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Sourdough

- The Stories Beyond Flour, Water and Salt

Master Thesis

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Abstract

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Thesis purpose: In order to contribute to Consumer Culture Theory, as well as critical dimensions in the foodie literature namely *authenticity*, *democracy/distinction* and *gender*, the study's aim is to explore how discourses and socio-cultural meanings underlie identity constructions in the specific sourdough culture.

Theoretical framework: As no research addresses the sourdough phenomenon directly, we combine related literature domains to build up a comprehensive framework for the study. We broadly elaborate postmodernity and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), and subsequently critically address central dimensions within foodie literature capturing discourses as well as socio-cultural meanings of food.

Methodology: With departure in social constructionism and hermeneutics, we employ an explorative study drawing on the experiential and sociocultural dimensions of consumption. We use a qualitative research strategy focusing on consumer perceptions and meanings. By employing ethnographic methods we submerge ourselves into the social settings of the consumers.

Empirical data: Triangulation of methods is used to gather empirical evidence. Informant diaries and ethnographic interviews are used as means to get a broad understanding of the socio-cultural worlds of the consumers. Strategic sampling is used to select appropriate respondents and forms the foundation of the subsequent data collection.

Conclusion: This study provides insight into the contradictions of *simplicity/complexity*, *popularized/distinctive* and *enacting/challenging gender roles* encompassing the sourdough phenomenon. These are also characteristics of the foodie culture in general. Enacting discourses around the contradictions, consumers place sourdough practices centrally in the process of establishing a fragmented sense of self. Deriving from these contradictions, we have found that consumers draw on a certain kind of capital named "*knowledge and skill capital*" to distinguish their identities.

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1 Introduction

“We bake our own bread with a sourdough culture that we vigorously tend to like a beloved pet, religiously adding filtered water and organic flour to sustain its bubbly natural yeasts” (Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 1).

In recent years, ‘sourdough’ has become a true buzzword in Sweden. Baking with sourdough, along with other ‘Do It Yourself’ (DIY) practices, has received exceptional attention in Swedish media and the public fascination has extended considerably. Bakeries, as well as organic flour companies like Saltå Kvarn have experienced an upswing. In only six years (2002 to 2008) Saltå Kvarn’s sales of flour and grain products increased from SEK 28 millions to 130 millions. (SvD, 2009) In each and every corner of the larger Swedish cities, you may easily stumble across one of the hundred bakeries, cafés or even pizzerias that offer trendy sourdough creations to dedicated consumers. If you are away for vacation you can even leave your sourdough in Stockholm, as the world’s first sourdough hotel has been initiated here. (The Local, 2011)

The interest has grown remarkably also within the private sphere; an abundance of enthusiastic hobby bakers have fallen for the trendy pastime, and sourdoughs are now regularly fermenting in many Swedish homes. Master Baker Manfred Eriksson’s sourdough courses have become excessively popular and are immensely overbooked. (SvD, 2009) Internet has become a primary tool for passionate amateur bakers to exhibit their sourdough creations. A number of blog profiles have become gurus teaching sourdough practices to the mass and the amount of leisure bread bloggers are steadily increasing. A Google search for ‘sourdough’ gives 393,000 hits in Sweden [2012-05-23], many related to public and private blogs.

In essence, Swedish consumers have become increasingly passionate about this little lump of dough. The sourdough phenomenon is not an isolated trend but mirrors a range of connected contemporary movements. Trends are emphasizing going ‘back to basics’ and consumers are increasingly critical to find pure and real foods. Sourdough is an excellent example as the essential ingredients simply are flour, water and salt. Trend analyst Ingela Stensson emphasizes that in times of anxiety, we long for what is perceived genuine and real – the authentic that does not deceive us (SvD, 2012b). Anna-Britta Ståhl poses a question whether we are taking *“one step back to recapture old types and knowledges”* (SvD, 2012c).

Contemporary trends further point towards a slow food movement and ‘fun dining’ instead of ‘fine dining’ et cetera, emphasizing somewhat oppositional values (SvD, 2012a). Manfred Enoksson explains that consumers want to use their senses and look, smell, taste and feel what they create. The popular bread blogger Martin Johansson expresses: *“When everything else moves fast, sourdough baking takes time”* (SvD, 2009)

Ostensibly, the meanings of sourdough are multiple and complex and seem to extend the

physical practices. The sourdough phenomenon could surely be viewed as a manifestation of a range of social discourses. As Lupton (2005: 317) recognizes, *“food and eating patterns are not purely products of biology but practices central to our subjectivity, our sense of self as well as our embodiment”*. Food is thus connected with thoughts about socialization, health and status (Bourdieu 1984 in Cairns, Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 596), why it is critical to address the discourses and sociocultural meanings constituted around food and eating practices.

We view the consumers engaging in sourdough pastimes as part of the greater ‘foodie culture’ that has developed in contemporary society. Foodies are defined as *“people with a longstanding passion for eating and learning about food but who are not food professionals”* (Cairns et al., 2010: 592). Even though the physical object sourdough (which seems to be a fully loaded carrier of personal and emotional meanings) is very interesting per se, in accordance with foodie literature (Cairns et al., 2010; Johnston & Baumann, 2010; Hollows, 2003) the focus in this study is placed on the discourses constituted within the culture and the meanings conveyed. More nuanced, this involves how the sourdough consumers talk and think about food, and what undisclosed premises and ideologies underlie the identities and preferences expressed. Here, Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of distinction is crucial.

The pursuit of ‘good’ food has long been connected to the privileged social classes and Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of economic and cultural capital (in Corrigan, 1997: 26-32). Authors within the foodie literature (Cairns et al., 2010; Johnston & Baumann, 2010) have found that people possessing a high economic and cultural capital find it easier to be grateful for pleasures of the foodie culture, as ‘worthy’ food not only is costly but also easier to appreciate by sophisticated and educated consumers.

The sourdough phenomenon appears to contradict these arguments, as its simplicity (flour, water and salt) makes it a seemingly inclusive practice that principally anyone, regardless of monetary or cultural resources can engage in. A boom in television cookery and lifestyle programming shows that media has contributed to the democracy of the phenomenon, as knowledge and skills are simply and quickly disseminated. In its very nature, the sourdough phenomenon is much more mainstream than other ‘haute cuisine’ practices that connoisseurs and highbrows within the foodie culture dedicate themselves to (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). In view of this, it is paradoxical that the hip and fashionable practice of sourdough seems to have become a great means to *“create a distinctive personal image of oneself”* (Manfred Enoxxson in SvD, 2009).

Furthermore, an abundance of men, Martin Johansson (owner of the bread blog ‘Pain de Martin’) being in the front line, have dedicated their spare time to engage in the pastime, and been very loud mouthed about their sourdough pursuits. This movement contradicts previous assertions and long-established ideals regarding gender norms in the kitchen, where mundane practices such as baking traditionally have been regarded a feminine territory (Hollows, 2003a). The sourdough phenomenon seems to reflect some of the moral ambiguities that according to Johnston and Baumann (2010) exist within foodie culture, both in regards to gender roles and

distinction. The authors illustrate that *“the gourmet foodscape embodies a tension between embracing ideals of meritocracy, equality, and inclusiveness on the one hand, and offering a venue for marking status and for divisive class and identity politics on the other”*. (2010: 204)

Purpose and Research Question

Even though the literature (Cairns et al., 2010; Hollows, 2003a&b; Johnston & Baumann, 2010) has directed considerable attention to foodie discourses, the field needs to be explored further and through new angles. The sourdough culture seems to embody central mechanisms within foodie discourse, and even draw some dimensions (namely, the ones related to *simplicity, authenticity, democracy vs. distinction and gender*) to the extreme. By investigating the discourses and socio-cultural meanings constituted around the sourdough culture, we aim at extending research on foodie culture in particular, and consumer culture in general. This by bringing light to the following research question:

- ❖ *In light of a broader sociocultural framework, how are discourses around sourdough shaped, negotiated and articulated in everyday life as important representations of the self?*

2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, we establish a theoretical framework by introducing concepts and constructs central for our study. As no research addresses the sourdough phenomenon directly, we combine related literature domains to build up a comprehensive framework for the study. We begin by broadly elaborating the study's postmodern departure within Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), and subsequently go deeper into literature on foodie culture as well as discourses and socio-cultural meanings attached to food. Here we will delve deeper into the most essential dimensions within the foodie literature.

2.1 Postmodernity and Consumer Culture Theory

The literature does not provide a singular, distinct definition of the term 'postmodernism'. The phrase emerged in the second half of the twentieth century defining characteristics of the socioeconomic conditions in the European affluent countries (Cova, 1997). Brown (2006) describes that postmodernity overthrew the grand narratives of modernity and involves an unobtrusive worldview that *"emphasizes the boundedness of knowledge, the limits to generalization, the lack of universal laws, the prevalence of disorder over order, irrationality rather than rationality, subjectivity instead of objectivity and passionate participation as an alternative to dispassionate spectatorship"* (2006: 214).

Firat and Dholakia (2006) claims that the 'postmodern condition' has blurred distinctions in the dialectical relationship between marketers and consumers, and that post-consumer communities are emerging as the *"new conjoined, conglomerate entities of the postmodern era"* (2006: 148). Seemingly, postmodernity has liberated consumers allowing them to engage in fragmentation processes as *"an emancipatory response to the totalizing logic of the market"* (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 255). One essence of the postmodern society is that there no longer exists a logic of production and consumption and neither is there a clear-cut distinction between reality and fantasy, as people consume objects as much as symbols and images (Brown, 2006).

Within the postmodern society, traditional boundaries have been shattered and individuals can connect with each other regardless of physical contact, through the Internet and other technical means. Thus, virtual social relations have supplemented visual relationships. In an attempt to explain postmodernity and postmodern consumer behavior, Cova (1997) draws attention to a 'de-differentiation' meaning that individuals freely embark on a journey towards a recomposition of a social space. Rather than accomplishing self-fulfillment through differentiation, individuals retreat to social communities. (Ibid.) Mitchell (2011) claims that shared consumption values and usage hold these communities together.

The Growth of Consumer Culture Theory

The postmodern responses have given rise to a relatively new research field - Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), which according to Arnould & Thompson is a family of theoretical perspectives focusing on *"the relationships among consumers' personal and collective identities; the cultures created and embodied in the lived worlds of consumers; underlying*

experiences, processes and structures; and the nature and dynamics of the sociological categories through and across which these consumer culture dynamics are enacted and inflected.” (2005: 870) As Firat and Venkatesh emphasize: “*We view the consumer in a decentered context or within the context of everyday life and practices instead of under the lens of grandiose or unifying theories*” (1995: 255).

Within CCT, this study’s primary focus will be the realm of ‘consumer identity projects’ and in so doing, concentrate on the socio-cultural dynamics driving consumers to establish a fragmented sense of the self through means of consumption. Featherstone (1991) illustrates that consumers within the postmodern society systematically uses symbolic meanings attached to goods to establish and preserve a sought-after identity or lifestyle. Likewise, he suggests that the new middle classes capitalize on the ‘aestheticization of everyday life’ (1991, in Hollows 2003a: 187) meaning that they make investments in the art of lifestyles. The symbolic aspects of consumption become visible not only when consumers speak with clothes but also with food, furnishings and cars drawing on an extended self (Belk, 1988). Hence, the domestic sphere functions as a site of aesthetic display also inferring the production and reproduction of class taste (Hollows, 2003a).

Food as an Identity

Food is often associated with flavor, aroma and deliciousness. However, food is not simply a reflection of taste but has its basis in lifestyles and cultures. Therefore, “*tastes are not simply a reflection of our identity but work to construct our cultural identity: We may be what we eat, but what we eat also produces who we are*” (Bell & Valentine, 1997 in Ashley, Hollows, Jones & Taylor, 2007: 59). Studying food through a sociocultural lens however means going beyond the natural and physical senses that twinkle our taste buds, to “*the social conditions of food’s production and consumption*” (Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 31).

As food has become a large part of people’s life, it is critical to investigate discourses, how people talk about, understand and discuss food, as part of a larger cultural system marked by social, contextual and cultural blueprints (Ibid.). As mentioned in the introduction, consumption practices are centered on food and eating is subjective and essential to consumers’ sense of self (Lupton, 2005). Thus, Fine (1996, in Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 32-33) argues that people convey symbolic images through the food they eat.

Food consumption patterns permeate many different domains of everyday life and “*function as symbolic boundaries between people: classes, geographic regions, nations, cultures, genders, lifecycle stages and occupations*”. (Lupton, 2005: 317) In accordance, in his idea of a post-structural lifestyle analysis, Holt (1997) argues that symbolic boundaries functions as means to establish collective lifestyles. Food can be divided into a range of binary oppositions (good or bad, sophisticated or vulgar, a sin or virtue) and oppositions shape consumers’ food preferences and principles and are used to support some food choices as well as resent others (Lupton, 2005). Hence, as Belasco (2002) notices, choices of food determine cultural boundaries and eating has become a way to discriminate oneself.

2.2 The Rise of Foodies

Johnston and Baumann recount that the original use of the term ‘foodie’ stems from the 80’s and is frequently ascribed to the British authors Paul Levy and Ann Bar, who explained a foodie as “*a person who is very very very interested in food and who considers food to be an art, on a level with painting and drama*” (1984: 6, in Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 53). A more recent denotation is expressed by Cairns et al. (2010), who describe foodies as individuals enthusiastic about the pursuit of ‘good food’ or namely as defined in this study’s introduction: “*people with a longstanding passion for eating and learning about food but who are not food professionals*” (2010: 592). Foodies are consumers that are appealed by a great diversity of food from many different culinary traditions. Foodies cherish authentic food made from the heart, with great history and tradition. Habitually, foodies view locally and sustainably produced foods as superior in both taste and quality to long-distance, industrially produced ones. (Johnston & Baumann, 2010)

Foodies exist within the greater ‘foodscape’, which is defined by Johnston and Baumann (2010: 3) as “*the cultural spaces of gourmet food*”. The foodscape is understood as an agreed-upon social construction that associates food with particular places, people and meanings and has two meanings. Firstly, understandings are mediated through cultural institutions such as mass media and are articulated in social customs. Secondly, it recognizes the relationship between taste, culture and the physical landscape in the society. New markets of food that value the authentic, rare, local, biological, simple and handmade have emerged contesting the culinary French food tradition historically being associated with high status. (Ibid.) As the notion of authenticity is highly reflected in the sourdough phenomenon, the following section provides a theoretical understanding of this multidimensional notion.

A Sojourn in the Authentic

Authenticity can be understood as a socially constructed phenomenon with various connotations (Johnston and Baumann, 2010). The strive for authenticity is great in the postmodern society, where a large community of consumers engage in creative consumption practices to enhance feelings and experiences of authenticity, what Campbell (2005) acknowledges as ‘craft consumption’. In producing aesthetically rare products often by hand, these consumers typically bring skill, knowledge and passion. At the same time, a desire for self-expression is what motivates them. This movement is reflected in the remarkable rise of Do It Yourself (DIY) practices, especially within food where consumers are willing to put considerable effort into complex cooking practices. (Ibid.)

Craft consumption thus appears to reveal the same plea for authenticity that foodies demonstrate when opposing commoditized, inhumane and industrialized food. Johnston and Baumann (2010) propose that this particular group of active consumers associate authentic food with simplicity, a personal connection and a link to history. In the following section their insightful ideas are taken as the starting point for the generation of theoretical accounts.

Parallels are also drawn between craft consumers and foodies.

Authentic Food is Simple

Similar to craft consumers, foodies engage in craft activities to experience authenticity in various ways. Campbell argues that one reason for this can be a longing for the preindustrial age (2005), as it is contrasting the alienable and inhumane Labour characterizing commodities produced in the industrial society with intention of mass-consumption. 'Simplicity' for instance, refers to the positive values of sincerity and truthfulness. They have an aversion to industrialized production and therefore desire aspects of simplicity, as it distances the real from the fake. Foodies do not prefer the chemicals commonly associated with industry production, which is an indication of their preference for purity and integrity. In addition, simple food connotes freshness and hand made and the outcome is far from standardized. In this sense, authenticity is not inherent in the food but rather in the way the food is produced, processed and presented without fussiness or any clear details. (Johnston & Baumann, 2010)

Furthermore, according to Ashley et al. (2004), contemporary food cultures are often associated with standardization and authenticity as two conflicting ideals. The authors argue that the rise of 'trattorias', in popular parlance 'bistros', is an effect of the increase in standardized fast-food restaurants. However, authenticity is at odds when businesses are expanding and jeopardize consumer demand for authentic experiences. If realized, authenticity is running a risk of being commercialized when establishments deliver packaged, standardized experiences and the once perceived genuine and distinctive is not real anymore. (Ibid., 2004) Critical consumer movements, for instance the slow food movement emerged in Italy, have started to spread globally, protecting the genuineness of 'slow food practices' and raising fierce criticism against the fast industry production and consumption of food (Andrews, 2008).

Authentic Food is Personal

Another dimension of authenticity is personal connection or rather investment, and a pursuit for the genuine is expressed in the way the producer is linked to the cultural object. Hence, authenticity is connected to identity (Cairns et al., 2010). Campbell (2005) explains that just like foodies, craft consumers invest the artifacts with particular hidden meanings and aim at achieving aesthetically significant products. Put it another way, he goes on discussing that craft consumers transform 'commodities' into 'humanized' objects, typically utilizing commodities as raw materials to create new products intended for self-consumption (Ibid.).

