Food: A Sensuous Matter of the Everyday
A sensorial exploration of material and bounded natures of mundane food practices

Elin Linder
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Abstract

This thesis examines everyday food practices such as sensed by seven households in the city of Stockholm, Sweden. By sensuously exploring the acts of acquiring, preparing, cooking, eating, and wasting food, I analyze how food is a matter of olfactory, gustatory, auditory, tactile, and visual significance, as much as *matter* per se. More specifically, I address relational and bounded aspects of food, looking at how ambient surroundings, presences of material and immaterial factors, sensuously influence everyday experiences of food. Intrigued by the at once inter-, extra-, and re-corporeal matters of food, I analytically position myself alongside Latour, Ingold, Douglas, and Bennett. In entertaining their theoretical lines of thoughts, using them as analytical springboards, this thesis explores socio-material dimensions of food practices, as well as corporeal dynamics of human-material encounters. Methodologically carried out by means of sensuous ethnography, following Pink’s notion of *participatory practice*, I have during ten weeks of fieldwork—in people’s homes and in their frequented grocery stores—engaged my senses to experientially sense the world of food, such as lived by them. In our conjoint sensorial exploration, taken-for-granted mundane understandings of what food constitutes and what constitutes it, have emerged as domestically diverse, bounded to sensuous perceptions derivative of the past, carried out in the presents, and cor(po)related to the future. By surveying situated meanings of what is smelled when savored, tasted when flavored, seen when looked, and felt when touched, simultaneously as accounting for nonhuman matters salient to courses of actions, the thesis remarks context-sensorial-imbued figurations of everyday food.

Keywords: Food, sensuous anthropology, boundaries, the everyday, materials, actor-network theory
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Glossary

CUISINE
established style, method and way of cooking such as characteristically performed by a people, country or region; preparation of food involving a series of defining characteristics—ranging from ingredients to techniques used—such as conceptually shaped by a particular social context (Crowther 2013: 276; English Oxford Living Dictionaries 2018).

FOOD
materials of sustenance; commonly consisting of fat, protein, carbohydrate, minerals, vitamins and alike, which, when consumed, furnish energy and sustain vital processes of growth and repair in the body of an organism (Merriam-Webster 2018a).

FOODSTUFF
raw material with food value; the term refers to substances having the potential of becoming food (i.e. gaining food quality) if processed/prepared as such (Merriam-Webster 2018b).

FOOD INDUSTRY
like industries of sorts, this term refers to standardized mass production/consumption of food. It is similar to the subsequent term, food system, in that it pertains to processes of production and distribution; it differs (from it) in its emphasis on processes of commodification.

FOOD SYSTEM
the nature by which food is produced and distributed, for example in a society, but also globally and locally. It can in sum be defined as “the path that food travels from field to fork” (Aneliac Organics Learning Center 2013); more specifically, as a system encompassing “all the stages of keeping us fed: growing, harvesting, packing, processing, transforming, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food” (CFS 2016).

RECIPE
a detailed outline of the making of a certain dish. According to Crowther (2013: 137), the word derives “from receipt, a listing of received and agreed-upon list of information, just as the recipe represents an agreed-upon list of ingredients, methods, and an outcome—a dish”.

STAPLE FOOD
foods making up a dominant portion of day-to-day meals, such as various grains, potato, rice, pasta and alike (this is defined since it makes a difference in how people perceive and categorize meals, for instance in terms of complete/incomplete, proper/snack.

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Acknowledgments

Like this thesis engages specificity to account for certain agencies present in everyday food practices, so must I, as the author of it, give specific accounts of people making it (this thesis) possible: to sensuously explore and practically experience; to methodologically pursue and theoretically entertain; to pull off and write. I am equally grateful to all partaking players in the realization of this piece, albeit in different ways.

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1. Introduction


Donna Haraway (2016: 35) catalogues a sample of matters mattering in the becoming of other matters. I am intrigued by it, curious to explore the entangled contingency it suggests. She writes about it from a theoretical standpoint, considering how human and nonhuman beings of the world in historic, present, and future terms are kin who become in relation to one another. She does so in making a case for re-thinking human practices as inextricably intertwined with those of other beings, so to reframe ideas about the Anthropocene to that of the Chthulucene1. Me, I am less concerned with whether the epoch of our times should be labeled the one or the other. At least herein. Nevertheless, from an analytical standpoint I find her writing, the open-ended yet bounded nature of it, fruitful to remark in addressing the relational nature of my subject matter, namely that of how ambient surroundings2—the presence of material and immaterial dynamics within one’s living environment—sensuously influence mundane experiences of food.

This thesis considers the thoughts, knowledges, relations, and stories mattering in thinking, knowing, relating, and telling thoughts, knowledges, relations, and stories about food; the everyday practices thereof. Based on ten weeks of fieldwork taking place among seven middle-class households in the city and outskirts of Stockholm, I herein sensuously explore the matters mattering in the everyday food habits of the research participants. That is, using my own senses, such as smell and touch, I have through my fieldwork experience delved into ways in which the research participants use theirs; in experiencing food, in undertaking certain food related practices, and in understanding the relational matters between their doings, their sensations and their ambient surroundings. Thus, through simultaneous exploration and practice of, alongside

1 The former, she argues, rid the story of its nonhuman histories, whereas the latter reknits the order to also include biotic and abiotic powers as co-producers of makings of worlds (Haraway 2016: 13, 31, 49, 55; see also Sayre 2012 for discussion about the Anthropocene).

2 The term ambient surrounding is herein used to denote the all-over potent presences of material and immaterial matters, ranging from store signage to aromas, that the research participants (deliberately and subconsciously) relate to in their everyday food practices. While the combined use of ambient and surrounding may appear redundant, I have deliberately used them together to highlight the sensuously encompassed nature of our living environment (I think herein of ambient as an adjective and surrounding as a noun).
discussion on, for instance, the savors and textures of the food consumed—bought, prepared, eaten, and wasted—by the practitioners, I have come to understand food as it is lived in the everyday life by the research participants. More about exactly how this was done, as well as why I decided to do sensuous ethnography, is furthered in the background section of this thesis. Furthermore, specific implications of how food mundanely was sensed by the households are deliberated in the chapters.

That said, let’s consider some aspects speaking to my overall interest in conducting a sensuous study about food. Food is a matter of cooking and eating, consumption and waste, nutrition and body. It is a matter of practices, performances, and boundary-makings; of social and biological dynamics; of wide-ranging sociocultural customs and domestically confined cosmologies; of everyday life and the well-being thereof. Sensuously imbued, food is an olfactory, gustatory, auditory, tactile, and visual matter of acquisition and preparation, as well as of ingestion and digestion. As such, food surfaces at once as an extra-, inter-, and re-corporeal matter (Bennett 2007; Sutton 2010). Conversely, food is arguably not only a matter of human-related actions and engagements, it is also matter per se: matter with which human lifeworlds relationally and processually, temporally and spatially, interact and take form (cf. Appadurai 1986; Bennett 2010; Haraway 2016: Ingold 2007; Ingold and Palsson 2013; Latour 2005; Tsing 2015). Hence, tangential to the introductory quote by Haraway, that about what matters in the mattering of other matters, this thesis ponders the subject matter of food, at once in terms of it being, for instance, context-bound, and in terms of it being material (i.e. made up by physical substances, on the one hand, and being materially situated, such as in homes, on the other).

Considering the above, the edible character of food—what it constitutes and what constitutes it—is a complex matter. Yet it is a constant, an everyday activity which all humans worldwide routinely engage. For the sake of sustenance? Indeed. However, ultimately practiced so to survive, food nonetheless arguably represents other-than-survival dimensions: culturally charged³, socially informed⁴, and biologically imperative⁵, the overall subject of food is collectively defined yet individually consumed. Importantly, societal folk (food) taxonomies permeate domestic food repertoires; it does so habitually, yet differently. Nevertheless, or maybe precisely due to this mundanity—which is produced through the not-too-much-thought-

³ That is, understandings of food are value-laden and context-specific.
⁴ As far as this thesis is concerned, this notion builds on a particular application of Bruno Latour’s (2005) actor-network theory (ANT), which is furthered in the background section.
⁵ Nourishment is paramount to survive; however, how this is physically, mentally, and imperatively felt, experienced, and practiced by the research participants, varies.
about routine occurrences of the everyday—food has for any given practitioner “a taken-for-granted quality” (Crowther 2013: xxx). A quality, which to judge from the rigid legacy of food studies within anthropology (cf. Mintz and Du Bois 2002), is equally exciting for anthropologists, as it is ordinary for the people with whom we engage.

It is in the kaleidoscopic commonplace quality of food that also my research interest lies. Not surprisingly maybe, as it is, which this thesis will unfold, within the explicitly practiced and tacitly known dimensions of everyday domestic food practices that the essence of certain material and immaterial aspects (inherent to context-specific conventions) materialize as they are habituated. In other words, my emphasis on the mundane opens up analytical space to consider the intricate ways in which food knowledges—how people comprehend and conceptualize food—contextually interrelate socio-material dimensions and multisensorial experiences thereof. Furthermore, I noticed early on in my fieldwork that such an analytical positioning offers a window onto exploring the elusive presence of conceptual boundaries prevalent in everyday food practices—such as those underpinning why some considers the stalk of broccoli waste material while others consider it foodstuff (i.e. having the potential of becoming food)—and the role they play in our day-to-day life.

By the token of various practices being experienced every day, it is also in these occurrences that the routinely engaged materializes just as such: as habits which one regularly does without spending too much time thinking about how, let alone, why. This aspect of the everyday was not least made evident, to both me and the research participants of this study, as the researching nature of my presence undeniably shed other lights on the ordinary quality of their routinized behaviors: having me participating during their grocery shopping, their unpacking of groceries at home, their preparation, cooking, and eating of food, their settings and cleanings of table etcetera, impinged a solicited setting where words were put onto what they did, why they did so, and how they thought around it. And this is the reason for why I throughout this thesis refer to my, as well as to our conjoint undertakings, as exploration, for what we really did, was to explore the ways in which people undertake certain practices simply as accustomed to the m. While the specifics of these habituated occurrences may differ—between contexts and individuals alike—the fact that they to a large extent, insofar they are habitually practiced, appear as ordinary for each given practitioner, I argue, epitomizes the essence of them.

To exemplify the above, and introduce a materially conditioned and sensuously (in)formed everyday practice of food as explored during fieldwork, let’s turn the research participant of
Vega, a forty-four-year-old female footwear technician living in Solna, and her understanding of cucumber ends; as bitter, thereby as distinct from the rest of the produce, for which reason they are habitually cut away. Now the plural designation of cucumber ends in the prior sentence refers not only to them being two on each cucumber, given the stick-like shape of it, but also to the fact that Vega after having experienced one, to her taste, bitter cucumber end, ever since that encounter reckon cucumber ends as an entity, bitter in kind, and thereby, inedible. When I told her that I eat the ends, and that I never really have sensed a bitter taste, she thought for a bit before replying that she actually is quite sensitive to bitter savors in general. Her taste buds, she commented, reacts immediately on the taste of bitter flavors.

Contemplating this event, three points may be revisited, so to briefly frame the analytical agenda of this thesis. First, Vega’s reference to taste buds is intriguing from the actor-network theoretical perspective that this thesis is concerned with since it, according to me, underlines the entangled nature by which actions come about (i.e. in this case how receptors on the tongue interact with the molecular substance of the cucumber, which in turn channels gustatory experience through cranial nerves, which are instantly registered in the mind and sensory memory of Vega, and which ultimately makes her interact with cucumbers a certain way). Courses of actions, Bruno Latour (2005: 45) maintains, are other-taken, mediated through an array of entities, for which reason central questions to any socio-material analysis, such as that of mine, must consider who/what else is acting, and how, when we act (ibid. 43, 60). Hence my interest in Vega’s reference to taste buds (as one else thing acting when she acts).
Second, tangential to this is that of how sensorial remembrances of the past engage courses of action in the present (Pink 2015: 3). While Vega upon our conversation about her interaction with the cucumber explained that she of course could try the ends of each purchased cucumber, and then decide whether to eat or throw them away, she also noted that the habit of cutting them away had become so ordinary to her that she carried it out without deliberately contemplating why. It is only in my probing about the cut-away ends that she reviews the cause behind her action, and that she deliberates this routine practice of hers. Consequently, it could be maintained that her habitual action of readily cutting away the ends of (all) cucumbers is subconsciously—sentiently—informed by past perceptions of one bitter cucumber end.

Ideas about interactive dimensions of the senses brings us to a third and last point, namely that of how bodily sensations produce emplaced—that is, spatially and temporally anchored—forms of knowing (Pink 2015: 28, 53, 59), which, in turn, yield certain practices. Now this is especially intriguing to me in terms of boundary-makings; their conceptual basis, entailments, and motivational force. It is for instance interesting to think about the cucumber as an entity on the one hand, and as made up by different elements, which for different people is differently conceptualized, and thereby, experienced, practiced, and interacted with differently, on the other. I, for example, have the habit of peeling cucumbers, as I find the texture of the outer part coarse. Meanwhile, Vega leaves that part intact, cutting away the ends, which to her mind constitute the outer part. Hence, our categorical distinctions between inside and outside revolve around different elements of the produce. Yet, both distinctions are matters of sensuously imbued boundary dynamics (revolved around the sense of texture for me and taste for her).

While prior literature will be regarded in the subsequent section, I find it relevant to already at this point introduce David Sutton (2010). This as the comprehensive review of his underlines how sensory processes inherently permeate ideas about food; categorizations and applications thereof. Whether concerned with the acquisition (e.g. Halkier et al. 2007; Miller 1998; Miller 2017; Yim et al. 2013), preparation (e.g. Halkier 2015; Pérez 2011; Short 2006), eating (e.g. Bennett 2007; Stoller 1989), or wasting (e.g. Coles and Hallett 2013; Evans 2014) of food, our conceptualizations of it is sensuously experienced, practiced, and reinforced. Aspects such as texture, savor, light, and sound influence how food is contextually understood. They do so interactively, for which reason it was paramount for me in entering this project to, as encouraged by Sutton (2010: 220), sharpen those contextually produced multisensory apparatuses so to grasp the complexity with which “culturally shaped sensory properties and sensory experiences of food are invested with meaning, emotion, memory, and value”.


Aim and Research Questions

The introduction will now be wrapped up by noting the purpose of the thesis and by stating my research questions. The purpose of this thesis is to open up spaces for continuous conversation (Ingold 2014: 391) about the social life of food as sensuously corresponding to material matters of everyday encounters. In acknowledging multisensorial engagements with the physical world as fundament for situated ways of knowing and doing (Ingold 2007; Pink 2015), the thesis aims to bring to the table a contextual comprehension of how nonhuman actors interconnect (Latour 2005) mundane food practices. Shortened, it can be said that the core of this research—the essence of it being pursued—is to enable exploration of the *particular* in the myriad ways in which food practices and knowledges—as embodied and emplaced—play out in the everyday life of people. Following this, my central research questions are:

1. How is food sensuously understood, practiced, and interacted with in everyday life?
2. How do ambient surroundings—the presence of material and immaterial dynamics—sensuously influence experiences as well as conceptualizations of food?
3. What can be said about the ways in which food activities—acquisition, preparation, cooking, eating, and wasting—are multisensorial matters of mundanity?

As a last note, I would like to remark that while the thesis arguably builds on material from a limited range of households, general ideas from the particular may be put forth as material from the different households are relationally analyzed; to one another, as well as to a body of literature concerned with sensuous everyday knowledge (Pink 2015), boundary-makings (Douglas 2002), properties and affordances of materials (Ingold 2007), actor-networks (Latour 2005), physical and physiological dimensions of edible matters (Bennett 2007), and embodied sociocultural constructions of food (Crowther 2013; Sutton 2010).

