

GATHERING PLACE: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE SOCIAL ROLE OF
IMMIGRANT-OWNED FOOD BUSINESSES IN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES

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Janika Oza

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ABSTRACT

The importance of foodways in diasporic communities makes restaurants and grocery stores significant sites where identity is reproduced and social, political, and economic interactions occur. Considering the prevalence of social isolation amongst migrants and the potential for networks and community to develop within food businesses, this literature review examines the role of immigrant-owned food businesses as cultural, social, and informational hubs amongst migrants. This paper provides a critical review of the international literature on the role of immigrant-owned food businesses within the last two decades. The main themes that characterise the literature are as follows: 1) identity and belonging, 2) community and social ties, 3) information exchange and networks, and 4) hybridity and cultural change. This research analyzes the social impact of these food businesses within immigrant communities and links these spaces to the context of social isolation and settlement-related challenges experienced by migrants.

Key Words:

Immigrant, food business, social isolation, settlement, community

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Introduction

The role of food and food practices in shaping cultural identity, sense of belonging, and group membership has been a site of recent research (Koc & Welsh 2002, Padolsky 2005, Vallianatos & Raine 2008, Weller & Turken 2014, Lessa & Rocha 2009). For migrants, who move from one culture to another and experience the challenges of cultural and dietary transition, food plays a significant role in adapting to or resisting changed conditions and makes restaurants, home kitchens, and cultural grocery stores important sites where social, political, and economic transactions may occur (Sen 2012). Several studies identify food as a physical link between migrant culture and diasporic community, where the availability of familiar foods through ethnic grocers and restaurants can be understood as creating a sense of ‘home’ while providing a tangible connection to other places, memories, and times (Weller & Turken 2014, Bailey 2016, Lessa & Rocha 2009). While recognizing the important role of food in the transition process for migrants, these studies have paid little attention to the specific food environments through which migrants are accessing their food, such as grocery stores, restaurants, and cafeterias (Sen 2012). This paper will review the literature on the social functions of immigrant-owned restaurants and grocery stores for diasporic communities during the settlement process. In compiling and critically analyzing the existing literature on ethnic food businesses, this research seeks to review the social impact that these food businesses have within immigrant communities and explore to what extent these spaces may address issues of social isolation and settlement-related challenges. I will argue that the immigrant-owned food businesses serve an important role as cultural and social hubs by providing culturally familiar foods, alleviating social isolation, and connecting migrants to certain resources such as housing and employment.

The role of immigrant-owned food businesses in diasporic communities merits research for a number of reasons, including its role in immigrants' sense of identity, belonging and inclusion in their host country, its potential to build community and social networks at a local level where immigrants may face social isolation and a lack of support, and its implications within multicultural contexts. Existing literature supports the importance of food for immigrants in terms of social connection, belonging, and identity maintenance, where access to familiar and culturally acceptable foods can greatly impact the sense of belonging and wellbeing of the immigrant (Koc 2015, Lessa & Rocha 2009, D'Sylva & Beagan 2011). Weller & Turken (2014) emphasize how the loss of access to certain foods due to the economic, physical, and sociocultural realities of the new home affects the migrants' sense of social identity and belonging (58). Several studies have also documented the importance of food practices as a form of power and identity maintenance, particularly for immigrant women, though most have focused on the role of the home kitchen and the gendered dimension of foodwork in the home (Vallianatos & Raine 2008, D'Sylva & Beagan 2011, Chapman & Beagan 2015, Kwik 2008). This research thus aims to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on public food spaces such as grocery stores and restaurants as potential sites of identity maintenance, cultural transmission, and community formation outside of the home kitchen.

Another body of literature on the role of ethnic restaurants and grocery stores examines the public perception of 'ethnic' fare, the attitudes of consumers to foods from minority cultures, and how ethnic restaurants negotiate their menus and spaces to appeal to the host culture (Chan 2002, Ray 2016, Chen 2014, Cappeliez & Johnston 2013, Hashimoto & Telfer 2006, Evans 2014, Ferrero 2002). While this body of literature provides useful insight into the complex interactions between ethnic and dominant cultures in food spaces, this literature review brings

together the research examining the impact of immigrant food businesses on immigrant communities and the inter-ethnic interactions and negotiations rather than the interaction between immigrants and the mainstream.

In examining the role of immigrant-owned food businesses among immigrant communities, this literature review aims to develop a framework for understanding how certain spaces may help address social isolation and alienation that immigrants may be facing upon arrival and throughout their settlement in the host country. The social isolation and exclusion that many immigrants face has been greatly documented in the literature, with studies demonstrating the impacts of having limited access to social networks and support on immigrant groups. These studies elucidate the impacts of social connectedness on immigrant mental health (Ahmad et al. 2008, Mehta 1998), social integration (Potter 1999), access to knowledge and resources upon arrival (SPCO 2010), and overall wellbeing (Murdie & Ghosh 2010, Qadeer & Kumar 2006, Raphael et al. 2001, Yoon et al. 2008, Yoon et al. 2012). They outline the specific acculturative stresses and challenges experienced by immigrants that can be mitigated to some extent through social supports (Levitt et al. 2005, Abouguendia & Noels 2010). For instance, immigrants often encounter chronic difficulties related to work prospects, economic insecurity, downward social mobility, discrimination and social exclusion, and loss of family and social support (Bhattacharya 2007, Abouguendia & Noels 2010). Moreover, while social support may be perceived as an important factor in immigrant settlement and wellbeing, systemic issues such as a lack of resources also limit the ability of service providers such as settlement agencies in meeting the needs of newcomers (Simich et al. 2005). The literature thus points to the widespread effects of social isolation and alienation on immigrants as well as the inadequacy of settlement services and social policies in addressing the full scope of the issue.

The issue of immigrant isolation is important to address due to its implications on immigrant integration, health, wellbeing, and belonging. Social connectedness and access to social networks have consistently been linked to the wellbeing of immigrant communities, where a sense of connection and belonging may contribute to feelings of acceptance in the new surroundings and reduce the negative impacts of stressors (Lee, Dean & Jung 2008, Yoon et al. 2008). Understanding where and how social connection can be fostered within migrant communities is thus vital as a means of addressing the challenge of social isolation, particularly when settlement agencies are not always equipped with the resources, knowledge, or local trust necessary to address these issues. Considering the prevalence of social isolation amongst immigrants and the potential for social networks and community to develop within food spaces, this literature review examines the significance of restaurants and grocery stores within immigrant communities to understand how these food spaces may enhance community cohesion and address the issue of social isolation among immigrants at a local level. This literature review thus aims to conceptually link the context of social isolation with the significance of migrant foodways and the sociospatial boundaries of the food business, expanding current knowledge of the ways in which immigrants seek support and attempt to satisfy their needs in their lived spaces.

Reflexivity is a crucial element of the research process as a means of understanding subjectivity in knowledge creation and acknowledging the impact of potential biases. I will therefore disclose my own positionality as well as my relationship to the subject matter. The context of this research is based on both academic findings as well as my experiential knowledge of the role of food and food spaces in maintaining links to culture and building community. While I was born and raised in Toronto, my life and experiences have been strongly grounded

within and shaped by the Indian immigrant communities across the Greater Toronto Area. While most of my connection to food occurred within the home, my family would sometimes visit Indian restaurants and grocery stores along Gerrard Street or in Scarborough, and we continue to frequent several of these restaurants and shops that primarily serve other Indian families. During these trips, I witnessed how these food businesses often became sites of community, connection, and familiarity amongst Indian immigrants in Toronto. Throughout my life, food has been intimately tied to my understanding of community, relationships, and family, and this informs my own interest in this research as well as my desire to understand how food spaces mediate community and connection, and particularly for those experiencing isolation or marginalization. In researching this topic, I am particularly drawing on my own knowledge of the role of food in facilitating community and a sense of belonging amongst diasporic communities.

Based on an understanding of the challenges of acculturation among immigrants, the role of food and food spaces in connecting migrants to their identity, community, and culture, and the importance of addressing issues of social isolation and marginalization for immigrants, this paper will review the current state of knowledge on this topic. In this literature review, I will examine the role of immigrant-owned food businesses in immigrant communities and the social and connective functions of these food spaces for immigrants. My review will include relevant academic and non-academic publications from the last two decades in English language from online databases. This review will focus on four thematic sections: 1) identity and belonging, 2) community and social ties, 3) information exchange and networks, and 4) hybridity and cultural change. The final section of the paper will offer a discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research on this topic.

Conceptual Background

This study bridges the concepts of community building, social belonging, and spatial theories through the lens of food and foodways. Based on the assumptions that certain spaces facilitate community building and social connectedness, this study examines how specific food spaces may build community and enhance social connectedness where immigrants are facing isolation and a lack of support. Concepts of belonging, community, social capital, and hybrid spaces will be used to frame the analysis of the literature and to understand the function of ethnic food businesses within immigrant communities. The four thematic areas of this literature review - identity and belonging, community and social ties, information exchange and networks, and hybridity and cultural change - arise from these concepts and allow for a deeper analysis of how ethnic food businesses shape identity, belonging, networks, and cultural interactions within immigrant communities. As mentioned above, the role of food as a connector and a mediator of identity and social belonging has been well documented; this literature review thus exists within a conceptual understanding of immigrant foodscapes that links food, place, identity, culture, and migration and explores how food locates us within specific cultural and geographic spaces.

This section will provide definitions and context on the following concepts: *social capital*, *hybridity*, *contact zone*, *community hub*, *'ethnic' business*, and *immigrant-owned food business*. These concepts are key to analyzing the literature on immigrant-owned food businesses and understanding the interactions that occur within these spaces, such as the development of networks, social capital, and community.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) theory of social capital provides an important foundation for this study, in which social capital is connected to class and stratification and can be accrued through individual investment in a network of relationships. In Bourdieu's (1986) theory, social

capital is directly related to the production and reproduction of inequality and to specific advantages for those who possess it. Here, social networks may act as a means to other resources, such as a social connection to an employer, as well as a means of psychological support, survival, and satisfaction in the host country (Potter 1999). This theory thus forms the groundwork for this study of how a lack of social connectedness affects immigrants and how spaces that facilitate social capital might serve to improve these conditions.