Similarly, foodies appreciate to know who has cooked the dish, as it is through the artifact that the 'creator' expresses uniqueness, originality and sincerity (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Importantly, there is no clear distinction between production and consumption in the process of crafting, as the consumer typically does both (Campbell, 2005). What is of primary focus is the entire consumption practice, or the 'rituals' by which consumers subject goods into their own personalized world of meanings. In this way, the object is akin to any artistic creation. Because the person behind the product is unknown, mass-produced foods for instance in readymade vacuum-packages are not deemed authentic. As the yearning for singularization and

humanization of objects, according to Campbell (2005) and Johnston and Baumann, (2010), can have an important relation to the family and to historical traditions, we are turning to examine these dimensions next.

Authentic Food is Linked to the Past

History and tradition are also dimensions linked to authenticity in addition to simplicity and personal connection (Cairns et al., 2010). With regards to authenticity, conditioning that the food harmonizes with the culture in general and personal circumstances in particular, it is perceived real. Individuals compare the food to a set of established standards, conventions and traditions and then evaluate degree of authenticity. As the food often has a link to a particular historical tradition, tradition functions as reference point. Food is deemed authentic when tradition forms the ground for experimentation and artistry. Personalized innovation is achieved when an individual acts as an artist and creates something artistic on the basis of historical traditions. Foodies' memories of the past also highlight the role of food within the family and put special emphasis on the mother as a central figure in the kitchen. The father on the other hand, is rarely seen as a chef in the kitchen but rather as a fearless explorer, culinary artist. (Ibid.)

Craft consumption can be seen as a yearning for singularization in the complex everyday life consumers of today face. Rather than simply turning their backs towards the commercial society, craft consumers search for new and effective ways of tackling the effects of progressive commodification. *“Seen in this light, the arena of craft consumption could become highly valued because it is regarded as an oasis of personal self-expression and authenticity in what is an ever-widening ‘desert’ of commodification and marketization”* (Campbell, 2005: 37).

Craft consumers try to make things special and meaningful by using their own cultural and personal resources to transform commodities into singularities. By this, the creations feel unique, singular and even sacred. This is what stimulates craft consumers to engage in consumption practices not for the sake of constructing an image, lifestyle or identity, which is commonly assigned as the primary motives for postmodern consumers' consumption acts (Featherstone, 1991). Instead, the primary motivation to engage in creative acts is, as mentioned, a desire for self-expression rather than establishing a stable sense of identity (Campbell, 2005). Nevertheless, many authors agree that food and consumption patterns function as a field for social distinction and a means to establish a sense of self. In light of these contradictions, the following section goes on to explore how the gourmet foodscape functions as a field for distinction.

Democracy and Distinction Within the Foodscape

“The gourmet foodscape embodies a tension between embracing ideals of meritocracy, equality, and inclusiveness on the one hand, and offering a venue for marking status and for divisive class and identity politics on the other”. (Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 204)

As mentioned earlier, great moral ambiguities exist within the gourmet foodscape, and there is

a tension between democratic inclusion and status-based exclusion through cultural distinction. To fully understand the mechanisms within these tensions, we believe a historical recapitulation of 'taste' is essential, including a deeper exploration of the notion of cultural capital.

A Historical Recount of Taste

In his path-taking monograph *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984, in Peterson, 2005: 259) conceptualizes the links between taste, status and social class, emphasizing that taste is imbedded in social relations. Human beings structure reality and the structures organize consumption, thus "*consumption communicates social meaning and is the site of struggles over social distinction*" (Bourdieu 1984, in Corrigan, 1997: 32). Taste is therefore conceptualized as a construction of consumption experiences and economic circumstances, referred to as 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984 in Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 249), hence has its basis in the social relationships (Ashley et al., 2004). The habitus is an "*abstracted, transposable system of schema that both classifies the world and structures action*" (Holt, 1998: 3-4).

In the endeavors for social distinction, social, economic and cultural capital function as status markers (Bourdieu, 1984 in Corrigan, 1997: 26-32). The possession of the two latter is essential in our case. Economic capital refers to pure monetary assets whereas cultural capital comprises a set of "*socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices*" (Holt, 1998: 3). Cultural capital exists in three primary forms: manifested as practical knowledges, skills and characters; objectified in cultural goods; and institutionalized in authorized degrees and certificates that verify the actuality of the embodied form. (Ibid.).

Consuming in a tasteful and appropriate manner contributes to the deployment of cultural capital. Economic capital and cultural capital are interrelated, as it often requires considerable economic capital to achieve the manifestations of cultural capital, and time and finances are additionally seen as positive resources. (Corrigan, 1997: 26-32) Related to the aforementioned 'habitus', background and upbringing plays a central role in the accumulation of cultural capital, which is seen to be cultivated in the social milieu of cultural elites. This means that people with high cultural capital principally stem from families with well-educated parents whose professions demand cultural skills. Furthermore, people with high cultural capital have high levels of conventional education at universities that attract other cultural elites, where they through their studies have been taught to develop abstract thinking rather than gaining particularized trade skills and knowledges. (Holt, 1998)

It then becomes evident that particular sorts of lifestyles characterize particular social groups, as the space of social positions and the space of lifestyles are interconnected. These combinations allow the most fundamental social differences to be expressed, which means that acts of consumption produces social distinction (Bourdieu 1984, in Ashley et. al. 2004: 64) People possessing high cultural capital are considered comparatively few, and this rarity needs to be protected. If a group's unique qualifications and cultural practices are becoming attainable for other groups then, they have to be adjusted in order to keep up the distinguishing distance. (Bourdieu 1984 in Corrigan, 1997: 26-32)

Foodscape and Omnivorousness

Bourdieu's (1984) study showed that people make categorizations on the basis of a continuum between those with high and low status and these findings have served as a departure point for later research (in Peterson, 2005: 259). However, Peterson (1992) recognized that in addition to a possession of high cultural professions, a higher education, considerable income and a taste for fine art, highbrow people also engaged in 'low-status' activities hence had a more omnivorous taste. They appreciated a range of various cultural forms not only fine art but folk exhibitions as well. Peterson's contribution to earlier findings by Bourdieu is that an omnivorous orientation increasingly is replacing highbrow snobbery. (Peterson, 2005: 259) Similarly, Johnston and Baumann (2010) denote that high-status cultural groups in the foodscape emphasize an omnivorous taste and have an enthusiasm to eat a wide range of foods. Seemingly, Peterson (2005) argues that there is a trend towards cultural eclecticism.

The conditions of the postmodern society have also enabled consumers traditionally seen as lowbrows to take part in the 'gourmet foodscape', especially as media has popularized and democratized access to knowledge about various culinary trends. Johnston and Baumann illuminate that "*mass-media has made it easier for non-elites to learn about new food fashions and high-status cuisines, but this does not stop the status wheel of fashion and distinction from rolling on.*" (2010: 37) In accordance, Campbell (2005) argues that craft consumers possess a certain kind of cultural capital, that many times are more of populist rather than elitist nature. This is why craft activity typically exists in the crossing between authentic popular folk knowledge and high art. The necessary cultural capital is comparatively easy to acquire through the various media outlets focusing on different DIY-practices.

However, Johnston and Baumann (2010) contend that as within the greater foodscape, lines are drawn between 'worthy' and 'unworthy' food, much on the basis of authenticity and exoticism. When foods are framed in these ways, they are indubitably more achievable for people with high economic and cultural capital. Authentic and exotic foods are not only regularly costly, but they are often easier to appreciate by someone who is culturally sophisticated and educated, hence who possesses a significant degree of cultural capital. Foodie expertise often adds to the accumulation of cultural capital and a preference for pure ingredients as well. However, cultural and economic capital are often interrelated, which means that spending a lot of money on food can be considered an ostentatious representation of cultural capital. (Ibid.)

Johnston and Baumann (2010) conclude that the gourmet foodscape cannot be viewed in black and white. Even though the democratic motivations are real, these are manifested in a larger context of immense economic inequality, which means that it is complicated for many people to fully engage in all the pleasures of the foodie culture. On these premises, the democratic incentives result in nothing but "*ideological window-dressing on elite cultural practices*" (2010: 204) and the term 'faux populist' is thus more suitable to describe the gourmet foodscape. This faux populism induces cultural and social exclusion. "*For this reason, foodie culture stands to*

contribute further to the reproduction of social inequality because food knowledge is one way that privileged and high-status people relate to one another. A lack of food knowledge can contribute to a sense of being a cultural outsider from privileged circles.” (Ibid.: 205).

In addition to the contradictions between foodies with high and low cultural and wealth, the foodscape entails tractions between reasserting and challenging traditional gender roles. The notion of gender with regards to food is an expanding field of research and obviously there is a link to identity. The field warrants closer attention why we turn to explore it in greater detail in the proceeding section.

Foodies Doing Gender

In the west, there is a fairly large amount of food studies (Caplan, 1997) and more recent research reveal that foodies are enacting gender but in new ways (Cairns et al., 2010).

Cooking for Caring, A Female Ideal

Strikingly common in the literature is that provision of food remains to the female and cooking is a sign of ‘traditional’ domestic femininity (Ashley et al., 2004) Therefore, DeVault (1991, in Hollows, 2003b: 231) contends that women normally cook on behalf of other people and produce the ‘quality’ time necessary for a family in harmony. Traditionally, a careful analysis of women’s investment in relations of care, feminist criticism reveal how cooking as caring articulates inequalities (DeVault 1991, in Ashley et al, 2004: 138). Feeding the family produces cultural identities and caring fosters gender inequalities. Women’s work is a cultural and social activity requiring skills as well as knowledge and creativity and therefore women should be freed from being viewed as deskilled ‘dominated drudges’ (Ashley et al., 2004: 137).

Providing the market with new commodities such as the microwave blender et cetera, the industrial logic paralyzed the female cook transforming her into an ‘unskilled spectator’. (Ashley et al., 2004: 138). A distinction is established between what is authentic popular culture produced harmoniously in a ‘living’ tradition, and what is an inauthentic, industrialized mass-production for the passive uncritical people. Nostalgia existed before rationalization took over the production and industrialization to a certain extent destroyed the living tradition of the female cooking culture. (Ibid.) More recent studies by Hollows (2003b) for instance, indicate a more neutral role claiming that the dispositions of the new middle class have more gender-neutral qualities.

Feminine ideals of care are empowered by an emotional significance and women express their food identities through the imperative to provide food for the family. (Cairns et al., 2010) In accordance, women as mothers are expected to practice ‘maternal altruism’ meaning that they have a compassionate concern for their children and husband (Caplan, 1997: 10). Furthermore, women are supposed to prepare food that harmonizes family preferences and is healthy (Caplan, 1997). In more recent studies, Beagan, Chapman, D’Sylva and Bassett (2008) in Cairns et al. (2010: 593) have also gained the insight that women stress a protection of the familial health. Foodies express a commitment to maintaining their well being explaining why

they prefer organic food (Ibid.). Research by Hollows (2003a) reveals that when women discuss food, mothers are often figuring in the narratives functioning as a reference point for their cooking practices. Research also uncovers the female desire to cook for others and they express a sense of personal satisfaction when inviting people over for dinner.

Cooking for Leisure, A Male Ideal

Despite relatively little academic written about men's relationship to food and cooking, existing evidence show that foodie men commonly cook as a hobby (Caplan, 1997; Ashley et al. 2004) or as a leisure activity (Hollows, 2003b) and use it as a means for "helping out" in the kitchen (DeVault, 1991, in Cairns et al., 2010: 593). According to Fine (1995), men engaged in cooking practices are often conceived of as professional chefs, craftsmen, with talent and competence. Referring to male narratives and the aspect of cooking for others, men do so less frequently. At special occasions they invest both time and effort in the preparation making the cooking session highly exceptional, thoughtful and carefully performed. In other words, they take pride in articulating their masculine skills. According to Hollows (2003b), recent studies reveal that men attempt to escape the domestic scene yet is contained by it, which for instance is represented when ready-meals are brought for consumption at home.

Thematization of Gender Discourses

Studies of gender reveal that there are different 'entitlements' to food meaning that certain kinds of food are typically related to women and others to men. In the west for instance, meat is associated with men and masculinity whereas women more often prefer vegetarian food (Caplan, 1997). Recent studies show that men are increasingly entering the domestic food sphere being involved in labor work that has been performed predominantly by women. This means that men's cooking practices so far have not been connected to caring, as they typically do not have the same responsibilities and obligations as women. (Cairns et al., 2010)

In addition to care work, Cairns et al. (2010) have recognized two themes in the foodie discourses: pleasure, and knowledge and expertise. Women and men enact and challenge traditional gender ideals in their communication of identities pinpointing both continuity and change. Food and food practices have a central role in the lives of foodies and are sources of great pleasure. The pursuit of pleasure with regards to food is immense and in this sense, foodies have great emotional attachments to food.

In the articulation of foodie identities, knowledge and expertise is commonly acknowledged in the literature. Foodies have a plea for learning about food and experiencing new tastes embarking on culinary adventures, which is maintained through an ongoing self-education. Johnston and Baumann (2010) claim that foodies enjoy encountering exotic cuisines and take this as a learning opportunity. Media has fuelled a continuous education, as knowledge and inspiration are easily acquired through various sources; culinary shows on the television, blogs and other sites on the Internet, as well as books and magazines.

As described in previous sections, possessing a certain degree of culinary knowledge establishes

a cultural and social distinction apart from the ‘amateurs’. Men specifically, have a desire to draw on their knowledge and skills to manifest their relationship with food. By constantly searching out new culinary spaces, they refine and extend their knowledge template. When men figure on the culinary scene as artists motivated by their educational pastimes and certain aesthetic dispositions, typical foodie masculinities are enacted (Bourdieu, 1984 in Cairns et al., 2010: 596). Enacting culinary experts, men draw on their cultural capital to further position themselves as cultural connoisseurs. On the other hand, evidence show that women not have the same longing for ratifying a gastronomical competence. Neither do female foodies have the same concern for social expression through knowledge and expertise. Nevertheless, this provides women with new spaces for developing courageous identities further consolidating their honored class position. (Cairns et al., 2010)

Having introduced the study’s core concepts and constructs, in the following chapter we present a methodological reasoning.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, we provide our methodological reasoning and choices. At first, we argue for the methodological philosophy with departure in the CCT literature and present the ontological and epistemological stances. These factors have built the foundation for the research design, selection of methods, and the subsequent data collection. Furthermore, we argue for the sampling strategy and describe how the interviews have been carried out and interpreted. Throughout the chapter, we reflect upon our methodological choices and the effects these might have on our results.

Authors agree (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Easterby-Smith et al, 2008) that studies are always subjected to the fundamental views held by the researcher. This regards how reality is constructed and how knowledge should be extracted, in research termed ontology and epistemology. This study's departure within Consumer Culture Theory has led us to utilize certain research philosophies, and we believe it is important to clarify these stances as they have influenced our methodological choices and research process.

3.1 Research Philosophy

In accordance with the study's postmodernist departure, it views *"all knowledge to be a construction of one sort or another and the product of language and discourse"* (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 244). Given the multifaceted nature of food and eating practices, that is, the multitude of meanings attached to the phenomena, we view them as social constructions. The sourdough phenomenon, as well as the individuals engaging in the practice, needs to be addressed from a social constructivist perspective to further understand the socio-cultural meanings and emotions consumers attach to their consumption practices. In other words, this study's ontological view is constructivist as it presupposes that phenomena within the social world are socially constructed and meaning is continuously produced, reproduced and revised by the social actors' perceptions (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This stands in contrast to the modernist notion of reality as uncontested and singular (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995).

Seen from a social constructivist perspective, truth is not regarded stable but in constant flux and therefore no universal rules exist (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Reality should hence not be viewed as permanently circumscribed and finite but instead as a continuous expansion of production (Bauman, 2001). Firat and Venkatesh express:

"What postmodernism proposes is the construction of a cultural and philosophical space that is both human and sensible. Instead of universalism in thought and practice, it offers localisms and particularisms. Instead of subject-centered reason, it offers subject-centered experiences. Instead of single truth, it acknowledges regimes of truth. Instead of science as the primary vehicle of knowledge, it gives equal status to narratives, discourses, subjective accounts, and aesthetic concerns in the grounding of knowledge." (1995: 244)

As consumers' subjective meanings of social actions are central for our study, we employ a hermeneutic epistemological view allowing for richer descriptions of subjective experiences

(Thompson, 1997). We acknowledge that knowledge about humans and their institutions is fundamentally different from knowledge about objects of the natural sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In other words, as Elliot and Elliot (2003) state, human beings are viewed as subject and inconsistent, changing in time, space and context. The departure within the hermeneutic framework for meaning construction means that this study will elucidate the experimental, socio-cultural and historical background of consumption (Thompson, 1997).