Organization of Thesis

The first chapter of this thesis introduces food as a sensuous subject matter. Following an ethnographic example meant to bring multisensorial understandings of ambient surroundings—implications thereof—to the fore, the Background chapter details the research participants with whom fieldwork was conducted, the method by which it was carried out, and the analytical framework by which our conjoint experiences herein are explored. Included in this chapter is
also notes on ethics as well as on previous studies (what they have focused on and how my study adds to this body of work).

The two following chapters constitute the main part of the thesis. They are each divided into two subsections, and it is here that sensuous matters—material and immaterial alike—of everyday food practices are explored. The first theoretically delineates the relative socio-material-sensorial presence of boundaries and builds up my usage of actor-network theory (ANT hereafter). The second furthers these reasonings in considering corporealities, such as related to for instance material properties of specific foods. This section tunes in on sensorial perceptions of body-mind dichotomies as well as on specific attempts to gain control over intestines and hormones, such as by eating according to dietary guidelines of particular books. Subsection three and four, being part of the chapter centering on bounded significances of everyday food practices, accentuates food as a lived practice; one inherently informed and guided by the material context in which it advances.

The thesis concludes with a summary reconnecting central ideas and explorations herein considered. It does so by interknitting key points and principal theories, correlating these to the research questions and to ethnographic examples. It ends with reflections upon my analysis.

Figure 3. Collage of organizations of sorts.
2. Background

*Sensuous Fieldwork: Notes on Participants, Methods, Sites, and Ethics*

Grocery shopping with Linnea means tagging along on an inspirational journey; one starting already at the kitchen counter as she, simultaneously as she browses the fridge, freezer, and pantry to see what they already have, also browses a recipe folder with vegetarian dishes she got at work (she works as a seller of groceries and supplies to restaurants). She thinks loudly to herself what to get from the store—what to eat in the near future—while moving around in the kitchen. Every once in a while, she stops to jot down groceries on her phone (figure 5).

Albeit she compiled a list, Linnea calmly strolls through the aisles of *Stora Coop* in Västberga. She goes forth, enters an aisle, goes back to where she previously been, then forth again, as she browses all sections of the store in contemplating what to get. She is on a sensational journey, keen to let olfactory and gustatory effects materialize through the groceries she interacts with. Letting herself be swept away by what she sees, allowing for these impressions to determine what foods to have, she tells me that she enjoys these moments of grocery shopping. She passes by butternut pumpkins in her search for yellow beets, takes one up and exclaims, “oh, this I will make, butternut soup”. Exited by her fortuitous finding of butternut—something which she later explains that she has been craving ever since she saw them making butternut soup on TV a couple of weeks back—she forgets about the beets, which are located right above the shelf with the pumpkins (figure 6). I remind her, whereupon she gives away a laughter of recognition. I interpret it as this is not the first time preplanned purchases come secondhand to those of more spontaneous character.

![Figure 4](image_url)

*Figure 4*
Taking in all impressions, using all of her senses, Linnea invites me to experience how joyful she finds grocery shopping. To grocery shop with her entails, for me, adoption of her sensuous presence. She is there, in the moment, taking in the range of impressions of what is visually and tactically, at times olfactory and gustatory, presented to her. Based on what she senses—the flavors she tastes, the aromas she smells, and the textures she feels when interacting with the store environment—she imagines what dishes and/or combinations to make and eat. What goes into the cart when shopping, then, depends largely on her being (i.e. presence) in the store.

This stands in stark contrast to shopping with her partner Anders, who tracks through the store, allowing for the store layout—made up by specifically arranged sets of fixtures, counters, and fridges—to guide his way around all the products he mundanely acquires. Being the one who stands for the everyday making of meals, from breakfast to dinner, Anders embodies efficiency, considering everyday food as something that needs to be quick and easy—in its acquisition, preparation, and ingestion—so not to stagger the smooth flow of everyday combined working-family life. Hence, what ends up in the cart when shopping with Anders is derivative of his embodiment of past experiences playing out in the future\(^6\) (whether this future plays out the next day or next week, his presence in the store stems from him envisioning their everyday life at home, and from him expecting mundane life to proceed as previously proceeded)\(^7\).

\(^6\)It should be remarked here that Anders makes a sharp distinction between *everyday* food and *leisure* food, where the former is premised by practical purposes and the latter by joyful engagements (q.v. 59-60).

\(^7\)Future is here thought about as “a zone of expectations” (Pink 2015: 192). That is, rather than seeing the “future as predicted” or as “cerebral imaginings,” I herein uphold it as “embodied and sensory ways of perceiving what is not known” (ibid.). In other words, past, present, and future is in this thesis thought to be intimately related through sensorial perceptions.
Spatial and temporal differences in *being* (as in presences) predominates, I suggest, the different shopping experiences exemplified above. While Linnea assumes an in-store-presence that sensationally transitions her elsewhere, allowing for her to imagining what will be nice to eat using her sensory memory and imagination; Anders occupies an at-home-presence when in the store. He does so, I maintain, in that he senses their daily (food) routines as he moves around the store. Hence, unlike those nice-to-eat trajectories underpinning the sensations of Linnea, his engagements in the store is preoccupied with what-is-good-to-have-at-home. However distinct in terms of different spaces in time being occupied, their individual understandings of ambient surroundings—in this case, of the store, their home, and mundane life dynamics—nevertheless experientially influence the interactions taking place, and they do so in sensory ways.

Seven Households

This thesis builds on exploration of an array of food activities such as practiced by seven households located in Stockholm, Sweden. Out of the seven households, two are female single-households (Vega and Zoey), two are composed of engaged/married female-male couples (Jonna and Emil, Bahar and Keivan), and three consist of engaged/married female-male couples with one or two children (Linnea and Anders, Julia and Darryl, Anna and Carl). The age range of the households, the children excluded, is between mid-twenties to mid-forties, with the majority being in their mid-thirties. Some work as managers, some as creatives, and others with administrative tasks. All consider themselves middle-class, and most have higher education. One household dwell in a terraced house (Linnea and Anders), while all others in apartments; some owned and others rented. One household is located in the city center, and all others in outskirts of the city, reaching from Solna to Hägersten. Most households are of Swedish nationality, however, one is French-German (Zoey), and one is Irani (Bahar and Keivan). Meanwhile, two of the households of Swedish nationality consist of people of Dutch and Indonesian heritage (Linnea and Anders, Julia and Darryl). Moreover, Zoey, who has a dual French-German nationality, also has Spanish heritage.8

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8 Heritage is in this thesis commented only insofar participants themselves make points out of it (such as in terms of personal preference for a particular staple or a grocery store). While my interest in mundane food practices indeed is context-laden, I am much more concerned with sensuous-material natures of such matters, than with natures of national and/or ethnic cuisines (for such works, see e.g. Achaya 1998; Appadurai 1988; Caldwell 2002; Crowther 2013; Gvion 2009; Helstosky 2003; Panayi 2008; Roberts 2002; Rozin 1983; Sutton 2001).
More detailed information about each participant will be provided as they figure in the examples in the chapters. This will be done primarily so to provide a sense of their being⁹ (i.e. to furnish a background-context to particular food practices). In other words, analytical points regarding demographics will be made only insofar such relationally situate specific doings of the research participants as relevant for purpose of this thesis (to explore food practices as sensuously interconnected with the ambient surrounding in which they advance). Important to mention here, is that while both sites (homes and stores) and research participants were predetermined as I entered the fieldwork period, they were not selected as such. That is, I did not deliberately seek out a particular range of households, going about their food consumption in any particular way, in order to conduct a study in line with any specific pre-understanding of what food meant for them. Quite the opposite. Based on a notion that food matters to some extent are mundane matters, played out in myriad humdrum ways, and my interest to understand these from the particular standpoint of them being sensuously habituated in space and time, I posted an announcement about my upcoming fieldwork about food consumption in Stockholm on Facebook. I then went about conducting a study with the seven households whom invited me to join them in their usual food routines.

Given the small scale of this study, claims to representativeness and generalizability is limited. Even so, it is fair to say that situating my study among dwellers in Stockholm, which, although coincidentally, all happen to be middle-class people living in better-off residential areas of the city, nevertheless frames the scope of the mundane herein considered. The outcome of the study had been entirely different, had the fieldwork—intentionally or unintentionally—been about the mundane inherent to for example food insecurity; in Sweden or elsewhere in the world. More about the implication of conducting a study in an urban-industrial society, such as that inherent to the city of Stockholm, will in the chapters be furthered with regards to cross-cultural perspectives. I will for instance consider the vast array of sustenance strategies existing in the world as a means to defamiliarize some familiarities encountered during fieldwork.

In addressing the households participating in this study, the nature by which they were sampled, it can be noted that all but one feature friends and acquaintances. In other words, six out of seven households encompass people with which I had an established relationship already at the outset of the study¹⁰. Given the limited timeframe of the fieldwork period, alongside my wish

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⁹ The term *being* denotes presences and existences of both human and nonhuman kinds; when used in relation to *becoming*, it marks a relational, sometimes processual, notion of existences and occurrences (Ingold 2007: 14).

¹⁰ The household which I did not know prior to the study was recruited by a friend.
to participate in all parts of food consumption—from acquisition to waste via preparation and eating—I deemed it beneficial to do research with people whom readily invited me into their homes, much due to them knowing me; hence my posting on Facebook. I simply figured that there was not sufficient time for me to establish good enough rapport with random people to enable rich enough accounts of their food practices. I also found it easier to use my own network than to approach people randomly. I initially tried to approach people in store as they were grocery shopping, but as I did, it somehow just felt strange to ask if I could follow them home; estranged even in my role as a researching anthropologist.

To wrap up, I would like to acknowledge that I understand that my go-about technique might have affected my fieldwork in some ways, and I will in due course, as they appear to be of essence, voice any such circumstantial factors in the thesis. However, as of now, let me deliberate three expedient factors of doing fieldwork mainly with people I know. Firstly, along the lines of Tim Ingold (2014: 390-91), I approach the participatory practice of ethnographic encounters as a pursuit meant to open up the space for continuous conversations about situated ways of being in the world (see discussion by Ingold 2014: 390-91). Following this, I cherish the actual doing of ethnography (Borneman and Hammoudi 2009: 38), and this without being preoccupied with taking it somewhere (Ingold 2014: 385); the essence is of both ontological and epistemological kind, in that I set out to correspondingly learn, teach, and narrate the world while practicing ways of existing in it (rather than to describe the world by analyzing gathered data). Secondly, while my presence during fieldwork by no means was preoccupied with collecting material so to enable write-up of a thesis, it was undeniably influenced by an interest to explore specific sensuous and material aspects of mundane food practices, so to facilitate a (thesis) writing furthering our understanding of the significance of their presence. Thus, with an equally explicit pursuit to 1) emphasize certain dimensions of food mundanities, and to 2) do so conjointly with the research participant, I found it helpful to engage pre-existing rapports.

Last but not least, I would have been expected to establish rapport—to make friends with the research participants—had I conducted fieldwork elsewhere, in a context less familiar to me (see Davies 2008: 119-20 for notes on doing fieldwork in familiar/unfamiliar contexts). All of the above taken into consideration then, I found it advantageous to explore everyday food practices with people from my own network.
Methodological Approach and Fieldwork Sites

Sarah Pink (2015: 37-8) suggests that, how people “learn through, know and move in material and sensory environments,” fundamentally influence workings of their everyday realities. Myself having engaged sensory apprentice in studying the subject matter of food at homes and in stores, appreciate its accuracy, and I will in this section explain why. I will do so in declaring what I have done; why, where, and what it entailed. Included in these deliberations on my methodological approach are also details about my usage of audio, camera, and video footage. Definitions of important concepts are also present.

In general terms, my interest has been that of the large scope of food and food practices among seven urban households. Although I initially, the first week of the fieldwork period, intended to focus on in-store procurement of groceries, following people as they shopped, I noticed already during my first research occasion, where I was invited home to the participants, that the way people shop food, cannot be separated from the way they holistically practice it. It became during this research event clear to me that aspects such as writings of grocery lists and impulse purchases, spatiotemporal settings of grocery shopping and bodily orientations within them, unpackings of groceries and preparations of food, followed sensuously imbued ideas about 1) what food is and how it is supposed to be acquired, prepared and eaten, 2) why it is eaten/wasted, and 3) under what circumstances the ordinary is upheld and the deviant occurs. Furthermore, organizations of kitchens, for example where and why to store what—food, appliances, cookbooks—were intricately related both to how food was understood generally, and domestic food habits particularly. Food, it appeared, was intricately, situationally, and processually part of the overall lives of the participants. And so, my research emphasis changed, from initially being concerned only with the procurement of food, to the overall practices of it.

Now, I will in the next paragraph argue my choice to conduct a sensuous study—following Pink’s (2015) notion of how attention to the senses really is accentuation of how people attune to ambiances in learning and knowing—but first, let’s define my usage of ‘practice’11. This is a term that situates doings within the ordinary of ambient surroundings, for which reason I am opt to use it, and in turn, account for how I make use of it. In his book about the everyday life of domestic food consumption and waste in U.K., David Evans (2014: 17) writes that the

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11 Beware that I for the purpose of this thesis keep it simple. I had given the concept much more (theoretical) space, had this thesis concerned, for instance, the unequal playfield inherent to transnational food system affairs.
‘practice turn’ has invited consumption studies to “focus on the dynamics of the things that people do and at their most basic levels”. Keeping it to its most basic terms, he, in drawing on Andreas Reckwitz’s (2002)\textsuperscript{12} exposition of ‘practice theory’ in cultural theory, equals \textit{practices} with \textit{routinized behaviors}. He does so by claiming that actions characterized by routine enactments—that is, by their void of conscious deliberation of the spatial and temporal “established set of understandings, procedures, and engagements” governing them—really are matters of everyday life dynamics (Evans 2014: 17). Individuals, he says, are thereby “not autonomous architects of their own actions” but “carriers of practice” dynamically engaged with, and in, the socio-material nexus of other agents (ibid.). In its material-sensuous emphasis on everyday activities, this thesis aligns with this view. Henceforth, my usage of the combined term \textit{food practice} may be read as referring to those actions habitually enacted through the dynamics inherent to the socio-material world of food\textsuperscript{13}.

Against that backdrop—that is, against the notion of practice as routinized behaviors subconsciously governed by, and undertaken through, the socio-material nexus inherent to everyday life dynamics (Evans 2014: 17)—it can be stated that this thesis methodologically embraces what Pink (2015: 95) calls \textit{participatory practice}. This differs, as the argument goes, from participant observation in that it foregrounds sensorial aspects of knowing and learning, doing and being. That is, it puts forth bodily sensations, the experiential socio-material nature by which they advance, as key to how people come to know and practice their surroundings (ibid. 59). Thus, in relation to the more general lens of participant observation, participatory practice writ large sensuous experience as central to being in general, and to practice in particular. Hence, similar insofar that both set out to learn by doing, the latter differs from the former in its emphasis on \textit{sensory apprenticeship}: Employing the method bounds the researcher to at the outset explicitly engage herself sensuously in the practices she is interested in exploring, so to aid simultaneous learning about activities and environments, and how one sensuously learns in, about, of, and, through them (ibid. 105). In short, as an approach to ethnographic pursuits, participatory practice commits to account for tacitly tangibly \textit{felt} levels of experience—if yet in interventional terms.

\textsuperscript{12} He surveys classic works on social practice theory (e.g. Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault), and writes about how they differ from culturalist theories of mentalism, textualism, and intersubjectivism “in their localization of the social and in their conceptualization of the body, mind, things, knowledge, discourse, structure/process and the agent” (Reckwitz 2002: 243).

