

“Can you hand me the salt, please?”

Motivational Conflicts - Health v.s. Taste

- Master Thesis -



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Abstract

Title: “Can you hand me the salt, please?” - Motivational Conflicts - Health v.s. Taste

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Thesis purpose: to develop theory that can explain the contradictions that we see in contemporary society in the choice of cooking salt. Salt consumption can cause severe health problems. Consumers in the middle and upper classes are health aware, but seem to have other motivations for their choice in cooking salt. As appears in the hype that we see around cooking salt and the increased specialisation of this mundane product.

Conceptual Framework: we explore this phenomenon from a Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) perspective through a review of the literature on identity (Bourdieu), taste (Bourdieu) and the body (Veblen and Foucault). We also explore consumer motivations from a marketing perspective.

Methodology: from a constructionist ontological stance we used an inductive approach. We followed a qualitative research strategy conducting six in-depth interviews with consumers from the upper-middle class, in the age group 20 to 30, with different Western European backgrounds.

Empirical analysis: we analyse our findings based up seven main categories; the habit of salt; culturally defined; we are all influenced; the symbol of unhealthy; good healthy, high status; quality salt on the table and a chameleon for others’ taste.

Conclusion: we add to literature that, given this participants group, taste plays an important role in consumer motivations in the choice of the mundane product cooking salt. Consumers have however different cultural meanings of taste within their choice and are mostly restricted in their choices due to health issues. We also suggest, based on one of our participants, that consumers can show materialistic or conspicuous forms of salt consumption. Due to the small sample size of six in-depth interviews, further research is necessary to make any generalisations.

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1. Introduction

“[Y]esterday when I was eating, when I did this garlic butter thing, and I put soo much salt and it is just like... it tasted really good but yeah... I felt bad about it. [...] you could actually see the crystals inside the butter.”

Interview Mathilda

The quote above illustrates the tensions that health and taste can create within a person in the contemporary society. They largely influence society in the affluence world as they are employed for identity construction. This thesis explores the tensions that health and taste can create within a person in the case of cooking salt.

Cooking salt has been indicated as one of the most harmful substances in our food supply (Food, Nutrition & Science, 2014). Salt is build up on sodium and chloride and it is the sodium that can lead to severe health problems (Food Standards Agency, 2014). We use the term *salt* or cooking salt as most sodium is consumed in the form of salt and this is better understood by consumers (European Union, 2012a). That cooking salt is unhealthy is evidenced in the numerous researchers on this subject, for example He and MacGregor, who have done several researchers on the effect of salt on the body (e.g. MacGregor, 1997; He & MacGregor, 2002; 2006; 2009; He, Li & MacGregor 2013). They state that the increased salt intake in recent years;

“present[s] a major challenge to the kidneys to excrete these large amounts of salt. The consequence is that the high salt intake causes a rise in blood pressure (BP), thereby increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD — strokes, heart attacks and heart failure) and renal disease. Furthermore, a high salt intake may have direct harmful effects, for example, increasing the risk of stroke, left ventricular hypertrophy, progression of renal disease and proteinuria, independent of but additive to the effect of salt on blood pressure. There is also increasing evidence that salt intake is indirectly related to obesity through soft drink consumption, associated with an increased risk of renal stones and osteoporosis, and is probably a major cause of stomach cancer.”

He & MacGregor, 2009, pp.363

He & MacGregor identify salts influence on raising blood pressure as the most important cause of cardiovascular diseases, the number one cause of death and disability worldwide (2009). This large body of research on the negative effects of salt consumption also influences the efforts from organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and governments to reduce salt intake e.g. creating regulations on salt in processed food. Consumers are increasingly health aware, eagerly seeking for knowledge on health, to identify and control the dangers surrounding them (Crawford; 2006; Davis & Schneider, 2010). Health has become “a matter of identity” (Crawford, 2006, pp. 403). Previous research shows that Bourdieu’s economic, social and cultural capital all influence consumers in health (Abel, 2007), consequently consumers with a higher socioeconomic position show more healthy behaviours (Chandola, et al., 2010). However, figures show that the salt intake is still far above the advised level (European Union, 2012a). Daily, consumers in Europe use three to seven grams more salt than the five grams advised by the WHO (European Union, 2012a). Similar trends can be seen in Australia (Brinkman, et al., 2010; Charlton, 2010) and the U.S.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Although the largest part of our salt intake is caused by the increasing amount of processed food in the Western diet (He & MacGregor, 2009; European Commission, 2012b), recent years also show almost a hype around cooking salt among consumers in the middle and upper class. This presumably goes together with the fine eating culture that is seen widely among middle and upper class consumers as a way to distinguish themselves and create identity (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Parasecoli, 2008; Baumann & Johnston, 2010). Salt is increasingly becoming a specialized product with a wide assortment, especially sea salt has gained interest. We did not manage to find concrete sales figures, but the following quote illustrates the rising interest. The quote is from the CEO of Morton Salt, Mark Roberts, after an announcement about the expansion of their sea salt assortment:

"Our new line of sea salts capitalizes on the fastest growing category in the table and specialty salt category. Since consumers are preparing more meals at home, Morton's Sea Salts provide the 'everyday cook' with more options for cooking, baking, and flavoring their meals."

Marketline, 2010

Gourmet chefs also prefer the “coarse, crunchy texture and stronger flavour” of sea salt and manufacturers use it as an “all natural” ingredient (American Heart Association, 2014). Furthermore, niche products, like Himalaya- and Hawaiian-salt, gain popularity among consumers (Stohs, 2009). Consumers seem to use cooking salt for its signifying value and as a status object (Corrigan, 1997) in a way to differentiate and create identity (Arsel & Thompson, 2011).