3.2 Research Strategy

As our study strives to generate and extend theory on foodies in particular and consumer culture in general, we carry out an exploratory study. In accordance, our research process is of inductive nature, which according to Bryman and Bell (2007) is suitable when trying to contribute to the evolution of theory rather than testing existing ones. Or, in the words of Geertz (1973): *“Consumer culture theorists do not study consumption contexts; they study in consumption contexts to generate new constructs and theoretical insights and to extend existing theoretical formulations.”* (in Arnould & Thompson, 2005: 869) However, in strive to remain reflexive we have employed an iterative strategy when collecting data, enabling us to intertwine back and forth between theory and findings throughout the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

This study deploys a qualitative research strategy, as CCT focuses on the experiential and sociocultural dimensions of consumption that according to Arnould & Thompson (2005) are not simply accessible through experiments or surveys. A qualitative research strategy is advantageous when researchers strive to obtain an understanding of consumer perceptions and meanings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Correspondingly, Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that a qualitative research strategy enables the researchers to be flexible and non-structured, which is critical when recognizing the socio-cultural meanings attached to consumption patterns. Qualitative research is in its purposes much more intensive than extensive. One of the main premises of qualitative research is that less is more meaning that with fewer participants a more precise and accurate work can be carried out than often is the case with a breadth of research subjects. (McCracken, 1988)

3.3 Cultural Research

“No adequate knowledge of social behavior can be developed without an understanding of the symbolic world of the subjects of study, seeing the world through their eyes and using their shared meanings [...] This involves learning the language in use: dialect, jargon, special uses of words, neologisms.” (Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 216)

In our study, we view the consumer’s’ food and eating activities as parts of wider social, historical and cultural frameworks. To understand the socio-cultural meanings and discourses attached to food consumption practices within the foodie culture, we need a methodology that allows us to probe deeply into the respondents’ life-worlds. Employing ethnography, we are able to *“submerge ourselves into the social settings of the respondents’ lives”* (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 406). To achieve this, we consider ethnography being the most efficient methodology as

it aims to “*decode, translate and interpret behaviors and attached meaning systems*” (Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 216). Thus, it allows us to obtain rich data through which we can make bold interpretations and construct thick descriptions. (Ibid.)

Ethnography designates the practices of writing (*graphy*) about people and cultures (*ethno*) (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 425) and is the oldest methodology for studying social contexts characterized by ‘deep hanging out’ (Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 216). Wirth-Fellman (1999) argues that as ethnographers observe the study subjects in their natural habitat it enables for detailed data that would not be found otherwise. Ethnography is hence a powerful means of “*getting your pants dirty*” and study behavior in natural settings (Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 216).

Ethnography has progressively gained ground within marketing and consumer research, as researchers increasingly engage in ethnographic methods when studying consumers (Wirth-Fellman, 1999; Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Bryman and Bell (2007: 425) view this as a “*manifestation of the growing postmodernist influences within research and the subsequent emphasis on reflexivity*”. Elliot and Elliot (2003) argue that the use of ethnographic methods have emerged in light of the notion that consumers are ambiguous, irrational and many times unaware of their behavior. Hence, there are great limitations of asking, as people don’t always do as they say (Wirth-Fellman, 1999).

Naturally, ethnography is not without concerns or deficiencies. Ethnographic methods are criticized for being overly informal, and skeptics proclaim that ethnography is “*nothing more than a casual conversation*” (Schembri, 2009: 1308). Elliot and Elliot (2003) further explain that the insight generation process within ethnography is more interpretive than a quantitative study and that the generated insights therefore can be more ambiguous. Nevertheless, as a fundamental presumption of ethnography is that of context-dependency, the main objective is therefore not generalizability. Rather, it strives to understand the world through the eyes of those in study, which means that contexts, cultures and humans are the central focus (Schembri, 2009).

As a researcher we are aware that ethnography requires a large-scale amount of time and effort. Recognizing the limitations of this study, both time and monetary-wise, it would be unrealistic to aim at conducting a full-scale ethnographic study. This is simply not achievable. Instead, this study should rather be viewed as a ‘micro-ethnography’, which according to Bryman and Bell (2007: 427) involves focusing on a particular aspect of a culture – in our case sourdough practitioners within the greater foodie culture. The authors argue that micro-ethnography is suitable when the study is to be carried out within a shorter period of time, like in our case.

3.4 Research Methods and Data Collection

As CCT commits to “*multi-method investigations of consumption phenomena in natural settings*” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), this study’s methodology is built up by combining ethnographic informant diaries and in-depth ‘long interviews’ (as described by McCracken, 1988) with deliberately selected participants. Bryman and Bell (2007) contend that

complementing research methods, in research often termed ‘triangulation’, helps the researcher gain a profound understanding of the multifaceted social reality and functions as a means to confirm that interpretations of the subject of study have been made correctly. Additionally, we have conducted a series of informal interviews, what Agar (1996: 158) terms as ‘hanging out’, with people knowledgeable about the sourdough culture in beginning of the study. As Schembri (2009) maintains, initial informal interviews can effectively provide the researcher with a comprehensive contextual framework of the culture in study.

Informant Diaries

Through the use of informant diaries we let the respondents prepare their own stimulus documenting experiences in their everyday life that demonstrate their relationship with food (McCracken, 1988). When used in combination with other data-collection methods, informant diaries expose important differences (Elliot & Elliot, 2003). Much of this stems from the fact that the diaries give access to first-hand data less imposed by the researchers (Wirth-Fellman, 1999). A couple of weeks prior to the in-depth interviews we provided our respondents with diaries. In the diaries, the informants were to report on their everyday food and sourdough activities on five different days within a two-week period. The five days were thematized around for example ‘a relaxed day’, ‘a day with baking in focus’ and ‘a day where you invite friends to dinner’, in order to ensure a nuanced overview of the everyday food practices and the respondents were free to pick the days that were most suitable to them. (The diary in its entirety is presented in Appendix 1)

The aim was to extract rich and in-depth information about the socio-cultural meanings and discourses attached to the respondents’ food and eating practices, which is why the questions in the diaries were of open-ended nature and the participants were asked to broadly and extensively entail the routines, thoughts, emotions involved in their everyday food and sourdough practices. The diaries provided us with the respondents’ own photos, pictures and detailed descriptions of their everyday food consumption patterns. As McCracken (1988) asserts, the pictures in the diaries helped to foreground aspects of living experiences that would otherwise not have been prompted. The informant diaries enabled our respondents to give a rich narrative of their food and eating practices without our intervention, and we therefore argue that the diaries enabled us to “*walk a mile in their shoes*” and were invited to the respondents’ worlds of symbolic meanings (Hochschild, 1979 in Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 216). The subsequent in-depth interviews allowed us to delve deeper into the socio-cultural meanings and discourses that the diaries entailed.

Ethnographic Interviews

In-depth ethnographic interviews are used to capture rich and detailed information concerning the interviewees’ perceptions, emotions and meanings, which is focal for our area of study. Qualitative interviews are used to achieve *understanding* rather than *explanation* of behavior, patterns and emotions. (Bryman & Bell, 2007) There are two primary types of qualitative interviews: unstructured and semi-structured where the most essential difference is constituted by the unstructured interviews more ‘relaxed’ nature more resembling to an everyday

conversation, whereas a semi-structured interview departs from relatively specific themes presumed to be covered (Ibid.)

To achieve the profound understanding that our study aimed at, the interviews were loosely structured and involved non-directive questions to stimulate the respondents into elaborating on particular broad areas, as *“much of the richest data which ethnography can capture comes from the whole realm of informal talk between researcher and informants”* (Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 217). However, in light of the study’s time restraints as well as our own lack of interviewing experience, we considered semi-structured interviews comprising an interview guide the most realistic choice. Bryman and Bell (2007) suggest semi-structured interviews for studies with a distinctive focus ensuring that it does not turn into simply a ‘casual conversation’ entangled in topics irrelevant for the study.

Due to reasons of significance and guarantee that all key themes become covered, Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) argue for the use of at least a checklist to navigate in-depth interviews. McCracken (1988) emphasizes that the interview guide facilitates for the researcher to carefully attend to the respondent’s accounts, while not having to formulate themes during the demanding interview circumstance. It enables the researcher to order data and to ‘free’ him and at the same time concentrate on the tasks at hand. (Ibid)

As we strive to maintain a reflexive attitude in this study, we believe that the combination of informant diaries and in-depth interviews helped us circumvent some of the peculiarities with interviews. Denoting the interview as a *“socially and linguistically complex situation”*, Alvesson expresses (2003: 13) caution not to simplify or idealize the interview situation or trusting the interviewee primarily as a *“competent and moral truth teller, acting in the service of science and producing the data needed to reveal his or her “interior” (i.e., experiences, feelings, values)”*.

Within an interview situation as well as other methods where the researcher is subjectively involved in the environment, there is always the issue of reciprocal influence. McCracken (1988) emphasizes that it is beneficial to establish a meaningful researcher-respondent relationship, however the relationship should not become too intimate because tasks can be unclear and the interview situation complex. Bryman and Bell (2007) underline that researchers themselves represent an audience to the actors in study and that it is therefore unavoidable that the researcher does not have any effect at all on the very nature of the world in study. Institutional affiliation, the description of the study, the researcher’s appearance, and mode of dress et cetera are cues that influence the way in which the respondent responds to the questions. Likewise, the respondent can adjust the narratives according to what is perceived the sought-after reply (McCracken, 1988). Correspondingly, the researchers can run the risk of ‘going native’ and becoming too empathetic with the views and beliefs of the study subjects (McDonald, 2005).

We believe that the combination of diaries and interviews helped us remain reflexive as it gave

us access to different levels of abstraction in the data collecting methods (Elliot & Elliot, 2003: 218). The diaries accompanied the respondents in their everyday lives and gave them greater freedom in constructing their own narratives, whereas we in the interviews could stimulate deeper reflection and discussion around the most important themes for the study. Thanks to this, we believe that we successfully obtained the *“greater appreciation for the potential richness of meaning in complex empirical material”* that Alvesson (2003) argues reflexivity enables.

3.5 Sampling Method and Participant Selection Criteria

Within qualitative research, the primary objective does not concern generalizability but rather finding the right participants open to share their life experiences (McCracken, 1988). Our aim in this study has been to explore how food in general and sourdough in particular are used to construct consumers’ sense of self in distinction to others. With departure in the foodie literature and the definition of foodies as *“people with a longstanding passion for eating and learning about food but who are not food professionals”* (Cairns et al., 2010: 592), it has been critical for us to find participants with a genuine, virtually extreme, passion for food and specifically sourdough.

One critical aspect of practical studies is sampling, as it is rarely possible to make a complete documentation of a population (Brown, 2006). In dealing with large choice sets it is therefore indispensable to select informants on the basis of certain criteria. When elaborating different sampling methods, we considered it inappropriate to use so-called ‘snowball sampling’ or ‘convenience sampling’ methods, as we then would run the risk of winding up with convenient but inadequate research participants. As the purpose has been to analyze a phenomenon rather than quantify it, a large random and statistically representative sample was not necessary. On the contrary, a strategic sample was more appropriate. In order to get as comprehensive a picture as possible of the phenomena, we selected informants on the basis of a certain characteristic namely a genuine passion for sourdough.

Instead, we decided to use ‘strategic sampling’ to guarantee finding appropriate respondents, who could possibly contribute to the study’s focus. Our principal criteria for participation was inspired by Cairns et al.’s (2010) definition of foodies and required that the participants had a genuine interest in sourdough practices but do not have baker as a full-time profession. As we strived to find consumers that were almost fanatically dedicated to sourdough and food (authors argue for the efficiency of illuminating extreme consumers to enlighten general issues among the ‘normal’ consumers), we understood that we had to find them ourselves. In this process, we used the Internet as primary means to find the right participants for the study.

Our sample includes six participants and out of these six we found five through their personal sourdough blogs. One of the respondents even runs an own site focused on bread baking and sourdough with about 600 members. With this high engagement, it is obvious that sourdough plays a key role in their lives as well as their communicated identity. Our respondent base consists of three males and three females ranging from 22 to 52 years old. Four of them live in urban areas and two in smaller cities. McCracken (1988) recommends to intentionally creating

contrasts within the group of interviewees, which can be of age, gender, status, education, or occupation. Our respondents are connected by their shared sourdough interest but otherwise they are very different as they all have varying backgrounds, different education, are in different life stages and live in different cities. See the table below for a closer overview of the respondents' profiles:

Name	Sex	Age	Nationality	Residence	Education	Occupation
Adam*	Male	22	Swedish	Lund	Criminology	Student
Carin*	Female	24	Danish	Copenhagen	Interactive Design	Student
José*	Male	27	Portuguese	Stockholm	Computer Engineering	IT Consultant
Peter*	Male	38	Swedish	Stockholm	Business Administration	IT Consultant
Rosemarie*	Female	52	Swedish	Falun	No higher education	Housewife
Sara*	Female	43	Swedish	Eslöv	Product Development	Mechanical Engineer

Table 3.1. *The names are pseudonyms*

3.6 Designing and Conducting the Interviews

Bryman and Bell (2007) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) prompt that talking in a daily conversational manner enables circularly exchange of thoughts and consequently development of understanding of the respondents' personal 'world'. Therefore, our interview guide (see Appendix 1) was not a long list of defined questions but a repertoire of a broad set of themes that were critical to cover. (Elliot & Elliot, 2003) In designing our interview guide and conducting the interviews, we took departure in McCracken's (1988) 'the long interview' as well as Elliot and Elliot's (2003) advice on ethnographic interviews. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), it is of highest importance that the interview guide mirrors the study's research focus. We were therefore cautious to ensure that the included themes would provide us with rich material to answer our research question.

For each and every theme, we prepared a series of general and non-directive questions, what McCracken (1988) refers to as 'grand-tour questions'. Non-directive questions are key ingredients in ethnographic interviews and function as triggers that stimulate interviewees to talk about a particular broad area (Elliot & Elliot, 2003). When designing these questions we were inspired by the existential-phenomenological approach in asking about specific lived experiences rather than asking 'why' questions as these can arouse feelings of prejudgment and protective responses (Thompson et al., 1989). We strived to include open and descriptive

questions regarding life experiences and daily routines.

Every grand-tour question was followed by McCracken's (1988) 'floating prompts', which involves using paralinguistic or repeating important terms that the respondent expresses in order to sustain the respondents' narrative. The combination of grand tour and floating prompts are efficient means to obtain all the testimony needed. However, "*it is frequently the case that the categories that have been identified in the literature review and the cultural review do not emerge spontaneously in the course of the interview. In these cases, the investigator must be prepared to take a more 'proactive' and obtrusive position*" (Ibid.: 37) Therefore, we included a set of more direct and conspicuous questions at the end of every theme preventing the respondent from voluntarily speak about a certain area.

The in-depth interviews lasted between one and two hours and we were both present during the interviews. Thompson et al. (1989: 138) highlight the importance of researcher-respondent equality within the interview stressing: "*the interviewer does not want to be seen as more powerful or knowledgeable because the respondent must be the expert on his or her own experiences*". Considering this argument, we carefully elaborated how the presence of us both would affect the power balance, as the 'interviewer effects' (Bryman & Bell, 2007) naturally are greater with two researchers present. However, we believe that the advantages of being two outweighed the disadvantages, primarily because we shared the burden of interpretation and were able to discuss and substantiate observations between ourselves, which ought to increase the trustworthiness of the qualitative study (Ibid.). The results were hence more carefully reflected upon. According to Thompson (1989), a drawback with the lone researcher is that he or she can be overwhelmed by the interpretive task and overlook details. We tried to live after the motto 'talk is silver, silence is golden' and were cautious to let the respondents talk uninterruptedly and elaborate their accounts freely. We considered this specifically important to sustain a healthy power balance and to avoid 'taking over' the interview.

Being aware of Alvesson's (2003) caution regarding the complexity of interview situations, it was of utmost importance for us to carry out the interviews in a milieu and at a time where the respondents felt absolutely comfortable and relaxed. Four out of the six interviews were carried out in the respondents' own homes and during the afternoon. Food was incorporated into each and every interview as all of the respondents had prepared something to eat for us (three of them even served us their own-baked sourdough bread) and we brought complimentary snacks as well. The idea of meeting over 'fika' gave the interviews a casual and informal atmosphere, which seemed to really stimulate the interviewees' thoughts.

Due to geographical limitations, the two remaining interviews could not be carried out in the home environment. Nonetheless, we stressed to meet at a café in order to integrate food and remain a casual atmosphere of the interviews. The first interview took place at the bistro/café Urban Deli at Söder in Stockholm. We deliberately chose this place, as it is known for its delicacies, sourdough bread among others, where we had lunch together in a casual manner. The café was vivid and a bit noisy, which was not ultimate for the interview, however the sound

recording was not affected. The second interview took place over a cup of coffee at Espresso House Rådmanngatan in Stockholm, as it was nearby the respondent's office. We got a table in a calm corner of the café and could easily converse without disturbances. Incorporating food into these two out-of-home interviews as well, we managed to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere.

The diaries facilitated the interview procedure notably, as we could depart from the narratives expressed in the diaries and probe deeper into the subjects and meanings that emerged. Through this, we could utilize the 'auto-driving' technique, which means that the interviewee is asked to reflect upon a visual document and provide his or her personal account (McCracken, 1988). The diaries were hence very useful helping the interviewees further elucidating specific emotions and meanings connected to food and food practices.

The conversations were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. All the interviewees were extremely welcoming and happy (sometimes even honored) that we were willing to listen to their accounts. Their colorful personalities and openness enabled us to really 'tap' them on descriptions and draw out rich material from the interviews as well as the diaries, which naturally eased the subsequent interpretation process.

3.7 Interpreting the Data

Data management is perhaps one of the qualitative researchers' major challenges. It is inevitable for the researcher to deal with a big chunk of data, and imagination is necessary to identify patterns and themes. The researcher hence functions as an instrument in the interpretation process and personal involvement is required to construct insightful linkages between background knowledge and empirical texts. (McCracken, 1988)

As researchers we are bearers of cultural influences meaning that conclusions are drawn from personal reflections and interpretations. Following the hermeneutic approach we were therefore conscious of subjectivity throughout the interpretation process. (Thompson, 1997) However, as we were attentive to this notion, we believe our interpretations of consumer narratives allowed for richer descriptions and more fruitful interpretations ending up in 'fusion of horizons' which means a "*smooth mingling of the researchers' frames of references*" (Thompson, Pollio & Locander, 1994: 434).