\textsuperscript{13} Other writers also use the term \textit{food practice}, and since some (e.g. Slocum 2007, 2008) do so in line with social practice theoretical frameworks (see Reckwitz 2002), I have here defined how I use the term in this thesis (so to clarify my emphasis on the routine-material rather than the socio-structural nature of food practices).
I write interventional in the previous sentence to highlight the reflexive reality of what such an approach entail. I have for instance during my sensory apprenticeship got a sense of what the research participants experience in their everyday food life. While these sensations indeed have underpinned our co-produced exploration of various sensuous encounters, I did not by means of my own sensory reactions experience theirs (as they did/do). This reflexive actuality of sensory studies is something that Pink pinpoints in writing that,

A sensory ethnography calls for a form of reflexivity through which the ethnographer engages with how his or her own sensory experiences are produced through research encounters and how these might assist her or him in understanding those of others. (Pink 2015: 58)

According to her (2015: 53, 101), and as approached by me, engaging sensory scholarship is thusly not only a matter of attending to sensuous dimensions of people’s life—so to offer windows onto the significance of olfactory, gustatory, auditory, tactile, and visual effects in the occurrence of context-bound practices—but also a toolbox for the researcher to emphatically account for such embodied and emplaced ways of knowing by analytically contextualize them as relational to the physiological and cognitive undertakings of the researcher (ibid. 142-3).

Before I move on, detailing my sensuous undertakings, I feel like some definitions are in place. Following Pink (2015: 26-7), I herein use the term embodied to denote how bodies represent interactive sources—sites—of knowledge. Hence, when I refer to embodied ways of knowing, it is indicative of the body-mind-integration inherent to sensorial experiences. Taking it one step further, accenting body-mind-environment relations of occurrences, I use the term emplaced to denote “how we are part of the everyday environment in which we live, how we perceive these environments and how we contribute to their constitution” (ibid. 118). Both concepts are in this thesis employed to bring to the fore “questions of experience by accounting for the relationship between bodies, minds, and the materiality and sensoriality of the environment” (ibid. 28).

This thesis builds, in most basic terms, on me partaking in the overall practicing of food by the seven households: I have participated as they have planned, acquired, unpacked, and stored groceries; prepared, cooked, and eaten food; set tables and cleaned them off; made next-day lunchboxes, re-made leftovers, and ridded fridges. The frequency of my presence in each household ranges from one to five times: five households were visited three times; the household of Bahar and Keivan was due to travels and illness only visited once, and the household of Linnéa and Anders was visited five times. Each event has lasted from four to
seven hours, and has, in addition to engaged practice, also involved conversations about 1) general and specific understandings and practices of food, 2) material properties and layouts of kitchens and stores, and 3) sensory categories and sensuous experiences of ambient surroundings. They have, too, encompassed browsing of cookbooks alongside explorations of cabinets, fridges, and freezers and more. The subject matters of conceptualizations, categorizations, and organizations have been essential to our dialogues and explorations.

The homes of the research participants and the grocery stores frequented by them comprise the fieldsites of this study. Kitchens constitute the primary site in the homes for this fieldwork, as this was the area where most food related practices took place (the dining area was for instance only in one out of the seven homes located in a room separated from the kitchen, and meals were in this household eaten in the living room). As far as grocery stores are concerned, they are limited to those where the households did their shopping. While the bulk of food commonly was acquired at the larger grocery chains of Sweden, such as Coop, ICA, Lidl and Hemköp, smaller local stores were occasionally visited to get particular groceries, such as fresh herbs.

Apart from the obvious of conducting a sensuous study about food—i.e. the tastes, textures, smells, visions, and sounds inherent to practices of it—I understand sensuous scholarship as a route to experiencing the simultaneous meaning-making of places and practices of everyday life, and the world-making meanings that they constitute (Pink 2015: 22, 170). By framing my study in sensuous terms, I thusly believe to have paved way for getting a sense of the world of food as sensed by the research participants. Furthermore, while I uphold the senses as interconnected—that is, I see experience as an amalgamate of sensory sensations rather than as
constituted by the inputs of separate modalities (Newell and Shams 2007: 1415)—it is nevertheless herein productive to analytically speak in terms of sensory categories. The reason for this is twofold, revolved on the one hand around emic understandings, and on the other, around the fact that I have engaged myself sensuously during fieldwork, and thereby used my own “sensory reactions and categories” as points of reference (Pink 2015: 99). Importantly, all of us partaking in this study categorically speak in terms of smell, taste, touch, vision, and audio. Hence, insofar the participants articulate sensory categories in terms of their presence, meanings, values, and effects (ibid. 81), I analytically do so too. However, as our conjoint explorations also include notions about how the overall sense of a grocery store, or a cooking event, influence the practices taking place, the analysis obviously reflects multisensory dimensions of everyday life as well.

I have audio recorded all events in their totality (amounting to roughly eighty hours of material) as well as taken about 1000 photos (as a way of engaging visual note taking). Halfway into the fieldwork, after having completed Pink’s (2015) book on sensuous ethnography, I also started filming, for instance the routes in grocery stores and the steam rising from casseroles. This has been done so to enable easy return to the fieldwork—the sensible encounters experienced in it—such as to facilitate the analytical process and to recollect sensorial engagements. It has for instance been used as a way to survey “people’s relationships to their environments” (ibid. 132). Importantly, recording devices have been productive in allowing me to at once practically engage myself and record the engagement of others. While my photographic endeavors most certainly ought to be seen as intervening in kind, as I have documented things that the participants never themselves have photographed, for which reason it triggered intriguing conversations; my use of audio recorder went by pretty much unnoticed, and so did my instances of filming (maybe due to them being more continuous, less interruptive, in kind).

On that note, it should be remarked that I have explored other-than-textual notetaking techniques; I have limited my written notes to things that could neither be captured by auditory or visual devices, such as particular thoughts or reflections, commonly meant to remind me of something. However, there is no need to be alarmed about this seeming lack of written notes: I had the habit of throughout the fieldwork continuously work with the material the day after each research occasion; events during which I have transcribed happenings, jotted down

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14 The analytical objective had differed, had my study been situated in a context where the research participants spoke about their experience differently (e.g. Stoller 1989, 1997).
analytical and practical essences, and made mind maps (both general and thematic). As part of this processual working with the material—i.e. listening to the recordings, labelling the pictures, watching the videos—I have also researched and read relevant literature. Because most research occasions have taken place during afternoons and evenings, I have had the forenoons to do so. Furthermore, along the lines of Pink (2015: 143), I think about ethnographic research as an interplay between fieldwork experience and analysis; researcher and research participants. Thus, in my approach to the fieldwork as conjoint, emergent, and processual in kind, it has been hugely important for me to schedule time to read, write, and think about what I have experienced while engaged in the fieldwork process. This has also been of interest (for me) to enable a platform where the research participants are included in the analytical and theoretical processes herein considered.

Though it feels given to me that a range of material, social, invisible, and tangible elements influence how everyday practices of food are understood and performed, now that I have sensuously immersed myself in the food practices of others, I could in beforehand never imagine the extent of its implications. Attending to the tacit in the explicit—using my sensorial engagement so to understand those of others—has for instance encouraged me to make an analytical point of boundaries as distinctively reinforced by the senses. Partaking as an anthropologist, but also as a fellow human with my own categorically distinct food practices, I have noted that I have done things as done by the research participants, but which I myself never would do (as my boundaries are drawn elsewhere). I was for instance asked to taste soup from the same spoon as one research participant, which I did, although I have a strong sense of cutlery being contaminated if entered another person’s mouth\(^{15}\). Similarly, I got a hand of rice stuck up in my nose, onto which one research participant had breathed to the intensify the savor of it. At first, this felt rather strange to me, unhygienic even, but as I smelled the aroma and I felt the saliva starting to be produced in my mouth (as an instant effect of this sensorial experience), I asked of her to do it again.

In such moments during fieldwork, I realized not only the humbling effect participatory practice had on me and my preconceptions of food, but also how “the sharing of certain embodied experience” (Pink 2015: 78) indeed brings to the fore new levels of awareness. Moreover, many

\(^{15}\) Douglas’ (2002: 42) contemplation of salvia pollution and conditions of purity relates to my experience. She writes that if the lips of a cook touch the food being prepared, it runs the risk of becoming impure. Such was the case for me, but not for Zoey, and while I think that the distinction between pure and impure is interesting \textit{per se}, I find our different understandings of what, when, and how food is perceived as polluted as more intriguing.
such moments have brought about intriguing dialogues about the taken-for-granted quality of how we, ourselves, interact with food, and how such mundane practices are intervened, as other people enter the setting with their equally taken-for-granted ideas.

**Ethical Considerations**

Bearing in mind that I approach the ethnographic encounter as one fundamentally *conjoint* in kind—that is, one carried out together with the research participants—it is safe to say that the nature of my research from the very beginning was overt. Being open about one’s research, carrying it out in a plainly apparent manner, is key to conduct research aligned with ethical codes of conduct (Davies 2008: 54), and I have throughout the research process, within all research encounters, been explicit about my research interests: I have, from beginning to end, been completely transparent with the participants regarding my analytically driven curiosity about their doings, so not to jeopardize ethical dimensions. In inviting me to participate in their acts of acquiring, unpacking, preparing, cooking, repacking, and wasting food, they were all, for instance, introduced to my interest in exploring 1) the material properties of the context in which their food consumption is advanced, 2) human-food-environment correlations from an ANT perspective, 3) the significance of multisensorial dimensions in producing and reproducing their mundane food habits, and last but not least, in 4) boundary-makings and conceptualizations inherent to their food practices.

Insofar informed consent is concerned, I was meticulous in regularly assuring their voluntary participation in the study (cf. Davies 2008: 56). Moreover, since I had the habit of recording all encounters—using audio, photography, and video footage—I also had the habit of continuously asking for their permission in using such methods. Hence, I never presumed that I by default could record our encounters, simply because I could the previous time, but rather ensured to ask for permission at the beginning of each research occurrence. I occasionally also during research events asked for specific permissions to document certain things, such as inside fridges, pantries, and cabinets. Conducting fieldwork in domestic spaces, I felt, came with huge responsibility in terms of being sensitive to the presence of elusive boundaries, such as those of private and public. In other words, being invited as a participant in the everyday life in homes, not necessarily meant being invited to move freely within that space. At least it did not for me, and especially not in terms of documentation, as I sensed a bounded difference between my fleeting presence in that space, and my perpetual documentation of it. That is, I sensed that to open cabinets, fridges, and freezers in looking for kitchen appliances, ingredients, or unpacking
groceries, framed my doings in a completely different manner than me taking photos of such things. Perhaps as the former related to my participatory practice, and the latter, to the researching nature of my presence. Either or, although I never took such photos unless we conversed about their content, it felt imperative to have permission to document certain aspects of their homes, and our doings in it. That said, many of the participants regularly guided me through their kitchen upon such requests, which felt good for several reasons. One, I did not run the risk of crossing boundaries as I was guided on the research participants’ terms. Two, them taking the lead provided insights to organizational thoughts, for example, on the storage of various foods and appliances. Three, it created platforms for conversing about specific subject matters, such as the presence of various conceptualizations and categorizations.

Predominantly using my recordings as an alternative to written fieldnotes, I have made certain that I have the permission to use photos as presentation material herein. Furthermore, all names have been changed to ensure anonymity of the participants, and to enable my usage of the information without running the risk of it causing discomfort for them (Davies 2008: 59).

While I feel confident not to have overstepped any ethical codes of conduct insofar the research participants per se are concerned, ethical objections may be linked to my photographing and filming, maybe even audio recording, in stores. These places are not considered public, wherefore permission is required (Davies 2008: 65). I have however only asked permission to, for example, take photos in stores if I have revisited them for complementary purposes, and not as I have been there with the research participants. This since I have regarded their shopping practices my subject of research (i.e. not the store per se, but their engagement with and activities in it). In other words, because my presence as a researcher in these instances has been intimately linked to our conjoint being in grocery stores as consumers, I did not feel obligated to ask permission of others, such as of store management or other consumers. Importantly, then, I have limited my recordings, as well as my analysis of it, to the acts and sayings of the research participants, so not to violate, for instance, the privacy of other consumers. Consequently, as the ethical code of conduct, the way I read it, boils down to whether covert research has been engaged (ibid.), I must say that my research, given my precautions, was carried out in an (overt) ethical manner.
Theorizing Food: Previous Research and Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

Much has been written about food within anthropology. There are for instance myriad writings on cultural specificities of foods (e.g. Paxon 2013), cultural foodways (e.g. Coles and Hallet 2013; Domingos et al. 2014; Farquhar 2006; Miele and Murdock 2003; Seremetakis 1993), and food histories and food heritages (e.g. Freedman et al. 2014; Freidberg 2009; Grasseni 2011). There are also works specifically concerned with the influence of lifestyle magazines on food practices (Halkier 2015) alongside the interrelation between culinary practices, social organization, and human bonding (e.g. Burridge and Barker 2009; Charles and Kerr 1988; DeVault 1991; Fine 1996; Klein and Watson 2016; Murcott 1993; Short 2006).

Furthermore, a variety of studies tune in on consumption. Where some highlight ritualistic and devotional factors of shopping practices (Miller 1998), others accentuate national constructions of food consumers (Haliker et al. 2007). Whereas some explore routinized behaviors of ordinary consumption (Gronow and Warde 2001), others survey cultural organization of food as related to packaging (Hawkins 2013), and hedonic shopping motivation effects in grocery stores (Yim et al. 2013). Additionally, an assortment of works emphasizes the subject matter of food as related to the senses and the body (e.g. Lahne 2016; Lupton 1996; Pérez 2011; Soukup and Dvoráková 2016; Stoller 1989, 1997; Sutton 2010; van Ede 2009). Needless to say, anthropology of food is a substantial subfield, and its body of work unfolds material, social, cultural, epistemological, and ontological prominences (cf. Mintz and Du Bois 2002).

Looking through the vast literature available within the anthropology of food, I came across two particularly interesting works, namely those of David Evans (2014) and Gillian Crowther (2013)—both of which eloquently exhaust ideas about what food is, how it is domestically produced, understood and practiced, and how it relates to processes of everyday life. While the former concisely covers entangled aspects of home consumption, material culture, bounded dimensions of food, and everyday life, the latter offers a much more detailed, yet incredibly diverse, guide to the multifold practices inherent to food; conceptualizations and affordances thereof. Insofar the work by Evans regard boundary-makings inherent to mundanities in general, and food practices in particular, it is especially relevant to consider in this literature review. Meanwhile, the reading by Crowther represents a corner-stone, as it offers extensive coverage on the subject matters of food and eating by ethnographically illustrating the “broad
societal processes" (Mintz and Du Bois 2002: 99) inherent to cultural, spatial, and temporal dimensions of such practices.

A third work in requirement of some specific attention herein is that of The Handbook of Food and Anthropology (Klein and Watson 2016). This work must be mentioned since it entails a comprehensive overview on the socio-material life of food, on the one hand, and on anthropological undertakings on the overall subject matter of food, on the other. One can for instance in this book read about notions challenging presumed agencies of food and eaters as well as about individual-collective dynamics in terms of global and local foodscapes (ibid. 153, 269; also see Crowther 2013 for discussion on food as a global-local matter).

I have for the purpose of this literature review also considered a work by Pink (2012) dealing with situating the practices and places inherent to everyday life. Since this thesis concerns everyday practices of food, and does so by upholding sensorial engagements as routes to experience, I find it appropriate to acknowledge a writing which, while building an argument around the concepts of practice and place as abstract and open, bounds processes of everyday life relationally to social, material, sensorial, temporal, and environmental dimensions.

While the range of works covered above indeed are significant, in that they cover different aspect by which food and food practices may be understood—in analytical, practical, contextual, and theoretical terms—none of them explicitly intersect the material life of humans with the social life materials. Hence, I see a gap in the body of work that my study will add to. I also consider my emphasis on mundanity alongside my sensorial methodological approach, to contribute to new ways of understanding food, particular practices and natures thereof.

**Framing my Analytical Positioning**

This section considers, to paraphrase Haraway (2016: 35), the theoretical thoughts and notions framing the analytical thoughts and notions of this thesis. It contemplates writings by Tim Ingold (2007), Mary Douglas (2002), Jane Bennett (2007), and Bruno Latour (2005).