In this paper, I define a community hub as a physical public space where people choose to gather, share resources and skills, and seek support or connection. These spaces can provide social connection or a sense of belongingness in the social world (Yoon & Lee 2010) and social cohesion, which is an ongoing process of developing a sense of connectedness to a community with shared values or challenges and a sense of membership or recognition within the community (Jenson 1998, 4). The community hub thus functions as a space where individuals can come to seek belonging, connection, or participation to varying degrees and that also facilitates the informal transfer of resources and networks. The hub may act as a psychological refuge in that it provides a sense of familiarity, networks of solidarity, and support (Plaza 2014, 477). This definition provides the basis for understanding how some food businesses may facilitate community, social connection, and a sense of belonging for immigrants.

Within postcolonial theory, hybridity is a concept that encompasses the negotiation between and beyond the boundaries of identities and cultures, foregrounding the complex interactions and exchanges that occur. Postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha (1994) proposes a way of thinking about space and spatiality where ‘third spaces’ are hybrid, interstitial spaces that refuse the binary of fixed identities and are rather formed by continual translation and negotiation, thus enabling a renegotiation of boundaries and identities (Bhabha 1994, 38).

Similarly, Mary Louise Pratt's (1991) theory of the contact zone proposes the idea of social spaces in which cultures clash and grapple with one another and in which power is negotiated (34). These theories provide a framework for understanding the intersections of culture, identity, and space in community formation, elucidating the implications of such spaces within immigrant communities and exploring how lived spaces mediate identity formation and social belonging. These concepts will frame the discussion of cultural contact and negotiation within the food businesses, particularly in the fourth section of the literature review.

Throughout this paper and some of the literature, the term 'ethnic business' is used to refer to certain restaurants and grocery stores that are owned and operated by ethnic minorities and/or immigrants. In this paper, the term is used to demarcate the fact that such food businesses are immigrant-owned, rather than belonging to the mainstream society; however, it is necessary here to discuss the implications of the term 'ethnic' in relation to immigrant foods and cultures. Scholar Krishnendu Ray (2016) argues that the term 'ethnic food' in a multicultural context categorizes all non-white peoples and their foods together into one 'other' and connotes both difference and inferiority that is reflected in the prices consumers are willing to pay. Ray's data on Zagat restaurant guidebooks, for instance, demonstrates how Americans are willing to pay less for 'ethnic' cuisines such as Indian, Thai, and Vietnamese, while they are willing to pay more for American or Western European fare (Ray 2010, 11). His study reveals the ways in which consumers implicitly assign differentiated worth to cultural cuisines: while the expectation of European food is that it is expensive and distinguished, the expectation of 'ethnic' food is that it is cheap and ubiquitous (Ray 2010, 2). Not only does this term have an underlying connotation of subordination, but it is inadequate when considering the diversity and complexity of cultures and countries being grouped together. As Turgeon & Pastinelli (2002) write, "ethnicity, then, is a

relational concept, one in which the dominant is able to define the subordinate” (252). In certain contexts, the term ‘ethnic’ is used to describe outsiders or foreigners to the mainstream, which can uncritically homogenize all people of colour or marginalized communities in contrast to the dominant Eurocentric norm. As Ray (2016) demonstrates, the term ‘ethnic’ when applied to food comes with an association to cheapness and inferiority which establishes a power differential between ethnic and mainstream communities.

In this paper, I will use the term ‘immigrant-owned food business’ to refer to the restaurants and grocery stores that comprise the locale of the research. It should be noted that while the term ‘food business’ can encompass a wide variety of businesses such as catering, cafes, and chain restaurants, throughout this paper the term ‘food business’ will be used to describe only restaurants and grocery stores. While the term ‘immigrant’ can refer to a specific status, experience, or timeframe, in this paper it is simply used to refer to those who were born outside of the country to which they migrated. In this paper, the term ‘immigrant-owned food business’ is used to conceptualize a local place of food provision or consumption which is necessarily transnational through its connection to another place (Mohring 2008, 5). The establishment of these food businesses, along with various other ‘ethnic’ institutions such as religious sites and retail stores, is understood in the literature as a natural development in the migration process that facilitates the regeneration of a migrant community (Tuomainen 2009, 526). The concept of the immigrant-owned food business lies within a larger understanding of foodscapes, which Ferrero (2001) describes as “an analysis that deals with transnational food practices and their dynamics that usually characterize and potentially subvert consumer societies” (196). For the immigrant, these foodscapes often represent a means of reconstituting elements of their identity and culture through importing, preparing, selling, buying, and

consuming food from 'back home' (Bailey 2016, 52). These food spaces are not constructed in isolation, but rather are entangled with the politics and cultures of the host country such that they become uniquely diasporic phenomena that continue to adapt and change.

Literature Review as a Tool for Social Inquiry

The aim of this literature review is to assess the current body of knowledge on immigrant-owned food businesses and their role within immigrant communities on an international scale within the last two decades (2000 – 2019). The timeframe of 2000 – present was chosen due to the increasing attention that this subject has been gaining in recent years. From 2000-2005, there were only five relevant studies and articles written on the topic; from 2006-2010 there were thirteen, and from 2011-2019 there have been over 30 relevant articles. This demonstrates a trend in the research towards greater engagement with the topic of ethnic restaurants and grocery stores and their social impacts. In spite of this growing interest in the topic, the literature is still relatively limited, and thus the geographic scope of this literature review was widened beyond Canada and the United States to encompass international literature. The limit in research also led me to include multiple forms of literature, including peer-reviewed articles, masters theses, textbooks, non-fiction book chapters, and grey literature such as news stories and creative essays. The inclusion of grey literature allowed for certain observations and anecdotes that are not covered in the academic literature to be incorporated into the findings, although the information for this review was drawn primarily from published scholarly sources.

In order to locate relevant materials on the topic, I conducted searches of online databases including the general search-engine Google Scholar, general social sciences databases such as ProQuest Research Library, the Ryerson University search engine, and Sociological Abstracts. This search was limited to articles that were written from the year 2000 onwards in English. For the grey literature, a general google search was used.

Key search terms to locate relevant articles included: ethnic, restaurant, grocery store, immigrant, migration, migrant, ‘immigr’, ‘migra’, food, food business, network, community.

These search terms were used in a variety of combinations and the Boolean operators ‘and’ and ‘or’ were used to further broaden and narrow the results. The date limit of 2000 onwards was applied to review the most recent research, although I did perform a brief search of literature prior to 2000 to gain a sense of the research trend over time. Following the use of search engines, I read the abstracts and screened the sources for their relevance. Articles that discussed immigrant-owned food businesses, were written between 2000 and 2019, and focused on the reception or impacts of these food businesses on immigrant communities were included. Articles that focused on mainstream restaurants and grocery stores or the role of ethnic food businesses in the mainstream were screened for relevance but largely excluded. The bibliographies and reference lists of the selected articles were then scanned for other potential literature that met the inclusion criteria in terms of timeframe, language, and subject. Finally, I performed a critical analysis of all of the relevant sources until saturation was reached, where I could adequately assess the current state of knowledge on the topic, identify gaps and limitations, and determine areas for future research.

A Review of the Recent Literature on the Social Role of Immigrant-Owned Food Businesses in Diasporic Communities

In reviewing the literature on the role of immigrant-owned food businesses within various diasporas over the last two decades, I determined four key thematic areas that characterize the relationship between the ethnic food business and the diasporic communities: 1) identity and belonging, 2) community and social ties, 3) information exchange and networks, and 4) hybridity and cultural change. These themes represent the current state of knowledge on the subject and attempt to provide conceptual clarification towards the key questions, what does the current literature tell us about the role of immigrant-owned food businesses in immigrant communities? What are the social and connective functions of these food spaces for immigrants?

The first theme focuses on the role of ethnic food businesses in maintaining migrants' identity and contributing to a sense of belonging in the host country through accessing familiar and culturally appropriate foods. The second theme documents the role of ethnic restaurants and grocery stores in building social ties and connecting to community, demonstrating how the ethnic food business can become a communicative resource for diasporic individuals. The third theme explores how immigrant-owned food businesses become informal sites of information exchange in which clients find ways to build social networks and connect beyond food. The final theme complicates the formation of inter-ethnic community in ethnic food spaces by examining how multiculturalism and hybridity are enacted in these spaces, constructing the restaurant or grocery store as a contact zone or contested space.

In synthesizing, categorizing, and analysing the literature, this review aims to understand the functions of the immigrant-owned food business beyond the literal act of eating, contributing to the body of knowledge that both connects and complicates the relationship between food,

migration, identity, belonging, community, and social wellbeing. Following the discussion of the literature, this paper suggests a conceptual approach to future research that links the context of social isolation and the significance of migrant foodways with the sociospatial boundaries of the food business, analyzing how the space itself may facilitate connection, interaction, and transformation.

1. Identity and Belonging

“We sit here in silence, eating our lunch. But I know we are all here for the same reason. We’re all searching for a piece of home, or a piece of ourselves. We look for a taste of it in the food we order and the ingredients we buy. Then we separate. We bring the haul back to our dorm rooms or suburban kitchens, and we re-create a dish that couldn’t be made without that journey, because what we’re looking for isn’t accessible at a Trader Joe’s. H Mart is where you can find your people under one odorous roof, where you can have faith that you’ll find something you can’t find anywhere else.” – Michelle Zauner, 2018 (Zauner 2018, New Yorker).