In light of the hermeneutical framework we have identified emergent themes from which we have structured the subsequent analysis from the participants' narratives in the diaries and the interview transcriptions. The diaries were very fruitful in the interpretation process, as they served to substantiate or challenge constructs, themes and meanings that we identified within the interviews. This eased our ability to be creative and artistic in our interpretations and gave us a broader view of the issues we identified. In a postmodern fashion in order to discern symbolic meanings, we focused on capturing the discourses expressed in the narratives. These meanings require a multidimensional interpretation as they according to Thompson (1997) are embedded in complex social and historical relationships.

When interpreting the empirical material, we took into consideration that two of our interviewees were of foreign descent, which could bring about difficulties. As language is paramount in hermeneutic interpretations (Thompson et al., 1994), we underline that Carin is of Danish origin and the interview was carried out in Danish. As one of us work part-time in Copenhagen and thus is familiar with the language, the interview could successfully be transcribed into Swedish. Somehow, it is naturally possible that some of the meanings were misinterpreted and that the richness of the narrative was affected. Also, José has only spent four years in Sweden but he speaks Swedish fluently with only a few grammatical mistakes. However, if his native language was Swedish, his accounts could have been richer.

Furthermore, as the interviews were carried out in Swedish, quotations subsequently had to be translated into English. In this process, the meaning of some words naturally lose its originality. As we consider language imperative we did the best we could to capture the original meanings and translate the consumer narratives as precise as possible.

4 Analysis

In this chapter we analyze and categorize the sourdough practitioners' narratives in order to provide a framework for understanding the discourses and sociocultural meanings attached to their sourdough practices, as well as how these are part of their identity projects. To provide the reader with a comprehensive picture over the six interviewees, we introduce the chapter with six brief profile descriptions. Central to the rest of the analysis is a critical examination of the discourses connected to three identified contradictions encompassing the sourdough phenomenon, in relation to the concepts introduced in the theoretical framework.

In line with CCT's focus on in-depth understanding for consumer meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), we initiate the analysis chapter with six rich respondent profile depictions. Our hope is that the respondent profiles provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of who the consumers engaging in sourdough practices are and each participant's prominent characters, before we probe deeper into the critical issues.

This means that the first part of the analysis is more descriptive whilst the second offers a critical discussion, as we subsequently will turn focus to the most prominent discourses we have found that the participants express around sourdough and food. We organize this part around three identified paradoxes within the sourdough culture, which are centered on some of the most critical dimensions of the foodie culture. The paradoxes are: *simplicity versus complexity*, *popularized versus distinctive* as well as *enacting versus challenging gender roles*.

4.1 Respondents and Their Food Practices

These following respondent profiles will serve to illustrate how food practices in general and sourdough practices in particular interplay in their lives illuminating certain characteristics of the typical foodie as defined by the literature (Cairns et. al., 2010; Johnston & Baumann). For the sake of privacy, the practitioners are given pseudonyms.

Food in general and sourdough in particular play a great role in the interviewees' lives and is central to their identities and lifestyles, as suggested by Lupton (2005). In addition, sourdough ties them together and functions as a means for expressing collective identities and lifestyles. In this sense, their sourdough consumption patterns are used as symbolic boundaries and function as a means to establish not only individual but also collective lifestyles that Holt (1997) emphasizes. We will delve deeper into these notions when elaborating the participants' identities and lifestyles below.

Adam - Leisure and Relaxation

Adam is 22 years old and has quite recently started studying towards a Bachelor in Criminology in Lund. He is originally from a smaller city up north in Sweden, and lives in an apartment in Lund together with his girlfriend. On his spare time he engages in a range of different leisure activities. He is passionate about music and plays the guitar, and likes to play video games for relaxation. His primary leisure pursuit is nonetheless cooking and specifically baking with

sourdough. He sees himself as more interested in food than people in general and emphasizes cooking at home rather than eating out. As a reaction against the bad quality of cheap meat, he and his girlfriend have increasingly started to cook more vegetarian dishes. He is concerned with the genuineness of food and tries to avoid semi-manufactures, just like the foodies Johnston and Baumann (2010) describe. When discussing the role of food in his life, Adam portrays cooking and baking as a means to relax and do something completely different from his regular commitments:

“It is recreational, I relax and commit only to what I am actually doing in the moment. The same goes for baking with sourdough - it is a way of thinking about something else for a while [...] It is a pretty stressful society we are living in today, so this becomes some sort of therapy.”

Adam’s arguments entail that sourdough practices enable consumers to release stress and escape the hassles of everyday life, which resembles Campbell’s (2005) description of craft consumption as an *“oasis of personal self-expression and authenticity in what is an ever widening ‘desert’ of commodification and marketization”*. The lengthy process of sourdough is what fascinates Adam the most, and he values that *“it takes a great deal of time, and builds up great excitement”*.

Carin - Nostalgia and Reminiscence

Carin is a 24-year old girl originally from a small village just outside of Copenhagen. However, she has lived in Copenhagen for six years in the multi-cultural and hip area of Nørrebro. She is studying towards a Bachelor in Interactive Design and runs a blog where she shares her cooking and baking creations combined with design exhibitions. Every time she cooks or bakes something new, she simultaneously creates a graphic illustration that represents the actual creation. Through this, her blog expresses her two greatest passions in life: baking and designing.

Carin prefers to buy local and ecologically produced food especially when it comes to dairy and animal products. She is passionate about animals and cannot stand the thought of them being mistreated, which demonstrates the antipathy for inhumane food processes that Johnston and Baumann (2010) express is a common characteristic of foodies. Carin dedicates herself fully to her cooking and baking practices and likes to cook meals from the ground. She has been baking literally her entire life, as her mother involved her in the kitchen already at the age of two and she was provided with her own tools and responsibilities. Thus, she developed a passion for baking in her early years and baking enables her to reminisce memories from her childhood, which Cairns et al. (2010) term as ‘foodie memories’ where the mother often has a central role. Primarily, she focused on pastries but she was subsequently intrigued by sourdough because of its specific characteristics:

“I understood that sourdough had something unique, something different from other bread, and I wanted to explore the magical”.

Now sourdough has become an essential part in Carin's everyday life, which is confirmed by her best friend, stating it has a *"tremendous role, she talks very much about it"*. Carin believes there is a great deal of nostalgia involved in sourdough baking and sees it as a way for people to travel back in time, which draws upon the historic dimension of authenticity (Ashley et al., 2004). Carin has a special liking for the style of the 50's and loves art and design with a romantic style. She talks passionately about the bread's aesthetic attractiveness:

"It lies an magnetism in the bread's appearance, I love that they become a bit 'retro', it is a real handicraft to create that bread. Bread is just something really beautiful".

José - Emotions and Prestige

José is a 27-year old man with Portuguese descent who has been living in Sweden only the last couple of years. He resides in the southern parts of Stockholm and works as an IT consultant right in the city center, however he moonlights as a baker at various sourdough bakeries in Stockholm during the weekends. He describes that his interest for cooking culminated when he travelled to Paris last year to take the 'Cordon Bleu Certificate' in basic cuisine.

Cooking and baking are activities involving a wide chain of feelings for José. He takes pleasure in cooking and has a special liking for slow food and values extensive processes. José started baking with sourdough partly because he missed the genuine bread from back home in Portugal and describes that sourdough evokes many emotions and reflections within him:

"The dough is soft and nice, it is a living organism. That is the cool thing about it, it is hard to describe but to me it is a great deal of fun."

He is always fully committed to his food and baking practices, and sees them as artistic performances, mirroring the definition of a foodie as someone who considers food to be an art, equaling it with other art forms like painting and drama (Levy & Bar, 1984, in Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 53). Thus, in addition to releasing feelings of joy and happiness, he expresses the great pressure of 'making a performance' when cooking and baking:

"Cooking is a way of challenging myself. It is like golf, you compete against yourself. If I fail I feel anger and despair but my brain immediately starts thinking about what the problem was, and how to fix it the next time."

José admits that his great passion for food many times has caused him to contemplate giving up his career as an IT consultant and start his own restaurant or bakery but that he has been too afraid of the great changes it would mean in his life.

Peter - Expertise and Experimentation

Peter is a 38-year old man with half Swedish half Cypriot descent living in the Northern suburbs of Stockholm together with his South Korean wife. He works fulltime as an IT consultant in the city, and has a higher education in Business Administration. In his own words,

Peter describes himself and his wife as ‘real foodies’ and his extreme passion for genuine and authentic food practices takes up most of his leisure time. However, he is also very enthusiastic about writing and has written a series of fantasy novels.

Peter’s enthusiasm for ‘real food’ is very much driven by his exceptional desires to continuously enhance his knowledge about food practices, which is common for foodies (Johnston and Baumann, 2010). This can be seen in his numerous experimental food projects, ranging from fermenting sauerkraut and cucumber to stuffing sausages. Additionally, Peter and his wife grow a mixture of vegetables and berries in their garden from which they make their own jams and marmalades. Peter emphasizes that he *“loves to create most food from the ground, it is one of those childish things - do it yourself. I can do it myself.”*

This drive is very much reflected in Peter’s sourdough practices. He possesses a great deal of knowledge and expertise about the processes involved in sourdough. To him, engaging in sourdough baking means living out an experimental and innovative desire and he emphasizes the pursuit of ‘finding the perfect bread’ and the satisfaction he experiences when succeeding with a sourdough baking process. His pursuits to attain and sustain his knowledge and expertise about food are regularly viewed as typically manly characteristics (Cairns et al., 2010).

Rosemary - Fostering and Nurturing

Rosemary is a 52-year old woman of half Swedish, half German origin. She grew up in Stockholm but subsequently moved to the smaller city of Falun where she currently resides with her partner and two teenage daughters. Rosemary is a full-time housewife but has education and experience in the food and baking sphere. Her genuine interest in cooking and baking derives much from her father, who claimed: *“a hefty man can take care of himself”*. Rosemary therefore started baking when she was very young and has thereafter dedicated much of her life to her extraordinary passion for baking and cooking.

She proudly states:

“I bought my first cookbook when I was 13 years old and the last time I counted my collection of cookbooks they had amounted to 500.”

Throughout her motherhood, she has put great emphasis on providing her daughters with the ‘real’, ‘genuine’ and unprocessed food that is emphasized among foodies (Johnston & Baumann, 2010), which she has cooked at home from the ground. When she cooks, she always makes large servings to ensure that her family always has good food available at home. Rosemary shows a great deal of the ‘caring’ traits that according to Cairns et al. (2010) and Hollows (2003a) traditionally have been assigned to females in the kitchen.

Rosemary has a great heritage of sourdough in her family and her grandmother baked with sourdough and she was provided with the ‘classic’ German sourdough bread when little. Rosemary started experimenting with sourdough in 1982, which means that she has baked with

sourdough for remarkably 30 years. Rosemary's passion for bread can be seen in her primary pastime: she runs a bread site. The site is three years old and now has 600 members. The site is used as a medium to disseminate her exceptional knowledge and expertise about sourdough and she helps other practitioners succeed with their endeavors. Her role as a master of knowledge simultaneously as cooking for nurturing purposes shows that she has traditional masculine and feminine dispositions to food (Hollows, 2003a; Cairns et al., 2010).

Sara - Craftsmanship and Artisan Practices

Sara is a 43-year old woman living with her partner and her cat in the flat lands of Skåne, in a small town called Eslöv. Sara holds a university degree in Product Development and currently works as a Mechanical Engineer. In addition, she has studied handicraft for two years at a folk college, focusing on handicrafts made with fur, skin and leather. Since her childhood, Sara has been extremely creative and has crafted a great deal of objects on her leisure time, ranging from clothing and purses to furniture, which now has a spot in her home. In this sense, she is an astonishing depiction of Campbell's (2005) craft consumer. Another big passion in Sara's life is riding the motorcycle and she is a member of two motorcycle clubs in Skåne.

Sara is concerned with the quality and expresses that she *“tries to choose as pure food as possible, and avoid semi-manufactures”*. Her sourdough interest emerged a couple of years ago when she became unemployed and found herself with a great deal of time on her hands. Now sourdough has become a natural ingredient in her everyday life, but she also loves baking pastries of different kinds and recently she has developed a certain fondness for macaroons.

Cooking and baking practices in general, and sourdough in particular, have successively become greater pastimes for Sara to express her artistry and inventiveness, characteristics commonly regarded as masculine when doing food (Cairns et al., 2010). She reflects upon this when discussing sourdough's role in her life:

“It is probably that you create something. I don't have time with the handicraft right now, as it is such a lengthy start-up time. But the bread works, it gives the same rush in the head and it involves the same engagement in figuring out recipes a couple of days before initiating the baking process. So it is still about solving problems; why did this not turn out the way it was supposed to do, etcetera. Everything still comes out of your own hands.”

We Are All 'Sourdough Foodies'

The above illustrated narratives entail that the sourdough practitioners in our study definitely are part of Cairns et al.'s denotation of foodies as *“people with a longstanding passion for eating and learning about food but who are not food professionals”* (2010: 592). Johnston and Baumann (2010) denote that foodies' quest for 'good food' meaning that they are concerned with the quality and genuineness of the products. Our respondents, who all proclaim that they prefer 'real' and 'clean' food, actively articulate this pursuit. They treasure homemade authentic food and oppose half-fabricates and the excessive use of additives. Our respondents share a genuine passion for food in general and sourdough in particular and invest a great deal of time

and engagement in their daily lives to the pursuits of cooking and baking. Deriving from this, we will throughout the analysis conceptualize our participants as ‘sourdough foodies’.

There is no doubt that the six interviewees share a genuine passion for the little bubbling clump made of the simplest ingredients: water, flour and salt. It is a living creature they have invested time and engagement in creating and maintaining alive. The aforementioned profiles reveal that there is no coincidence engaging in sourdough practice intrigues consumers who have very creative personalities, just like the individuals Campbell (2005) describe as craft consumers. Many of them also compare sourdough practice to other creative and recreational interests, describing that they get the same rush and feeling of arousal when letting their hands smoothly take on the soft little organism.

Sourdough as a Social Link and a Collective Lifestyle

From the sourdough foodies’ narratives, it is apparent that as sourdough practices fill such a great function in the foodies’ lives, they express their personal identities through their practices. José illustrates this telling:

“Sourdough and bread baking are big parts of my life. People think I’m a bit eccentric but I think it’s cool and entertaining.”

One major channel for this is naturally their blogs, where information and personal experiences are disseminated. The sourdough foodies use their blogs to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, share pictures on their aesthetic sourdough creations and express feelings and emotions arisen in connection with the practices. Adam is the only one without a blog, but instead he uses Facebook to communicate his sourdough endeavors.

Carin acknowledges: *“I think my great sourdough interest also has resulted in me having the blog where I write and reflect about everything. That makes it an extremely big part of my life. And it also enables a greater dialogue with other people who are also interested in it”*.

Interestingly, the sourdough foodies in our study show that in addition to expressing their personal identities, the blogs are further used as means to build collective identities with other sourdough passionate.

Rosemary explains that thanks to, and because of, her site she can interact with other sourdough foodies. Sara refers to a blog she follows, expressing that: *“she makes really good recipes, very good bread, I have tried some of hers as well”*. The blogs thus serve as a means to accomplish their need for interaction, as it ‘links’ them together virally. Although fairly asynchronous, the blogs serve as an interactional medium through which consumption values and practices can be shared. (Mitchell, 2011)

Adam acknowledges that: *“I exchange thoughts via Internet and we share tips with each other. I give pieces of advice also to my close friends, if I have tried out something and it proved*

successful”. For him, baking and sourdough function as a social link not only virally but also physically in his circle of friends. They have long been gathering around ‘coffee parties’ where each and every guest have brought a baking creation to serve the others, and he has systematically introduced his sourdough bread at the parties and through that inspired a number of friends to start engaging in the practice. The urge to share their sourdough interest with like-minded consumers is greatly expressed among the respondents showing how the shared consumption patterns function as ways of identifying with each other and build collective lifestyles, as depicted in the literature (Lupton, 2005; Holt, 1997).

4.2 Sourdough - A Matter of Contradictions

Discourses within the foodie culture are of paramount importance as they dovetail consumer food practices and their cultural reminiscence into a comprehensive system of knowledge. Exploring foodie discourses therefore allows us to broaden our views to see what underlying beliefs and ideologies that sourdough practices uncovers, and make contributions to the area of interest. As we have aimed to explore how particular discourses around sourdough are shaped, negotiated and articulated in everyday life of sourdough consumers as important representations of their identities, we will use the following part of the analysis to discuss the three most evident paradoxes in the sourdough foodies discourses.

We find that these paradoxes embrace the contextual and socio-cultural dimensions of sourdough consumption and therefore serve as guidance towards finding a conclusion how identity construction is a condition for as well as a consequence of sourdough consumption. The first paradox - *simplicity versus complexity* - concerns on the one hand the simple, pure and authentic experiences that sourdough practice provides, and on the other the more complex sociocultural influences and concrete chemical processes involved. The second paradox - *popularized versus distinctive* - concerns the democracy that sourdough practice has experienced in recent years due to the proliferation of knowledge, rise in sourdough blogs, learning courses and enthusiastic home bakers. On the other hand, discourses on sourdough reveal that sourdough is very complex and distinguishing and attracts practitioners with a certain creative and knowledgeable talent. The last paradox, - *enacting but simultaneously challenging gender roles* - considers the important tension that is realized with regards to sourdough practice between authorizing typical gender ideals as presented in the foodie literature alternatively challenge them.