The phenomenon that is described above is very contradicting. Consumers in the middle and upper classes are health aware, but seem to have other motivations for their choice of salt. Why are consumers not as health conscious when it comes to their choice of salt? Do consumers use salt as a way to differentiate themselves, show their refined taste and create identity? We will research how consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and explore their motivations conserving health and taste. Therefore, we have formulated the following research question:

How do consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and what are their motivations concerning their health and taste?

We explore the dynamic relationships between consumers' actions, motivations and cultural meanings from a Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) perspective (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, pp. 868). We take our theoretical position close to that of Arsel & Thompson, who “conceptualize the field of consumption in fragmented terms” (2011, pp. 19), we conceptualize the field of consumption of mundane products, in specific cooking salt. We feel the need to research this tension between health and taste, because it highly influences consumers in the contemporary society as explained in the phenomenon. To the best of our knowledge little research has been done on the influence of taste within the consumption field of mundane products, let alone cooking salt. Previous research mainly focused on health associated motivations and had a more Behavioural Decision Theory (BDT) perspective (Wilk, 2006; Chapman & Hammond, 2008; Benavides, et al., 2012; Joubert & Poalses, 2012; Hartmann, et al., 2013; Hzami, et al., 2013). It is however very important to explore consumer motivations in health and taste, as salt has such a

large impact on health. Also from a marketing perspective this is an important issue as consumer motivations are crucial in marketing. Previous research on cooking salt, mainly took a stance from government reduction programmes (He & MacGregor, 2009). To the best of our knowledge, little research has been done from a marketing perspective on consumer motivations for cooking salt.

We will provide insights on the following:

- a) How do consumers in the contemporary society construct their use of cooking salt in their daily lives?
- b) What cultural meanings of taste are employed by consumers in contemporary society when making choices for mundane product cooking salt?
- c) How do consumers in contemporary society negotiate health related motivations in their choice for the mundane product cooking salt?

To acquire these insights, rich data is collected through conducting six in-depth consumer interviews and through reviewing the literature on identity (Bourdieu), taste (Bourdieu) and the body (Veblen and Foucault) and look at the consumer motivations from a marketing perspective. We use these concepts in literature as a guide for this first exploration in the consumption field of mundane products, in specific cooking salt, and consumer motivations concerning their health and taste. The aim of this research is to develop theory that can explain the contradictions that we see in contemporary society in the choice for cooking salt.

2. Background

In the introduction we have explained the phenomenon that we are going to research. We use this chapter to shed some light on the development of health, taste and cooking salt throughout history and their meanings in society.

2.1 Health

Health is becoming more important, almost “a matter of identity” (Crawford, 2006, pp. 403). But what is health and why has it become so important? In the early 1700s health became more important among the Protestant culture. According to Crawford (2006, pp. 402), health practices were signs of modern societies and people’s believe in Enlightenment ideals, such as rational control and humanistic progress. The body belonged to God and the individual was to take good care of it.

In the 19th century, biopolitics increased the focus on health. Healthy bodies were needed to fight wars, they were of great interest to the state and became a matter of national importance. The body therefore belonged more to the state than to the individual and it was the duty of the home to provide these healthy bodies (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 99). Later on, when military needs reduced, the body became owned by the individual. The importance of health for the body stayed, but it was seen on an individual level. It became a way to distinguish oneself. Those who did not follow the ‘principles of health’ were seen as irresponsible of their ‘self-improvement’ and failed to act upon the social laws (Crawford, 2006, pp. 407). From the state’s perspective, healthy bodies were important for both the workforce and to save on the medical bills. Therefore, a healthy body was kept as a priority (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 99-100). In the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century, this was clearly seen by government legislations and funding for research on health (Davis & Schneider, 2010). Experts, such as doctors, gained a huge amount of power. Entrepreneurs quickly picked up on this and created all sorts of health and fitness related products and services. Health became the lifestyle, and a form of ‘common sense’. A way for consumers to have some sort of control over their lives (Crawford, 2006, pp. 407-410).

In the time period described above, health mainly focused on physical health (Saylor, 2004, pp. 100). Nowadays the definition of health has more dimensions, introduced by the World Health Organization, health is defined as; “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948). Also the people’s view on health has changed according to research. We eagerly seek for knowledge about health, are guided by experts like doctors and nutritionist (Crawford, 2006; Davis & Schneider, 2010) and controlled by medicines (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 153-154). We need and want to be aware of the dangers surrounding us, so we can identify them and try to have control over them. These fears are fuelled by corporations, governments, experts and media (Crawford, 2006). According to Crawford we perceive health as something we need to attain, not something we have or are (2006), eating is seen as ‘a way to prevent diseases’ (Davis & Schneider, 2010). We have mixed feelings about this viewing point. Looking at the given definition of health it is almost impossible to ‘be’ healthy, “everyone lacks health” (Larson, 1999, cited in Saylor, 2004, pp. 101). But health can also be something that most people have when they are born and the choices made and events happening in life can influence this positive- or negatively. We wonder how this reference point, being healthy or unhealthy, is created. This is a question that is hard to answer as health is almost a cultural aspect,

defined through institutions like religion, the state, experts, economics and the media. The meanings and associations given to health are therefore different throughout cultures (Crawford, 2006, pp. 405) and varies “over time and [...] from one society, culture and country to another” (WHO, 1948).