Much literature exists documenting the role of ethnic food businesses in constructing and maintaining immigrant identity, sustaining links with the homeland, and developing a sense of belonging (Koc et al. 2015, Weller & Turkon 2014, Raman 2011, Rabikoswka 2010, Chen 2014, Liu & Lin 2009, Charon-Cardona 2004, Abbots 2016, Pottier 2014). The body of literature linking ethnic food businesses to identity and belonging contextualizes the power of food and food practices and demonstrates how culturally familiar foods hold both “physical and symbolic” meaning (Koc et al. 2015, 295). These studies explore how the biological act of eating is linked to cultural understandings of identity, which is an ongoing process shaped by major life events such as migration (Sabar & Posner 2013). Koc et al. (2015) and Weller & Turkon (2014) necessarily foreground the importance of accessibility, where access to familiar and culturally appropriate food impacts the sense of belonging of the migrant and where the loss of access to certain foods due to the changed realities in the host country impacts immigrant’s sense of social

identity and belonging, such as in the case of Latinx immigrants in New York (Weller & Turkon 2014, 58). The accessibility and availability of culturally familiar foods is further brought into focus through Charon-Cardona (2004)'s exploration of Cuban food spaces in both the United states and Australia, where the presence of Cuban cafes, markets, and restaurants becomes an important means of constructing a "diasporic locale" that allows for both cultural identification and connection to the past (40). Emphasizing how migrants were willing to travel to ethnic markets in order to capture the "right flavour" of home, Charon-Cardona (2004) argues that the presence of a Cuban food market in Sydney has allowed Cuban immigrants to maintain a sense of identity through preservation of their eating habits (48). It is notable that only a small portion of the literature mentions the challenges of affordability, accessibility, and availability of ethnic restaurants and grocery stores for immigrants, signifying a gap in connecting immigrant food security with the role and prevalence of ethnic food businesses (Koc et al. 2015, Weller & Turkon 2014). Future research should connect the reality of food insecurity within immigrant communities to the presence of immigrant-owned food businesses, as these food environments may mitigate the challenges of cultural food insecurity, although they do not necessarily represent a more affordable avenue for purchasing food (Vallianatos & Raine 2008).

The literature on ethnic food businesses and identity suggests a concept of collective belonging which is developed through engagement in shared food rituals, familiar food purchases, and food spaces as "embodied experiences" that can transport migrants back 'home' (Abbots 2016, 5). Charon-Cardona (2004) introduces the concept of food as a "sensual and embodied perceptual frontier" that demarcates a divide between 'us' and 'them' and thereby solidifies the sense of collective identity amongst Cuban immigrants (46). In line with this concept of the food frontier, several scholars explore the development of a collective identity

through the rise of immigrant-owned food businesses (Rabikowska 2010, Chen 2014, Crang 2010, Pottier 2014). Rabikowska (2010) explores how Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom materially reproduce memories of home through making extra effort to travel to Polish shops to purchase familiar and authentic ingredients (23). Her interviews of Polish immigrants elucidate how the effort of the journey to these Polish shops is perceived as enhancing the value of the authentically Polish products, further distinguishing ‘us’ from ‘them’ (Rabikowska 2010). Here, the act of choosing Polish ingredients over local ones begins the food ritual that emotionally links the Polish migrants to their identities and pasts, supporting Crang’s (2010) argument that the “stuff” of diaspora elicits powerful emotional responses that provoke feelings of connection to home and ancestral community, even as these diasporic products are commodified and decontextualized (1). Rabikowska (2010) refers to this ritualization of food as “practicing food” – a concept that clarifies the ways in which food and cultural identity are not only tied together, but performed through the act of going out in search of specific stores, foods, and authentic products.

The research demonstrates that ethnic grocery stores within immigrant communities provide not only necessary ingredients, but an entire experience in which the customer enters a familiar physical and symbolic space (Sabar & Posner 2013, Mankekar 2002, Renne 2007). While the role of the immigrant-owned food business as a site of belonging for diasporic individuals is well documented (Weller & Turkon 2014, Chen 2014, Abbots 2016, Charon-Cardona 2004, Zauner 2018, Pahwa 2018), some scholars discuss the significance of these food spaces as a means of defense, coping, and survival for migrants in the face of settlement-related challenges (Sabar & Posner 2013, Pahwa 2018). Sabar & Posner (2013) refer to the self-established restaurants run by Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers in Israel as “culinary safe

havens” in which the migrants not only find shared diasporic identity and familiar experiences, but also experience a sense of security and empowerment that is often elusive for forced migrants with precarious status (198). In the aftermath of a difficult and oftentimes painful journey and with an ongoing uncertainty of status in the host country, the refugees find certainty, security, and belonging in the Sudanese and Eritrean restaurants in Tel Aviv, which can be understood as a kind of coping strategy or survival mechanism in unstable times (Sabar & Posner 2013, 216). In his anecdotal essay on Indian food stores in Michigan, USA, Nitish Pahwa (2018) similarly recounts how these food spaces became a safe haven and a defense against the racism and social exclusion his family and community faced in their remote town. He writes of the comfort and safety of the Indian grocery store:

“Surrounding these stores, enclaves have been established where both immigrant and American-born Indian communities can find a common heritage, a communal peace, a togetherness that holds in the face of predominantly white communities, a formidable defense even in the face of attacks. In places so far from their own, having people like you and having a source of recognizable food can mean everything and give you the strength to brave a new home. As Ramila Agrawal, founder of the Spice Store in Prince Edward Island, Canada, put it, “if your stomach is full, you can face the world better” (Pahwa 2018).

Both Pahwa (2018) and Sabar & Posner (2013) highlight the significance of these food spaces beyond the actual purchase and consumption of food and point to the prevalence of marginalization, isolation, and exclusion amongst migrants that necessitates these culinary havens.

Several studies explore the relationship between food and memory in ethnic food businesses, examining how the triggering and reconstruction of memories contributes to a sense of cultural and collective identity (Abbots 2016, Holtzman 2006, Zauner 2018, Rinkeviciute 2011, Sabar & Posner 2013, Weller & Turkon 2014). Holtzman (2006) locates food as a locus of diasporic memory and nostalgia, exposing how the sensory experience of eating triggers memory

which in turn forms identity, a concept that he refers to as “gustatory nostalgia” (367). He complicates the idea of nostalgia in arguing that nostalgic longing can be oriented towards times and places never experienced – a kind of imagined homeland which could merit further study, particularly in relation to second-generation immigrants who frequent ethnic grocery stores and restaurants in search of connection to their ancestry. While few scholars in this body of work mention the different relationship of the second-generation to ethnic food spaces, Weller & Turkon (2014) purport that both the first and second generations express a deep emotional connection to food even without memories of the home country. They note that the changes in food preferences and consumption in the new country can become a traumatic reminder of the separation from homeland (71). Anecdotally, several writers have described the emotional comfort and rare ‘taste of home’ located in ethnic food businesses (Rinkeviciute 2011, Zauner 2018, Pahwa 2018), likening traditional foods found in ethnic grocery stores to “a mother’s embrace” (Rinkeviciute 2011). These authors describe how grief, loss, childhood memories, familial love, and a sense of self can all be conjured through the aisles of the grocery store and the ethnic canteen (Zauner 2018). In a study of Latin American food outlets in New Orleans, Fouts (2011) describes the Latin American food establishment for a recent immigrant as “deterritorialized familiarity” in which migrants experience the comfort and intimacy of a familiar social space during the difficult process of acculturation to the United States (7). The material and discursive reproduction of home through food and food spaces is a theme that is thus widely present in the literature on immigrant-owned food businesses in the diaspora.

While the majority of the literature on ethnic food businesses and identity highlights the reproduction of memory and cultural identity, several scholars complicate this discussion by analyzing the ways in which ideas of nationalism, authenticity, and hybridized identities are

constructed through migrants' interactions with ethnic food businesses (Pottier 2014, Renne 2007, Liu & Lin 2009, Raman 2011, Sabar & Posner 2013, Duru 2009, Rabikowska 2010). Duru (2009) and Renne (2007) explore how national identity is privileged over more specific regional, linguistic, or ethnic identities through marketing towards more national or global identities such as 'African' rather than 'Nigerian' or 'Igbo' in specialty grocery stores (Renne 2007, 622). Duru (2009) furthers this discussion by suggesting the necessity of substituting other similar ethnic ingredients, restaurants, and food stores due to a lack of availability or accessibility of food businesses from one's own specific ethnic group, such as Nigerian migrants in Belgium frequenting Congolese grocery stores and cafes to acquire a quasi-taste of home (60). The downplaying of specific identities in favour of broader identity categories thus demonstrates how identity is sometimes manipulated or contested within ethnic food spaces. In conversation with Charon-Cardona (2004)'s concept of the food frontier that delineates 'us' and 'them', Rabikowska (2010) explores how Polish food serves to crystalize national identity over individual or local differences for Polish immigrants in London. For instance, even those who did not particularly like certain Polish foods such as white borsh 'back home' would specifically search for and buy them in the United Kingdom (25). In doing so, these foods and the act of purchasing them takes on a symbolic meaning that further entrenches the migrants in their national identity through collective ritual. "In a collective imagination of nationality, certain products and situations merge into the symbolism of identity," she writes, identifying how material culture in the diaspora can become a stand-in for national identity and belonging, and thus avoiding or refusing such products becomes a rejection of national identity (Rabikowska 2010, 25). In contrast to the idea of privileging a more general identity through nationalized or globalized marketing of products in ethnic stores, Pottier (2014) demonstrates how Bangladeshi

restaurants in East London work to convey the sentiment that they are “different” from the Indian and West Bengali communities in the area, with whom they have historically been homogenized and whose restaurants have exploited their labour without recognition (11). Through calling on nostalgic images and décor and select dishes ‘from home’ such as *pusca* and *panta ilish*, the Bangladeshi restaurants solidify a more regional identity in which immigrants are instructed about who they are and from where they come beyond the reductive mainstreaming of South Asian identities in the United Kingdom (Pottier 2014, 10). The restaurant space can thus serve to solidify and maintain specific national identities while also marketing towards more generalized identity groups in the diaspora.