Simplicity versus Complexity

The first paradox identified in the interviewees’ narratives is the tension between simplicity and complexity. Sourdough is very simple as it consists of only three essential ingredients (flour, water and salt) and ‘takes care of itself’ once the dough has been set. However, when listening to the consumers’ endeavors with sourdough, it becomes apparent that a fairly large amount of knowledge and skills are required to succeed properly. In the following section we will discuss this tension through one of the most important dimensions of sourdough practice; authenticity. Sourdough foodies, similar to foodies in general (Johnston & Baumann, 2010), stress the

importance of authenticity and we have recognized that authenticity is prominent in their lives in various ways. First of all, we turn to the dimension of simplicity.

Flour, Water and Salt, That's All

Cairns et al. (2010) acknowledge that authenticity is a socially constructed phenomenon that has increasingly gained importance in the postmodern consumer society, particularly for foodies, who regard simple food as truthful, genuine and real. The sourdough foodies in this study have a clear plea for authenticity and emphasize various dimensions of authenticity, among them, simplicity. The respondents view sourdough as authentic as it consists of exceptionally simple and basic ingredients. Interestingly, all interviewees draw upon simplicity when they talk about sourdough and their particular practices, which resembles foodies as described in the literature (Johnston and Baumann, 2010; Cairns et al., 2010). They all favor baking bread at home over buying bread at the store and look upon industry-produced bread with frown and feel shame for how industry production destroy the natural, living processes characterizing sourdough. Carin describes how the simplicity with sourdough is intriguing:

“I also believe that there is something fascinating about the fact that you can make bread from only flour and water, it is so simple”.

Simplicity is often commonly assigned not only to the substance of foods but is also conceptualized in how it is produced (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Even though the sourdough processes are described as very simple in the words of the respondents, it is easily observed through their illustrative descriptions of the baking processes that sourdough practice requires a significant degree of knowledge. However, many of the interviewees agree that outsiders believe it is more complex than it actually is.

Adam illustrates brilliantly: *“When you talk to someone who does not know very much about it but who knows about the outcome, you get the impression that they believe it is ‘brain surgery’ we are doing. But, when you have tried it yourself you realize that it is not as advanced, you only need to keep an eye on what is up.”*

The quotation shows how the sourdough foodies have come to look upon their own practices as very undemanding and effortless. To them, the implicit knowledge and skills comes natural, and they believe it is easy to succeed. Simultaneously, the baking stories involve an enormous amount of terms, techniques and strategies that makes no sense whatsoever to outsiders. This can be referred to Johnston and Baumann (2010) notion that foodies’ descriptions of food as simple does not reflect inherent simplicity. Foodies thus use claims of simplicity even when the food itself seems fairly complex from an average standpoint. Surely, the language built around sourdough is both complex and comprehensive, and there are many lengthy processes involved in the practice. This becomes evident when Carin describes a ‘typical’ baking process:

“Then, when it is done I add between four and six deciliter water depending on what bread you should bake, and the flour and the grains and seeds you feel like that day and the time you feel

you have. And then I like to let it ferment either for 12 or 14 hours in the refrigerator after I have run the ‘autolyse’ [a certain baking technique]. Yes, it really is a chemical process. If you want you can ferment it on the table for just three hours, but then it is not as acidic as it becomes in the fridge and does not hold as long.”

An Antipathy For the Industrialized

One main quality of authenticity is genuineness, and the sourdough practitioners put great emphasis on that sourdough practices are genuine; you are dealing with a handicraft, as Sara describes it, that you put passion and effort into creating, just like the craft consumers Campbell (2005) describes. Johnston and Baumann (2010) argue that as standardized industry food is processed and presented without fussiness, it lacks the authentic feeling. The sourdough foodies oppose the industrialized bread filled with additives and bake bread that feels much more real to them. They are all in pursuit of pure ingredients and whole fabricates.

Sara claims: *“I try to choose as pure products as possible, and avoid half-fabricated”*. She has even bought a book titled ‘Äkta Vara’ that addresses the importance of using pure ingredients without additives. Peter pinpoints the trend of going back to ‘roots’ when choosing fabricates:

“People eat more and more fat food and avoid diet products. I never eat diet food. I always buy original milk with the highest fat content”.

He continues the discussion arguing that everything is connected. Because of the industrialization and the rise of half-fabricates as well as the rise in fast-food restaurants, people are moving back to the origins and long for what is real, genuine and untouched. We can understand from Johnston and Baumann (2010) that foodies search for real products as a contrast to the ‘fake’ and hence find this kind of foods much more ‘worthy’ to consume.

As sourdough foodies appreciate pure ingredients, sourdough practice provides satisfaction. When elaborating on this, Peter concludes that the trend of going back to the origin is very much a reaction against the growth of additives in food. Carin’s aversion to industry bread stems from her knowledge about the additives in the ‘fake’ bread. In her words, she puts it:

“I think, once you have begun baking yourself you realize that you only need water, flour and salt. That is all you need. Then you look at the back of an industrialized bread package and see ten E-numbers, milk powder and additives, I think it is disgusting.”

Peter declares:

“the first time I bought industry-baked bread was when I moved out of my child residence to study in Norway, and it was the first and the last time I have ever bought readymade bread”.

José expresses the same distaste for industry-produced bread, as he acknowledges: *“it has no flavor profile”*. When discussing Kronjäst’s industry produced ready-made sourdough basis

now available in cans in retail outlets like ICA, a shared skepticism is demonstrated. As Sara portrays in her narrative, sourdough foodies find it very sad that the industry has made claim of authenticity. When industries produce sourdough for ‘everyone’, it loses its appeal and uniqueness and as Ashley et al (2004) reason, becomes commercialized. Sara quotes:

“Now ‘Kronjäst’ has released its sourdough canned and dried, I am very skeptical towards that. It still says that you need to add a lot of yeast. I thought I would see if it is possible to feed it, because if you cannot feed it then the bacteria are dead, which means, you only have something called sourdough but isn’t sourdough but rather dead bacteria”.

The sourdough foodies’ shared knowledge about the realness of products is used to distance themselves from the uncritical consumers that just happily consume the industrialized bread. It is evident that they agree about having ‘realized’ what is genuine, while the mass consumer is still deluded and under the impression that he/she eats something that is real when it is simply fake. These consumers are looked upon as unenlightened, and the sourdough foodies express pity for their lack of knowledge. In this sense, the sourdough foodies resemble the critical consumers engaging in slow food movements, who see industrial eaters as uncritical victims who accept food with nothing real left in it (Andrews, 2008). The interviews entail how cultural differences towards uncritical consumers are mapped out and how the sourdough consumption practices mark difference from others. Holt’s (1997) argumentation that lifestyles build a boundary towards other groups is reflected in the way foodies dissociate themselves from consumers who prefer fast and ready-made choices.

Although sourdough is as simple as flour, water and salt, the underlying premises shape and negotiate prevalent discourses around sourdough consumption. In the following section we discuss more rigorously the socio-cultural meanings that consumers ascribe to their sourdough practices.

Sourdough, My Little Precious

Campbell (2005) argues that craft consumers establish a tight relationship with the cultural object and in agreement, Lupton (2005) maintains that there is a dynamic relationship between food, emotion and subjectivity. Emotional senses arise in food practices on a continuum between pleasure, satisfaction and desire to disgust, fear and anger. From the discourses we can contend that sourdough is no exception, as the interviewees transform sourdough into astonishing creations. Sourdough involves a range of emotions and the practitioners establish close relationships with the sourdough almost as the relationship between mother and child. José illustrates his personal relation with the sourdough: *“it is soft and nice, it is a living creature”*. The emotional and joyful aspect is highlighted in many other narratives as well.

José describes his feelings after completing a baking session:

“entertained, disappointed, ecstatic, sad and happy. It sounds strange but baking mixes a lot of feelings for me. I am a perfectionist and my own harshest critic”. Carin explains: *“you*

somewhat relax, it is incredibly satisfying” and Sara puts it: *“it is satisfaction, completely”*. For Adam, baking is relaxation and he views it as ‘therapy’.

Amusingly, Peter equals sourdough practice with childbearing:

“I know that some have made the analogy that it is almost like giving birth to a child. You have not heard about it? Giving birth to a child, I have even joked about it when you have made a bread and bring it in the bread towel and say, ‘it is a boy’, and then got a laugh attack”.

The following citation by Carin concludes the emotional attachment sourdough foodies typically display:

[Referring to her boyfriend] *“So he has given it the name Torben [laughter], such a classic Danish uncle’s name. And it is fun with the rhetoric of sourdough; it almost becomes a small pet, a living creature. It can of course become sour, you talk about it as it is active, it is bubbling, oh no, not it dies. Thus, people weep when the sourdough dies. Indeed, you have a responsibility for them.”*

José and Peter share the philosophy that they should one day find the ‘perfect bread’. Drawing a line between worthy and unworthy food, foodies find the former more authentic regardless of complexity (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). In this sense, the simplest ingredients serve as more authentic. However, even though only flour, water and salt are required to create a sourdough, ostensibly the interviewees establish a confidential relationship with the artifact, perhaps because it *is* a living creature. Analogous with craft consumers, foodies bring necessary skills, knowledge and passion to live out the creative and aesthetic elements of the human nature (Campbell, 2005).

Ascribing almost humanized values to the sourdough makes it more living, authentic and certainly more exciting to work with. Investing such strong connotations is evidence for foodies’ desire not only to live out their creative ability but also to create something aesthetically unique (Campbell, 2005). In so doing, they distance themselves from what Campbell (2005) calls the mundane contemporary life. In the last two sections, we turn to discuss sourdough consumption in a traditional and historical context.

Sourdough as Recourse To The Past

Authors claim that history and tradition are common dimensions of authenticity (Cairns et al., 2010). Under the condition that the food is in harmony with the cultural surrounding and in particular personal circumstances, it is considered authentic and real by foodies (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Sara talks nostalgically about her genuine interest in crafting that very much stems from her family background. Through her education in handicraft she was taught about different materials such as leather, fur and wool and how to use them for crafting. Moreover, she explains that she was born and raised in a farmer family. The family had sheep husbandry and her mother *“cut the sheep, washed the wool, spun the yarn and then sewed it”*. At that

time, she found the manufacturing process extremely boring and slow therefore she started to sew clothes out of garment pattern. Sara's lifestyle encourages artisan practices as representations of her family farming tradition.

In addition, she illustrates her commitment to and passion for the handicraft, in this case dolls she made several years ago:

“they are very naturalistic, she has a removable stomach and a crochet baby, and it is extremely carefully done”. She compares her sourdough passion with the passion for handicraft expressing: *“you create something”*.

Her preference for local taste is shed light upon when she recalls her mother's experience with sheep husbandry. Johnston and Baumann (2010) argue that mothers frequently figure in the foodies' memories, which can be explained by the fact that women often produce meals on behalf of others (DeVault, 1991, in Cairns et al., 2010: 593).

Similarly, Carin expresses that baking involves a great deal of nostalgia for her, as she and her brother have been baking together with her mother since she was very little. In explaining how her interest in sourdough grew, Carin's mother is immediately brought up as a central figure. When she and her brother were only one and a half years old they were given entrance to the kitchen. With a bowl in her hands she was allowed to take part in the baking sessions: *“stirring around and so”*. When she moved out from her secure parental residence, she realized that she had to make her own living. Thus, baking bread became an essential part of her life. Since her mother always cooked from scratch, she finds it important as well. It is apparent that Sara and Carin's socialization processes have to a significant degree formed their identities and shaped their desire for sourdough practice.

Referring to her parents, Sara also brings attention to her personal connection with the sourdough artifact. Interestingly, she also relates her friends' fear for sourdough due to the unpleasant smell to her own personal experience:

“It was also my thing in the beginning, how should sourdough smell? Then, I was reminded of my parents, they are farmers and have been engaged in ensilage for many years... It is lactic acid grass”.

She concludes that it contains the same bacteria, *“then I thought, I know such processes”*. By uncovering family traditions while simultaneously showing a creative talent, a personal attachment to the cultural artifact is established (Johnston et al., 2010).

Peter typically evaluates the food quality on the basis of his childhood experiences and further declares that the entire sourdough trend has a connection to the past, once more giving extra currency to the genuine:

“We are moving back to our roots in cooking, not longer preferring readymade products, but rather make our own from scratch.” He continues: *“Sourdough has been used long before you could buy yeast in the store, you had to use sourdough to make bread, and sauerkraut is also a very old canning method.”*

Rosemary colorfully explains how her family has shaped her fascination for qualitative bread:

“I know that my father for instance never bought bread in the grocery store, but when buying bread, you go to the bakery, buying ice cream you go to the ice cream shop, buying meat you go to the butcher and vegetables in the vegetables store. I guess that somehow it was my grandmother and father who funneled me into this but it turned out when father moved to us, at that time we did not have very much contact because he had lived in Cape Town for twenty years, but when he came to us he was fascinated, is it possible to make such a bread? I baked the bread I remembered my father bought, the bread I was used to eat as a child, real dark bread.”

Sourdough foodies have strong affiliations with their families and the sourdough interest is to a very great extent shaped by history. However, not only their family background and upbringing have contributed to shaping their interest in sourdough practice. Apparently, all interviewees have a predilection for creative and experimental activities besides their sourdough practice. For instance, Sara has a genuine interest in handicrafts, Peter is an author, Adam loves to play guitar and Carin designs graphic illustrations. This relates to how they invest and express their personalities into their practices, which we will expand upon below.

Sourdough Foodies Invest their Personalities

Ostensibly, foodies, as well as sourdough foodies, have an interest in cultivating their own food, presumably to satisfy their quest for authentic food (Cairns et al., 2010; Johnston and Baumann, 2010). According to Trubek (2005), foodies like to engage in artisan practices because it offers them an opportunity to express uniqueness, originality and sincerity. In addition, they can perform the dish, or as in this case, bake their own bread. (Johnston & Baumann, 2010) Evidently, Peter is an extreme foodie showing full commitment to his artisan practices. As mentioned earlier, he cultivates his own plot of vegetables and uses them in various ways.

In addition to baking his own sourdough bread, Peter also makes sour cucumber and homemade jam from of the berries in the garden. A new thing he has recently started experimenting with is called ‘yeast bread drink’. He describes that his friends jestingly calls him and his wife pretentious. It is strikingly obvious that Peter, similar to foodies described by Johnston et al. (2010), has a predilection for engaging in artistic innovation, yeast bread drink, on the basis of a very old tradition namely acid treatment. His use of acid treatment in various ways reveals that his food is timelessly appropriate, it has maintained integrity as he finds it unique and sincere. Apparently, he also brings skills, knowledge and passion to his processes, which is typically characteristic for craft consumers (Campbell, 2005). Peter reveals both

knowledge and passion when preparing the bread drink:

“It is mixed in a rather special way: you should have plain water, a little sauerkraut juice, sourdough bread and some kind of flavoring. Then, you let it be for quite some time, first you let it be for ten days, cold for four weeks and then in the fridge for six to eight weeks. So, it is quite a long process, you often do this in barrels in Russia and the like.”

Dancing around on the kitchen floor, Peter makes an amusing performance to show off his skills: *“I feel like ‘Brasse’ in ‘Fem myror’ with his ‘Lattjolajbanlåda’”* [laughing]. His engagement is absolutely astonishing. As most of his leisure time is structured around the various food pursuits of his, it is easy to observe that Peter distinguishes himself through his extraordinary expertise and engagement. It is also visible that he cares a lot about his roots, traditions and the food origin.

Cairns et al. (2010) as well as Johnston and Baumann (2010) argue that tradition forms the basis for artistry and experimentation. Foodies act as artists to achieve fulfillment and they personally innovate to create something artistic on the basis of historical traditions. Similarly, Campbell (2005) argues that craft consumption satisfies a desire for singularization in a world that has become paralyzed by standardization caused by the industrialization. Sourdough foodies seek out new spaces where they can improvise and live out their creativity. In so doing, they manage to tackle the negative effects of the progressive rationalization described above.

Sara contends that it is the thinking around and the creation that is important: *“that the bread is good is a bonus.”* She makes a comparison to the handicraft she is engaged in:

“Someone told me once that the end result is not as fun as the formation and the thinking and the process around. It is the pleasure to realize the image I have in my head and turn it into a complete product. Can I produce what I dream about? And it is the same thing here, can I achieve the taste that I have projected in my head, what will this combination be like? It is the creation.”

Interestingly, just like craft-consumers, Sara is very engaged in the production as well as the end-result deemed for self-consumption. Paradoxically, she also mentions the pleasure in realizing the image projected in her head. Hence, although many interviewees highlight the process, the necessary skills and knowledge they bring to the baking, in the end they try to achieve the ‘perfect’ bread. José explains that he has a philosophy of one day finding ‘his bread’, the method and the recipe.

The participants emphasize improvising and demonstrating skills when having friends over to dinner and habitually offer their friends, relatives and co-workers their hand baked bread. This mirrors that sourdough practice is not simply about the process but also about a great deal of communicating and demonstrating their skills, knowledge and passion through sharing the aesthetically beautiful and deliciously tasty end results. This is also enabled through their blogs

where they put the sourdough creations on display, disclosing the aesthetically significant that Campbell (2005) emphasizes.

In sum, sourdough can appear surprisingly simple at a first glance. However, when exploring the interviewees' underlying cultural meanings, there exists a contradiction between a very simple and pure phenomenon on the one hand and a much more complex on the other. As understood from the discussions around each dimension of authenticity, it is clear that the sourdough foodies invest themselves in the sourdough baking, and because of that it is not only a physical practice but also seemingly a socially constructed phenomenon. They dedicate themselves fully to their practices, and invest both their personalities in terms of creative elements, knowledge and skills, and also attach a great deal of socio-cultural meanings to their practices serving as a recourse to historical memories, experiences and emotions. Finally, the end product further reflects their effort put in, and they use the final product, the bread, to communicate and share their talent and expertise with others. It is the confirmation of their great investments.