2.2 Taste

Taste is almost an elusive phenomenon as it has more meanings. The concrete meaning of taste is a sense that is located in the mouth. According to the four-taste model, taste is build up by four elements; sweet, salty, sour and bitter (Erickson, 2008). The abstract meaning however, is the ‘aesthetic appreciation’ of things (Skov, 2010, pp. 326). We think that taste is very personal and that you build up your own likes and dislikes (Pickering, Jain & Bezawada, 2013). However, we can also see that individuals observe others, e.g. those they aspire, and adjust their behaviour to fit in a group, formed around taste, or to stand out (Skov, 2010, pp. 326-330). This has been researched by Bourdieu, who reasons that “good taste” is a form of symbolic power, which creates a clear distinction between the upper, middle and working class and their aesthetic preferences (Skov, 2010).

Looking at the abstract meaning of taste in combination with food we can see that taste has changed over history. We have become civilized in our eating (Corrigan, 1997). In medieval Europe, when food supply was uncertain for all classes, a mentality of ‘feast while you can’ was applied (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 116). When food supply became steadier, mainly the upper class benefited from this, while lower classes were still fighting hunger and starvation. Eating a large quantity of food was a way to distinguish oneself (Corrigan, 1997). In the eighteenth century also lower classes were able to eat large quantities of food. Eating even larger quantities would be physically impossible for the higher classes, therefor quality became the new quantity. Delicate and refined dishes came in place for limitless eating (Corrigan, 1997). ‘Conspicuous culinary consumption’ was a way to distinct oneself, seen among a minority of the elite class who dominated the gourmet foodscape with the French cuisine (Baumann & Johnston, 2010). Food was not meant to feed the stomach, it was a sign of good taste to eat in small proportions and eat highly refined food (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 119). But over the course of time this also changed, fuelled by the media, who made the fine eating culture known to other classes and even feasible in the own kitchen through cooking books and cooking shows on TV. The culture of fine eating ‘trickled down’ to lower classes. (Holt, 1998) Nowadays, many people seek for culinary satisfaction, Baumann & Johnston define them as foodies.

“[F]oodies praise both the high culture of great restaurant chefs and the low culture of street vendors. They travel far and wide to forage for humble products and unknown preparations. They worship the peasant cook, the local speciality, and anything that suggests an authentic experience that can penetrate through the standardization of modern life to the essence of “good taste”. Foodies are, in short, omnivorous consumers in pursuit of perfection wherever they can find it.”

Baumann & Johnston, 2010, pp. XIV

Despite the economic crisis, the interest for this fine eating has not disappeared (Baumann & Johnston, 2010, pp. XVI). Baumann & Johnston see several reasons for the increasing interest in

the gourmet foodscape. These have to do with: the world becoming increasingly globalized, consumer concerns about the industrial food system, the need for consumers to be engaged and active participants during the production process, mere than just consumers (Baumann & Johnston, 2010, pp. XVII – XIX). This is also seen by De Solier and Campbell, consumption of food has become ‘suspicious’ in the defining of the self, the production or crafting of food is therefore seen as “having a higher moral value” and a sign of good taste (Campbell, 2005; De Solier, 2013, para. 2).

Looking at taste in combination with health, it can also be seen that these two concepts are very connected. Good health is seen as a way to distinguish oneself, pursuing the social laws and being responsible (Crawford, 2006, pp. 407) and therefore having good taste.

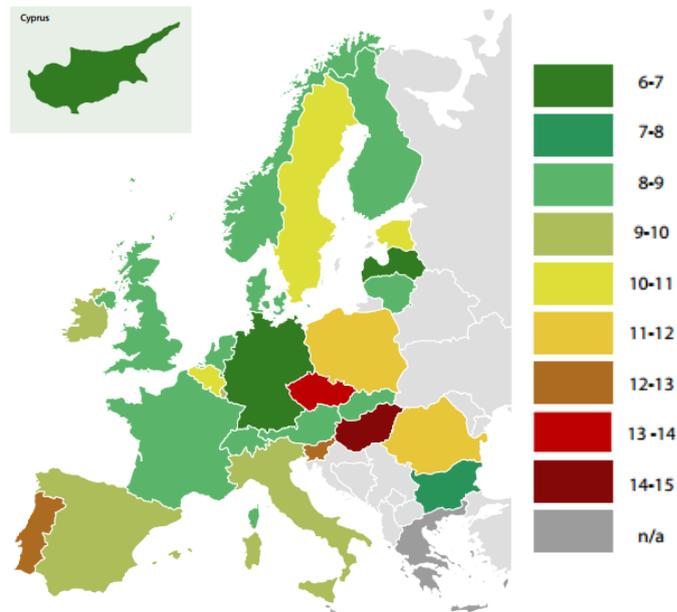
2.3 Cooking Salt

The foodie trend that we see in taste and food also has an effect on salt. We see a great specialisation within the cooking salt assortment, with wide ranges of niche products (Stohs, 2009; Baumann & Johnston, 2010; Marketline, 2010). The most commonly known cooking salt types are table salt and sea salt (Nesmith, et al., 2008). Table salt comes from underground salt deposits and is heavily processed to remove trace elements (Russo, 2013). Sea salt is from evaporated seawater or underground resources (Russo, 2013). Despite this increasing variety in salt and the different production processes, consumers seem to have little preference in taste. During blind tastings, it was found that “participants -classified as everyday consumers- could not taste a statistical difference between sea, table and kosher salts” (Nesmith, et al., 2008, pp. 320). These results make us curious about consumer motivations behind the types of cooking salt they use and how they reason for taste and health.