Although many scholars have written about the belonging, familiarity, and identification discovered within these ethnic food businesses, some scholarship has begun to explore the ways in which the identities, foods, and products are in fact hybridized or changed versions of the original (Renne 2007, Pottier 2014, Sabar & Posner 2013, Raman 2011). Sabar & Posner (2013) and Renne (2007) explore how the changed modes of production and consumption in the diaspora mean that home is reproduced differently. Renne (2007) shows how West African immigrants in the United States would purchase mass produced packaged goods in ethnic grocery stores rather than following the slow labour-intensive cooking methods used back home, while Sabar & Posner (2013) discuss how the asylum-seekers in Israel missed the connection to the soil and active role in growing produce in food preparation. While still supporting the idea that identity and belonging are integral features of ethnic food businesses – and strong reasons why many immigrants frequent them – these scholars complicate the notion of singular fixed identities by exploring the ways in which identity is contested and changed within diasporic food spaces, drafting new ideas of what it means to belong.

2. Community and Social Ties

“You’ll get kind smiles and eager help as soon as you walk in, like you’re being welcomed into someone’s home. When you’re checking in or out, the counter manager may ask you, softly, “India?” “Are you Indian?” “Where from India are you?” Origin explanations are pleasantly traded, and a warm rapport is established for the next time you come in. It’s a kind of comfort that’s never unwelcome, especially in a new place, on your own.” – Nitish Pahwa, 2018 (Pahwa 2018, Slate)

This section brings together the literature on the role of immigrant-owned food businesses in building social ties and connecting to community, demonstrating how they serve as a communicative resource for diasporic individuals. Several studies have documented the role of immigrant grocery stores and restaurants in creating social connections and facilitating community, exploring the ways they become a ‘gathering place’, develop fictive kinship, and sustain social interaction (Visser et al. 2014, Bailey 2016, Plaza 2014, Kim 2009, Ferrero 2002, Brightwell 2012, Williams-Forsen 2014, Collins 2008, Sabar & Posner 2013, Lo 2007). This section also highlights the development of new kinds of social and cultural relations in diasporic food environments that move beyond entrenched cultural boundaries (Williams-Forsen 2014, Abbots 2016, Brightwell 2012, Mankekar 2010, Vallianatos & Raine 2008, Renne 2007). Finally, this section explores how some migrants may experience immigrant-owned food businesses as sites of vulnerability or danger due to community policing or unwanted visibility (Brightwell 2012, Mankekar 2010, Vallianatos & Raine 2008). While most of these studies focus on the role of food purchasing, preparation, and consumption via ethnic stores and restaurants, Bailey (2016) makes a necessary distinction between production and consumption in immigrant foodscapes, noting that the concentration of immigrants found in ethnic food and restaurant businesses indicates employment and labour market discrimination (52). The ways in which food businesses, while an important site of identity and belonging, also represent a kind of constrained

choice due to challenges in labour-market integration will be further explored in the third section of this review.

The main body of literature around immigrant-owned food businesses and community building discusses the role of sociality around food, where eating communally, engaging in food rituals, and sharing meals or preparing food for others become acts of solidarity and care amongst migrants (Sabar & Posner 2013, Collins 2008, Sutton 2004, Lo 2007, Brightwell 2012). Brightwell (2012) and Sabar & Posner (2013) present restaurants as public spaces of belonging that care for the emotional aspects of migration. Sabar & Posner (2013) assert that while many migrants eat communally at home in their countries of origin, they are often unable to cook at home after migration due to long working hours and/or small and shared living quarters (207). In this context, eating in restaurants represents a shift from normal eating practices for many migrants. The restaurant thus becomes a new diasporic sphere for eating “home-like food in a home-like way” within the constraints and challenges of the new country (Sabar & Posner 2013, 207). Collins (2008) furthers this discussion by arguing that sociality plays a key role in the performance of food cultures, where the preparation and consumption of Korean foods among Korean international students in Auckland allows for the enactment of sociality and familiarity that becomes a necessary way of re-grounding uprooted lives (17). The significance of sociality around eating thus plays a role in the formation of migrant community in immigrant-owned restaurants.

Several studies examine how the ethnic grocery store or restaurant serves as a “gathering place” (Visser et al. 2015, 15) by focusing on the role of the space itself (Plaza 2014, Collins 2008, Visser et al. 2015, Pottier 2014) and the interactions among members of different groups within (Bailey 2015, Vallianatos & Raine 2008, Lo 2007, Williams-Forson 2014, Aye &

Chadwick 2018). Plaza (2014) and Visser et al. (2015) introduce the use of spatiality and spatial theories into their studies of ethnic shops and restaurants to generate a concept that links place and space to social belonging and wellbeing. Visser et al. (2015) demonstrate how “place-based social networks” found in African grocery shops contribute to the sense of social wellbeing and belonging among Ghanaian migrants. Plaza (2014) furthers this concept by introducing the idea of the immigrant-owned grocery store as a ‘third space’: a distinctly diasporic space in which culture, identity, and community are redefined and performed. Here, the experience of shopping and eating in Trinidadian roti shops in cities throughout Canada and Britain is distinctly different from performing the same act in Trinidad, and thus becomes an authentic hybrid space for the Trinidadian diaspora to enact their culture, meet other Trinidadians, and feel a sense of common membership in a larger group (Plaza 2014, 485). Plaza’s (2014) concept of the immigrant-owned food business as an authentic third space for diasporic individuals sheds light on how the space itself becomes a communicative resource in diasporic communities. Collins (2008) begins to clarify this concept in exploring how the features of the restaurants contribute to the sense of familiarity and sociability of the space:

Restaurants like San-Su-Gap-San have very important embodied and sensual characteristics. While San-Su-Gap-San is not solely patronised by young Koreans, they are the predominant group here. Furthermore, the waiting staff and cooks are unsurprisingly also Korean, many of them international students, and their bodies are also crucial to the making of this space (cf. Crang 1994). Linguistically, the restaurant is awash with Korean language. The senses of smell, taste and touch are also well attended here by the food, the way that it is cooked and presented, and the utensils provided. It is clear that it is these embodied and sensual aspects of the restaurant that play such a crucial role in producing it as a ‘familiar place’” (Collins 2018, 158).

The sensory aspects of the ethnic restaurant thus play a key role in reproducing familiarity, which fosters the development of community and social networks amongst migrants. The

concept of the gathering place thus encompasses the space itself as well as the interactions between the individuals as they negotiate their diasporic identities.

The literature on the ethnic food business as a ‘gathering place’ explores the various groups of people that frequent these food spaces and analyzes how these interactions relate to a sense of wellbeing and belonging in the host country (Visser et al. 2015, Bailey 2016, Vallianatos & Raine 2008, Williams-Forson 2014, Wang & Lo 2007). Wang & Lo (2007) explore how the practice of shopping in Chinese grocery stores becomes a leisure and social outing for the whole family and a “socially and culturally situated activity” for Chinese immigrants (696). This practice of shopping as a social activity comes from the cultural atmosphere of the Chinese grocery store as well as the interactions with other Chinese immigrants that occur in the store. Wang & Lo’s (2007) study contributes to the understanding of the sociocultural significance of grocery shopping in the daily lives of immigrants beyond the basic need for food, demonstrating how the act of grocery shopping itself can become a social act in a diasporic cultural milieu (695). Pottier (2014) furthers the discussion of the ethnic food business as a social space by exploring how the Bangladeshi restaurants in London have become meeting places not only for social occasions, but also for political and community organizations, press conferences, hosting guest scholars and speakers from ‘back home’, and community groups preparing for cultural festivals (20). These studies elucidate why the immigrant-owned food business becomes a gathering place and who chooses to frequent these spaces.

While it is less common in the literature on ethnic food businesses than that of home kitchens, the role of gender and the gendered dimension of food shopping is analyzed to a limited extent in the literature (Visser et al. 2015, Vallianatos & Raine 2008, Williams-Forson 2014, Mankekar 2010). Visser et al. (2015) and Vallianatos & Raine (2008) discuss how women

in particular frequent ethnic grocery stores as a strategy to socialize and seek community and wellbeing in their new surroundings, which becomes particularly important for women who may have less opportunity to achieve social relationships through going to work in the host country. Williams-Forsen (2014) offers the concept of cultural sustainability, where women play a key role in sustaining and preserving cultural lifeways through patronizing ethnic markets and continuing to prioritize the cooking of specific cultural and nostalgic foods (70). “Now that the kids are in school, they’re forgetting their Gujarati. But the least I can do is to give them one Indian meal a day,” one female interviewee said in Mankekar (2010)’s study of Indian grocery stores in San Francisco, demonstrating the relationship between food preparation and cultural preservation while also highlighting the gendered nature assigned to this responsibility (83). Beyond these few studies on the relationship between gender and ethnic food businesses, there is a gap in the literature on the intersections of gender, race, class, and immigration status on the experiences of migrants in ethnic food businesses and how this may impact their sense of wellbeing.

The concept of fictive kinship and the creation of imagined communities becomes important in the literature on immigrant-owned food businesses, as evidenced by several scholars (Bailey 2016, Sutton 2004, Collins 2008, Sabar & Posner 2013, Visser et al. 2015, Kim 2009). These scholars explore how the public space of the restaurant or grocery store affords migrants the chance to form social bonds and fictive kinship relationships based on shared experiences or identities. Visser et al. (2015) and Bailey (2016) focus on the role of immigrant-owned food businesses in providing space for commensality between people of the same ethnic origin. Others explore the formation of kinship based on shared marginality, supporting Sabar & Posner (2013)’s idea of the culinary safe havens that become a kind of survival for migrants in

precarious situations (Kim 2009, Collins 2008). In his study of Korean international students in Auckland, New Zealand, Collins (2008) describes how eating at Korean restaurants together was an important part of these students' daily lives due to their experiences of social exclusion, racial discrimination, and feelings of loss associated with being far from Korea (157). His study deepens the notion of building community and social ties in ethnic restaurant spaces by exploring how community identity becomes even more important when there is geographical distance between the migrants and their homeland, although in this case the kinship exists only between Korean students rather than across ethnic groups as discussed by Duru (2009) and Renne (2007). The concept of fictive kinship across ethnic and cultural differences is most deeply explored through Kim (2009)'s study of undocumented migrant restaurant workers in a Korean-Japanese restaurant in the northeastern United States, in which a "fictive family" formed between the undocumented workers based on their shared marginality due to limited resources, discrimination, and precarious status (498). According to Kim (2009), the fictive kin relationships counteract some of the challenges and negative experiences faced by the undocumented workers by developing a sense of belonging through shared experience and providing space for social networking and social capital for those who are away from their families and do not have the ability to join other social groups outside work (508). Basu (2002) similarly describes how some South Asian immigrant restaurant owners in her study would offer accommodation to their South Asian employees in rooms above the restaurant, lending a new meaning to the term, "family business" (165). While these studies explore the experiences of those working in an immigrant-owned restaurant rather than the customers, they provide an important insight into the development of community within restaurant spaces by contextualizing

the landscape of prejudice, exclusion, and threats that many migrants may be facing in their daily lives.