Nevertheless, rather than a cultural blueprint, consumers' identities are continuously shaped by historical conventions and these function as reserves to the accumulation of various capital. The second paradox concerns how sourdough-practice has been popularized in contemporary society but how knowledge and artistic talent simultaneously make sourdough a matter of distinction. These are topics reflected on in the next section.

Popularized versus Distinctive

The second paradox we have identified in the study stems from the tension between democracy and distinction the gourmet foodscape embodies according to Johnston and Baumann (2010). According to the authors, new cultural spaces have emerged referred to as 'foodscapes'. They claim that the central ideas and understandings mediated through cultural institutions such as television and the Internet are characterized by values such as authenticity, rarity and locality. They also argue that markets have come into view as a counteraction against the culinary fine French food.

Mass media has fuelled democratization of the new food landscape. As knowledge and information about cuisine trends have become proliferated it is now available to everyone regardless of class, status or economical situation. Ostensibly, the omnivorous orientation that Peterson (2005) identified can be a contributor to the rise of sourdough foodies.

Media's Role in Democratizing the Practice

The respondents' narratives entail that the democracy and omnivorousness discussed in the literature are distinctive characteristics of the sourdough phenomenon. Even though all sourdough foodies' historical roots have helped forming their interest for cooking and baking, they all emphasize mass media's influence on the awakening of their sourdough interest. All respondents brought up Martin Johansson, who runs the blog 'Pain de Martin', as a great source of inspiration. As he has downplayed the complexity of sourdough it appears that he is a

true democratic figure eliminating earlier snobbish traits.

When the sourdough trend first emerged in Sweden, the bread was regarded as highly fashionable. The bakeries selling sourdough portray it as gourmet and luxurious, and sourdough bread is still considerably more expensive than other bread. Sara claims that due to the complexity and elitist traits gourmet experts long have communicated around sourdough, she was initially discouraged to engage in the practice. She refers to Jan Hedh, the confectioner, master in chocolate, world cup medalist and bread expert, who in her opinion illuminates sourdough as a very discriminatory and exclusive practice.

“If you want to be discouraged and think that everything is very complex, you should read it [referring to the book written by Jan Hedh] He portrays it as something elitist.”

On the contrary, Martin Johansson makes sourdough baking very simple and emphasizes that *everyone* can do it. In his blog, he presents a ‘little sourdough school’ on how to start a sourdough basis, and gives hands-on practical tips for amateurs on how to succeed with their sourdough endeavors. Adam mentions Martin as a great initial stimulation to his sourdough pursuits: *“He released a book named ‘Surdegsbröd’ that I used frequently in the beginning”*. Sara explains that he changed her view of sourdough dramatically:

“But then Martin appeared with his blog. He is much much more reachable. Mix flour and water, and if something goes wrong, just mix a little more flour and water. So he has a much more easy approach to it all.”

Carin expresses a similar view: *“Martin Johansson has given me a lot. It was through his blog it dawned on me how to carry out the practice. He is extremely pedagogical and his attitude is that it involves a real exploration, that you should dare to try out things”*.

Sourdough practices have progressively become democratized the last couple of years, much due to medial influences. Because it is much easier to extract knowledge from media sources today, *anyone* can bake their own bread and subsequently does not have to buy the expensive artisan bread from the local bakeries. This is naturally demonstrated in the inflation of sourdough blogs, sourdough learning courses and the enthusiastic home bakers who exchange tips and knowledge with each other. The popularization of sourdough reflects what Johnston and Baumann (2010) discuss is the democratization of omnivorousness in the increasingly all-inclusive gourmet foodscape, as well as Peterson’s (2005) notion of cultural eclecticism.

Distinction Without Traditional Means

However, there still seems to be a tension between democracy and distinction, both on a level between the figures within the public sphere (such as ‘experts’ like Jan Hedh and ‘everyday men’ like Martin Johansson), but also between the hobby practitioners. Apparently, the discourses of sourdough as something complex and distinguishing attract practitioners, and they use their sourdough practices to create distance from other people without the ‘magical

sourdough knowledge'. Peter clearly expresses this when he maintains:

“What makes the bread-book by Jan Hedh so protruding is that it begins with 40 pages generally about how to bake bread, where you can find everything. I read it without stopping; it was a whole new world for me that you should think about sourdoughs and long fermentations. I had only thought about bread baking as, add ingredients, mix everything, one ferment, in the oven - ready!”

Even though sourdough is something popularly consumed in Sweden, we can discern from the participants' narratives that they distinguish between 'real' sourdough practitioners (a category to which they ascribe themselves) and the consumers 'fooled' by the emerging commercialization of the trend. The narratives reveal that in order to distinguish from the uncritical amateurs, the sourdough foodies draw on their cultural and knowledge skills to its extreme. This distinction can be seen clearly when discussing Kronjäst's newly launched ready-made 'sourdough basis' available in retail stores. This is seen as a 'fake' way of creating sourdough bread, as it is a much shorter process and you still have to add yeast to the dough.

José shows his aversion clearly when stating:

“It is so silly, I don't know how much it costs, maybe 30, 40 SEK, but it costs almost nothing to do it yourself. It is similar within cooking, there are always people who do not want to invest time in it and then they take shortcuts”.

Sara agrees and deplores the fact that people actually believe in it: *“I think it is a bit sad that people become fooled, as it says that just add yeast and you will get a good bread”*. She continues: *“We are a couple of people on the blogs that are skeptical about it”*, clearly showing how the sourdough foodies converge around mutual oppositions, which is a way of sharing lifestyles and create distinction towards others (Holt, 1997).

All the sourdough foodies express clear opposition against these, in their opinion, commercial attempts to exploit the 'realness' of sourdough. José discusses this further:

“There are so many industry bakeries that say they sell sourdough bread, oh my god it is not sourdough bread. The thing they have not yet understood is that you cannot call bread sourdough bread just because you have a sourdough basis in it. It is much more than that, it is a process, it is a long fermentation, it is much more - it is a process. To bake sourdough is a process.”

Sara even states that she has actively searched out for information regarding the 'realness' of the commercial attempts, both in books and when shopping. She is infuriated that many stores use 'false marketing' to lure consumers believing they experience something real:

“I studied a bake-off product in the store, I even took a picture of it as it was a walnut bread,

which really only needs four ingredients and the walnuts, and I counted up to 25 ingredients on the list. It is so sad, I just felt that oh, people become really happy about a walnut-bread that is baked in the store and it taste really good and looks really fresh, but yah you are so fooled, I was really upset! [...] I feel a bit the same way with 'Kronjäst', that it is supposed to make people feel proud over what you have accomplished but yet you still have been fooled without knowing it. That is even worse"

The rhetoric in the citations above shows how the sourdough foodies use the knowledge about and genuineness of their sourdough practices as a distinction from others, and an underlying but unspoken premise seems to be that as they have become 'enlightened' about the truth of products and practices, they are superior to the consumers who happily consume the 'fake' sourdough or industrialized bread under the belief that it is healthy.

In conclusion, the sourdough phenomenon seems to be of democratic and popular nature, as it now can be enjoyed by anyone who is interested in taking part of it, not only elite, highbrow consumers. However, the sourdough foodies in our study are still preoccupied with protecting the realness of their practices and are different from others. This is not a distinction based on traditional premises such as the economic and cultural capitals presented by Bourdieu. Neither do the sourdough practitioners see themselves as high status connoisseurs but rather is the distinction based on something else, of being informed and knowledgeable about purity, the process of 'enlightening' mentioned above. We will discuss this in greater detail in the next section.

Cultural and Economical Capital – Or a Lack Thereof?

As first introduced by Bourdieu (1984, in Corrigan, 1997: 26-32), economic and cultural resources determine social position and functions as means to create distinction from others. Economic capital refers to pure monetary assets while cultural capital involves the set of cultural resources that give the means to consume in a tasteful and appropriate manner, and is constituted by knowledge and expertise but also by education and physical products.

Bourdieu (1984, in Corrigan, 1997: 26-32) contends that social positions are connected with lifestyles, and distinct lifestyles commonly characterize social groups. Johnston and Baumann (2010) acknowledge that the possession of economic and cultural capital facilitates for consumers to fully participate in the indulgences of the foodie culture. Foodies in general, according to Cairns et al. (2010), possess a considerate degree of cultural capital and have an urge to learn more about food and experiencing new tastes. Economic and cultural capital is often interrelated, and economic resources are essential to be a true connoisseur.

On these premises, it is surprising how little of the resources commonly regarded as economic and cultural capital the sourdough foodies in our study give the impression of possessing. Their stories reveal that sourdough engagement is exceptionally cheap compared to cooking and other creative activities. The economic capital varies among the respondents, some of them have well-paid jobs and could be considered belonging to the 'new middle class', according to

Hollows (2003a). However, as two of the respondents are students, another is a housewife and a third recently has been unemployed, they do definitely not belong to the 'high status' groups in society, and the economic reserves are certainly not of paramount importance to engage in sourdough practice.

Additionally, a majority of the sourdough foodies emphasize the economical aspect of cooking and baking at home, especially baking with sourdough that is unusually cheap. As the only essential ingredients are salt, water and flour, it is obvious that no particular economic capital is needed to engage in the practice, rather are these ingredients substantial to the human sustenance. Sara reflects upon this:

"Flour is, according to my opinion, not as expensive. That is why I thought to do something useful of my time as unemployed, and then I found that flour has a reasonable price. Flour, water and salt, it is actually very cheap and you can afford to fail too."

Carin also points to the economic advantages claiming: "There has been a tendency that more and more bakeries emerge and they sell extremely expensive bread. And I think that in all cases one thing holds - it really pays off to bake yourself."

Rosemary describes that she can only afford to use the somewhat more expensive ingredients preferably bought at Saltå Kvarn for the sourdough basis. In other cases, she has to use cheaper alternatives. She entails: *"It varies according to what is economically affordable and what I can get"*. Hence, the economic burden unfortunately outweighs the culinary more prestigious.

From the interviewees' arguments it is apparent that the economic benefit is a central incentive for baking with sourdough. All the respondents agree that there is room for failure when engaging in sourdough practice. Nonetheless, the practice provides the same pleasure as a creative activity that often requires considerably more economical capital. Sourdough foodies take great pride in having the ability to make bread with the same quality as the much more expensive sourdough bread available in the fashionable artisan stone oven bakeries. Carin illustrates her satisfaction when creating something so beautiful and delicious out of so little money:

"Yeah, you become proud. Proud to have the ability of creating something that is just as tasty as what you can buy. You feel like 'Ha!' now I have really saved money and so on."

Regarding cultural capital, definitions differ and there are greater contradictions among the respondents. As Holt (1998: 3-4) emphasizes, Bourdieu (1984) contended that cultural capital consists of three main reserves: manifested as practical skills, objectified in products and institutionalized in official diplomas (the more elite, the better). In one way, the respondents appear to possess cultural capital, as they are all cultivated and have somewhat higher education or are in the process of getting one (except from Rosemary), however the education is not exceptional or elitist.

Furthermore, Holt (1998: 3-4) illuminates how Bourdieu (1984) claimed that upbringing and social circumstances are imperative in the accrual of cultural capital, and that people high in cultural capital primarily originate from families with well-educated and cultured parents, and typically socialize only in privileged circles. This cannot be applied to the sourdough foodies, as none of them come from distinctive privileged backgrounds nor do they articulate any clear wish to be regarded as high-status or sophisticated.

The exception here might be Peter, who is very cautious to define himself as a ‘foodie’ early on in the interview, and engages in many culinary practices popularly regarded as fashionable in Sweden. Furthermore, he and his wife have a taste for high status restaurants, which he describes enthusiastically:

“We love going to fine restaurants out of one simple reason; we like food, we think it is most delicious when we cook it ourselves, so if we’re going to eat out it has to be something we cannot cook ourselves, ethnic food of different kinds, or something that is so exceptional that we cannot accomplish it ourselves, then we are speaking about Michelin starred restaurants. These we usually visit a couple of times every year.”

Peter’s command of language in the citation above certainly shows how he uses his high taste in food to distinguish himself from others and use it as a means to establish status. As Johnston and Baumann (2010) emphasize, people with less cultural capital and lack of food knowledge find it harder to take part in the indulgences of the foodie culture. In a manifestation of their exceptional knowledge about ‘good food’ and eliteness in food practices, Peter goes on to declare that seldom can restaurants offer food superior to his and his wife’s culinary creations. It is evident that Peter’s cultural capital also is connected to his and his wife’s economic capital; not anyone can afford to enjoy the luxurious restaurants he speaks about, nor appreciate them in the same way given the lack of the ‘right’ cultural resources.

Peter’s eccentric high taste in restaurants is though not found among the other respondents, and the cultural capital he possesses does not appear to be a prerequisite for passionately engaging in the sourdough culture. In this sense, the sourdough culture differs from other domains and practices within the greater foodie culture where authentic and exotic foods are described as *“not only regularly costly, but they are often easier to appreciate by someone who is culturally sophisticated and educated”* (Johnston & Baumann, 2010: 205).

Ostensibly, as far as sourdough consumers are concerned, social distinction is not primarily realized through a manifestation of the traditional cultural and economic capital but rather through a proof of a lack thereof. It is nonetheless clear that some other form of ‘capital’ is required, a capital we elaborate in the following section.

A Certain Kind of Cultural Capital

As discussed above some traits of the traditional cultural capital cannot be ascribed to the sourdough practitioners. However, to fully take pleasure in and commit to the emotional and creative process that baking with sourdough apparently involves, a certain kind of cultural capital shows signs of being required. Bourdieu (1984) in Holt (1998: 3) defines cultural capital as “*socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices*”, and when disregarding the elitist attributes of cultural capital described above these could be applied to the ‘magical knowledge’ of sourdough practice and the realness of products that our respondents possess. *This* is what distinguishes them, more than anything else, as they see themselves as the only ‘true’ sourdough practitioners. Principally, these traits can be found in the first form of cultural capital being implicit practical knowledges, skills and characters (Ibid.)

However, as these practical knowledges and skills are of artisan character rather than gastronome, the specific cultural expertise in sourdough practice is more resembling the cultural capital Campbell (2005) explains that craft consumers possess. He argues that this cultural capital many times is more of populist than elitist nature, which is why craft activity exists in the intersection between genuine folk knowledge and top-level art. This is very much applicable to the sourdough practitioners, and once again illuminates how the practice is caught in-between democracy and distinction.

In addition to the specific cultural capital required to engage in sourdough practice, it is obvious from the earlier discussed dimensions in this analysis that in addition to this capital, the sourdough practitioners’ history is imperative. Again, this is not positioned in the elite background that Holt (1998: 3-4) illuminates, but rather in a creative upbringing where artisan skills have been highly promoted, such as in Sara’s family tradition of farming, Carin’s early kitchen endeavors and Rosemary’s family custom of home-made food and bread. Connected to this, creative and expressive personalities seem to encourage the enjoyment of the pursuits within the sourdough.

Campbell (2005) contends that the necessary cultural capital is relatively easy to obtain through various media outlets specialized in DIY-practices. This does also concern the sourdough phenomenon, in the role of the blogs. We understand that these are considered gurus distributing information and knowledge about practices. However, our analysis has shown that historical background and creative personalities are facilitating the ability to successfully engage in the practice and enhancing the multi-level appreciation of the practice. In this sense, just because information is available not simply ‘anyone’ can be a successful sourdough foodie and distinction is yet again accomplished on the basis of having the ‘real’ personalities, knowledges and skills. As sourdough practice does not require much traditional economic and cultural capital, this group of foodies might desire to develop their knowledge and expertise even more in search for distinction. Instead of showing pecuniary wealth or eclectic taste to demonstrate status, engaging in sourdough baking is not only a demonstration of a great deal of the ‘magical expertise’ but also creativity, craftsmanship and innovativeness.

Creating distinction is thus a powerful means of establishing and expressing identity, which leads us to the third contradiction found within the respondents' stories. In communicating an identity, the influence of socially constructed gender roles cannot be neglected. However, our study shows that gender roles within sourdough consumption are fluid and not enacted simply in traditional ways. We will elaborate this closer in the next section.

Enacting but Simultaneously Challenging Gender Roles

The third paradox identified in the narratives concerns the gender dimension. Food studies in the west illuminating gender confirm that women traditionally have been associated with caring as she has responsibility to provide for her family and blend family tastes. (Caplan, 1997) In addition, women find it important to maintain family health. (Beagan et al., 2008) in Cairns et al., 2010: 593; Caplan, 1997) However, talking about gender with regards to food can be controversy and our study is no exception.

We did not find any distinctive patterns or prominent 'entitlements' in the interviewees' narratives and we believe that when a practice corresponds with typical gender ideals it is rather a coincidence than a rule. Traditionally, baking is conceived of as female activity and several interviewees recall memories from their mothers and grandmothers certainly because baking is a practice related to care work. We observed that sourdough foodies sometimes enact traditional gender roles and other times overthrow them. Rosemary is an excellent example of the former. She is a caring mother who invests a substantial part of her time providing food and bread for her family consisting of her partner and two daughters. She has also taken care of her father has resided in the family home in Dalarna for one and a half years. Her narrative goes hand in hand with the female narrative as acknowledged in the foodie literature:

"It is not everyday you have time and therefore it is good when there are leftovers to eat, we do not eat the same food everyone in the family either. My father has been living with us for one and a half years and he is used to a completely different culture, he has never lived in Sweden so I had to adapt the food to him as well, therefore it has been some pottering with that, but I have always cooked more than needed [...] 400 gram minced meat is required for four persons and I always use 800 grams to the same amount of people. It says a little, I want some leftovers for the children in case they do not like the dinner."