Entering this research project, I knew that I had a particular interest in exploring how material qualities of food *per se* influence notions, experiences, and practices of food. One aspect of curiosity was to survey boundary-makings involved in various food activities, such as procurement and preparation, and how separations of edible/inedible, raw/cooked, breakfast/dinner materialize. Having my mind somewhat set on exploring lines of inquires
revolved around sensorial and conceptual dimensions of everyday food practices—of course with a flexible attitude towards dynamics of the fieldwork.\(^{16}\) I made, what I call, the scholarly choice of deliberately line up with some theories; undeniably at the expense of analytically positioning myself among others.

The scope and scale of my theoretical framing would differ considerably, had I been interested in scrutinizing structural inequities inherent to transnational infrastructures of particular foods (e.g. Barndt 2002; Holmes 2013), or considered the institutional nature of food chains (e.g. Belasco and Horowitz 2009). Moreover, featuring an interest in socio-material aspects, I could have looked at food and specific food systems through the prism of human-nonhuman relations in a capitalist context (e.g. Bestor 2001; Lien 2015; Tsing 2015), or critically contextualized ethical aspects of food consumption (e.g. Röcklinsberg and Sandin 2013). With my curiosity in corporeal dynamics of food, I could have chosen to emphasize biosocial factors following theories about humans as at once historical, biological, and social becomings (Ingold and Palsson 2013). Opt to explore how we as a species “think and act locally” (Moran 2006: 2), and how we as members of societies always consume food locally, independently of its origin or technique of production (Crowther 2013: xvii), my research could have centered either on local-global dynamics prevailing industrial and national cuisines (e.g. Inglis and Gimlin 2009), or on nation-states and health directives (e.g. Helstosky 2000). Intrigued by conceptualizations and boundaries, it could then have been analytically aligned with Anderson’s (2006) thoughts on imaginary communities and Bourdieu’s (1984) analysis on taste and social distinction.

Now, this thesis explores the world of materials—their properties and affordances (Ingold 2007)—and how it relates to the socio-material matter of everyday sensuous food practices. Hence, it positions itself within a body of work that bridges the social and the material on the one hand (Bennett 2007; Ingold 2007; Latour 2005), and that which traces boundary-imbued conventions of particular ways of practicing and experiencing on the other (Douglas 2002).

Following Ingold, his writing on the worth for socio-material studies to align theoretical considerations on “the materiality of objects” with sensible enquiries emphasising “the properties of materials” (2007: 1), this thesis surveys the matter of food both in terms of it being physical and experiential. Key to this exploration—to the argument put forth by Ingold in writing that “Whereas the physical world exists in and for itself, the environment is a world that

\(^{16}\) The fieldwork has been mutually guided by experiences of the research participants and analytical emphases.
continually unfolds in relation to the beings that make a living there” (ibid. 14, emphasis in original)—is to appreciate the difference between what is and what occurs. In other words, to pay attention to realities of being and becoming by simultaneously exploring constants and generative movements (ibid. 7). In my case then, this means attending at once to the material properties of matters having the quality of becoming food—i.e. to the substances and raw materials herein referred to as foodstuff—and to the affordances by which they in practice are transformed into food.

Using the processual and relational properties and affordances of materials as a backdrop, the thesis aligns with the classical work by Douglas (2002) to explore how boundaries come about and are reinforced as they are experientially practiced. In terms of my experiences during fieldwork, I find her notions about perceived distinctions and relative categories expedient to comment on the role of organizational patterns, both as related to “the symbolic realms of the domestic cosmology” (Evans 2014: 48), and to judging matter to be in or out of place (Douglas 2002). Boundary-makings are of paramount importance to ways of preparation, the utilities and kitchen appliances used, classificatory notions of what makes a proper meal, what is considered main versus side dish, as well as how to organize ingredients in kitchens, and groceries in store. Hence, analysis in terms of categorical thinking emerge imperative vis-à-vis sensuously imbued experiences and practices of food (such as related to what to eat at what time during the day, and which part of a cucumber to eat/discard). While Douglas zooms in on the subject matter of dirt as related to how “rituals of purity and impurity create unity of experience” in making an argument for context-bound “systematic ordering and classification of matter” (ibid. 3, 44), I use her overall organizational thinking as a springboard to contextualize experiences of food.

In upholding fluctuating affordances of food as important for my analysis, conceptualizations and separations (such as those hinted above) to some extent concerns contemplation of mutable qualities of food per se. Conversely, it is not only of analytical importance for this thesis to regard how people perceive their surroundings differently, and thereby, interact differently with the things constituting these surroundings and their ambiances; considering that many practices experienced during my fieldwork revolved around bodily reactions following the consumption of particular foods, it is also of interest to survey theorizations on how food itself mutates as it is eaten. Hence, along the lines of Jane Bennett (2007: 135), I herein approach food as a continually occurring corporeal matter which becomes as it is practiced and experienced by those consuming it. I do so in maintaining three claims of her. Firstly, that edible matters are more than “means to human action” (ibid. 133). Secondly, that such matters have potentiality
Thirdly, that for “the eaten to become ‘food’, it must be digestible to a formerly foreign body. Likewise, if the eater is to be nourished, it must accommodate itself to a formerly foreign body” (ibid. 134). Thus, following her attempt to by “an enhanced alertness to material agency” view food as more than “inert, brute matter” (ibid. 134), I herein uphold food and specific food practices as intimately related to physical and physiological—corporeal—experiences of it. While her writing is far more philosophical than I aim to be, I find it intriguing how she, laterally to Ingold’s quest for bringing “the flesh and blood of human bodies into corporeal contact with materials of other kinds” (2007: 3), remarks bodily effects of edible matters. Her writing for instance speaks to re-corporeal dynamics of food in contemplating how that which is consumed, through the equally mutable properties of its own material body and that of the human body, interdependently merge and reform (bodies). Human and nonhuman bodies, she theorizes, are actors and agencies becoming in response to each other, as “both exercise formative powers and also offer themselves as matter to be acted upon” (ibid. 134).

Considering that the terms actor and agency appeared above, it might serve my continuous writing well to briefly explain ANT, and to define some of its core concepts. ANT is a theoretical framework accounting for the specificity of associations by which actions come about (Latour 2005: 79). It regards human and nonhuman matters alike, and it challenges notions of actions as predominated by human intentionality by tracing the human-nonhuman networks through which frames of references are formed, and actions are imbued. The concepts of actant, actor, and agency are important in reckoning actions as mediated across a range of entities (ibid. 39). An actant is an entity capable to act and/or bring about action. An actor is “the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming toward it” (ibid. 46). An agency is something doing something (ibid. 52). Now, all these concepts are brought together by the technical term figuration (ibid. 53). This is a term at once used to pinpoint the fact that acts and processes form figures, and that the values of such figures are not mutually exclusive their existence (i.e. defining the figures, be they objects or subjects, humans or nonhumans, is not enough to define the role they play in any given formation or course of action (ibid. 39)). According to Latour, the term is vital “to grasp that there exist many more figures than anthropomorphous ones” (ibid. 53). Moreover, the term also plays part in distinguishing between actants, actors, and agencies, where actants are those things capable of playing active parts in

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17 The vocabulary of ANT includes the terms mediators and intermediaries (Latour 2005: 39) additionally to those of actant, actor, and agency. These two terms denote accounts of nonhuman matters in actions (i.e. insofar nonhuman matters are accounted for, they are denoted mediators, as their effects on other agents are made visible; if they are unaccounted for, they are denoted intermediaries, as their effect “remain silent” (ibid. 79)).
the outcome of occurrence, but which are yet to be given figuration. Meanwhile, actors and agencies are those things which by means of their figuration make a difference in modifying states of affairs (ibid. 71).

I understand that the above sounds like a theoretical abstraction of reality, but hopefully it will become clear as I exemplify it in relation to my fieldwork experiences. Of importance at this point is to recognize that I use socio-material theoretical frameworks, such as ANT, to consider movements of associations not to be blinded by their existences (Latour 2005: 4, 8; see also Ingold 2007: 7). My fieldwork has made me quite aware of the fact that nonhuman matters play active parts in everyday food practices, and thus, I make use of the above writings to explore how such matters influence courses of actions as people acquire, prepare, cook, eat, and waste food. That said, I do not care a whole lot about Latour’s quest for re-thinking the social within social theory. Rather than to engage in theoretical debates on the social as such, I am intrigued to in practical terms exemplify what is acting in addition to who is acting (i.e. to account for objects as well as for subjects in mundane food practices). For, insofar this thesis is concerned, food practices are social in that they are assembled in nature, both in terms of human and nonhuman associations (Latour 2005). However, they are also material in that their figurations encompass nonhuman actors and agencies alongside those of human ones (figures 9 and 10).

To conclude this section, I found it productive to combine the writings of Ingold (2007) and Latour (2005) as they consider (for the aim of this thesis) complementary aspects of socio-material dynamics; Ingold focuses on properties and affordances of materials, and Latour on the networked nature of actions. However different in their terminologies and emphases, both maintain the vitality of considering material matters in situated practices, for which reason they analytically add to contextual comprehensions of mundane food practices herein explored.

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18 I will not theorize the term social itself, nor implications of denoting something as such. However, it may be said that the social for Latour (2005) is a form of connection, not an attribute; its nature assembled, not contained.
3. Food Practices as (a) Sensuously Interacted Matter

This chapter entertains the theoretical thinking of Latour (2005) in regarding the actors and agencies, other than ourselves, active as we practice food. In thinking along the lines of Haraway, in terms of how it “matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories” (2016: 12), the chapter writ large the sensuously imbued socio-material worlds of food, such as practiced by the research participants and as afforded by material properties. It does so by exploring what we, in our everyday interaction with food, “see when we look, hear when we listen” (van Ede 2009: 64), smell when we sniff, savor when we taste, and feel when we touch.

Sensory Knowledge and Relative Practices

Bahar stands in front of me next to the stove in the L-shaped kitchen of their apartment in Hägersten. She has just put a couple of deciliters of green lentils into a large pot, and added just enough water to cover them, as she spells out the name of the dish we are about to make: “it is a d a s p o l o [Adas polo]. Okay. It is a very common Iranian name, so it’s made of lentils, the green one, and rice. It can be consumed like, as a vegetarian food, and also like with meat.” She goes on bringing out a large, maybe about 10kg, white textile bag of rice. It has something written on it in a clear blue print. Considering that Bahar has already introduced me to what they call their ‘Irani freezer’—this is, as the name implies, a freezer containing food which they brought from Iran, and it is located in the closet in their bedroom—I figure the text to be Persian and that it, the bag of rice that is, too, has been imported from Iran. Bahar says quietly, as if to herself, “I put this on nine,” as she turns on the hotplate for the lentils. She then grabs a green bowl and puts it on the counter. It is for rinsing the rice, she lets me know (figure 11). “I brought this from Iran,” she says, standing with the large bag of rice on the counter in front of her, without me having asked about its origin yet. Then she continues, still without me having asked anything, “Okay, I should tell you, every time that we go to Iran, we bring at least 20kg of rice”.

I repeat what she just said, then curiously inquiry if it is because they like Iranian rice. “Yes,” she responds, explaining, “It smells…it has a smell, it has taste...for us.” Putting her hands close together, folding them into the shape of a cup, Bahar scoops up a mountain of the yellowish rice from the large textile bag (figure 12). She breaths forcefully, yet gently, onto the rice before quickly sticking her hands right below my nose. “Wow,” I exclaim with a laughter. For a second struck by the for me unusual way of interacting with food, I am hit by the intense effect of Bahar’s action and I can sense my mouth watering.
Upon telling her about how I just loved how she breathed on the rice to bring out the sensation of it, she instantly says, before I have had a chance to finish my sentence, “You should do that! It is different!” Not certain whether she means that the experience of the rice, or the rice per se, is different, she says, with her calm warm voice, “Okay, let me show you something else”.

Another bag of rice appears, this one in thin see-through plastic, and through the transparent material, I can see that this rice has a deep golden color. The hue reminds me of saffron, however, once again olfactory invited to experience its gustatory effect, the thought of saffron disappears. The savor evokes the familiar taste of smoked food—to my mind, barbeque—and I sense the flavor on the tip of my tongue. I ask of her to repeat the action, readily accepting the previously unasked for invitation to her way of interacting with food, while inhaling the sensorial immensity of this traditional Irani smokey rice.

![Figure 11](left) Bahar rinsing rice, moving her fingers gently within the bowl, as to pave way for the water. She replaces the water until it is transparent.

![Figure 12](right) Textile bag of imported ‘Irani rice’.

This event arguably triggered at once curiosity about Bahar’s sensorial understanding of food and questions about my own, I wish to say, taboo-laden understanding of how food—and especially ingredients which are to be put back into the container from which they were taken—is best left untouched by others. What struck me as unhygienic—an act of pollution—was for Bahar habitually done, so to release the flavor of this particular kind of rice. Bahar later, as the food “prepared itself”\(^\text{19}\), invited me to partake in the sensation of yet other “traditional Irani flavors” by breathing into bags of bulk ingredients, such as tea (figure 13). And so, partaking

\(^{19}\) Once ingredients are put into pots and skillets, food cooks pretty much itself according to Bahar. Hence, she rarely, if at all, stirs it.
in these practices of her, I came not only to appreciate the sensorial ways in which she understands food, but also to embody the multisensorial effects of it. In the presence of humid air and various flavors, the culinary knowledge of Bahar was transmitted to me through sensorial interactions inclusive of nonhuman actors (Latour 2005).

I wish to here further a couple of points touched upon in the previous paragraphs, one having to do with the agencies and actors inherent to the figurations of events, another with boundaries, and a third with circumstantial cooking techniques.

We shall take it from the point where I was sensuously moved from an experience of discomfort to one of pleasure (through a movement of seeing to feeling). Recall how my instantaneous reaction to Bahar’s breathing on the rice was ‘unhygienic’, but that I equally instantaneously, as I was invited to her world of interacting with food, sensed it differently. I had before this event no idea that the vapor of breath could trigger the aroma of rice. Growing up, I have learnt to smell tomatoes to judge their flavor, been taught that intense scents of certain fruits and vegetables equals intense flavor; thus, I was not estranged to engage olfactory interaction with food so to activate gustatory stimuli. I was, however, until this occurrence estranged to breathing on food, and to this customary way of assessing the flavor of, for example, rice.

Drawing on Latour (2005), it can be argued that the agencies inherent to the group formation of rice, breath, vapor, and aroma were, although common to Bahar, uncommon to me. I was due to my lack of a sensuous frame of reference endowing form to the flavor of rice, foreign to

Figure 13 (left)
A bag of ‘Irani tea’ that I was invited to interact with after Bahar had breathed into it.

Figure 14 (right)
The dish Adas polo before all ingredients are stirred together.
its figuration. Moreover, I was initially rather preoccupied by visual impressions having me perceive the rice as polluted by Bahar’s action, than immersed by its effects. Meanwhile, through her multisensorial knowing of rice, Bahar could by means of breathing on it bring about an experiential encounter different from that of someone sensuously unfamiliar with its qualities. In other words, her understanding of the interactive material properties of rice and vapor made her treat these agencies as mediators—that is, as matters able to “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (ibid. 39)—and by doing so, making their influences felt to us (ibid. 57). Hence, her way of interacting with the rice animated a movement where I went from observing to embodying.

Connecting this to the writings of Ingold (2007) and Pink (2015), it may be said that I by practically engaging the sensuous perceptions such as embodied by Bahar and Keivan1, learnt to appreciate the material properties of rice and vapor such as understood by them. Furthermore, in conjointly with them, Bahar and Keivan that is, rehearsing and exploring “accounts of what makes us act” (Latour 2005: 55), I got through my participatory practice in this household not only a sense of the socio-material figuration by which, as in this case, rice unfolds to them, but de facto to sense it myself.