While many authors explore the role of the ethnic food business in developing community, some scholars are complicating this notion by analyzing the cultural change that occurs within these spaces (Williams-Forson 2014, Abbots 2016, Brightwell 2012, Mankekar 2010, Vallianatos & Raine 2008, Renne 2007). These scholars highlight the ways that cultural identity changes based on the specific context of the host country, which in turn changes the nature of the social relationships formed in the food businesses. Williams-Forson (2014) and Abbots (2016) discuss the collapsing of cultural differences that occurs in ethnic food businesses, where individuals across countries and cultures meet and share the foodscape and thus redefine the food traditions and social relations that are typical back home. “Places of migrant belonging can also traverse previously entrenched social boundaries and foster solidarity between minority groups within a wider diaspora,” Abbots (2016) writes, identifying the emergence of a new kind of social relationship under the specific diasporic circumstances in the host country (5). This concept of shifting sociocultural relations and practices is further developed by Brightwell (2012), who explores how Brazilian immigrants in the United Kingdom negotiate and recreate their food culture and social relationships in the diaspora, redefining and performing ‘Brazilianness’ through the restaurants (58). It is relevant here to bring up Mankekar (2010)’s concept of “objects-in-motion”, which is the idea that the stores and the commodities they display contain and evoke memories, longing, and complex feelings that necessarily change with migration. This concept helps to frame how the foods from home and the ways in which they are prepared and consumed necessarily changes in the host country, shifting from ‘traditional’ to hybrid food in the new context (Mankekar 2010, 81). As Abbots (2016) aptly states, “We have to

remember that just as people and food (and their narratives) travel and circulate, so do the meanings attached to them,” (9). These studies begin to explore how ethnic food businesses in diasporic communities and the development of social relations within them is necessarily different to those food spaces and community bonds found ‘back home,’ contextualizing the food businesses within the particularities of the host country and exploring the influence of migration, exclusion, and cultural contact. These scholars analyze how community within ethnic food businesses is sometimes built across previously entrenched ethnic or social boundaries – a concept that will be further explored in the section on hybridity and cultural change.

Despite the majority of the literature constructing the ethnic food business as a haven for migrants, several scholars explore how immigrant foodscapes can evoke complex emotions and challenges (Brightwell 2012, Mankekar 2010, Vallianatos & Raine 2008). Brightwell (2012) and Mankekar (2010) purport that familiarity does not always equate to security and that belonging cannot always be assumed in these spaces; rather, these spaces can sometimes further solidify cultural boundaries and inequalities and create a feeling of being “trapped” within cultural confines, despite residing in the host country (Brightwell 2012, 73). In her study of Indian grocery stores and transnational identity in the San Francisco Bay Area, Mankekar (2010) demonstrates how these stores both hold nostalgic and social functions for Indians in the diaspora while also reinscribing hierarchical and patriarchal power relations through, for instance, the surveillance of women’s purchases and behaviour (92). She argues that the particular kind of social space of these stores allows for the perpetuation and reconfiguration of harmful practices, acting as both an extension and disruption of hierarchies and power relations originating in the homeland (Mankekar 2010, 93). While Mankekar (2010) documents the patriarchal community surveillance in immigrant food stores, Brightwell (2012) documents the

government surveillance that occurs, arguing that the high number of undocumented Brazilian migrants in the United Kingdom makes the visibility of Brazilian shops a potential threat due to the targeted policing of migration status (73). She writes:

“At the same time as they offer a place of sociability, these shops also make such sociability a risky activity...instead of being considered solely places of refuge or positive affirmations of Brazilian presence, retail spaces can, sometimes, represent a danger and vulnerability for those for whom presence in the national space is denied” (Brightwell 2012, 73).

The targeting of these shops for police raids as described in the study makes clear the material danger associated with the immigrant-owned business and the anxiety that comes with diasporic living for many migrants. Finally, Vallianatos & Raine (2008) importantly mention the intersection of class and immigration, explaining that the high cost of many traditional foods found in small-scale ethnic grocery stores can present a challenge for many migrants, who ultimately may have to forgo the comfort and familiarity of their preferred grocery stores for larger supermarket chains in order to make ends meet (366). While limited, these studies offer a vital insight into the community ties, power relations, and vulnerabilities that can be reproduced within immigrant-owned food businesses, providing some nuance to the meaning of belonging and security found in diasporic foodscapes.

3. Information Exchange and Networks

“Each time I visit I end up spending much more time there than I anticipated—Saraga is designed this way, or so it seems. The checkout counter sits far back from the exit, with plenty of space near the entrance for customers to hang around, whether it be to purchase a Mexican pastry and to watch soccer or to post a message in any language on the massive bulletin board that advertises everything from Vietnamese church services to home-delivered Somali food. The space is so diverse and expansive that many immigrant communities think of Saraga as a place built by one of their own, for their very own. And while the former may not always be the case, the latter most definitely is.” – Zahir Janmohamed (Janmohamed 2018, Bon Appetit).

A limited number of studies explore the role of the immigrant-owned food business as an informal information hub and network for migrants that provides settlement support such as connections to employment and housing (Mankekar 2010, Shi 2017, Pottier 2014, Plaza 2014, Hung 2017, Hossein & Berhe 2018, Oza 2019, Williams-Forson 2014, Wang & Lo 2007, Fouts 2011). It is notable that this observation is more explicitly documented in the grey literature, offering a newer insight into the informal information exchange occurring within ethnic food spaces while also denoting a gap in the scholarly literature that would merit further research. This section provides an important foundation for future study that connects the social, economic, and labour-related functions of the immigrant-owned food business within diasporic communities. It highlights how immigrant-owned food businesses build social capital amongst migrants who are experiencing social exclusion and labour-market discrimination, among other challenges.

Several studies mention the function of the ethnic restaurant or grocery store as a space to gather and exchange information about community and religious events, employment opportunities, and schools (Mankekar 2010, Pottier 2014, Plaza 2014, Oza 2019, Fouts 2011). While some of this exchange may occur informally through conversations with other customers or with staff, Hung (2017) and Janmohamed (2018) both document the more formalized presence of informational boards within ethnic grocery stores through which individuals can post up and receive information about a variety of services. Highlighting the connective power of Chinese grocery stores in New York, Hung (2017) writes,

“Never underestimate the power of a bulletin board or ‘community corner’ that has postings in various languages, offering everything from English classes to real estate agents who are multilingual. Some stores even host events recognizing festivals from their clients’ native countries, others have community outreach arms that work to unite and advocate for the immigrant community.”

This passage highlights the awareness of grocery store owners of the needs of their customers and the kinds of exchange that occur within the food space, illuminating the ways in which immigrant-owned food businesses respond to the settlement needs of their clientele which may not be available, or accessible, elsewhere. The concept of accessibility of information is expanded upon in some of the literature, particularly emphasizing the importance of linguistic accessibility (Wang & Lo 2007, Hung 2017, Janmohamed 2018). Hung (2017) comments on the power of simply having a newspaper in one's own language, while Janmohamed (2018) documents the availability of products marketed using the familiar labels from back home, such as the term "monkey cap" when referring to a beanie hat. Expanding upon these anecdotal observations of the value of linguistic familiarity in ethnic food spaces, Wang & Lo (2007) analyze the relationship between accessibility and ethnicity. They argue for the need to prioritize the social and cultural contexts for accessibility and explore how immigrant consumers may choose ethnic shopping venues over mainstream ones due to the cultural, social, and linguistic accessibility (686). Hung (2017) refers to this as a kind of "cultural translation" for immigrants that occurs in ethnic food businesses – a concept that highlights the vital purpose of immigrant-owned food businesses in diasporic communities beyond the provision of food.

The multiple functions of immigrant-owned restaurants as compared to mainstream restaurants is examined by several authors, observing the provision of unofficial services and connections for people of the same ethnic origin who frequent the restaurant space (Shi 2017, Oza 2019, Williams-Forsen 2014, Wang & Lo 2007, Fouts 2011). Shi (2017) makes the distinction that ethnic restaurants provide different services for customers within the ethnic community versus mainstream or local customers, where the Chinese restaurants she studied in a small Southeastern United States town would provide cultural, informational, and social support

to their Chinese customers who comprised a very small minority in the area (17). This study provides an interesting distinction between attendance and consumption at ethnic restaurants by ethnic versus mainstream customers, where immigrant customers may be drawn to the ethnic restaurants for reasons beyond consuming the food, while mainstream customers may be in search of authentic or exotic encounters that are unavailable at mainstream restaurants (Shi 2017, 20). According to Shi (2017), the owners and servers at the restaurants act as “agents” who collect and distribute information, while the Chinese immigrant clients treat the restaurant as “information hubs” when they are seeking out specific services (18). As she observes in Panda’s and Tasty Garden, two of the restaurants in her study,

“The information they make available includes roommate-seeking, car selling, course information sharing, and flight tickets information sharing...Students preparing to leave the region and some new students leave their information and preferences with the server. Because most of the Chinese students here are around the same age as her son, the server at Tasty Garden is seen as an “aunt” who is capable of helping those young students” (Shi 2017, 18).