The amount of salt intake has varied throughout history. As discussed in the introduction, cooking salt has been indicated as one of the most harmful substances in our food supply nowadays (Food, Nutrition & Science, 2014). Still, consumers in the Western world use more than the five grams per day that is advised by the WHO (Brinkman, et al., 2010; Charlton, 2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; European Union, 2012a). This has not always been the case. Since the discovery of salt, thousands of years ago, salt has a profound life in the “human, economic, mythological and religious spheres” (Salt works, 2014). For feeding, humans did not use more than 0.25 grams salt a day, until about 5,000 years ago, when the Chinese discovered that you could preserve food with salt (He & MacGregor, 2009). This discovery had a large impact on society as people were now able to preserve food during the winter, allowing communities to settle (He & MacGregor, 2009). Salt became a very valuable commodity, also because harvesting salt was extremely labour intensive before the industrialization (Freeman, 2012). It turned into an exchange commodity that travelled the world and created the so-called ‘salt routes’ (Salt works, 2014). Because salt was put in food to preserve it, consumers’ salt intake increased enormously. This changed when the refrigerator was invented for home and domestic use in the early 20th century (Keep it cool, 2002). Consumers’ salt intake was declining for a while, but due to the high level of salt in processed food in the Western diet this level is increasing again (He & MacGregor, 2009; European Commission, 2012b). Figure 1 shows a map of Europe and the estimated daily salt intake per adult inhabitant (European Commission, 2012b, pp. 16). All countries exceed the advised level of five grams of salt a day. Men consume higher amounts of salt than women, namely

6.5 to 16.6 grams a day, compared to 5.4 to 12.3 grams a day for women (European Commission, 2012b). Children in Europe consume a higher level of salt as they grow older. Starting around 4.5 grams at an age of 1 to 3, to maximum 11.5 when they are 14 to 18 years old (European Commission, 2012b).

Figure 1 – Map with estimates of daily salt intakes (in g) of adults in most European countries



Source: European Commission, 2012b, pp. 16

3. Conceptual Framework

In this chapter we start by explaining our choice for a CCT perspective, followed by a review of the literature on identity (Bourdieu), taste (Bourdieu) and the body (Veblen and Foucault) that will help us explore the phenomenon. We also look into consumer motivations from a marketing perspective. All these concepts help us to answer our research question: How do consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and what are their motivations concerning their health and taste?

With this research we explore the conflicting motivations between health and taste within the choice for cooking salt from a CCT perspective. As said in the introduction, we explore the dynamic relationships between consumer actions', motivations and 'cultural meanings' (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, pp. 868). According to Holt consumer culture is dependent on everyday 'free personal choice' of people (2002). The use of cooking salt is one of those choices that consumers make in their everyday lives. CCT focuses on consumers as social beings, "[cultural] values and norms can be considered as the criteria that individuals use to select and justify their actions, to value objects and the behaviour of others" (Hansen, 2010, pp. 307). Both health and taste motivations are closely connected to the consumers' relation with others and this is something we want to explore. Previous research took a more Behavioural Decision Theory (BDT) perspective (Wilk, 2006; Chapman & Hammond, 2008; Benavides, et al., 2012; Joubert & Poales, 2012; Hartmann, et al., 2013; Hzami, et al., 2013). Therefore, we decided on a CCT perspective in this research on consumer motivations' choice of salt. To know where we add on to theory we will provide a brief literature review of different concepts within the field of CCT that helps us with exploring the phenomenon. We give a review on identity (Bourdieu), taste (Bourdieu) and the body (Veblen and Foucault) and look at consumer motivations from a marketing perspective.

The most influential theorist for this research is Pierre Bourdieu and his concepts on cultural capital and taste (1984). Holt describes it as "the most comprehensive and influential attempt to develop a theoretical framework to plumb the social patterns of consumption in an increasingly mystified social world" (1998, pp. 1). Below we will explain per concept our choice for the mainly Bourdieuan perspective in our research.

3.1 Identity

Within our contemporary society consumers are eagerly looking for ways to distinguish themselves and to construct identities (Salzer-Mörling, 2010, pp. 538). Identity is created through the consumption of good (Holt, 1998; De Solier, 2010). According to Baudrillard 'system of objects', goods do not only have a use-value, but also a signifying-value (Corrigan, 1997). Meaning that goods "are not merely functional [...], but sign certain things" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 47). Through these signifying-values consumers construct their identity. Identity is closely related with both health and taste in food. "From a Bourdieuan perspective, consumption practices are viewed as the embodied skills that people bring to bear in everyday activities and are shaped by consumers' habitus" (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp.135). Symbols from the market are used as 'building blocks' to create identity (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp.135). Food consumption is a central aspect of our sense of self-identity (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp.135). It is central in every human's life, but it is not merely a biological process, food constructs a human individual also psychologically and socially (Bardhi,

et al., 2010, pp.136). Important are ‘the meanings and representations behind the food and the way food shapes both our individual and collective identities’ (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp.135)

Different definitions and meanings of identity are used in sociology. We seek our definition between *nominal* and *social identity*. Nominal identity is described by Bourdieu as something that is used for the name of the subject as well as for representing a sensed world of a topic or event (Bourdieu, 1984). It is a more complicated structure, something where the meaning goes further than the name itself (Bourdieu, 1984). Social identity refers to “aspects of a person’s self-concept based upon their group memberships together with their emotional, evaluative and other psychological correlates” (Oakes & Turner, 1986, pp. 240). It is the combination of nominal and social identity that describes the form of identity for this research best, because identity is about constructing the self for yourself and others.