My sensational transferal from discomfort to pleasure closely interknits at once my sensuous being during fieldwork and relative aspects of, as in this case, pollution behavior. This since behaviors, as duly noted by Douglas (2002: 45), whether concerned with classifications of pollution or other, commonly—reactively—follow sensorial stimuli and preconceptualized cues. “In a chaos of shifting impressions,” Douglas remarks, “each of us constructs a stable world in which objects have recognisable shapes, are located in depth and have permanence”2 (ibid.). She continues by saying that perceiving corresponds building, which, in turn, corresponds previous building, and she remarks how experiences build up structures of assumptions that govern how we perceive and relate to future experiences. However pre-established and stable in kind, though, these pattern-making buildings are by no means absolute, but dynamically elastic, for which reason one may modify notions, the behaviors that follow, if

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1 I include Keivan here, even though he was not part of this specific occurrence, as he, at a later point when we talked about it, told me that this (i.e. breathing on it) is how one shops for rice in Iran. He explained that it is customary to grab a fist of rice, breath on it, sense its savor, and only thereafter decide whether to buy it or not.

2 Insofar objects are everyday and routine (i.e. regularly approached without too much thought) I agree with the idea about their permanence, such as put forth by Douglas (2002: 45).
exposed to a situation activating transformation (such as of the frames of reference giving form to actions)\textsuperscript{22}.

Such was the case for me when invited to interact with specific bulk ingredients as do Bahar and Keivan. In following Douglas (2002: 44), her systematic-ordering-theory and notion that
dirt-is-relative-to-classification-matters, my initial reaction to Bahar’s breathing on the rice
could categorically be said to revolve around my distinct understanding of ‘breath’ and ‘food’
as incompatible; an understanding perhaps derivative of my growing up in a societal context
where the “idea of dirt is dominated by the knowledge of pathogenic organisms” (ibid.). To my
mind, breath in general, another person’s in particular, did not belong on ingredients. It was not
that her breath was dirty \textit{per se} to me, but her breath on food, did not sit well with my notions
of customary food practices and purity; i.e. with the “set of ordered relations” (ibid.)
derunning my understandings. Rather, her action contravened them, for which reason her
breath appeared as matter out of place to me. It did so until I practically sensed—physically
experienced—the point of her action. Hence, a matter relative in kind, the action of breathing
on food first struck me as discordant, thereafter, as I learnt how to account for the “intermittent
existences” of nonhuman agencies inherent to this particular action (Latour 2005: 57, 78-9), as
fundamentally appropriate.

Two other experiences regarding relative aspects of matter—where things or actions are
considered out of place, however not dirty \textit{per se}—concern Darryl’s licking off the serving
spoon after our lunch, and Zoey’s hunt for neutral peanuts to have in the pumpkin soup we
made for dinner one night. In following Douglas’ (2002: 8) suggestion that “dirt is compounded
of two things, care for hygiene and respect for conventions”, I use ‘dirt’ metaphorically to
pinpoint that details to the matters within these occurrences were experienced as contraventions.
That is, as contradictions to established conventions about what is appropriate to do/use; how
and when.

Turning first to Darryl, it was incredibly fascinating to perceive how he commonly licks off
food from serving spoons and other cutlery (rather than rinsing them) before putting them into
the dishwasher, but how he in the middle of the action hesitated, as if just reminded of my
presence. It might not be conventional to lick off the serving spoon, or at least he sensed that it
was not appropriate in my presence, for which reason he disrupted his movement in the middle

\textsuperscript{22} Douglas (2002: 45-6) maintains that structures of assumptions are modified insofar discordant cues are accepted
as a result of new experiences.
of it. However, myself regularly licking off serving spoons and cutlery once the table is cleared after a meal, I asked him what he would have done void of my presence. “Ladling it in,” he answered, chuckling. “Then, don’t let my being here stop you,” I replied, equally chuckling, as I came to think about how I sometimes even lick off my plate if the food was real tasty.

Especially intriguing to me in this occurrence is how dynamic interplays between public and private dominate which actions seem appropriate and which seem not. That he was about to lick off the spoon speaks to, I argue, him being comfortable to do as he please, regardless of any public conventions, in the confined space of his home. It also speaks to us being friends and him feeling comfortable enough in my company (within realms of the private) to routinely go about cleaning off the table. However, my presence also brings with it a reminder of sorts of the public; it hints towards generally accepted behaviors as well as to rejected ones. I would never lick off a plate in a restaurant, nor at a friend’s house, no matter how good the food, and this is most probably due to this not being customary practice; thus, ‘dirty’. Key to the point is that a practice dirty in one instance might be deemed, so to speak, pure\textsuperscript{23} in another, as conventions relationally confirm/reject certain behaviors.

Zoey’s notion of salted contra unsalted peanuts also follows boundary-imbued trains of thought, but as related to what is appropriate to use and when (rather than how to act and under what circumstances). This was made clear during one of our grocery shopping events at Hemköp, Mörby Centrum, where the last piece of grocery to get before checking out by the register was just that of peanuts; peeled and neutral in kind. Albeit salt was part of the recipe, and we passed a fixture featuring bags with peeled salted peanuts (figure 16) on our way looking for the section where peanuts most commonly are merchandised in Swedish grocery stores—namely, by the

\textsuperscript{23} Term is here used to indicate the opposite of dirty.
salty snacks such as chips—Zoey rejected my pointing out of it with the question, “but aren’t they salted?” She looked confused by my suggestive move, for they were indeed salted. This salty nature of them withstanding, I would for the sake of convenience—both in terms of location in the store, which was towards the cashier area, and the fact that the soup included salt—readily grabbed them myself. To my mind, there was no drawback in them being salted, no convention to adhere to or cue to advice. For Zoey, however, salted peanuts equal “aperitif”. Period. Just as unequivocally as neutral peanuts equal ingredients, just as categorically are salted ones for her a snack; either to have before dinner or as a nibble with alcoholic drinks. Hence the sight of the bags with salted peanuts triggered other ideas, drawn from other experiences and built around other perceptions, to her mind than they did mine. Resuming the analytical reasoning, it could be argued, that in relation to the making of soup, salted peanuts was for her dirty, a matter out of place (Douglas 2002: 44-5). In furthering the analytical significance of the above occurrences, simultaneously setting the frame for deliberations to come, let me consider Douglas (2002) in what I think is an eloquent writing tangential to the subject matter of sensuously imbued food practices. Apropos the tendency to let ourselves be guided by pre-established assumptions, she writes that we inhabit “a kind of filtering mechanism which at first only lets in sensations we know how to use” (ibid. 46). We are in other words, as declared by Douglas and upheld by me, somewhat default and biased in entering experiences, taking note first and foremost of occurrences in line with consistencies of the past (ibid.). This is not to say that people are set a priori, but to acknowledge that we are most comfortable readily accepting conceptualizations confirming already
established ones. Hence, I think of such a filtering mechanism as a springboard of sorts; one guiding us through impressions of everyday life, and one useful in contemplating ways in which we are relationally linked to past, present, and future experiences (cf. Pink 2015). In theoretical terms then, I employ the filtering mechanism as a tool to contextualize the trains of thoughts recurrently expressed by the participants with regards to spatiotemporal dimensions of their everyday food practices. I also think that this reasoning of Douglas, in juxtaposition to Latour’s (2005: 39, 53, 79) writing about mediators, enable analysis of how the very same figuration may generate dissimilar actions, perceptions thereof, and vice versa.

In a similar vein as Douglas accentuates the purpose of specifying details underpinning “systematic ordering and classification of matter” (2002: 44), Latour (2005) maintains that the specificity of mediators must be contemplated. He does so in arguing that their input, as opposed to that of intermediaries24, never represent good predictors of their output (ibid. 39). Mediators are according to ANT never given, but always circumstantial matters, for which reason their relational existence ought to be defined, and their associations traced (ibid. 107). Hence, much like Douglas addresses situated analysis of pollution behavior, Latour quests situated accounts of the agencies and actors involved in the figuration of (such) behaviors.

Whereas Latour (2005: 68) writes a whole lot about uncertainty, emphasizing the unknown matter of what, not who, is acting, I am for the purpose of this thesis keener on drawing on his discussion about relays and “intermittent existences” (ibid. 78). The incorporation of nonhuman matters in accounting for events is a central aspect of this treatise of his, and he writes that insofar objects are unaccounted for, they “quickly shift from being mediators to being intermediaries, counting for one or nothing, no matter how internally complicated they might be” (ibid. 79). Yet, if we allow them to “enter into accounts”, we open up space to consider the traces they produce, the information they offer, and the effect they have on other agents (ibid.).

The above underpins my interest in entertaining ANT for this research project. As hopefully made apparent—hinted at least—employing such an analytical toolbox is for me not a theoretical abstraction of reality, but a pathway attending to modes and movements of existences specifying the actions taking place. Letting material matters into our accounts equals to me to bringing to the fore their vital presence (this is furthered in the next section). Moreover, notetaking of socio-material aspects, inclusive of nonhuman actors and agencies, is according

24 Latour (2005: 39) defines an intermediary as that which “transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs”.

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to me paramount to enable sensible understandings of “the world-making activities of those” (Latour 2005: 57) I explored food practices with. This since the research participants routinely verbalized socio-material aspects imperative to their courses of actions—such as Darryl not rinsing vegetables to be boiled since the heat of the water according to him will remove bacteria and dirt in the cooking process anyways—but also as I during my fieldwork got to practically experience ways in which myriad food activities unfolded in relation to how we in our everyday life perceive, engage with, and sensuously understand materials inherent to our living environments in general, and to food practices in particular.

I have in this section attempted to make clear my analytical positioning along the lines of Douglas (2002) and Latour (2005). It has not been in my interest to essentialize the presence of material matters, but to acknowledge the role they play in the courses of action animated by the research participants. In relating these frameworks, to the examples exploring specific food practices of Bahar, Darryl, and Zoey, I hope to have made apparent how dissimilar and relative ideas, about for instance dirt, interactivates at once material properties and sensorial engagements. By entertaining specificities of mediators, it has been my purpose to contemplate how such aspects simultaneously frame multisensorial understandings and discernments of pollution behavior, and how the research participants and I, in tracing associations and defining their part in the situation (i.e. in entering them into account), became aware of one another’s perception as well as that of our own. The next section builds on these reasonings in accounting for corporeal dynamics of food and certain practices thereof.

**Cor(po)related Matters of Everyday Food**

The book on the kitchen counter is bright in tone; its cover rich in color featuring a glass container filled with mixed vegetables, shrimps, and quinoa surrounded by raspberries, peas, beets, carrots, and radishes. Vega nods to it, her hands being occupied with unpacking the groceries we just acquired, as I enter the kitchen after having taken off my shoes and jacket in the hallway. She remarks that she used the book this morning to look up which ingredients she already had at home, and which to buy, to make the zucchini and pesto dish we are having for dinner. Intrigued by how she, apropos us acquiring ingredients based on a recipe during our shopping event, briefed that it came from a book she regularly “eats by,” I pick it up to browse its content. Reading on the back cover, I am informed that this book, titled *Mat för Hormonell Balans* [food for hormonal balance], encompasses two parts, where the first deals with food-
related physiological facts concerning hormonal workings of the female body\textsuperscript{25}, and the second, with recipes following dietary logics of such facts\textsuperscript{26}.

Being in her forties and recovering from fatigue-syndrome, Vega has followed the dietary recommendations of this book as part of her rehabilitation: “I eat to support the hormonal system of my body,” she declares when notifying me about the recipe in the grocery store. As dinner is served and we sit down to eat the, to us, deliciously tasting and velvety creamy homemade-pesto-raw-zucchini-pasta-composition we just finished making by sprinkling feta cheese and cocktail capers onto it, Vega resumes the topic of her current recovery. She does so

\textsuperscript{25} See Margaret Lock (1995) for cross-cultural anthropological work regarding workings of the female body as related to processes, experiences, and symptoms of menopause.

\textsuperscript{26} I use the term ‘fact’ here as the book does so (i.e. I re-present it as it is presented to me).
by stating that “food is medicine,” in us conversing about her sick-leave and how she, before deliberately started eating to support her hormonal system, spent months crying without understanding why (now she thinks that her body at the time was “out of balance” and therefore less fit to cope with any stress exposed to). I ask if the book—its content—was known to her before she got ill. It was not, but was introduced to her by a woman in her fatigue-syndrome-support-group after that Vega, during a meeting, voiced concern about “doctors literally throwing antidepressants at you”. Not satisfied with the doctors attempt to “simply relieve the symptoms”\textsuperscript{27}, and with a quest to come to terms with what caused—or at least added to—the terrible feelings she experienced, Vega rejected all pharmaceuticals prescribed to her.

\textquote{Eating such shit} did not sit well with her idea of regaining health. Rather, it felt contra productive to her notion of feeling well in general, and of eating well in particular, so she read the book and \textquote{gave the diet a try}. She started off with the two-week based meal schedule featured at the end of the book, noticed quite a difference in mood and overall well-being by eating accordingly, and so she kept following its advice. She does so regularly, if yet by no means fastidiously. That is, she explains, she uses the book as a guide to how she can \textquote{help} herself feeling better—becoming better—by understanding (hormonal) processes in her body and how the food she eats affects her in various ways. Both physically and physiologically.

The above correlates Vega’s overall perception of the purpose of eating, namely, to nourish herself, and pharmaceutical substances are to her mind nutritive neither to mind nor soul. Moreover, it tangents her ideas concerning imperatives of sustaining oneself, and hints her openness to \textquote{eat by} a book about food as a pathway to achieve hormonal balance and well-being. Food, in terms of it being a nutritional source and a metabolic activity, has always been an important matter for Vega. Ever since we first met in 2010, when we studied in New York together, she has voiced concern about aptly “feeding” herself to stay energized and not to get hungry too quickly. Whereas I experience myself having slow metabolism—to be in need of quite little food to feel on top of my game throughout the day—she experiences herself having \textquote{fast metabolism}, and she frequently comments that she \textquote{must eat nutrient rich food to function,” whenever food is on the subject. Hence, food, nutrition, metabolism, and body is intricately related to her mind. I knew this entering the fieldwork with her, were from our established rapport and previous conversations acquainted with 1) her view of the body as \textquote{a machine,” an intricate system in need of proper “fuel,” and 2) familiar with her preference for

\textsuperscript{27} To focus on alleviating symptoms is according to her symptomatic of Swedish healthcare.
organic foods, so to avoid “toxins” entering this “system”. A detail to mention here is that while Vega was not intentionally sampled for these understandings of food, nor for her ways of interacting with it, I was nevertheless arguably intrigued to explore corporeal dynamics of food with her (i.e. to survey food as correlated to physical and physiological experiences of her).

It is in our sensuous exploration of Vega’s everyday food practices obvious that she, in thinking about food as fuel on the one hand, her body as a machine on the other, goes about the overall acts of consuming food—acquiring, preparing, eating—directly linking it to corporeal experiences. Differently put, she practices food to “ensure” that she as a “complete system functions”. Whether revolved around hunger or fatigue, prevention or redemptions thereof, we conjointly—by discussing and carrying out practices of her together—conclude that she perceives food as it is bodily and mentally felt to her. To exemplify, knowing that nuts are high in energy and nutrient rich, she commonly starts the day with a smoothie made on almond milk and cashew nuts. Similarly, sensing that scrambled eggs with vegetables and sausage keeps her going until lunch, it represents another breakfast favorite. Based on similar logics—that is, nourishing body and mind, and keeping herself evenly energized throughout the day—she never microwaves her lunch, or any other meal either for that matter. This since it according to her “reduces its nutrition” and leaves “less for the body to digest,” wherefore she would experience herself “starving within just a couple of hours” and “feeling tired and dejected”.

Now, with regards to what is already read about Vega, and what is to come about other research participants, it is of essence to mention that I for the purpose of this thesis emphatically center analyses on interactions with food as related to perceived functionings of it from a socio-material perspective: I herein uphold ambient surroundings and the properties/affordances of edible materials to influence courses of actions, leaving aside critical theorization of how for instance contemporary societal currents of health and self-help might impose notions on people as individually responsible for their well-being. In short, I emphasize the theoretical value of accounting for nonhuman agencies and actors per se in such interactions.