This passage exemplifies the extent to which immigrant and international student clientele would seek out the Chinese restaurants specifically for the informal services provided by the staff, while also documenting the sense of familiarity or comfort associated with this kind of informal service provision, where the server is viewed as an ‘aunt’. This concept of migrants seeking services and satisfying needs in familiar spaces should be examined in conversation with the stigma, inaccessibility, and lack of community trust sometimes associated with accessing formal settlement services through agencies or organizations (Simich et al. 2005). Not only do these targeted foodscapes facilitate a sense of shared identity and familiarity at the local level, but they also provide culturally and linguistically accessible services that sustain and support minority communities. The relationship between immigrant food spaces and service provision necessitates a discussion of migrant agency, exploring how immigrants may seek support and attempt to

satisfy their needs beyond the reach of organized projects. While it is beyond the scope of this literature review, future research can examine how migrants' experiences of accessing information and services may differ between formal settlement service provision and informal information hubs.

Beyond exchanging information, several studies document the value of the immigrant-owned food business as an effective means of employment for new immigrants who may be experiencing labour-market discrimination, deprofessionalization, and challenges in entering the workforce after migration (Kim 2009, Shi 2017, Wang & Lo 2007, Hossein & Berhe 2018). A large body of literature questions whether the concentration of immigrants working in the food and retail sectors can be attributed to labour market discrimination (Li, Li & Li 2016, Fong & Shen 2011, Hou 2009, Ensign & Robinson 2011, Liu & Lin 2009, Ray 2011, Basu 2002, Chan 2002, Ram et al. 2001, Kitching et al. 2009). While this body of literature is largely beyond the scope of this literature review, it is important to mention how new immigrants may seek out employment in immigrant-owned food businesses as a strategy against labour market discrimination. Traditionally, participation in the ethnic economy has been viewed as an alternative avenue to employment and economic adaptation for immigrants in immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada and the United States, where immigrants may rely on ethnic resources and networks in order to overcome barriers to entering the labour market (Hou 2009, 70). Hou (2009) demonstrates how this strategy is particularly important for immigrants arriving with low levels of education or who lack proficiency in the host language (70). Li & Li (2016) further this discussion in their exploration of the ethnic enclave economies in Canada, where the enclave provides a strong alternative opportunity for those with less human capital, and yet rewards the immigrant workers differently than the mainstream economy, sometimes exploiting

immigrant workers with demanding work hours and lower wages (133). While the systemic discrimination that results in migrants working in the ethnic enclave economy, as well as its unequal rewards and potential for exploitation, demonstrate that immigrant entrepreneurship and self-employment are not uncomplicated solutions to immigrant economic integration, the role of the ethnic enclave economy in initially providing immigrants with employment is necessary to this discussion of immigrant-owned food businesses. Within food work, ethnic restaurants and grocery stores are one avenue for immigrant employment documented by several authors (Kim 2009, Shi 2017, Wang & Lo 2007, Hossein & Berhe 2018, Hung 2017, Ray 2011, Basu 2002, Chan 2002). Shi (2017) describes how Chinese enclaves in large cities provide an effective channel for new immigrants to find jobs in restaurants around Chinatown, while Kim (2009) documents how many of the undocumented migrants in her study traveled from restaurant to restaurant until they found employment at the Korean-Japanese restaurant. Anecdotally, Hung (2017) and Hossen & Berhe (2018) document the role of immigrant-owned grocery stores in providing much-needed jobs to immigrants in the United States and Canada. Hung (2017) describes how many of the employees at Pearl River Mart in New York found their first job after migration in this grocery store, and that the store has even helped some of its employees gain their green cards. “Indeed, Pearl River has long been a place where people not only get their start, but can also sustain a life in America,” Hung (2017) writes, exposing the lesser-known function of ethnic grocery stores that provides a foot in the door for many immigrants. Hossen & Berhe (2018) place the rise of immigrant-owned businesses such as small-scale ethnic grocers in the context of racism, discrimination, and devaluation of foreign credentials, noting that racialized immigrants in particular are relegated to precarious low-paying labour and thus find refuge in small-scale businesses such as Mom & Pop shops. This trend becomes a kind of

“survival economics” that may also have social and community value in hiring marginalized people and providing unconventional products. In their article, Hossen & Berhe (2018) provide the example of Toronto’s iconic Little India restaurant called Lahore Tikka House, whose owners train and mentor newcomers to work in the restaurant, thereby providing a way into economic and social life for migrants who may otherwise be experiencing discrimination and barriers to employment. Kim (2009) and Sabar & Posner (2013) also explore how the restaurant space becomes a particularly important first network for those in precarious positions such as undocumented migrants or asylum-seekers, exposing the value of ethnic food businesses in building social capital and potential employment networks to those who have limited access to other kinds of networking. Kitching et al. (2009) effectively capture the issue in demonstrating how relying on diaspora-based networks is an economic necessity for survival for many ethnic minorities, while also arguing that it does not replace the importance of developing other resources and skills towards business and employment development (702). The literature thus clearly demonstrates how access to employment and networks is a key function of the immigrant-owned restaurant and grocery store in diasporic communities. While the implications of immigrants working in the food sector as a result of systemic discrimination necessitates further research, the literature highlights the challenges of integration faced by many migrants, particularly those who are racialized, less educated, or do not speak the host language.

4. Hybridity and Cultural Change

“If I already sell two types of beans here, I am not going to bring another type just because it is regional. I am going to bring a brand which is nationally known so I can serve everybody. I am not an outlet specialized in selling gaucha [from the state of Rio Grande do Sul], mineira [from the state of Minas Gerais], or baiana [from the state of Bahia] food. I am a Brazilian shop. I mean, I have a Brazilian shop.”- Brazilian shop owner, 2009 (Brightwell 2012, 64).

While much of the literature reviewed for this study analyzes the solidarity amongst migrants in ethnic food businesses, a significant body of literature complicates the formation of community by questioning how hybridity, cultural change, and multiculturalism are enacted in these spaces (Frost 2011, Highmore 2015, Sen 2012, Padolsky 2005, Caldwell 2002, Fouts 2011, Brightwell 2012, Turgeon & Pastinelli 2002, Tuomainen 2009, Duru 2009, Basu 2002, Mankekar 2010). These studies construct the immigrant-owned food business as a contested space and a contact zone, where cultures come into contact and culinary and national identity are both reproduced and reinvented in a diasporic context. As Ray & Srinivas (2012) write, “we argue that food—the provisioning, preparation, presentation, and consumption of it—can help us to unearth subtle changes in the social and cultural world that connect the local to the global” (8). The importance of this theme lies in its analysis of the ways in which food and food spaces are not isolated or fixed phenomena, but rather are dynamic, politically-influenced arenas that are both subject to the host context as well as to the desires and dreams of the immigrant owners and community (Ray 2011, Sen 2012, Highmore 2015). The dynamic and political nature of these spaces is evident through examples provided in several of the studies in this body of literature. Fouts (2011) discusses how the racial tensions towards Latinx communities and their growing presence in New Orleans manifested in a local ban on taco trucks. Brightwell (2012) highlights the targeting of Brazilian food stores with police raids as a means of surveying and controlling the undocumented Brazilian population in the United Kingdom, which results in a drop in Brazilian customers to the stores. Frost (2011) analyzes the relationship between racial discrimination towards London’s Bengali migrants and the regeneration of Brick Lane’s Bengali restaurants, where the Bengali restaurateurs worked to counter discrimination through rebranding their restaurants to the public. These are just some examples that illustrate how food is

inextricable from the societal context and how food businesses must negotiate the landscape in which they are situated, employing a range of strategies to protect their identities, appeal to customers, and survive in new and often challenging environments.

Several scholars explore how ethnic food businesses contribute to the formation of a diasporic culinary identity that is separate from the identity in the homeland, where various regions, languages, cultures, and even countries are amalgamated and redefined in the host context (Fouts 2011, Tuomainen 2009, Brightwell 2012, Duru 2009, Rabikowska 2010, Caldwell 2002, Turgeon & Pastinelli 2002). In spite of the cultural heterogeneity of the migrants and the countries from which they originate, the diasporic food businesses tend towards diminishing regional contrasts as part of the process of redrawing the boundaries of a new national cuisine and identity in the host country (Tuomainen 2009, Duru 2009, Fouts 2011). Fouts (2011) states: “the further away from the mother country, the more crystallized the culinary identity” (4). This concept of the post-migration crystallization of culinary identity is echoed by Duru (2009), who argues that Congolese and Nigerian migrants in Belgium built a group identity around shared food spaces as a means of sustaining their foodways away from home (59). Several authors analyze why this amalgamation and crystallizing of culinary identity occurs, arguing that the desire for it--or necessity of it--comes from a heightened awareness of the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the diaspora (Duru 2009, Turgeon & Pastinelli 2002, Rabikowska 2010, Tuomainen 2009). Here, dishes once linked with specific regions, tribes, or cultures become symbols of the entire country as a means of unifying those now living in the diaspora and developing a stronger frontier against the outside—a concept that Caldwell (2002) refers to as “privileg[ing] ethnic, religious, cultural, and ideological homogeneity over diversity” (297). The dichotomy between us/them and here/there becomes more pronounced in the ethnic restaurant,

and the marginalized or minority position of the migrant necessitates a realigning of identities and affiliations within groups as a means of protection, solidarity, and maintenance of cultural practices (Duru 2009, Turgeon & Pastinelli 2002). The event of migration and the challenge of surviving within a new and sometimes exclusionary host context thus can result in the calcifying of culinary and national identities as a means of sustaining foodways and rebuilding a sense of belonging and identity amongst the migrants themselves.