The first theory on this subject were written by Veblen (1899). He identifies two ways through which people can establish distinction; conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption (Corrigan, 1997). Previously people distinguished themselves through conspicuous leisure; the unproductive consumption of time (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 22). Identity was created through elements like class, profession, origin and education (Salzer-Mörling, 2010, pp. 538). This type of distinction is however only seen in small societies, where people know each other and do not have to show off through consumption. But we do not have this comfort, or restriction, anymore (De Solier, 2013). Now we are responsible for creating our own identity and meaning in life and it has become an ongoing project. The main emphasis during this creating process is put on consumption today (Bourdieu 1984; Featherstone 1991; Baudrillard 1998 in De Solier, 2013). Veblen calls this conspicuous consumption; the unproductive consumption of goods (Corrigan, 1997). Conspicuous leisure and consumption are ‘methods of demonstrating wealth and claiming status’ (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 26). But to create status you cannot merely consume, “one must consume in a proper and seemingly manner, this manner having been attained through an expenditure of time and money on such unproductive matters” (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 27).

Weber (1978) was the first to subdivided society on more elements than only economic position. “[N]oneconomic criteria such as morals, culture, and lifestyle” are used to define the different classes (Holt, 1998, pp. 2).

Later Bourdieu argues for a model of social distinction through “various types of capital within social fields” (Holt, 1998, pp. 3). As Holt puts it “Bourdieu argues that social life can be conceived as a multidimensional status game in which people draw on three different types of resources (what he terms economic, cultural, and social capital) to compete for status (what he terms ‘symbolic capital’)” (1998, pp 3). Consumers can distinct themselves through economic capital (e.g. occupation and financial resources); social capital (e.g. social connections and networks) and cultural capital (e.g. taste, education, knowledge and skills) (Holt, 1998, pp. 3; Coskuner-Balli and Thompson, 2013, pp. 20). Status, defined as symbolic capital, is explained as e.g. authority, prestige, respect and social recognition (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson, 2013, pp. 20).

Cultural capital has probably the highest influence on consumer identity building and distinction and it has become ‘a theoretical touchstone’ for researchers investigating social-cultural structures in consumption (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson, 2013). Through cultural capital, habits are created, Bourdieu refers to this as ‘habitus’ (Holt, 1998). It is concerned with “family

upbringing, [...] educational experiences, [...] peer networks, and other sociological factors that exert an enduring influence on [consumers] intellectual, social, and aesthetic predispositions and, more generally, the kind of social milieu in which they feel at home” (Arsel & Thompson, 2011, pp. 793). Habitus within food is shaped through ‘socio-economic standing’ and ‘home food regimes’, it “tends to be enduring and take considerable amount of time and effort to transform” (Thompson and Tambyah, 1999, cited in Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp. 136).

As mentioned in the introduction; economic, social and cultural capital influence consumer in health (Abel, 2007). According to Abel “cultural capital is a key element in the behavioural transformation of social inequality into health inequality” (Abel, 2007, pp. 1). Thus, consumers with a higher socioeconomic position show healthier behaviours (Chandola, et al., 2010). The contradiction there is the hype around cooking salt in recent years among consumers for the middle to upper class. If consumers are constructing their identity through the use of cooking salt, why is the use of salt than more important than the health in this construction? Previous research on “food consumption has argued that food is the site where the relationship between the self and the other is contested” (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp. 133). An answer to this question might therefore be related to taste.

3.2 Taste

Taste is a way through which consumers can distinguish themselves. As explained in the background, taste is the ‘aesthetic appreciation’ of things (Skov 2010). Bourdieu’s contributions to literature on taste are one of the most influential attempts to conceptualize this subject. According to him, there is little personal about taste, “being the product of the conditions associated with a particular class of conditions of existence, it unites all those who are the product of similar conditions while distinguishing them from all others” (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 49). The field of consumption “is stratified so that there exist different lifestyles organized by class position” (Holt, 1998, pp. 4). Taste is therefore an essential way through which we classify ourselves and are classified by others, it “unites and separates” (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 49). Bourdieu sees ‘good taste’ as a form of symbolic power, which creates a clear distinction between the upper, middle and working class and their aesthetic preferences (Skov, 2010). Depending on the class you are in, different requirements are set before you ‘have’ good taste. As Holt explains; ‘material value of cultural objects’ are taken for granted by consumers with high cultural capital, “[i]nstead taste becomes a realm of self-expression, a means of constructing subjectivities”, for example ‘visually appealing cultural objects’ (Holt, 1998, pp. 8).

Where taste is almost a natural thing we are more aware of our taste through our distaste (Bourdieu, 1984). Wilk also writes about this, but argues that ‘dislikes and distastes are not the mirror images of tastes and desire, but instead provide very different ways for people to express identity and difference, to create senses of self, space, and personal and social time” (Wilk, 1997, pp. 175).

As said before embodied food tastes are shaped through ‘socio-economic standing’ and ‘home food regimes’ (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp. 136). Culinary taste is therefore largely constructed through others, e.g. peers, and cultural capital. The foodie trend for example can even be seen as gastronomic, “meaning that it involves a communicative public-sphere dimension specifying what foods and food trends are interesting, relevant, and high status for foodies” (Baumann & Johnston,

2010, pp. 40). To the best of our knowledge little research has been done on the connection between taste and mundane products, in particular cooking salt from a CCT perspective. An example is Wilk's (2006) research on bottled water, however he uses the concrete meaning of taste for his research. Therefore, we explore consumer motivations in this field with the aim to contribute to literature.