On that note, the following writing arguably—eloquently according to me—manifests Vega’s understanding of the cor(po)related relationship between that which she eats and that which she senses:

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28 See Davidson (2004), Cisney and Morar (2016) and Lemm and Vatter (2014) for works on biopolitics/power and neoliberalism, which could stand as theoretical grip for such analyses.

29 This term denotes embodied correlations between the eater, the eaten, and the sensations following.
Food—as a self-altering, dissipative materiality—is also a player. It enters into what we become. It is one of the many agencies when we engage in the question of what to eat, how to get it, and when to stop. (Bennett 2007: 145, emphasis added)

Along the lines of the above quoted remark of Bennett, regarding the vitality of other agents active as we eat, Vega and I reasoned around her taking into consideration ways in which edible objects are “transformed by and re-formed into the eater” (Kass 1994: 25-6 quoted in Bennett 2007: 133). In this conversation, she expressed that while sensing a strong wish for her food to be visually appetizing and seasoned to allure olfactory and gustatory organs, of most importance is how it makes her feel once processes of digestion take off. Hence, re-corporeal effects imperatively matters to her, wherefore it could be said, argued even, that she embodies a stance where active agencies of edible matters cor(po)relate that of her human body.

In engaging the corporeal contact between human bodies and other bodies (Ingold 2007: 3) that food consumption constitutes, I here challenge hierarchical lines of thoughts conceptualizing humans as masters of figurations\(^{30}\). That is, by drawing on fieldwork experiences, such as that above and those below, I make visible (Latour 2005: 79) how specific material properties of the food we eat affect us. It is my purpose doing so, to uphold substances as material agencies (Bennett 2007: 134) that simultaneously activate inter and intra bodily processes over which we humans have no control once they occur in our bodies. Hence, by remarking how the edible bodies of for example vegetables, nuts, and fibers, assimilate in the human body when digested, I highlight at once the mutable nature of bodies—human and nonhuman alike—and the corporeal figurations by which the eaten is digested and the eater is nourished (Bennett 2007: 134; see Latour 2005: 53-54 for deliberations specifically on figurations).

Having myself never experienced the symptoms of fatigue-syndrome felt by Vega, I cannot really speak to any dietary effects nor comment on pre/post sensations of it. I can, however, relate to the feelings she verbalizes in terms of eating so to gain a sense of control over bodily outcomes followed what’s eaten. Like Jonna and Linnea, both of who expressed a need of fiber rich diets to have properly functioning stomachs, I, too, readily sense physical effects of certain edible matters; though, rather from eating, than lacking, them. For instance, I get heartburn from cucumber, instant stomach rumble from broccoli, and itching palate from white bread.

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\(^{30}\) See Bennett (2010) and Latour (2005) for works on the intentionality of humans as related to agencies of materials; Bennett (2007) and Kass (1994) for work specifically related to food.
These are cor(po)relating matters that I by means of recurrent and experimental experience make out to be cause-effect relations, and so are the experiences of Jonna and Linnea.

Linnea for instance tells me that she, due to “stomach issues,” needs “lots of fibers to avoid constipation”. This is not a medical claim, but a physically sensed one (i.e. she bodily experiences this correlation between what she eats and feels, but a doctor has not confirmed the cor(po)relation). She explains to me, while checking content labels on a range of rigid unevenly-textured and dark-colored rye breads, all of which are double-spread—a quality of convenient importance, as she brings one sandwich to eat as breakfast at work each morning—that she commonly seeks out bread rich in fiber, containing a minimum of 11 grams per 100 grams. She does so, noting, that consumption of such breads mitigates her sensations of constipation. Hence, whereas her fiancé Anders exclusively buys spongy and sugary loaf bread since it pleases his olfactory taste per se, her taste of bread rather pleases the sensed workings of her digestive system. Albeit different in their sensuous specificity, both Anders’ and Linnea’s experiences are, I maintain, corporeal matters of everyday food practices: the material properties of their preferred bread activate particular actions on behalf of them, wherefore each bread should be upheld as agencies in the occurrence of each figuration (Latour 2005: 53, 107).

As a last corporeal exploration of this chapter, I will survey the eating habits of Jonna, which to quite some extent revolves around sensed workings of her intestines. We can start by noting that, while Linnea senses control of the digestive processes occurring in her stomach by eating breads with high fiber content, Jonna remarks difficulty eating—digesting—fibers from sources such as rye, for which reason she practically avoids them. This was commented when she, as we were grocery shopping together, made a sudden stop by the chia seeds, exclaiming, “I should really buy chia seeds”. I asked what she uses these tiny black-white-grey, to me, grit-looking seeds for, whereupon she answered that she puts them in her “morning-smoothies” so to “get the stomach going”. Myself unexperienced in terms of any re-corporeal effects of chia seeds—i.e. how the bodies of them transform in response to being ingested into human bodies, and vice versa (Bennett 2007: 134)—learnt that they contain “a bunch of viscous fibers”. This is, I am informed, a property which makes them easy to digest, if they are allowed time to swell in liquid before consumed. The “jelly texture” resultant of this swelling process, Jonna explained, “easily runs through the digestive tract” and makes “good in the stomach”. This since it, according to her knowledge, which is acquired both through physical experience and nutrition books, at once eases nutrient uptake and digestive processes.
Intrigued to know more about Jonna’s sensing of this making-good-in-the-stomach dimension of chia seeds, I probe her on the subject, whereupon she clarifies that she suffers from instant diarrhea eating foods which is not “aligned” with the digestive system of her body: “I have twenty minutes to find a toilet if I eat wrong” (i.e. foods which she senses her body cannot digest properly, if at all). Adding that she through trial-and-error kind of experiments have become aware of which foods she may eat, and which foodstuff she may prepare in certain ways to align sensed functionings of her intestines, she conveys that most of her diet builds on soluble (viscose) fibers inclusive of grains, such as chia, quinoa, and oat. She comments that she is especially careful in her dietary choices during workdays, where she opts to consume foods which, insofar she senses, allow her stomach to function properly, so that she can function in her everyday work-life. However uncomfortable being “out of control” in terms of felt effects of consuming certain foods when present in public environments, she voices less concern with bodily functions when at home.

I will soon wrap up this section, I will just end with two points. Firstly, that all three participants in one way or another refer to ‘control’—being in or devoid thereof—speaks, I claim, to perceptions of themselves having agency to, through various actions, take charge over other agencies, as well as to other agencies having control over them (cf. Bennett 2007). Hence, while they during our conversations did not explicitly label edible matters actors or agencies, they nevertheless implicitly remarked sensed presences thereof; thus, they hinted the mediating nature of nonhuman existences as affecting their actions (Latour 2005: 79). That is, in undertaking certain food practices, and in reasoning about these in certain ways, they arguably
relate(d) to relaying networks active in their day-to-day life (no matter the being or not being of specific labels designating their effects). Secondly, by tapping into the argument of Latour (2005: 61), the one calling for a shifting focus from certainties about who is acting, to uncertainties about what is acting, one may denote that immaterial and material matters at once are active, activated, and de-activated in food related occurrences of everyday life, as well as in boundary-making, such as that of body/mind and public/private. While such dimensions are present in all three cases, they are especially salient to the experiences of Vega and Jonna.

I have in this section specified some significances of material properties/affordances in the (figurative) acts of acquiring, preparing, and eating food. I have pointed to natures of them in terms of corporeal dynamics, and hinted them as sensuously experienced agencies. My aim doing so, has been to underline their vital part in the actions exemplified; the meanings, instigations, and effects thereof. The subsequent chapter furthers the interactive role of material matters in everyday food practices. It does so by exploring myriad environment produced-induced multisensorial experiences of the research participants.

**Figure 24** (left)  
Falafel, five-grain mix with grated broccoli, over-roasted beets, salad, and parsley crème at Jonna and Emil’s place.

**Figure 25** (bottom left)  
Five-grain mix with grated broccoli in pot before served.

**Figure 26** (bottom right)  
Salad in the making.
4. (Em)bounded Significances of Everyday Food

This chapter explores interrelations between people 1) as sensuous perceivers of ambient surroundings, 2) as experiencers of context-bound orderings, and 3) as spatially, temporally, contextually, and bodily engaged everyday practitioners of food. In exemplifying embodied and emplaced dimensions of mundane food practices, it draws on the seminal work on boundaries by Douglas (2002), as well as on writings concerned with humans as perceptual and sensory knowers (Grasseni 2004, 2007; Ingold 2000; Pink 2015; Sutton 2010; van Ede 2009). Furthermore, in surveying ways in which the research participants have sensuous-contextually learnt to practice food, it follows notions regarding how “one learns how to look, how to move and how to exercise one’s senses in specific contexts characterised by localised practice” (Mauss 1935 cited in Grasseni 2004: 47). That said, the chapter details habitual acts of acquiring, preparing, cooking, eating, and wasting food, and it remarks how such doings tap into situated conventions and myriad bounded significances. Importantly, it denotes, in much broader sense than the previous chapter, nonhuman actors and agencies, which by processes of figuration, influence particularities of food activities (Latour 2005: 71).

Engaging Ordinary Practice

Anders walks through the supermarket of Stora Coop in Västberga with firm steps. He grabs some potatoes, a yellow onion, a pot of lettuce, and a cucumber from the fruit and vegetable section at the entrance of the store. He notes that, while randomly picking potatoes, lettuce, and cucumber—taking those positioned on the top/furthers out, not due to convenience, but since these specific groceries according to him are refilled from above/front—he selects an onion perfect in size for making one dish, most probably either sausage stew or ground meat sauce. He announces, still in rapid movement, how leaving half an onion in the fridge makes all other foods take the taste of it. This (the transferal of taste) is unwished for, went around through mindful selection of a one-dish-sized onion.

I cannot help to think that the plastic bag he puts the onion in would seal the aroma, keep it from transferring to other foods; that other foods in the fridge, also those packed or (pre)wrapped in plastic, would be sealed from it. The thought instantaneously hits me. Perhaps

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31 This piece of information comes from doing fieldwork in this household.
since I keep onions—whole and half ones—in open air at my place. Thus, I have never myself experienced the specificities of this transferal effect that Anders perceptually relates to. The thought could also come from the actuality that I, insofar possible, reject any plastic in my own fridge. Be it bags or wrappers, the bare sight of plastic—my sensed feeling of it—sits wrong with my perception of food generally, that of fresh produce particularly.

In analyzing this event, accounting for the objects inherent to it on the one hand (Latour 2005: 39, 79), that of the properties of materials on the other (Ingold 2007: 9)\(^\text{32}\), one could exemplify how the relational existences of, in this case, plastic and onion, affect perceptions and actions. In sensuously relating to the properties of these materials differently, Anders and I interact with them differently, wherefore we carry out dissimilar actions. For instance, whereas he sees the plastic bag mainly as a carrier, I see it as a plausible shield; whereas I do not perceive the transferable effect of onion at all, he perceives it as unwanted. Hence, he pics a one-dish-sized onion. Meanwhile, the size would be insignificant on my behalf (had I grocery shopped for myself). Now, it might very well be that he in perceiving the aroma of onion to affect the taste of other foods, considers the plastic bag equally inapt a shield, as I do it a food holder. Nonetheless, and to the point I wish to make, the material matter matters per se. In other words, the objects and their properties/affordances, whether sensed or actual, play part on our

\(^{32}\) While Latour (2005: 79) maintains that objects ought to be accounted for in acknowledging circumstantial existences of matters (be they material or immaterial), Ingold (2007: 9) contends how “objects themselves…capture our attention” in maintaining that focus must be on the “materials of which they are made”. Nevertheless, both writers both speak to occurrences 1) as material matters, 2) to material matters as practically experienced, and 3) to the importance of incorporate the nature of nonhuman matters in analyzing events. Hence, they are, as duly noted (q.v. 27), apt to complementary frame this and other analytical points of mine.
perceptions—of them as well as of other, related matters—for which reason they influence the courses of actions taken. Or at least so I argue.

Back to then and there. Thinking about the plastic bag, simultaneously as a shield and (to my mind) inapt food-container-material, yet another instantaneous thought hits me: I remember how I as a kid thought that juice, the sort concentrated in kind which oneself mixes with water, tasted ‘fridge’ unless properly sealed with a lid (on the pitcher it was mixed in) before placed in the refrigerator. Hence, transiently sensing, in the instance of a second re-experiencing, how the juice took the taste of the refrigerator\textsuperscript{33}, I perceive Anders’ sensation of transferable savors. If yet of another kind, triggered by a different figuration (Latour 2005: 53), composed of other constituents (Ingold 2000: 5), I am through my sensuous presence, jolted into experiencing his (sensuous presence) (Pink 2015: 52). Meanwhile, through the fast-pace rhythm of his movement, by which he pushes the large shopping cart in front of him along the main aisle, away from the fruit and vegetable section and further into the store, I equally well sense his mission to shortly finish the grocery shopping. And so, without further deliberation on plastics and aromas, I continue tracking the store with him.

Moving on within the bright and airy layout of this one-stop shop supermarket, we pass rows of large refrigerated counters, glass doored fridges, tilted wooden shelves, countless iron fixtures in various shapes and sizes, and crates of sorts; all of which store and display assorted foods and foodstuffs; fresh, frozen, prepacked, single-piece, processed, and crude in kind. Following his track, I try to keep up as he habitually reaches in and out for whatever needed, adding groceries such as packages of minced meat, pre-sliced loafs of bread, whole milk, frozen fish filets, and bags of broccoli florets and haricot verts to the cart. One cheese, of the kind oneself slices, and two \textit{falukorvar}\textsuperscript{34} are also added; both with comments that they already have unopened ones at home, but that these “good-to-have” doublets are readily “used-up”.

Pursuing his shopping in an, I feel, almost mechanic manner, he systematically takes from top, underneath and behind, noting, as he picks something, how he knows how they refill most of the groceries he buys. Aware of the method by which groceries are re-stocked, he needs not look too closely on, for example, expiration dates. Moreover, knowing his household’s shopping list by heart—perceptibly also, by foot and hand, by commonplace Swedish dishes,\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{33} More accurately, took the taste of how I perceived the refrigerator to smell.

\textsuperscript{34} This is a Swedish sausage common in a range of commonplace Swedish dishes; it figurates as main ingredient, as complimentary ingredient, and as ingredient in stews/on sandwiches.
by the layout of the frequented supermarket, by entailments of the everyday work-family balance, and by sensing future occurrences through past experiences—he needs not revisit the shopping list he showed me as we entered the store. Not until he, less than twenty minutes and a week’s worth of groceries later, reaches the end of it. Right before entering the cue by the cashier, he checks off the list against what is in his cart. With a chuckling sound of recognition, he notes that everything, and then some, is in there.

Having paid and packed the groceries in the three large reusable bags he brought with him from the trunk of his car, it stands clear to me that he, unlike I, who experience some difficulty keeping up with him, is used to grocery shop here; synchronously, to do so according to the mundane food practices of his household. It is my sensation, tracking along, that his bodily orientation within the store, unlike the unskilled\(^{35}\) presence of mine, occurs as smooth and frictionless as he aims everyday life—any food related acts inherent to its realization—to do.

Following notions of how people—as sensuous and situated beings—perceive and engage practices relationally to ambient surroundings (Grasseni 2004, 2007; Ingold 2000; Pink 2015; Sutton 2010; van Ede 2009), I find it fair to say that Anders, through his food practices, embodies imperative mundanities of their life. In other words, that he gives physical shape to the practical purposes premising daily food in this household; thus, to the interrelation between the ambient surrounding in which he lives (be it the physical place of home/store or him juggling work-family life), his perception of it, as well as his partaking in its constitution. His skilled movement within these lived surroundings, I argue, at once reflect his sensory awareness of, in, and through it. In short, his embeddedness. By way of citing Yolanda van Ede (2009: 65), it is my argument that he through situated activities has learnt “how to see…to observe or not to observe”. Following the same logic, extending it to all other senses, he has learnt how to smell, taste, listen, and touch; to, or not to, savor, hear, and feel. That is, he has learnt to engage his sensory perception at once in a coordinated and environment-practical-imbued way (Grasseni 2007: 4).