While the concept of the crystallized culinary identity offers insight into the way that group identity is redefined after migration, several scholars further complicate this notion in writing of the globalized palate in ethnic food businesses (Fouts 2011, Duru 2009, Clair et al. 2011, Ray 2011, Tuomainen 2009, Brightwell 2012, Highmore 2015). These authors explore how migrant foodways are also influenced by their host countries, which Fouts (2011) describes as the “dualities” of food and food spaces in migrant contexts (2). Tuomainen (2009) and Duru (2009) explore how the transformation of foodways is inevitable due to a variety of factors such as changing ethnic identity, length of stay in the host country, socioeconomic status, and the host food culture (Tuomainen 2009, 526). While previously authors have focused on the loss of certain ingredients and tastes from back home, Tuomainen (2009) demonstrates how expensive ingredients in Ghana became more affordable and available in London, allowing for Ghanaian individuals and restaurants to make different dishes that were previously restricted to the elite (542). Tuomainen’s (2009) study disrupts the notion that migrants seek out ethnic grocery stores and restaurants only in search of the very ingredients and dishes that they consumed back home by demonstrating how accessibility, availability, and affordability influence food choices and tastes. Duru (2009) notes that even dishes that are considered authentic may have been greatly altered by the influence of the host country, exposing the dynamic and porous nature of migrant

foodways (55). Tuomainen (2009) and Highmore (2015) lend further nuance to the concept of the globalized palate by highlighting how the identities and foods of migrants were already hybrid even before migration. In his discussion of South Asian restaurants in London, Highmore (2015) argues that any celebration of hybridity or bricolage between South Asian and British dishes, such as the invention of chicken tikka masala, is built on a false idea of authenticity through the “assumed and fantasized purities of South Asian and British cuisine” (187). Tuomainen (2009) further clarifies this notion in writing of the ways in which colonial pasts and postcolonialism shape the identities and foodways of migrants before, during, and after migration (542). As Inglis & Gimlin (2009) state, “Globalizing forces can upset, reconfigure, and re-establish such connections between food and feelings of belonging” (as cited in Brightwell 2012, 55). Here, Brightwell (2012) analyzes how diasporic food cultures are reconstructed under the conditions of globalizing forces, such as the customization of “Brazilian Style” pizza in London that exhibit the incorporation of global food trends into culinary culture and palates of diasporic Brazilians (66). These authors clarify the concept of authenticity by arguing that migrant cultures and food practices are already hybrid entities that have endured and been shaped by the influence of colonization, globalization, and migration, rather than existing apart from these events.

Many studies analyze how immigrant-owned restaurants and grocery stores market authenticity and nostalgia as a strategy to gain customers (Highmore 2015, Frost 2011, Basu 2002, Brightwell 2012, Mankekar 2010, Chan 2002), exploring the idea of ‘authenticity’ in the ethnic food business. Basu (2002) describes how Indian restaurants in the United Kingdom would cater to the demands of the ethnic community and attempt to attract Indian customers through employing strategies such as creating “a sense of the homeland” through the décor, music, and slogans of the restaurants (154). The marketing of authenticity in ethnic food

businesses can be understood as a kind of performance of identity, which allows migrants to develop solidarity and belonging: as Brightwell (2012) describes of Brazilian restaurants in London,

“Thus Brazilian food was a medium through which performances of being Brazilian in London could be staged; through which Brazilian identity could be articulated to others; but also through which inclusions into, and exclusions from, Brazilian identity in London were forged” (74).

Here, the author makes clear the disputed nature of identity and authenticity in migrant contexts, which at once allows migrants to perform their identity in the host country while also reifying understandings of who does and does not belong. Mankekar (2010) further develops the concept of nostalgia in ethnic food businesses by arguing that nostalgia can evoke complex and sometimes negative emotions in migrants, rather than simply a romantic longing for the past. “Indeed, in some cases nostalgia entailed contradictory emotions, sometimes in the same individual who would, at once, feel a sense of loss regarding certain elements of the past, and a sense of relief of having left that past behind,” she writes (Mankekar 2010, 85), noting how nostalgia is based on a selective remembering and forgetting of the past. The marketing of nostalgia and authenticity is thus a strategy that evokes hybrid and complex feelings for migrants attending the shops and restaurants, at once providing a sense of familiarity while also inscribing the experience with a sense of loss, relief, or ambivalence in regards to the past. While the marketing of authenticity in these instances is geared towards people of the same ethnic origin, Basu (2002) and Chan (2002) explore how some immigrant-owned restaurants switched to employing this strategy towards the mainstream, where dishes were adapted to appeal to a wider or more mainstream palate. Basu (2002) offers the example of Indian restaurateurs in the United Kingdom who initially served only vegetarian food with no alcohol, thereby catering largely to the Indian community, where others cross these “religious and national boundaries important in

South Asia” as a means of appealing to a wider audience, while still selling an ‘authentic’ Indian experience (167). These studies provide insight into the ways in which immigrant-owned food businesses must negotiate their food practices and incorporate new strategies based on the host country, offering a nostalgia that at once can evoke complex emotions in migrants and appeal to the mainstream consumer.

The question of who the immigrant-owned food business is in service for is examined from various angles in the literature, with several scholars arguing that the ethnic grocery store and restaurant exists as an intercultural zone (Highmore 2015, Frost 2011, Sen 2012, Mankekar 2010, Turgeon & Pastinelli 2002, Brightwell 2012). Tuomainen (2009) purports that certain ethnic food stores and restaurants belong to an ethnic niche that is not intended for a white majority, as evidenced through features such as food products and menus lacking names or explanations of dishes in English (535). A significant body of literature bridges the ethnic/mainstream consumption divide by exploring how these transnational food spaces are “multiply inhabited” by many groups (Brightwell 2012, 64). These scholars ask us to understand the ethnic food business not as a space that is separate and isolated, but rather as a contact zone where ethnic and mainstream worlds intersect. As Sen (2012) aptly states:

“In these discussions one finds a common refrain that ethnic culinary spaces in urban America cannot be read as part of a landscape that is segregated, circumscribed, and distinct from mainstream. Rather these are sites of hybridity and cultural contact where multiple worlds, networks, processes, and agents interact with each other. These spaces, indeed, are contemporary multicultural public spaces” (196).

Writing in the context of the multicultural city of San Francisco, Sen’s (2012) concept of the ethnic food business as a contact zone containing multiple spatialities and intersections shows that migrant food and foodways do not exist in isolation, nor can these spaces be understood entirely for the consumption of the mainstream. Rather, it is the complex interactions within and

between groups, cultures, and larger forces that define these food spaces. Highmore (2015) provides a clear example of how British Indian restaurants navigate multiple inhabitances:

“Many restaurants alter during the day, serving a different clientele at seven in the evening to the one they might serve at eleven at night. Similarly, diasporic restaurants, which might (financially) address a white clientele, are also valuable meeting places for all sorts of celebrations (weddings, birthdays, and so on) and meetings... The idea of the Indian restaurant as an unofficial public sphere for a diasporic community is a crucial feature of its social presence, and this has to be seen alongside its address to white culture through its cuisine and décor” (184).

In his study, Highmore (2015) makes the case for a multiply inhabited restaurant space that can serve its social and connective functions for the ethnic community while simultaneously appealing to and serving the mainstream consumer. He suggests that we must see ethnic restaurants as sites of “diasporic popular culture” that encompass the messy entanglements of multiculturalism, intercultural exchange, and the tensions that exist within this negotiation. On the other hand, Turgeon & Pastinelli (2002)’s study of Quebec City’s ethnic restaurants shows how race and class-based differences in the ethnic food business manifest through the layout of the restaurant. While the front and interior spaces catered to a mainstream white clientele, the back spaces were occupied by racialized ethnic workers, thus controlling the contact between the two groups and indicating the unevenness of the intercultural exchange. Sen (2012) provides the example of the Indian chaat cafes in the United States such as the famous Vik’s in Berkeley. He demonstrates how the two distinct realms of the immigrant community and the urban public come into contact with one another, resulting in a constantly changing space (215). These studies give insight into how intercultural food transactions occur in the ethnic food business, lending some importance to Bhabha (1994)’s idea of the in-between spaces of hybridization that create new cultural forms and draw on wider culinary circuits beyond a specific ethnocultural niche. Sen (2012) describes this space as “a meeting point for immigrants, natives, men, women,

bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, the powerful, and the powerless” in which immigrants can find solidarity and perform ethnicity, outsiders can be instructed in the world of Indianness, and the boundaries between these continue to transform (216). The literature thus examines how these food spaces act as intercultural spaces where global cultures are negotiated, reproduced, redefined, and consumed, existing both under the influence of local and global forces whilst also using strategies to define their own culinary and specific identities.

The literature in this theme analyzes the complexities of hybrid food spaces and their impacts on migrant identities and communities. Several authors unveil the ways in which immigrant-owned food businesses come into contact with conflict, discrimination, and challenges in the host country, where ethnic food and its consumption are tied to larger issues in multicultural contexts (Brightwell 2012, Highmore 2015, Turgeon & Pastinelli 2002, Frost 2011, Padolsky 2005, Mankekar 2010). Brightwell (2012) and Turgeon & Pastinelli (2002) demonstrate how ethnic food exists in a field in which power relations and domination are at play, where the culinary cultures of migrant food businesses can become a selling point for mainstream consumers who are looking to eat beyond their cultural boundaries. However, this transaction largely overlooks the “unequal terms of interchange” between host and migrant countries in the past and present (Brightwell 2012, 56). As mentioned in the opening of this section, some of the literature attempts to demonstrate how immigrant-owned food businesses must navigate a landscape of racism and discrimination, even within multicultural contexts that seem to support the growth of ethnic foodscapes. Frost (2011) and Highmore (2015) examine the unequal landscape of multiculturalism and its everyday racism as evidenced by the reception of South Asian ‘curry’ restaurants by the British mainstream, where the restaurants became sites of

ethnic and racial tensions and antagonism. As Highmore (2015) writes of one restaurateur's experience of racial conflict in the restaurant space,

“Thus one restaurateur remembers: “There was a fight every night. We used to make curry and rice for 3/6d [about 17 pence]—they used to eat and then they'd run! We used to catch them! At that time we were young, 18–25-year-olds. They used to throw rice and curry at each other” (183).