3.3 The Body

Where consumption practices are viewed as embodied skills from a Bourdieuan perspective, "we see food tastes and food consumption practices as embodied, reflecting socialization processes that work directly on the body" (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp.135). The body is like a canvas on which consumers place and "read messages about status, class and gender" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 147).

The human view of the body as part of identity has changed over time. 'The body' was not so much subject of literature in sociology until the mid-1980s (Corrigan, 1997). Some sociologists, such as Turner (1992) see a Cartesian philosophy as the reason why body and mind have been separated in the field of literature, e.g. 'Descartes' motto was "I think therefore I am" – and not "I eat, drink, sleep and have sex, therefore I am." (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 147). The body and mind were split in literature. One other reason for this could be the victory of the European hygiene movements, as Corrigan suggests, "the cleaner the body, the less it can betray itself as something made of flesh by giving off odour or leaving bits of its waste products about the place as evidence of its passage" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 147). There was a split up in the literature between 'nature-body-environment' and 'society-mind culture' (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 148). Consciousness, knowledge and meaning were far more important in sociology than embodiment was (Corrigan, 1997). Although the body was a kind of hidden subject in sociology for a long time, it has gained interest in recent years. As Shilling mentions in his book (2012), both morbidity and mortality rates can differ so much from country to country that this has given sociologists the incentive to investigate "what it is about the social existence of people that affects the bodies in such dramatic ways" (Shilling, 2012, pp. 17).

Turner's theory about the body is well known in sociology. He gives meaning to the body in three ways: by 'having a body', 'being a body' and 'doing a body' (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 150). This theory is closely connected to the health, the body and identity. Normally we are 'just' being a body, "the body does not pose any sort of troubling resistance to us" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 151). When we experience an illness we 'have a body', the body works independently from the mind in mysterious ways (Corrigan, 1997). The person has little control over its own body, and in more serious cases of illness, has given control to the medical specialist (Corrigan, 1997). Through 'doing a body' our bodies create identity where they belong to the 'social world'. People want to present their selves to others and treat the body not only as objects, but as 'objects of representation' (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 151). The consumption of salt can be connected to all of these 'bodies', it is a social practice (being a body) that is mostly done subconsciously, but can have a large impact on the body's health. Turner's 'double-sidedness of the body' also fits in this perspective of the consumption of salt, "it is ours and not ours" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 151). He makes his own distinction by a foundationalist and non-foundationalist approach. The non-foundationalist approach sees the body as a representation rather than a 'lived experience', which is the foundationalist approach (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 152).

Where Turner makes a distinction between ways of seeing the body, Foucault writes about the 'disciplined body'. "The Foucauldian body is very much a body to be disciplined by and for others" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 153). Foucault's important contribution to the discussion of the body in sociological literature is that he writes that we take our bodies for granted, he means that our bodies are not fully controllable by ourselves (Howson, 2013).

These views of the body are closely connected to the consumption of salt. As the consumption of salt can have severe influence on health and the body, the different perspectives are important in our research.

3.4 Consumer Motivations from a Marketing Perspective

We also want to explore consumer motivations as a marketing practice as this research is part of the marketing scholar. Consumer motivations are crucial in marketing. Literature has several definitions of marketing, but we use Kotler's who defines marketing as:

"[T]he science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services."

Kotler, 2014

From an utilitarian view, consumers should try to purchase products in "an efficient and timely manner" to reach "their goals with a minimum of irritation" (Carr, et al., 2001, pp. 513). Similar is the basic model of consumer behaviour in economics, suggesting that consumers are 'rational economic men' (Brekke, 2010). Given the budget a consumer is limited to, they are "supposed to choose the most preferred bundle of consumption goods and services" (Brekke, 2010, pp. 117). But within our contemporary society, consumers are everything but rational and our choices have little to do with economics.

Consumers are either "problem solvers" or seeking for "fun, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, and enjoyment" in their consumption (Carr, et al., 2001, pp. 513). Consumers can have many motivations as shopping goals, "but most typologies consider instrumental and hedonic motivations as fundamental to understanding consumer shopping behavior because they maintain a basic underlying presence across consumption phenomena" (Carr, et al. 2001, pp. 513). How consumers arrive at this specific behaviour depends on their thought process.

One important theory in social science is that of thinking fast and slow by Kahneman and Tversky (Kahneman, 2011). Kahneman describes 'mental life' by 'System 1' and 'System 2' thinking (2011, pp. 16). System 1 works mainly unconscious and makes quick judgements looking at experience and emotions (Kahneman, 2011). Through practice, mental activities become automatic, for example the use of salt in cooking. System 2 is conscious and more rational than System 1 (Kahneman, 2011). The reason why we are not 'rational economic men' is because we use our System 1 in a lot of decisions and this system is not designed to think statistically (Kahneman, 2011). The two systems have different interests based upon two selves, the 'experiencing self' and the 'remembering self' (Kahneman, 2011, pp. 19). We make 'risky choices' based on our experience without thinking rationally (Kahneman 2011). Perhaps this is what we see as well in our

phenomenon, although consumers have learned that salt is unhealthy and has negative health effects, they keep using it as a choice coming from their ‘experiencing self’. According to Kahneman’s ‘prospect theory’, the losses are valued higher than the gains. Not using salt, or limiting the salt use, might be a too big of a loss of taste compared to the gains in health. Consumers need help from others to make ‘more accurate judgements’ and ‘better decisions’ (Kahneman, 2011, pp. 396). By anticipating triggers that consumers use in their System 1 or 2, marketers can use this to provoke certain consumer motivations and with this behaviour.