\(^{35}\) I could have written unaccustomed here, but in writing ‘unskilled’ I align myself with theories (e.g. Grasseni 2004, 2007; Ingold 2000, 2014; Pink 2015; van Ede 2009) speaking to our being, inclusive of sensory perception, as one of apprenticeship (i.e. one learnt through situated practice).
Participating in the food practices of Anders provides an embodied and emplaced route to his understanding of mundane imperatives. Meanwhile, engagement of ordinary practices of other research participants offer equally embodied and emplaced routes to theirs. By way of example, Julia and Darryl, also them having full-time jobs and two small children, preferably bulk-cook. That is, when they cook dinner, they make enough to last for several days to come. While they do so mainly to avoid spend time cooking every day, yet enable the eating of homemade meals made from scratch\(^{36}\) most days per week (they do buy take-away food, such as sushi or pizza, one-two times per week), the bulk-cooking is also a direct consequence of Darryl’s preference for buying food and foodstuff in bulk. Unlike his wife, who, while sharing his preference for bulk-cooking, gets stressed by too full of a fridge (wherefore she prefers to grocery shop what they need on a day-to-day basis); he, in being a very, as he has it, “cost-conscious person,” likes to buy large quantities of food less often. This, he says, saves both time and money.

Given their different understanding of their fridge—where Julia sees perishability, food and foodstuff in need to quickly be used up not to decay, and Darryl sees cost and time efficiency—shopping and cooking with the two takes quite different shape. For instance, shopping with Darryl means going to a store (it being the destination), taking a cart, and orienting around it through special offers using a smartphone application called *Matpriskollen*\(^{37}\) [the-price-of-

\(^{36}\) They keep ready-made hotdogs, falukorv, and meatballs in the freezer to enable quick and easy making of lunch/dinner in case their oldest child dislikes what they have cooked. Other than that, and staples like pasta, they make most of their food on ingredient-based basis.

\(^{37}\) This is an application which allows grocery consumers to check out special price offers that stores within one’s vicinity has at any given time. The application enables comparison between stores, as well as to specifically show offerings within the store of one’s choice.
food-check-up]. Shopping with Julia, on the other hand, means dropping by Coop\textsuperscript{38} (conveniently located next to the subway station where she gets off) on her way back home from work, taking a rolling basket, and orienting within it through a list of groceries made using a specific recipe.

In speaking about this together, at once contemplating their dissimilar go-about-techniques of shopping and cooking—conversing about how Darryl never would throw away food, no matter what, and how Julia gets stressed out by the bare thought of all the food they must cook when he has done the shopping—it is mentioned that, whereas Darryl feels comfortable “freestyling” in his cooking, Julia needs a recipe to cook. Hence, whereas he sees a full fridge as one of many options, she sees a confined everyday life. Taking out her recipe scrapbook—one comprised of cut-out recipes from various magazines and folders, such as those offered for free at Coop—Julia voices how Darryl can just look in the fridge and get inspired, but how she habitually looks at recipes to stimulate her imagination. Moreover, in articulating the three-fold sequence by which a dish materializes for her—recipe, grocery list, cooking—it is noted that, while

\textsuperscript{38} This is one of the more common grocery store chains in Sweden. It consists of smaller stores, such as those located in/nearby residential areas, as well as larger ones, such as the supermarket style store of Stora Coop frequented by Anders.
Darryl wants to do weekly shopping of food as it saves time, money, and frees up day-to-day thinking about what (food) to make and what (groceries) to buy to make it, she feels that it would “square-in” everyday life too much: that it would leave no space for doing what they, in the moment, feels like (or to reject doing what they do not feel like, such as cooking). So, whereas Julia wants a less full fridge to enable freestyling of their everyday life, he wants a full fridge for the exact same reason. I find it intriguing how that which is perceived as liberating for one, may be perceived as limiting for another, and how these sensations vary based on situation and individual preference.

Figure 32. Darryl checking out special offers using the smartphone application Matpriskollen.

Figure 33. Julia’s recipe scrapbook.

To give another example, it is for instance so, that where Vega, who buys organic food to the extent it is offered, appreciates the highlighted labeling of such products in the national grocery chain of ICA Supermarket, as they, according to her, ease her procurement of groceries; Anna, who also frequents ICA Supermarket, but in Högdalen Centrum rather than Solna Centrum (as does Vega), finds the ‘choose organic’ signs quite stressful. In fact, they generate a sense of ambivalence, causing her to experience it “difficult to shop for food”. Expanding on this as we shop together, Anna says that she wants to buy everything organic, but how “some products are just much more expensive to buy organic”. “Like aubergine,” adds Carl, demonstratively pointing to the shelf underneath the ginger (which we are getting). Taking a look, I see that the
organic kind is half the size the conventionally produced ones; double the price. Shopping on, Anna tells me how she sometimes finds herself selecting all-organic groceries because it “feels like the right thing to do,” but how she, as she approaches the cashier, changes her mind in realizing that it would cost too much. Hence, she goes back to exchange some of the organically produced groceries in her basket to conventionally produced varieties.

Figure 34 (top left)
‘Choose organic’ signs in the aisle with canned foods, such as tomatoes, at ICA Supermarket, Högdalen Centrum.

Figure 35 (top right)
Vega deciding which packet of organic ginger to purchase.

Figure 36 (bottom)
Organic beef bought by Vega at ICA Supermarket, Solna Centrum.

As exemplified above, the ‘chose organic’ signs at ICA Supermarket are situationally experienced concurrently as guidance and condemning reminders of sorts; they trigger feelings of ease in Vega, those of ambivalence in Anna. Now, one could here reason for the one or the other in discussing how freedom of choice within capitalist societies transfers responsibility from companies to individual consumers, and how choices allow for consumers to vote with their money (see for example Röcklinsberg and Sandin 2013, and Haliker et al. 2007, for critical thoughts and studies of such matters). However, for the purpose of this thesis, I let such discussions be, for it is not such natures of matters that I herein regard, but the sensed presences
of matters *per se*. In other words, considering my research questions, it is far more interesting to think about sensuous details to the matter, for example how Vega senses organic foods as good for her body, but Anna, as good for her conscious. On that note, my focus is to specify how the material matters in the mattering of sensory perception (and not to discuss the large scope by which certain matters come to matter to begin with). Hence, I here settle with underlining that the signs, the groceries, and the prices—the perceived and experienced notions of such objects—indeed play situated part in the actions taken, and the sensations felt, on behalf of both Vega and Anna.

While the last few examples are less specified than that of Anders, by which this subchapter was introduced, they still, I suggest, cast light on how *body, mind, and environment* sensuously integrate material matters of everyday food experiences, as well as on how each entity itself may be seen as “a source of knowledge and subsequently of agency” (Pink 2015: 26). Hence, though the consumption pattern of the research participants differs in its specificity, it is my claim that they all nevertheless exemplify ways in which ambient surroundings sensuously influence their mundane food practices. That is, how presences of material and immaterial dynamics within their living environments correlate their sensorial perceptions and the actions following such perceptions (whether they are deliberately or subconsciously carried out).

To sum up, this section has along the lines of Grasseni (2007), Ingold (2000, 2007), Latour (2005), Pink (2015), and van Ede (2009) provided some examples of how one, by tracing the association by which certain sensuous-imbued actions take place, may grasp the manifold kinds of material matters—*agencies*—that people mundanely relate to in going about everyday food practices, be it a recipe scrapbook or good-to-have groceries. The examples are by no means exhausting, and they certainly entail more details than herein provided, but even so, I hope to have given a sense of some sensed presences of material matters salient to the unfolding of certain food practices. The next section builds on ideas about (em)bounded significances of habituated food activities in considering some elusive boundary-makings inherent to them.
Living Boundaries

Carl moves across the roofed pathway from *ICA Supermarket*, where we just finished shopping ingredients for this evening’s dinner, to *Högdals Grossen*, where he is to buy coriander. Having been told that “it [coriander] tastes better there,” I follow him in acquiring this last piece of ingredient. Meanwhile, Anna waits with their daughter and the already procured groceries on the pathway outside. An Indian dish containing coriander is on tonight’s menu, and while they sold coriander at *ICA Supermarket*, neither Anna nor Carl considered buying it from there. “Those tastes nothing,” said Anna when at *ICA*, hinting towards the tall column filled with plastic wrapped pots of coriander in the fruits and vegetable section. They tell me how they do their daily grocery shopping at *ICA*, that they sometimes visit *Coop* a bit further away, for particular groceries, such as lamb and fresh herbs, also the local shop of *Högdals Grossen*, but how they most of the time procure what is needed at *ICA*.\(^{39}\)

Today, however, is a particular-grocery-day, and so, *Högdals Grossen* gets a visit. Entering the small shop, Carl walks through it, straight to the corner with fruits and vegetables located furthest into it. This section, which is somewhat refrigerated, is separated from the rest of the shop with a plastic drapery. It is quite small, but bright, and in quite some contrast to *ICA*, where for instance coriander is sold potted, all herbs are here sold in bulk. Carl approaches the EPS box\(^{40}\) containing bunches of coriander; he habitually removes the top ones, grabs one from underneath, and turns his heel, out through the drapery, and towards the cashier. In noting how he immediately, without really looking at the ones on top, removed them to take one under, I ask him how he opt for the bunch. His reply is as immediate as his selection of it: “it looked nice”. Intriguingly enough, he could not see the picked bunch at first sight, as it was covered by the top ones. Nor did he spend any mentionable time judging its appearance before being on

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\(^{39}\) Anna and Carl have the habit of acquiring what they need on a daily basis, and they commonly buy groceries for the making of dinner and lunch, or vice versa, at each store visit. According to Anna, this is much due to them not having a car (to do large quantity shopping), but as we talk more, it becomes clear that they are flexible in what they eat, and that their day-to-day procurement, much like that of Julia, also reflects their wish to eat what they on a daily basis feel like eating.

\(^{40}\) EPS stands for *expanded polystyrene*, and is a common fresh-food-shipping-box-material (MW Material Worlds 2016).
his way towards the cashier, yet he referred to *sight* in motivating the sensation underpinning his selection. Struck by this detail, alongside the fact that the top ones at first sight were visible, yet seemingly unseen, I probe him, as we are cuing, about what I perceived to be a concurrent

**Figure 37** (left) Fruits and vegetable section, Högdals Grossen.

**Figure 38** (right) Outside Högdals Grossen.

**Figure 39** (bottom) Inside fruits and vegetable section of Högdals Grossen.
rejection of those on top, and selection of one from underneath. He thinks for a bit, and then he answers, in a somewhat surprised manner, that he upon reflection does not really know why he went about picking this particular bunch. Looking at it, shaking it softly, he notes how he subconsciously, by an accustomed movement, just grabbed one from underneath. Still in line, he adds, without me having said anything further, that he might have taken one underneath in thinking that many people probably have touched the top ones. For the truth be told, he cannot really say that the chosen bunch is nicer than the ones he rejected; it is namely not until we stand in line that he actually looks at it, so to scrutinize its (assumed) niceness.

Seemingly an act on a hunch, it is my interpretation that Carl opt for a bunch that in a sense was seen without being sighted. In other words, that he through his sensorial perception, governed by patterns of past impressions, selected a bunch befitting his preconceptualized cues (Douglas 2002: 45) of what to him felt to look nice, rather than looked nice per se.

Having been with a range of households shopping, I can say that the above neither is an uncommon train of thought, nor one limited to sight. Rather, it is a recurring theme, especially in sensorial terms of mundane practices speaking to “systematic ordering and classification of matters” (Douglas 2002: 44). Julia, for instance, always buys the most recently baked toast bread. This even though she puts it straight into the freezer, and from there, straight into the toaster. While she reckons that she could take a one-to-two days old loaf without it making any difference to taste or softness, as the bread is toasted anyways; she nevertheless upholds that it feels better to pick one baked the day of purchase.

Of similar kind is the thought process of Zoey, who has the habit of always-already removing the top boxes whenever she shops at Lidl41, which is most of the time. She does so to take her

41 Lidl is a German grocery chain (also present in Sweden) in which groceries, rather than being unpacked and stored on for example shelves, are merchandised by stacking the boxes in which the food is shipped on top of one another (i.e. consumers take directly from the boxes).
groceries from the, so far as she senses, new boxes underneath. Well aware of what motivates her action, she articulates how she feels like all other people have touched—rejected even—the groceries stored in the top box. In showing me what she means, she remarks how several pre-packed bell peppers found in the top box are “defect”, as well as how other groceries commonly are “misplaced” in the boxes on top, as people change their minds (figure 41). This is disturbing to her, “feels messy” somehow, for which reason she habitually, though not necessarily carefully, picks from the boxes underneath. As such, her action tangents that of Carl.

Habitual boundary-makings, like those referred to above, are present in an array of food practices that I got the opportunity to partake in during my fieldwork experience. I was for instance made aware that Darryl commonly uses only the steam of fresh broccoli in certain dishes, such as that of fried rice, while Anders readily discards broccoli stems. In being used to buy pre-packed frozen broccoli florets from the grocery store, he has, he tells me, come to think about the steam as inedible (i.e. not fit to eat). Hence, in one instance foodstuff, the other wastestuff, the affordance of broccoli unfolds relationally to how it is “practically experienced” (Ingold 2007: 14). In other words, it occurs as it, through processes of cooking, is transformed into food by the former, and through those of being binned, into waste by the latter. I argue such bounded dispositions to epitomize living boundaries; thus, that they signify ways in which boundaries are habituated through routinized practice, on the one hand, and animated through the myriad mundanities by which food materializes, on the other.

Figure 41. Top box with ‘defect’ bell peppers and a ‘misplaced’ packet of tomatoes.

Figure 42 (left) Pre-packed frozen broccoli florets, such as sold in the supermarket.

Figure 43 (right) Fresh broccoli with intact steam.
Briefing a few more examples of conceptualizations and categorizations experientially practiced by the households, I find it intriguing to note how groceries within the domestic sphere by and large follow the same logics by which they are merchandised in stores (figures 44 and 45). While this could be decisions of convenience, in some cases more than in others, the frequency by which it during fieldwork was encountered, I suggest, speaks to how structures of ambient surroundings influence the orderings by which we live (Douglas 2002). Furthermore, sensorial perceptions concerning, for example, which cooking technique that is appropriate for certain dishes, what cutlery to use\(^\text{42}^\), and how much food must be left over for it to be regarded a *leftover*\(^\text{43}\), play relational part in the everyday being of food in the households. For instance, Carl shimmers tomato sauce for up to thirty minutes if to be served with spaghetti, but quickly stir it together when used in lasagna. Using the exact same ingredient in both instances—canned tomatoes, yellow onion, garlic, salt, and pepper—he considers the taste of it to be more important when it serves as a *main part* of the dish, as opposed to a *component*, for which reason his cooking technique differs. Moreover, whereas Anders use a fryer to get the taste and texture of “real fries” at home, Jonna puts sweet potato in water for fifteen minutes to extracts starch, she thereafter lets them dry for a bit on a kitchen towel, before shaking them in a bag with potato flour. She is not concerned with labels of “real” or “homemade,” as is Anders, but rather only cares about achieving the crispiness she likes. As a

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\(^{42}\) Julia and Darryl, for instance, customarily eat rice dishes with fork and spoon. Myself only ever having eaten pasta with that combination of cutlery, had to be instructed on its use.

\(^{43}\) Whereas Darryl regards all post-meal remaining food, no matter how little left, a *leftover*, Linnea only considers that enough to make a lunchbox a *leftover*: all other food left over is waste for her (she for instance threw away three zucchini balls after one dinner with the comment that “it is too little to save”). One factor playing part in these two different conceptualization strategies may be that Darryl habitually make *new dishes* using leftovers from the households’ bulk-cooking, whereas the household of Linnea does not.
last example of how objects and categorizations take form as they are habituated, Bahar use, what I think of as a *frying spade*, as a *rice spoon*. While I before this encounter never had heard the term ‘rice spoon’, perhaps as I rarely cook rice, I was informed that she had bought it at IKEA specifically for the purpose of cooking rice.