Padolsky (2005) and Mankekar (2010) further construct the contested space of the restaurant by highlighting the inter-ethnic conflicts that also arise in these spaces, where the interactions within ethnic groups who are consuming and purchasing the food also encompass feelings of fear or exploitation and thus impact the experience of these spaces. These authors thus construct the ethnic food business as a contested space in which complex interactions within and between ethnic groups, mainstream consumers, and the host context shape how the space is experienced.

In the context of the tensions and conflict that arise within and around immigrant-owned food businesses, several scholars explore the role of agency and resilience among the migrants who run and attend these food spaces (Brightwell 2012, Frost 2011, Highmore 2015, Sabar & Posner 2013, Williams-Forson 2014). While it is largely understood that migrants' food habits are one of the final cultural traits to change after migration (Charon-Cardona 2004, Tuomainen 2009), the literature on hybridity and cultural change has demonstrated how these food practices themselves are dynamic and subject to multiple influences through time. With this in mind, scholars such as Brightwell (2012) and Williams-Forson (2014) examine how migrants' daily practices of food provision and consumption allow them to redefine and communicate their own diasporic identities in the host context (Brightwell 2012, 54). These studies address the question of migrant agency in exploring how migrants play a role in both consuming and disseminating their culinary cultures and how they make choices and develop strategies to establish spaces of solidarity, maintain their foodways, and navigate the host context on a daily basis. For instance,

Frost (2011) analyzes how Bengali restaurateurs and consumers choose their own relationship to both the mainstream and the homeland, viewed specifically through the changing names of Brick Lane's South Asian restaurants:

“From the 1960s onwards, Brick Lane restaurant names have gradually abandoned their colonial connections; the most recent “indicate not only a certain authenticity of expression, but also the self-confidence of having arrived” (Sardar 2008: 345). Sardar's authenticity is one which acknowledges a certain political integrity, where migrants can shape, even determine, the terms of their engagement with “British society” (and the British economy). It looks as unlike the hackneyed repetition of chicken tikka masala crowd-pleasers as it does a strict adherence to Bengali culinary tradition” (239).

This passage suggests a new relationship to authenticity that acknowledges the role of globalizing influences while also paying homage to the migrants' own conception of themselves, allowing the migrants to define their relationship to their culinary traditions and identities.

Scholars such as Highmore (2015) and Sabar & Posner (2013) show how, in spite of societal constraints and challenges, migrants and their foodways both survive and thrive, demonstrating their resilience in the face of many challenges. Sabar & Posner (2013) describe the many strategies employed by asylum-seekers in Israel to construct their own culinary safe havens as a means of safety and familiarity in an insecure environment, investing time and money into their foodways to regain a sense of stability (207). The power of finding agency in constructing and participating in these food spaces can be understood clearly through the words of one Sudanese asylum-seeker in Israel who opened a Sudanese restaurant in Tel Aviv, creating a space for others in similar positions to reconstruct their lives and identities in a way that made sense for them. In his words,

“Me and my friends needed a place to feel good...to think about home...to eat food like we did back then, before the war...before we had to run away...eating *asida* with *shata* makes me happy...this is why I opened my little restaurant...look at it now, it is big, it is good business” (J.I., Tel Aviv, June 2009, as quoted in Sabar & Posner 2013, 198).

Conclusions

This literature review has aimed to address the key questions, what does the current literature tell us about the role of ethnic food businesses in immigrant communities? What are the social and connective functions of these food spaces for immigrants? These questions arose from the significant body of literature connecting food, belonging, and identity in migrant communities worldwide, as well as the potential for immigrant food spaces to fulfill greater roles than simply the provision and consumption of food. The importance of exploring the role of the immigrant-owned food business stems from the prevalence of social isolation, exclusion, and settlement-related challenges that many migrants experience in their host country, and the development of community, social support, networking, and a greater sense of belonging through interacting with ethnic restaurants and grocery stores.

In response to these key questions, I identified four major themes in the literature: 1) identity and belonging, 2) community and social ties, 3) information exchange and networks, and 4) hybridity and cultural change.

One of the common themes that the literature demonstrates is that immigrant-owned food businesses can foster a sense of cultural familiarity, can both strengthen and redefine diasporic identity, and can contribute to a sense of belonging, safety, and solidarity for migrants. The literature indicates that the immigrant-owned food business becomes a familiar physical and symbolic space in which migrants can discover a sense of collective belonging and feelings of safety and solidarity amongst other ethnic minorities or migrants. The literature offers a key insight into how migrant food spaces can act as a coping mechanism or culinary safe haven, which becomes especially important for migrants experiencing exclusion or precarious status. The review also clarifies the concept of diasporic identity by demonstrating how national identity

can be crystallized and redefined through the ethnic grocery store or restaurant. These findings demonstrate how access to familiar and culturally appropriate foods through immigrant-owned food businesses affects the sense of belonging and cultural identification of migrants.

Another key theme in the literature constructs the immigrant-owned food business as an unofficial public hub for the diasporic community to gather. Here, the literature highlights the impact of social rituals around food and explores the development of fictive kinship that can become especially important in an insecure or unfamiliar surrounding. The literature offers the concept of the hybrid third space of the immigrant-owned food business, exploring how new kinds of social and cultural identities and relationships develop under the specific diasporic context of the host country. Importantly, the review demonstrates that complex emotions and situations can arise through the community surrounding immigrant-owned food businesses, such as the prevalence of patriarchal community surveillance which complicates the notion of the culinary safe haven.

A third key theme that arose from the literature highlights the immigrant-owned food business as a multipurpose hub in which unofficial services, networks, and even employment contribute to the settlement process of migrants in various contexts. The literature indicates that immigrant-owned restaurants and grocery stores act as informational hubs which provide services such as connections to housing and employment within the ethnic minority community. The review shows how immigrant-owned food businesses offer a more accessible form of settlement service provision, where migrants are able to seek support and satisfy their needs in a familiar and comfortable environment. The literature also indicates the role of immigrant-owned food businesses as an alternative avenue to employment for migrants experiencing labour-market discrimination.

Finally, a common theme in the literature demonstrates the role of hybridity and cultural change within immigrant-owned food businesses, complicating how identity and belonging are reproduced in ethnic food spaces by placing them in the context of greater societal forces. The literature analyzes the influences of globalization, colonization, migration, multiculturalism, intercultural interactions, and changing political landscapes on the migrants and the food businesses to demonstrate how immigrant-owned food businesses become intercultural contact zones that are inhabited by multiple identities and communities. The review shows how these food spaces are arenas of change that are subject to the host context and through which a new diasporic food culture emerges. In highlighting the presence of racism and conflict in the host countries, the literature offers the concept of migrant agency, demonstrating how migrants redefine their diasporic identities and develop strategies to establish spaces of community, sustain their foodways, and navigate the realities of the host country.

These themes serve to develop a deeper understanding of the many functions and multiple inhabitations of immigrant-owned food businesses. The literature identifies the role of immigrant-owned food businesses in mitigating some of the social isolation and settlement-related challenges experienced by migrants while also exposing the complexities of these spaces and the multifaceted emotions and experiences that they can evoke. In doing so, this literature review has contributed to the development of a more nuanced understanding of immigrant-owned food businesses and the many roles they play in diasporic communities.

There are some limitations associated with this literature review that will be mentioned here. The topics of food, immigration, and belonging are complex and interdisciplinary in nature, and thus the list of sources retrieved for this study is not exhaustive. While limits of time and

geographical scope were instated due to constraints in time and resources, a number of studies have not been included in this review and some may have been overlooked.

In addition to constructing a fuller picture of immigrant-owned food businesses, this literature review identified several gaps in the current research that should be addressed in the future. Further research is required to analyze the challenges of accessibility and affordability of food from ethnic grocers and restaurants, linking the immigrant-owned food business to the context of food insecurity, including their role in cultural food insecurity of migrants. Very few studies explored the experiences, practices, and perceptions of second-generation immigrants in immigrant-owned food businesses; this could be an area of future study that could contribute to the literature on belonging and acculturation between generations. While a small number of studies mentioned the role of gender in how migrants use and experience ethnic grocery stores and restaurants, further research should address how intersections of gender as well as class, race, and immigration status impact the experience and role of these food businesses amongst immigrants. While a portion of this paper examined the connective function of ethnic food businesses in relation to providing employment and opportunity for migrants, future research should critically analyze the reasons why many immigrants turn to food businesses as a means of employment, assessing the role of economic necessity, labour-market discrimination, and constrained choice. Further research on the function of the immigrant-owned food business as a site of information exchange and in developing social capital would also contribute to the limited literature on information and networks included in this literature review. This research should connect with literature on the experiences of migrants in accessing formal settlement services and should critically analyze how migrants develop strategies, both formal and informal, to address their social and settlement-related needs. While scholars such as Plaza (2014) and Sen

(2012) have begun to use sociospatial analysis and spatial theory as a framework for understanding the immigrant-owned restaurant and grocer, future research could benefit from using spatial theory as a method of analyzing how place is produced materially and symbolically and how the sociospatial boundaries of the food business itself may facilitate connection, interaction, and transformation among migrants. While a large portion of the literature highlights the significance and necessity of ‘gathering places’ for migrants, future research should explicitly link the context of social isolation and exclusion to the role of the ethnic food business in building community, networks, and addressing isolation. Finally, this paper began to address the role of agency and resilience in immigrant-owned food business and has attempted to demonstrate how migrant agency is developed through running and participating in their own food spaces within the landscape of exclusion, isolation, or political instability that many migrants experience. Future research should continue to develop this area, placing migrants and their choices, constraints, and dreams at the center of the discussion. By examining the complex formation of belonging, community, and networks in immigrant-owned food businesses, future research can build upon current understandings of how individuals seek support and attempt to satisfy their needs after migration, exploring the agency that migrants may find within their own lived spaces as well as the complexity of interactions that arise.

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