For the process explained above it is important to know what motivates consumers in the contemporary society in their choice of salt. Do consumers use their System 1 or 2 and which factors are most influential within health and taste motivations? It is the marketer’s task to try to control these factors, although it is impossible to control all those factors (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, pp. 61). Consumer behaviour goes far beyond purchasing goods (Harris-Tuck, et al., 2006, pp. 15), it is much more about how “having (or not having) things, affect our lives” (Harris-Tuck, et al., 2006, pp. 15). In our research identity, taste and the body are those elements that ‘affect life’. This part of marketing relates to “how our possessions influence the way we feel about ourselves and about each other –our state of being” (Harris-Tuck, et al., 2006).

4. Methodology

In the methodology chapter we discuss the research philosophy and design of the following research question: How do consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and what are their motivations concerning their health and taste? We also discuss our data collection and participant selection, data analysis, limitations and ethical considerations.

4.1 The Phenomenon

For this research the phenomenon described in the introduction is very important, as it is on this that we base and build our research. Therefore, we will explain the phenomenon shortly again.

With this research we want to explore the contradiction that consumers in middle and upper classes show within their choice for cooking salt between health and taste. They are health aware (Crawford; 2006; Chandola, et al., 2010; Davis & Schneider, 2010), but seem to have other motivations for their choice in salt. In recent years we see almost a hype around cooking salt and an increased specialisation of this mundane product (Stohs, 2009; Baumann & Johnston, 2010; Marketline, 2010). The research question that we have therefore formulated is: *How do consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and what are their motivations concerning their health and taste?* The objects of this study are the use of salt (behaviour) and consumer motivations concerning health and taste. To the best of our knowledge, this conflict between health and taste motivations in the case of cooking salt has not been researched yet. We therefor perform an exploratory research to shed some first light on this important aspect of consumer motivations. In this chapter we will further explain how we will research the phenomenon, starting with our research philosophy.

4.2 Research Philosophy

In this paragraph we will explain the research philosophy. It looks at the researchers own view on the world and the philosophy behind the research. These are important insights as they have great influence on the research design.

To understand the philosophical reasoning for this particular research, it is important to understand the researchers' own philosophies. As researchers on postgraduate level, it is hard to know and understand our own philosophy, let alone having certain view on how the world should be viewed. After careful consideration we have chosen the standpoint of harmony (Svensson, 2014a). This standpoint supposes that people are of kind nature and research is done to explain anger in this world. This view is reflected in the research question, where it looks upon contradictions in consumer motivations when making choices in salt. We want to explore the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, motivations and 'cultural meanings' from a CCT perspective (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). This choice affects the research philosophy that we apply. For the assumptions that we make "about the nature of reality" (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012, pp. 18) we feel obligated to adapt a constructionist ontological stance. Because this implies that social phenomena, like the one we research, are constantly being adapted by social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011). There are many truths and realities, like cultures, that are not the same everywhere, because they differ in time and place (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012). Our research question looks at "heterogeneous distribution of meanings" and "the exercise of free personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, pp. 868-869). Therefore, we feel that a

constructionist ontological stance fits the best to our research. The way that we are “inquiring into the nature of the world”, are our epistemological considerations (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2012, pp. 18). We take an interpretive stance, because the “emphasis [is] on lived experience as the basis of human action and activities” (Sandberg, 2005, pp. 42). We research how consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and explore motivations concerning their health and taste. We interpret the social world from the perspective of the social actor and see many truths (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore we believe that interpretivism is the most relevant epistemology for our research, as it aims to understanding the experiences of social actors and their social actions (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4.3 Research Design

The phenomenon and research question have been explained in paragraph one of this methodology. The objects of the study have been defined as the way consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives (behaviour) and their health and taste related motivations within this. Use (behaviour) and motivations are the main objects of this study. It is hard us to get direct access to these objects and for some, such as motivations, it is almost impossible. Therefore, we need to study the symptoms of the object (Svensson, 2014b). To determine the most suitable symptoms, researchers need to take into consideration; the context of the question, the accessibility of the symptoms and the limitations of the research frame. In the ideal world, a large amount of consumers should be interviewed several times and observed for a long period of time while using cooking salt in their daily lives. Through this, researchers can observe actual consumer behaviour, while exploring motivations through interviews. This allows the researchers to discover changes and patterns in behaviour and motivations and to make generalisations. However, conflicting motivations can be a sensitive issue, where a person has pressure from social identity and from aspiration and reference groups. And not all consumers are conscious of these conflicts within them. The research framework also causes limitations as it only provides a ten-week time period, a limited number of researchers and restricted research funds. We will elaborate on his in the chapter 4.6 limitations. Furthermore, we cannot expect every consumer to be willing and able to talk about their thoughts, feelings, behaviour and motivations freely. Despite this last point, we have chosen for the symptom of spoken words. Where these reveal more about the motivations of consumers and it is less time consuming than observations of behaviour (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In an attempt to capture relevant information on the symptoms of the object, we will now elaborate on the research strategy.

With this research we want to explore consumer motivations in taste and health and fulfil the aim to develop theory that explains the contradictions that we see in contemporary society in the choice of salt. We therefore apply an inductive approach, where theory is the preferred outcome of this research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Bryman and Bell see that the choice for quantitative or qualitative research is connected to the epistemological foundations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It implies that an inductive approach is qualitative, for the generation of theory. Qualitative research “is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 386). It corresponds with the research question and the symptoms needed. The focus of the research is on the out-layer and combined with the research philosophy they imply a qualitative approach.