Pleasure and Pride

After a close interpretation of the interviewees' narratives, we identified a prominent resemblance among the interviewees. Sourdough foodies fancy inviting friends, colleagues and family to their homes and have them try the home-baked sourdough bread. This conduct is encouraged as all the sourdough foodies, both women and men, find pleasure in cooking for others (Hollows, 2003a). In addition, apparently they take pride in offering their 'handicraft'. For instance, Peter describes:

"it is very appreciated. I usually bring bread in a basket and it is recognized. Once you enter the

kitchen with the basket it is, here he comes again". This, he notes, makes him feel glad and appreciated.

Bread baking is still a fairly uncommon activity according to Peter, which perhaps can be explained by the rise in industry production that have replaced much of the 'living' tradition as defined by Ashley et al., (2004). Therefore, as baking is a rather small niche of food consumption, Cairns et al. (2010) contend that it can be seen as a representation of class privilege. Offering bread can in other words serve as an additional way for sourdough foodies' to attain social distinction.

Evidence show that men and women are enacting gender stereotypes when it comes to taking pleasure in baking for others and they all get a feeling of self-satisfaction when succeeding. However, regardless of gender, all interviewees obviously have a desire to expose their creative and talented vein, which according to Fine (1995), usually is a male preoccupation. As an illustration, when Sara offers bread at work her female colleagues boost her self-confidence telling her how surprised they are by her peculiar talent. Claiming her superior position, she notes that salvation comes to light. Convincing her colleagues that home baked bread is superior to industry bread, she praises authenticity while simultaneously turns her back against the industrialization.

"It is really fun to hear that it is good. And then you feel this is how bread should taste. It is a little of the salvation I am trying to communicate, think a little about what you eat. It is the best way to go instead of me standing and preaching about it."

Adam believes that men especially, appreciate confirmation and this is one reason why he engages in sourdough practice. He describes:

"It is probably the most proud moments in bread baking. Then you are very satisfied with what you are doing, with what you have accomplished. Often, you get pretty good responses. Often, they like it very much. Often, I believe it ends up in discussions that they should start themselves."

He also explains that because the baking session is usually accomplished in isolation, he finds baking a competition between friends. *"You want to succeed best while you do not want the others to fail."* Putting it this way, he enacts the male ideal of assertiveness when he has a demand to show who indeed is the professional in the context. Alternatively, he challenges traditional gender qualities as he draws on the feminine predisposition to care.

Caring No Matter What

In his diary, Peter describes that he always brings bread to family gatherings. Accompanying photographs in the diary illustrate how he puts the sourdough in the bowls he intends to bring. He also mentions in the diary that, since one of his sisters is gluten intolerant, he makes a gluten-free version exclusively for her. In the sub-text, it is indicated that that the dough is trying

to escape, he puts it: *“a regular baking accident”*. From a gender view, analyzing sourdough practice in general and Peter’s conduct in particular, feminine qualities are more prominent than masculine. For instance, bringing bread to his family, Peter’s hospitality can be a reflection of ‘maternal altruism’ (Caplan, 1997), a typically feminine trait. In addition, the fact that he bakes a gluten-free version for his sister can be seen as sign of how much he cares for his family.

Ostensibly, compared to many mothers, providing for his loved ones, Peter enacts the feminine ideal. His tolerance towards the *“baking accident”* is neither a typically masculine feature, as men in general want to demonstrate the considerate effort it takes to accomplish the food preparation. Evidence of defeat (in this case the over swelled dough in the bowl), should be distressing and a verification of inexperience. Peter states that in general he bakes once a week however it depends on how busy working he is and how much time he and his wife spend at home. What is important for him is that bread should always be found in the fridge. Hence, in contrast of Cairns et al. (2010) standpoint, male sourdough foodies in our study do not only bake bread as a hobby but more for the purpose of everyday sustenance. The male interviewees therefore provide bread for their wife, girlfriend or friends for that matter, as the most essential nourishment. Adam tells us about an old tradition when he and his friends were gathering occasionally:

“Yes, it was very spontaneous [...] We had times when we had ‘coffee sessions’, we were gathering and everyone brought something they had baked themselves. It was a bit of a sugar rush but then I started to bake bread instead.”

The fact that Adam brings ‘salty’ food bread instead of sweet bread and pastries to their gatherings reflects his stress on care for his friends’ health. Adam’s protection of health is evidence of how male qualities sometimes cut across gender roles when it comes to sourdough consumption. To his surprise, Adam’s friends have become incorporated in the sourdough movement and started to bake sourdough bread themselves. Just like Adam, Peter tells that men in his social circle have started baking as well:

“Yes, it is a bit funny actually, I usually meet friends and hang out and play some games and the like, and I started to bring my baked there and what has happened now is that these friends who are parents of young children all of them, also have started to bake.”

After a somewhat closer analysis of the foodies’ conduct, we can see a tendency that even though gender stereotypes resist, men experience to a higher degree a reformation as they increasingly occupy work that traditionally has been performed predominantly by women.

When discussing why the image of the ‘sourdough father’ has emerged, Peter elaborates on the knowledge and skills involved in the practice:

“Ummm... What to say... Yes, probably it is because it has taken the step from being

something that should only be prepared and then it is done, to something that you can really be a 'nerd' in doing [laughter]. And I think that it is quite masculine after all, that you want to experiment, try different fermentation times, and really find the perfect."

Peter is taking on a traditionally female activity and turns it into a challenging experience that requires a whole lot more of engagement. In so doing, he gets attention as well as confirmation. The above quotation illustrates that masculine dispositions are maintained however in new ways. Additionally, as men traditionally have lower expectations to perform such work, he gets away easily from the domestic drudgery that they are contained by (Hollows, 2003b).

Apparently, men have a greater freedom than women to pick and choose ideals of the stereotypical foodie as described in the literature. In Peter's opinion, men dedicate significant mental activity and knowledge to a fairly mundane task regardless of degree of difficulty. Because all three men have occupied a sign of traditional domestic femininity, bread baking, they are not constrained by the broader system of gender structures (Cairns et al., 2010). Instead their dispositions point towards the more gender-neutral characteristics of the 'new middle class' counterbalancing gender differences (Hollows, 2003b). Peter, José and Adam, reproduce masculine qualities and emphasize that sourdough practice indeed satisfies their aesthetic vein. However, as typical female dispositions are revealed as well, Peter and Adam's sourdough practices are somewhat challenging gender structures.

5 Discussion

In this study, our intention has been to add to theory within the foodie literature, and more generally to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). In accordance with our focus on foodie discourses, our contributions have been centered on the specific dimensions of *authenticity*, *democracy/distinction*, and *gender roles* within foodie literature, and on the realm of *consumer identity projects* within CCT. We achieve our aim by exploring a certain domain of the foodie culture – consumer practices of the previously unexamined sourdough phenomenon – that seemingly draw these dimensions to the extreme.

More specifically, we give insight into how foodie discourses are shaped by the postmodern society and negotiated in chime with the sociocultural context, and how consumers with a genuine interest in sourdough articulate these in everyday life as representations of the self. With departure in postmodern thoughts, we provide a subtle explanation why sourdough plays such a considerable role in the construction of identity.

We have gained a number of substantial and meaningful insights through the analysis of the sourdough foodies' narratives. Ostensibly, ambiguities underlie the sourdough culture and three major paradoxes that fuel the puzzling nature of the phenomenon have been identified. We will shortly discuss the insights derived from each paradox in the proceeding discussion, resulting in a more general conclusion.

5.1 Complexity Within the Simplest of Simple

Discourses around sourdough practice express a tension between simplicity and complexity as baking with sourdough on the one hand is extremely simple (water, salt, flour) but on the other extremely complex, as it comprises living organisms that need to be sensibly taken care of. In addition, the phenomenon of sourdough practice is embedded in a multiplicity of historical, cultural and symbolic meanings beyond the natural processes. The tension between simplicity and complexity is thus imperative as it provides an understanding for the foodies' representations of their self in a wider contextual manner.

A historical retrospect allows us to detect some implications of the postmodern consumer society. Existing literature and practical evidence show that authenticity is a multifaceted phenomenon of vital importance for foodies in general. As industrialization has brought about standardization of consumer goods, the goods have lost the pure and genuine ingredients, which have been replaced by synthetic additives (Ashley et al, 2004). Therefore, consumers increasingly urge for authenticity in products and practices.

This development is mirrored in the sourdough phenomenon, where consumers evidently search for the “*authentic that is not deceptive*” (SvD, 2012a). This is reflected in the sourdough foodies' clear aversion to industry bread and half-fabricates. The sourdough foodies strive to go

“*one step back*”, as claimed by Anna-Britta Ståhl (SvD, 2012c), to recapture reality and authenticity. In this sense, the sourdough phenomenon can be seen as an opposition towards progressive industrialization.

Authenticity is further established through the sourdough foodies’ personal relationships with the dough and sourdough baking elicits strong feelings. This further shows that sourdough foodies are similar to craft consumers who transforms commodities, in this case food, into humanized objects with personal characteristics (Campbell, 2005). The sourdough foodies treat the dough with caution as a living creature and it is part of their extended self (Belk, 1988).

The sourdough foodies further enact the historical dimension of authenticity (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Their sourdough interest is rooted in family traditions where genuine artisan food practices have been promoted. The family custom thus serves as a point of reference for preferences and physical practices, for representations of the self (Cairns et al., 2010).

Through attaching such multiplicity of subjective meanings in the practices, the sourdough foodies invest their personalities into the practice, which serves to communicate a sense of self. They have an inherent drive to express their skills and live out their passion. Through gathering around common preferences, they also establish collective lifestyles (Holt, 1997). As social relationships are the basis of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984 in Corrigan, 1997: 26-32), we will discuss the notion of distinction in a more nuanced way below.

5.2 Distinction Without Traditional Capital

Traditional sociology theory, with Bourdieu in the front line, acknowledges that social distinction is accomplished through the possession of various capitals, namely cultural, economic and social capital (1984, in Holt, 1998: 3-4). These capitals are beneficial also to enjoy the pleasures of the foodie world, as the foods regarded as ‘worthy’ often are both rare and expensive (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). However, this study has shown that these capitals are not of predominant importance to engage in sourdough practice.

Sourdough is a democratic practice because anyone can engage in it with no regards to wealth, social status or cultural resources. Through technical means, cooking has become democratized giving rise to new cultural and culinary spaces, in theoretical terms referred to as ‘foodscapes’ (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). This reflects Peterson’s (2005) notion of cultural eclecticism with emphasis on omnivorousness. Fuelled by inflation in blogs, television shows and learning courses on the practice, seemingly sourdough has become available for everyone.

Even in the best of worlds, controversies exist. The public sphere embodies a tension between democracy and distinction, which is further reflected within the sourdough foodies’ narratives. The everyman ‘Pain de Martin’ operates on behalf of the amateur home bakers, whereas professional guru Jan Hedh has taken sourdough practice to new elitist dimensions. Although

talking about the practice as all-inclusive, the sourdough foodies distinguish themselves from consumers by not possessing the ‘magical expertise’ of sourdough, but just wanting to ‘ride along with the trend’. The tension between democracy and distinction is mirrored in the respondents’ emphasis on sourdough as simple while simultaneously using extremely complex language when assessing it. Thus, it is difficult to conclude whether sourdough practice is more populist or more elitist in nature. Perhaps the phenomenon exists right in the intersection between authentic folk knowledge and high fashion food art, just like craft consumption (Campbell, 2005).

In contemporary society, new spaces for cultural distinction have emerged given consumers new means to distinguish themselves from others. Seemingly, sourdough is such a cultural space inculcated with symbolic meanings. The sourdough foodies’ ‘enlightening’ serves as a means to distinguish themselves from the uncritical consumers ‘lured’ by the industry. This reveals that sourdough practice is a matter of differentiation. Destroying the natural process of acidification by adding yeast and additives removes the natural authentic experience. Through their knowledge about the realness of practices, sourdough foodies regard themselves as ‘freed’ from the passivation caused by commercialization (Campbell, 2005).

5.3 Contemporary ‘Caring’ Males and ‘Expert’ Women

Ashley et al. (2004) and Hollows (2003b) contend that men to a greater extent than women are appealed to be assertive when it comes to cooking, whereas women draw on a more caring role.

However, we have found that sourdough foodies’ discourses differ from traditional conventions. The abundance of symbolic meanings attached to consumer goods and practices has given consumers means to express different identities for different occasions (Featherstone, 1991). The main incentives to engage in sourdough practice are to relive the authentic and genuine tastes and traditions and express creativity. In these pursuits, typical male and women dispositions are not static and hence less important.

When it comes to enjoy the pleasures of cooking and baking, women and men in our study enact stereotypical gender roles however in new ways. The men draw upon as much traditional feminine ideals as the females and vice versa. This mirrors the continuous reproduction and challenge of stereotypical gender roles within the foodie culture, as described by foodie literature (Cairns et al., 2010; Hollows, 2003a & 2003b)

Women have opened up the kitchen territory to their counterparts and the sourdough men have had the courage to step out of their comfort zone and embraced the traditionally more mundane practice of baking. Interestingly, the male sourdough foodies feel as much responsibility for caring about their social surrounding as the females. Drawing on ‘mother roles’ they bake for basic purposes like nurturing and feeding their families whilst

simultaneously involving pleasure and creativity. By enacting the caring dimension exceptionally well the sourdough males satisfy the family members' singular needs, which typically has been ascribed as feminine (Cairns et al., 2010; Caplan, 1997; Ashley et al., 2004).

However, from practical evidence we can maintain that men are still able to enact the typical masculine qualities of knowledge and expertise in sourdough practice notwithstanding the fact that it is such a mundane and ostensibly simple activity. Perhaps this is one reason why the 'sourdough father' has gained acceptance in recent years. Typically, sourdough men have either requiring jobs or education and feel that sourdough practice is a completely new field of practice where they can experiment with new tastes and methods and fulfill their masculine instincts.

Regarding the sourdough females, a clear pattern is difficult to discern. Even though caring is an essential ingredient the central motivation to engage in the practice is for the sake of pleasure and self-fulfillment. They put emphasis on the aesthetics of the composition, as well as the ability to experiment and use their creative skills. In this sense, they enact as much of the traditional male characteristics as the sourdough males. They feel despair when failing. They get a sense of contentment when others praise their extraordinary talents. Disclosing their creative aptitude exhibits superiority. In sum, sourdough practice enables females to ascribe an exceptional amount of masculine traits into their practices, without constraining the imposition of traditional feminine attributes.

Providing that sourdough practice offers great challenges, experiments and unpredictable moments simultaneously as it involves a great deal of caring and nurturing, ostensibly it offers consumers an opportunity to enact stereotypical female and male traits continuously without regards to actual biological gender. Thus, we conclude that sourdough practice can be considered gender neutral.

5.4 Conclusion

Summarily, sourdough practice seemingly requires a specific set of essential knowledge and skills, which however is not equivalent to the economic or cultural capitals once introduced by Bourdieu (1984) that the literature (Cairns et al., 2010; Johnston & Baumann, 2010) typically ascribes to foodies. This capital is one of a kind, and distinguishes sourdough foodies from the greater foodie culture; in which economic and cultural capital mutually operate to facilitate culinary pleasures for privileged consumers.

With departure in Campbell's (2005) notion of a 'popularized' cultural capital, referring to the typical characteristics and resources of craft consumers, we provide a conceptualization of the 'alternative' capital we believe is required to fully relish in the pleasures of the sourdough culture. We define this capital '*knowledge and skill capital*', incorporating two distinct, but interrelated, components. Firstly, the 'knowledge' part of the capital refers to the 'magical

knowledge' about the various processes sourdough practice involves. This also involves the 'enlightening' these consumers consider themselves to have undergone about the genuineness and authenticity of baking produces and practices. The knowledge part of this capital is fostered through explicit, hands-on learning procedures and should therefore not be confused with 'fine food knowledge' that one can cultivate simply through culinary reading.

This leads us to the second component of the capital, which is more inherent in the actual characteristics and skills of the sourdough foodies. This reserve consists of creative, artistic and self-expressive elements that are necessary to enjoy sourdough practices in a multi-leveled manner; traits similar to Campbell's (2005) craft consumers. These traits enhance the consumers' ability to completely commit to the practice. Additionally, investing the personality in the sourdough attaching memories, emotions and socio-cultural meanings makes it possible to fully live out the interest.

The sourdough foodies continuously use this capital as a means to distinguish from others. They are not primarily preoccupied with being perceived as fashionable highbrows but rather as knowledgeable and well informed. Possessing and communicating the necessary knowledge and skills about sourdough is a way to achieve this goal. In this sense, they consider themselves being 'enlightened' and cultivated consumers, which are more conscious than the 'mass consumers'.

In conclusion, the sourdough phenomenon extends the physical practice and is partially a socially constructed phenomenon, as the consumers attach such a multiplicity of meanings to the practice. As the respondents make sourdough so central in their lives and invest so much of their personalities into the processes of sourdough, the practices and the results also function as means to produce, reproduce and communicate a sense of identity, both to themselves and to others. As we have discussed above, the identity is further replicated through establishing distinction, which also ties sourdough foodies together and creates a collective lifestyle.