Speaking about labels and frames of references, such dimensions permeate food mundanities; the myriad conceptualizations and classifications inherent to them. To exemplify, constitutions of meals—as in what make up mains and sides, a ‘proper’ meal, as well as what part of the day one habitually eats—make apparent everyday living boundaries in several ways. It is for instance noted by Bahar and Keivan that, while they occasionally have pasta for dinner, a dinner dish void of rice does not to classify as “real food” for them. Devoid of rice—it being the main component—the dish is incomplete, improper, not “real”. An eloquent quote underlining this lived boundary of Bahar and Keivan is that of Crowther,

> Rice is a staple across many areas of the world, and is it often regarded as essential to classify food as a meal, rather than a snack; its symbolic associations are so great that its absence can leave diners feeling underfed even if they have eaten enough. (Crowther 2013: 157)

Continuing on the subject matter of proper meals, Anders and Linnea articulate diverging perceptions of what a meal should include in order to be, as Linnea puts it, “composed”. Whereas Anders favors quick and easy everyday dishes consisting of as few ingredients as

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44 It should be noted that although rice *per se* is staple for them, they make clear distinctions between Irani rice and other sorts, such as Basmati, in that the former “has taste” to them.
possible, such as spaghetti with ground meat sauce or potatoes with isterband\textsuperscript{45}, Linnea recurrently advocates more vegetables on their plates; preferably not just as sides, but in the form of vegetarian dishes. Moreover, while he considers any dish by which they “get fed” to be proper, she emphasizes how a “composed meal” consists of “protein, fat, and carbs, and fibers and vitamins,” and she voices how she thinks that they should eat according to “tallriksmodellen” (figures 49 and 50). Hence, though she eats what is served\textsuperscript{46}, she always requests a bit of “freshness” to be added to their food; be it some “grated carrot or boiled broccoli florets”, she just wants “something”.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure49}
\caption{“Tallriksmodellen” illustrated with symbols. Source: Livsmedelsverket (2017a).}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure50}
\caption{“Tallriksmodellen” illustrated with words. Translated illustration by author; source of information: Livsmedelsverket (2017b).}
\end{figure}

Tangential to the above subject matter is that how Anders, through food, demarcate the everyday from leisure. His preference for the making of “simple foods” during workdays revolves not around a lack of interest in terms of spending time in the kitchen. To the contrary, insofar Anders perceives himself to have time, he is quite an advanced cook who loves to try new recipes, and who enjoys cooking from scratch. He for instance bakes homemade gua bao\textsuperscript{47} when making Korean barbeque, and he goes through quite some trouble visiting specialty stores to find all ingredients needed to cook, for example, homemade ramen broth. The fact to the matter is that he, parallel to his preference for the smooth workings of everyday life, also

\textsuperscript{45} This is a lightly smoked sausage made of coarsely ground pork.

\textsuperscript{46} Anders is the one cooking on a daily basis in this household. They have arranged it so that he picks up the children from day-care around 4pm, has dinner served as Linnea gets from work around 5.30pm, and then he works a couple of hours from home in the evening.

\textsuperscript{47} This is a kind of steamed bun common in Northeast Asian cuisines.
features a profound interest in food: hence my introduction of this paragraph with the statement that he demarcates the everyday from leisure through food. I will now turn to an explanation of this impression of mine.

Through my participatory practice in this household, I noticed that Anders makes a direct connection between workdays, the everyday and routine. In other words, that he perceptually upholds these aspects as intimately interconnected in leading their life; such as through streamlining food practices during workdays by means of commonplace Swedish dishes (which he readily knows how to acquire, prepare, and cook, and which he knows will satisfy all diners). While he articulates not having the time to cook as elaborate dishes during workdays as during spare time, I would, based on partaking both during times of leisure and work, say that this understanding is relational in kind. I am namely under the impression that time for him is a matter formed in relation to when it occurs and what it entails. Much more so, than a matter of how long something takes in terms of duration, such as how many minutes a dish takes to prepare, cook, and eat. For instance, it took roughly half an hour to make the zucchini balls with tahini sauce that we had for dinner one night (on Linnea’s request), and it took about the same time making the falukorv-stew with rice and boiled broccoli florets\(^{48}\) that we had at another research occasion. Regardless of the fact that we did not bake the pita bread for the zucchini balls—which I know that Anders would have preferred to do, had this dish been made during leisure—it is my understanding that temporal dimensions for him have less to do with time spent per se, and much more to do with framings of how it is spent; when, why, and under what circumstances. I draw this conclusion based on several sensations, but to provide one, it may be argued that we had factory-baked pita bread, not due to limited time as such\(^{49}\), but due to Anders not framing this workday evening as one fit for baking. Important to note here is that he outspokenly makes a difference between “making dinner” and “spending time cooking,” where the former denotes practical undertakings in order to “get fed,” and the latter, an enjoyment of practices by which ingredients are transformed into dishes. Needless to say, he makes dinner during workdays, but spend time cooking during leisure.

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\(^{48}\) The broccoli was explicitly cooked to accommodate Linnea’s wish for some added “freshness” (see Miller 1998 for work on how this could be interpreted as an act of devotion on behalf of Anders).

\(^{49}\) We were by no means in a hurry; we had roughly one and a half hour at hand before Linnea got home from work, and the children were occupying themselves with games and television, which they usually do while Anders makes dinner. Hence, we would have had time to bake pita bread, yet have dinner ready well in time for Linnea’s arrival.
In order to theoretically frame my argument about how conceptual framings influence Anders’ sense of time, let’s turn to Crowther (2013), and her notion about how we relate to context-bound conventions in determining what and when to eat. Drawing on Sutton (2001), she writes that we in practical instances call “upon all our senses to determine the appropriateness of what
we are to eat” (Crowther 2013: 157). Hence, in making a study inquiring what may be said about the ways in which food activities are multisensorial matter of mundanity, I would argue that Anders’ sense of time—the preconceptions guiding his notions about what is appropriate to cook during which day of the week—by and large is informed by his sensorial perception of the everyday as routine. Differently worded, I interpret it as if he thinks about daily practices—whether revolved around food or other day-to-day activities—as something ought to just flow, and that he finds comfort in not thinking too much about enactments of his everyday life (Evans 2014: 17). Along similar lines, it is my interpretation that he senses freedom in during time of leisure devoting himself to his interests, such as to spend time cooking.

Keeping ideas about bounded natures of mundanity in mind, I will in concluding this chapter turn to an analysis of how broad-ranging patterns of life in an urban-industrial society50, such as Stockholm, influence everyday boundary-makings. I wrote early on in this thesis that I would consider the vast array of sustenance strategies existing in the world, so to enable defamiliarization of familiarities encountered during fieldwork (q.v. 12). Now, I did by this not mean to in detail survey food-getting strategies such as hunter-gathering, pastoralism, horticulture, and agriculture (see Crowther 2013: 30-63 for more detailed outline concerning this). Nor was my intention with the statement to concern myself with delineating differences between small-scale and large-scale production and/or selling techniques, such as prevalent both within hunting-gathering strategies and industrial agriculture (cf. ibid. 33, 71). Rather, my interest in denoting such variances rests in the fact that they exist per se; better yet, that they arguably influence conceptualizations of food, alongside classifications of what to eat, and when. By way of example, while hunter-gatherers, pastoralists, and horticulturalist work to eat—that is, engage in activities directly generating food to be consumed51—the majority of people in industrial societies, such as the research participants of this study dwelling in Stockholm, eat to work (ibid. 153). In other words, they engage in activities generating money, by which they can purchase food.

The above detail of eat to work, has two important implications for the everyday food life of people dwelling in urban-industrial societies. Firstly, the primary source of food is that of grocery stores; be it convenient-shops down the block, supermarkets located in shopping malls,

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50 That is, in places characterized by life in the city, market economies, and standardized mass production of sorts.
51 The primary source of food is for the first the pursuit of game alongside collection of berries, nuts, and similar, which exists without the care of humans; the second herding of domesticated animals; the third cultivating gardens (Crowther 2013: 32, 45, 48).
or day-to-day basis market-places, food is habitually acquired by means of commodified premises inherent to the presence of a food industry. That is, it is procured by the nature of a commercial system where “ingredients, flavours, recipes, equipment, dishes, and eating styles” are turned “into knowledge and products to be bought and sold” (Crowther 2013: 87). Hence, food is packaged, in metaphorical and literal terms, so to be retailed to consumers. This retailing aspect of food, I argue, influence myriad ways in which food is understood, both generally and particularly (Anders’ binning of broccoli steams suggestively speaks to such conceptualizing matters). Secondly, food consumption within urban-industrial societies is by and large arranged to fit the highly indexed life of its eat to work inhabitants: the consumption of food, whether revolved around acts of acquisition, preparation, cooking, or eating, is “suited to the standardized meal schedule of working life—breakfast, lunch, and dinner” (Crowther 2013: 87). As a pattern constructed to fit “the working lives of its member” (ibid. 152), the breakfast-lunch-dinner structure is undertaken by all research participants. As such, it could be argued to represent an overarching bounded influence of food mundanities; one which at once reflects 1) domestic orderings of everyday food, 2) the broader structure by which life and systems of sustenance in this context is organized, and 3) how these dynamically constitute one another.

I have in this chapter surveyed some ways in which habituated practices at once are bounded, and bound the context in which they advance. Following the lead on boundary-makings by Douglas (2002), and theorizations on eating culture by Crowther (2013), I have exemplified how boundaries simultaneously are lived and living. They are lived insofar they are lived by (i.e. insofar they are situationally reinforced through certain practices undertaken relationally to certain societal and/or domestic conventions). Meanwhile, they are living in that, what is given for one practitioner, may or may not be so for another. Likewise, what may be appropriate in one instance, may be deemed inappropriate in another, and so, this shifting nature of boundaries make them, so to speak, living.
5. Concluding Summary: The Sensuous-Bounded Matter of Everyday Food

The kitchen of Jonna and Emil is approximately two square meters in total, including the tiny dining area, and so, void of any larger kitchen counters, the smaller-sized kitchen table acts as unpacking area. Already having asked about them keeping cherry tomatoes in open air, which Jonna explains is due to tomatoes becoming sweeter in flavor when stored in room temperature (i.e. around 20 degrees Celcius), it comes as no surprise to her when I ask about the bowl of avocados standing on the floor by the radiator, too. Although the overall space of the kitchen is limited, the bowl could have fitted, for instance, on the dining table. So, while thinking to myself that it might have been placed there—on the floor, underneath the radiator, next to the table—temporarily, and then been forgotten about, I figure that it might also be a deliberate reason for its placement. “Avocado is best kept warm,” says Jonna, “they get all stringy if kept cold, and I don’t like that”. She puts a cherry tomato into her mouth, makes a nodding movement towards the bowl, and once the tomato is swallowed, she adds that the apartment is freezing cold during winter time, and that the temperature underneath the radiator makes the avocados creamy. Surprised by her answer, the basis for this particular action, I reply that I had no idea about the correlation between avocado, coldness, and stringiness; that I keep mine in the fridge, and that I actually have wondered why some avocado have that stringy texture.

**Figure 55** (left)
Bowl with avocados and bananas on floor by the radiator.

**Figure 56** (bottom)
Perfectly creamy avocado cut in half.
The terms *acts, becoming, temporarily, figure, deliberate, movement, makes, action, correlation,* and *texture* are accentuated in the above paragraph as they all, in one way or another, speak to the sensuous-imbued and context-bound socio-material nature by which food in the everyday life of the research participants is carried out. As I have exemplified in this thesis, food matters are at once bounded and relational matters; their entangled nature simultaneously routinely enacted and dynamically experienced. As a lived practice, food is inherently informed and guided by the material context in which it advances, and it is sensuously reinforced through the figurations by which it occurs. On that note, let’s consider some of the explorations and analytical points provided in the thesis.

I discussed at length in chapter three relative aspects of sensory knowledges by exploring what it was that the research participants saw when they looked, heard when they listened, smelled when they sniffed, savored when they tasted, and felt when they touched (van Ede 2009: 64). It was my objective in this chapter to exemplify not just their sensorial perception in interacting with food, but also to bring to the fore other agencies and actors present in such interactions (Bennett 2007; Latour 2005). For instance, I exemplified how I learnt to appreciate the flavor of rice, as does Bahar, through accounting for the nonhuman agencies salient to her action of breathing on it. I also noted how we in tracing associations and specifying mediators (Latour 2005: 39, 107) became aware of elusive boundaries and conventions that guide our individual interactions with food. Whether societal or domestic in kind, I argued that we habitually practice food as we are accustomed to it, and I made use of Douglas’ (2002) systematic-ordering-theory to exemplify how boundaries, such as those inherent to pollution behavior, come about and are reinforced as they are experientially practiced. This was done through the examples of Darryl licking off the serving spoon and Zoey using neutral peanuts in the soup.

Another aim of chapter three was to convey how properties and affordances of materials (Ingold 2007) influence courses of actions by being bodily felt. Tuning in on corporeal effects (Bennett 2007) of everyday food practices, I claimed that sensory aspects, in that they “like few other things” are experienced “both inside and outside of bodies (and transformed in the crossing of bodily boundaries)” (Sutton 2010: 220) prevailed the dietary choices of Vega, Linnea, and Jonna. Writing large how these women bodily experienced the consumption of various foods, I noted embodied correlations between the eater, the eaten, and the sensations following.

Explorations of how food matters are mundane matters, at once socio-material and spatiotemporal in kind, were in chapter four detailed by means of analytically aligning myself...
with 1) Douglas’ (2002) theories on how people through preconceptual cues sensuously relate to systematic orderings of the world in which they live, 2) Pink’s (2015) framework on experiences as embodied and emplaced, 3) Ingold’s (2000, 2007) and Latour’s (2005) notions of the manifold kinds of beings that informs our being, and 4) Crowther’s theorizations on staple foods and food-getting strategies. While the first subchapter centered on sensed presences of material matters in accounting for elusive notions of the everyday life of food of the research participants, the second emphasized the embounded living nature of such notions. However separate in that the first engaged ordinary practice in exploring myriad produced-induced experiences of food mundanities, and the second surveyed habituated practices through prisms of boundaries, they were both written with the aim to situate the particular within the general.

In conclusion, this thesis has explored sensuously perceived natures of existences inherent to everyday food. In probing how food is sensuously understood, practiced, and interacted with, it has given shape to myriad trajectories leading up to certain food practices. In enquiring how ambient surroundings sensuously influence experiences as well as conceptualizations of food, it has surveyed presences of material and immaterial factors by which everyday habits routinely are carried out. Through questing ways in which food activities are multisensorial matters of mundanity, it has exemplified how acts of acquisition, preparation, cooking, eating, and wasting, at once are bounded and bounds the context in which it unfolds.

While I opted to explore food as sensuously corresponding to material matters of everyday encounters, there are as myriad ways to research food mundanities, as there are such habituated practices per se. Nevertheless, considering that correlations between food, the everyday, and well-being surfaced as a common theme during my fieldwork, I would suggest future research to focus on that; possibly as related to food practices in retirement homes, or food offerings in food banks. Another emphasis could be to use ANT in sensuously study rice in Iran. Regardless of the specific focus, however, I suggest more food research to account for nonhuman beings, and to do so through sensuous engagement.

On that note, my approach has mediated some thoughts, knowledges, relations, and stories that sensuously matters in the thinking, knowing, relating, and telling some entangled contingencies inherent to specific unfoldings of everyday food of seven households in Stockholm. However limited the scale/scope of the conversations herein initiated, space for continuous conversation about the sensuous matter of everyday food is through this thesis literally brought to the table.
References