In this sense, we do not believe that sourdough foodies have a stable sense of identity, like Campbell (2005) suggests for craft consumers. As identities in the postmodern society are seen as fragmented constructs rather than fixed entities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), we see that the sourdough foodies' identities are fluent and continuously re-developed and negotiated in a context of contradictory discourses and shaped by greater historical and cultural legacies. This study has shown that sourdough foodies have an urge both to express creativity within the practice, but also to publicly display their sourdough identities towards others, both in real life and virally. We can therefore contend that the practice is a means for self-expression as much as it is a demonstration of identity. In conclusion, as sourdough communicates a sense of identity it is as much a condition for as a consequence of the greater self.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

We have found meaningful and substantial material of the sourdough phenomenon thanks to the interviews. However, we acknowledge that there are a number of limitations affecting our study that need to be addressed. We have been lucky to find a multi-faceted pond of respondents with consumers in different ages, with diverse cultural backgrounds and living in different social contexts. However, it would be interesting to research the phenomenon, or similar movements, in other countries or cultural sphere and see what similarities and differences that might appear.

We have approached the sourdough culture with a rather broad focus, as we took departure in the specific phenomenon. We then broadly explored a number of foodie discourses related to the phenomenon, rather than starting out from a specific discourse and exploring it in depth. We have thus elaborated the specific set of discourses connected to sourdough widely, but each and every one of these needs closer warrant, as they all address critical contradictions that might be specific for the sourdough culture, but are most presumably present in various ways within other domains of foodie culture, and also in alternative DIY-practices in contemporary consumer culture.

It is quite fascinating how a physical practice can be taken to a much higher level of abstraction, becoming an essential part of consumers' individual and collective identities. Thus, we welcome further research on how physical practices, both related to food and other activities, figure as central ingredients in postmodern consumers' sense of selves in contemporary society. We also encourage further studies to explore the specific characteristics we have identified being required for a foodie to possess the *'knowledge and skill capital'*, and see whether these resources are present in other domains of the foodie culture, or in other consumer practices within the greater sphere of postmodern consumer culture.

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Appendix 1 – Informant Diaries

FOTODAGBOK: Matlagnings- och bakningsvanor

Denna undersökning genomförs som en del av ett större forskningsprojekt vid Lunds universitet. Syftet är att undersöka hur konsumenter med ett gediget intresse för bakning och surdeg utövar sina matlagnings- och bakningsvanor i en vardaglig kontext. För att förse oss med djupare insikter inom detta område skulle vi vilja att du fyller i en fotodagbok under fem olika dagar. De aktiviteter du dokumenterar behöver nödvändigtvis inte involvera surdegsbakning även om detta givetvis är intressant för oss. De fem dagarna behöver inte vara sammanhängande utan du kan under en tvåveckorsperiod välja de dagar som passar dig. Tanken är att du ska dagboksföra dina dagliga rutiner, tankar och aktiviteter. Dagboken kommer sedan att användas som underlag för den efterföljande intervju vi kommer att hålla med dig.

Dag 1 är en *vardag* som representerar en helt vanlig dag i ditt liv.

Dag 2 är en *avslappnad dag* då du kanske inte orkar lägga ned så mycket tid på matlagning

Dag 3 är en dag då ditt *surdegsintresse står i fokus* och du bakar något som kräver tid och kunskap.

Dag 4 representerar en dag då du *bjuder hem folk på middag*.

Dag 5 är en dag då du inte äter i hemmet men då middagstillfället är viktigt, exempelvis äter på *restaurang* eller hos kompisar.

Vi är medvetna om att det kan vara svårt att på förhand veta när dessa dagar kommer att inträffa, men det kanske finns någon aning om när de olika typerna av dagarna vanligtvis inträffar och då kan ni vara beredda med kameran. Bildkvaliteten är inte det viktiga utan att det tydligt framgår vad bilden föreställer eller representerar.

När du har färdigställt fotodagboken ber vi dig sända in den via mail. All din information kommer att behandlas med största försiktighet och anonymitet inom forskningsprojektet

Om du har några frågor så hör gärna av dig till oss. Din hjälp är mycket uppskattad!

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Sanna & Amelie

Namn: Sanna Gustafsson
E-mail: gustafsson.sanna@gmail.com
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Namn: Amelie Engstrand
E-mail: amelieengstrand@hotmail.com
Tel. Nr: 0702669160

Generella instruktioner för genomförandet av dagboken

För att vi ska hinna bearbeta materialet är det viktigt att fotodagboken fylls i så snabbt som möjligt, ju förr vi lyckas få svaren desto bättre. Det kan vara en god idé att titta igenom fotodagboksformuläret för att sätta dig i materialet redan innan du börjar. På detta sätt kan du förbereda dig att ta bilder av speciella situationer under de dagar som kan bli aktuella för projektet. Känn dig fri att tänka kreativt när du tar bilderna (t.ex. genom att ta en bild av en bild i en tidning som fångar meningen av det du hade velat ta en bild av egentligen).

För varje bild skall du skriva ner varför och vad du har tagit bilder av (närmare instruktioner finner du på varje sida).

Spendera inte för mycket tid på att formulera dina svar eller fundera på stavning eller grammatik. Det viktiga är att du skriver ner vad du finner mest relevant med dina egna ord.

Fyll i detta worddokument och lägg in bilderna så att de hänger ihop med rätt rubriker (förslagsvis under varje bildbeskrivning) och svara på frågorna bäst du kan!

Vi ser helst att du tar naturliga bilder, du ska till exempel inte städa upp innan du tar bilder i ditt hem.

Försök, så långt som möjligt, att ta med dig kameran under perioden – på det sättet kan du ta bilder när du får en god idé eller när relevanta situationer inträffar.

Inledningsvis ber vi dig att besvara ett fåtal frågor av det generella slaget, samt ta några illustrerande bilder

Ditt namn:

Ålder:

Kön:

Sysselsättning:

Utbildning:

Individuell inkomst/månad

Hushållets inkomst/månad:

Genomsnittligt utlägg på mat / månad (t.ex. X000 till hushållet och X00 på restaurang/person):

E-mail-adress:

(Mobil)telefonnummer:

Information om andra medlemmar i ditt hushåll:

Namn: Ålder: Relation till dig:

Namn: Ålder: Relation till dig:

Namn: Ålder: Relation till dig:

Namn: Ålder: Relation till dig:

0.1 VAR GOD TAG EN BILD AV DIG SJÄLV

Var god beskriv bilden:

0.2 VAR GOD TA EN BILD PÅ EN SAK ELLER PRODUKT I DITT HEM SOM ÄR KARAKTÄRISTISK FÖR DIG

Var god beskriv bilden:

På följande sidor (4-8) finner du fotodagboken.

DAG 1 - En vanlig vardag

Datum: _____

1.0 VAR GOD BESKRIV DAGENS VIKTIGASTE TANKAR, KÄNSLOR OCH AKTIVITETER.

Var god ta bilder på de matlagning-/bakningsprodukter du har använt under dagen (max 7 bilder):

1.1 PÅ MORGONEN - FRUKOST

Beskriv kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara varför:

1.2 PÅ JOBBET/ I SKOLAN/UTE - LUNCH

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bilder av:

Förklara varför:

1.3 PÅ KVÄLLEN - MIDDAG

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara varför:

1.4 EN MATPRODUKT (och dess VARUMÄRKE) SOM DU INTE KLARAR DIG UTAN

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara varför du tycker det är en produkt du inte klarar dig utan och var du förvarar den:

1.5 EN MATPRODUKT DU KÖPTE BARA FÖR SKOJS SKULL

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara var och varför du köpte produkten/varumärket och var du förvarar den:

1.6 EN MATPRODUKT DU ÄR LITE GENERAD ÖVER ATT DU HAR

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara var och varför du köpte produkten/varumärket, varför du är generad över den och var du förvarar den:

1.7 EN MATPRODUKT SOM DU BARA ANVÄNDER VID SPECIELLA TILLFÄLLEN

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara var du köpte den, när du använder produkten/varumärket och var du förvarar den:

1.8 NÅGOT SOM FÅR POSITIV INVERKAN PÅ DIN MATLAGNING/BAKNING

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bilder av:

Beskriv hur detta har positiv inverkan på din matlagning:

1.9 NÅGONTING SOM FÅR NEGATIV INVERKAN PÅ DIN MATLAGNING/BAKNING

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv hur detta har en negativ inverkan på din matlagning:

DAG 2 - En avslappnad dag

Datum: _____

2.0 VAR GOD BESKRIV DAGENS VIKTIGASTE TANKAR, KÄNSLOR OCH AKTIVITETER.

Var god tag bilder av följande:

2.1 EN MATVARUPRODUKT SOM SYMBOLISERAR EN SÅDAN DAG

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara varför du väljer denna matvaruprodukten just idag:

2.2 ETT VARUMÄRKE SOM SYMBOLISERAR EN SÅDAN DAG

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv varför varumärket symboliserar dagen:

2.3 EN TYPISK AKTIVITET FÖR EN SÅDAN DAG

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv varför aktiviteten är typisk för en sådan dag:

DAG 3 - En dag med bakning i fokus

Datum: _____

3.0 VAR GOD BESKRIV DAGENS VIKTIGASTE TANKAR, KÄNSLOR OCH AKTIVITETER.

Var god tag bilder av följande:

3.1 EN DAGLIGVARUBUTIK DU BESÖKER NÄR DU SKA HANDLA TILL BAKNINGEN

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Förklara varför du väljer denna butik för inköp till ditt bak och hur miljö/människorna får dig att må när du är där inne:

3.2 DE PRODUKTER DU KÖPTE TILL BAKET (spara också kvitto)

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv vad du ska använda/använde produkterna till:

3.3 ETT REDSKAP DU GÄRNA ANVÄNDER TILL BAKNINGEN DENNA DAG

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv varför redskapet är bra att använda:

3.4 NÅGON/NÅGRA KRITISKA MOMENT AV SJÄLVA BAKNINGSPROCESSEN

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av och varför de är viktiga:

3.5 EN RÅVARA SOM ÄR VIKTIG FÖR DAGENS BAKNING

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv vad som gör råvaran viktig i maträtten:

3.6 TILLFÄLLET SURDEGEN KONSUMERAS [detta inträffar kanske en annan dag än bakdagen alternativt under flera dagar, kommentera i så fall detta nedan]

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv förväntningarna du hade på bakningen och huruvida resultatet levde upp till dessa förväntningar. Varför/varför inte?

3.7 KÄNSLOR OCH TANKAR NÄR BAKET ÄR AVSLUTAT

Beskriv fritt

DAG 4 - En dag då du bjuder hem folk på middag

Datum: _____

4.0 VAR GOD BESKRIV DAGENS VIKTIGASTE TANKAR, KÄNSLOR OCH AKTIVITETER.

Var god tag bilder av följande:

4.1 EN DEL AV FÖRBEREDELSE INFÖR KVÄLLEN (besök i affär, förberedelser i köket, receptpåläsning etc.)

Förklara kortfattat vad du tagit bilder av:

Beskriv varför det här är en viktig del av förberedelserna:

4.2 NÅGOT SOM SYMBOLISERAR ATT DU SKA HA GÄSTER

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv varför detta är viktigt:

4.3 ETT REDSKAP DU GÄRNA ANVÄNDER TILL MATLAGNINGEN DENNA DAG

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv varför redskapet är bra att använda:

4.4 NÅGON/NÅGRA KRITISKA MOMENT AV SJÄLVA MATLAGNINGSPROCESSEN

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av och varför de är viktiga:

4.5 EN RÅVARA SOM ÄR VIKTIG FÖR DEN MATRÄTTEN

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv vad som gör råvaran viktig i maträtten:

4.6 SJÄLVA MIDDAGSTILLFÄLLET

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv responsen du förväntade dig av din gäst/dina gäster och responsen du fick, samt hur responsen fick dig att känna:

DAG 5 - En dag då du inte lagar maten själv,

Datum: _____

men då middagstillfället är viktigt (restaurangbesök alternativt middag hos vänner)

5.0 VAR GOD BESKRIV DAGENS VIKTIGASTE TANKAR, KÄNSLOR OCH AKTIVITETER.

Var god tag bilder av följande:

5.1 NÅGOT SOM SYMBOLISERAR ATT DU ÄTER UTE/HOS NÅGON ANNAN

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

5.2 EN DEL AV OMGIVNINGEN

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv hur omgivningen får dig att känna:

5.2 NÅGON/NÅGRA AV MATRÄTTERNA

Beskriv kortfattat vad du har tagit bild av:

Beskriv hur maten står sig mot din egen matlagning, hade du kunnat göra det bättre själv?

Appendix 2 – Interview Guide

Presentation av studien och etiskt hänsynstagande:

Eftersom vi är otroligt intresserade och fascinerade över surdegens framväxt under de senaste åren, vill vi lära oss mer om de människor som väljer att engagera sig i utövandet av surdegsbakning. Den förståelse vi vill uppnå innefattar många olika aspekter i hela er livsstil så intervjun kommer därför att vara väldigt öppen och har ett brett perspektiv. Våra intervjuer kommer att transkriberas och du har som intervjuperson full anonymitet i studien.

Inledning:

- Berätta lite om dig själv (arbete, intressen, familj)

Matlagning i allmänhet:

- Hur skulle du beskriva ditt förhållande till matlagning generellt? Vad har matlagning för roll i ditt liv?
- Ser du dig som en exceptionellt matlagningsintresserad person generellt? Hur?
- Tror du att du tycker det är viktigare med mat än andra människor?
- Lagar du all mat från grunden?
- Är det viktigt för dig med hållbara och ekologiska råvaror i matlagning och bakning?
- Tänker du på vad du äter? Tycker du att det är viktigt att äta hälsosamt?
- Hur ser du på snabbmat och färdiglagad mat? Äter du det ibland? När, i så fall, och varför?
- Äter du oftast hemma eller ute? Vilka typer av restauranger föredrar du i så fall?

Surdegsintresset:

- Hur blev du intresserad av surdeg?
- Vad har inspirerat dig till att engagera dig i surdegsbakning?
- Minns du någon specifik händelse/incident som präglat/format ditt intresse?
- Finns det någon eller några personer som haft inflytande på ditt intresse?
- Är din familj intresserad av surdeg/bakning, om ja hur har det påverkat dig och ditt intresse?
- Hur har du skaffat dig den kunskap och expertis som behövs för att lyckas med surdegsbakning?

Surdegen i din vardag:

- Hur uttrycks surdegsintresset i din vardag?
- Hur beskriver du din personliga relation till surdeg?
- Känner du dig annorlunda gentemot andra som inte har samma särpräglade intresse?
- Hur skulle du själv beskriva ditt intresse för surdeg?
- Varför bakar du med surdeg?
- Vad associerar du med surdeg?

- Vilken roll har surdegsbakandet i ditt liv? Vilken funktion har det? Vad bidrar det med?
- Varför tror du att fler och fler börjat engagera sig i surdegsbakning?
- Vad är den största skillnaden mellan dig och andra som bakar utan surdeg?

Bakningsprocessen:

- Beskriv hur en vanlig surdegsbakning går till från dess att du sätter degen till tidpunkten du bakar av och till det slutgiltiga resultatet uppnås.
- Hur ofta bakar du med surdeg?
- Finns det perioder du bakar mer eller mindre? (Följdfråga: varför?)
- Vilka sammanhang bakar du?
- Hur går bakningen ut över övrigt hushållsarbete? Hur mycket tid upptar bakningen i förhållande till annat hushållsarbete?
- Bakar du oftast själv eller tillsammans med andra? Varför?
- Vad är det viktigaste i bakningsprocessen? Ett visst moment, produkt, annan faktor?
- Har du några speciella rutiner?
- Hur får du idéer till nya bak-kreationer?
- Följer du recept när du bakar eller improviserar du?
- Ser varje bakningsprocess likadan ut?
- Vad känner du för känslor när du bakar med surdeg?
- Kan du berätta om ett riktigt lyckat bakningstillfälle? Vilka var de kritiska faktorerna, momenten?
- Kan du berätta om en gång där det inte gick lika bra? Varför inte? Hur kände du då?

Det färdiga resultatet:

- Hur ser du på det färdiga resultatet?
- Hur konsumerar du det bröd du bakar?
- Äter du det oftast själv eller i sällskap? Varför?
- Tycker du om att bjuda din omgivning på det du bakar, i så fall när bjuder du?
- Kan du beskriva din känsla när du bjuder någon på ditt nybakade bröd?
- Kan du jämföra surdeg med en annan ägodel i ditt liv?
- Äter du bara surdegsbröd eller även annat bröd? Vilket i så fall och var köper du det? Bageri/livsmedelsaffär
- Hur ser du på industribakat bröd?
- Vad är viktigast för dig när du bakar med surdeg - processen eller det färdiga brödet?

Den sociala aspekten:

- Känner du samhörighet med andra människor som bakar med surdeg? I så fall, hur?

- Interagerar du ofta med andra människor med samma intresse som du? I så fall, hur?
- Bakar de flesta i din närhet (vänner, familj) också med surdeg? Delar de ditt intresse?
- Vad tycker dina vänner om ditt surdegsintresse?
- Har du vänner som är helt ointresserade av surdegsbakning/matlagning? Vad tycker du om det?

- Vad har Internet/din blogg för roll i ditt surdegsintresse?
- Vad har bloggen för betydelse i ditt liv?
- Hur använder du bloggen för att visa ditt intresse?
- Vad vill du uppnå med bloggen?
- Vad får du för respons?
- Följer du andra surdegsbloggar? Eller andra matlagningsbloggar? I så fall, vilka?
- Hur använder du Internet för att interagera med andra surdegsintresserade?
- Vad spelar bilderna för roll?