Now the research methodology will be discussed. As said before, conflicting motivations can be sensitive subjects and not all consumers are conscious of these conflicts within them. Therefore, it is suggested to use a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative emphasizes on words, which is linked to the symptoms we are looking for, spoken words. It focusses on “the way in which individuals interpret their social word” and “embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 27). Within qualitative research we have chosen in-depth interviews as our method. Interviews are a way to capture the objects ‘use’ and ‘motivation’ through the symptoms of spoken words. By using in-depth interviews we allow the participants to expand on different topics and will not limit them. This is suitable for our research where motivations can be subconscious and different for all social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By using semi-structured interviews we can create questions on the specific topics of our research and allow our participants to answer broadly within this frame (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The use of semi-structured interviews allows us to compare the different participants with each other to see if patterns can be detected. The following types of research questions defined by Kvale (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 477-478) will be used; introduction questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, silence and interpreting questions.

4.4 Data Collection and Participants Selection

To answer our research question on how consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and their motivations are on health and taste, we want to find lived experiences through in-depth interviews (Sandberg, 2005). It is always hard to decide how many in-depth interviews are required to give a reliable answer on our research question. Looking at our choice for qualitative research, issues such as validity are ‘less relevant’ as it is not about generalization, but about finding rich data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It is “the quality of the theoretical inferences that are made out of qualitative data that are crucial to the assessment of generalization” (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp. 409). In terms of validity, we explore the research field in search of contradictions and similarities that we gather from our empirical data through in depth-interviews. Qualitative research requires therefore a significant smaller research sample than quantitative research. McCracken describes in ‘The long interview’ the principle of ‘less is more’, where he suggests that “[i]t is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people than more superficially with many of them.” (1988, pp. 17). He suggests a sample size of eight participants (McCracken, 1988). Glaser and Strauss, urge on five to six interviewees for qualitative research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Due to the time constrains we have chosen a sample size of six participants for the in-depth-interviews.

It can be seen as preferable to not know the interviewees, because this might limit them in answering the questions to the fullest. Due to time constrains this is hard to achieve and we have therefore decided to go for second-degree connections. These connections are still located within our network but we do not have severe personal connections with these people. This will allow them to feel less influenced by us and answer the research questions freely.

For selecting our participants it is important that they fit into the research frame. Looking at the phenomenon explained in the introduction this conflict between taste and health is mainly a middle to upper class phenomenon. Consumers with a higher socioeconomic position show

healthier behaviours (Chandola, et al., 2010), but this is also the class that shows the biggest interest in cooking salt (Arnould & Thompson 2005; Baumann & Johnston, 2010). Therefore, we look for people in the middle or upper class with some level of cultural, economic and social capital (Abel, 2007). We decided to focus on the upper-middle class as these people are more likely to be in our second-degree network, being a postgraduate student, and are in the heart of our target group. We also picked our participants from different Western European backgrounds to see if this makes any difference within the motivations for the choice of cooking salt. The age group we targeted is between the 20 and 30 years old. We decided on this age group as this groups has mostly started cooking for themselves not too long ago and changed their living situation from living with their parents to living on their own or with a partner. These changes make them more aware of their own habits and motivations, as they have rethought them when they have started a new phase of life. Table 1 shows the profiles of our participants.

Table 1 – Participant Profiles

Name	Sex	Age	Residence	Nationality	Education	Occupation
Fred*	Male	25	Lelystad, The Netherlands	Dutch	Bachelor	Accountant
Janine*	Female	25	Havelte, The Netherlands	Dutch	Bachelor	Physiotherapist
Manon*	Female	25	Groningen, The Netherlands	Dutch	Bachelor	Orthopedagogue
Mathilda*	Female	23	Lund, Sweden	Luxembourg / Swedish	Bachelor	Student
Olivier*	Male	24	Lund, Sweden	French / Swedish	Master	Student
Willem*	Male	30	The Hague, The Netherlands	Dutch / German	Master	Lawyer

*Names given are pseudonyms

To make the participants feel comfortable we did our interviews at neutral grounds. We let the participants pick the time and location and for participants that lived outside of Sweden we used Skype. During the interviews only the participant and the two researchers (in one occasion only one of the researchers) were present, giving the participant a sense of privacy. The interviews were conducted during calendar week 17 and 18 of 2014. All the interviews were taped with permission from the participant and at every interview, one of the researcher was mainly responsible for asking questions, the other one for making notes. The interviews ranged in length from 40 minutes to over one hour. Some participants were easier to talk to than others, giving large amounts of data with a minimum of guidance of the researchers. When it was more difficult to get data from the participant, the semi-structured interview questions were helpful to keep the conversation going. As inexperienced interviewers this was a good structure to hold on to.

We started the interview with more contextual questions to get to know the participant and to make them feel at ease. The contextual questions contain questions about their living situation, cooking habits, grocery shopping and their awareness on the health and food trends that are

currently seen in the contemporary society and what these meant to them. After the contextual questions we went more into the topic of cooking salt, their use of cooking salt in different cuisines, their motivations behind their use, their purchasing behaviour for salt and their motivations within this. In the final questions we tried to be more direct, as we have gotten to know the person a bit better, we asked directly what they thought influenced their use of cooking salt.

When participants went into a topic that was not part of our semi-structured questions, we followed the participant in that topic to see if there were any interesting new topics. As there is not one reality and there are many truths, probing was the best way to see if these new topics fit within our phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In Abstract 1 the semi-structured interview questions can be found, in Abstract 2 a transcription of the interviews is given.

4.5 Data Analysis

The object of our analysis was to uncover the motivations that our participants have concerning their health and taste in the choice of cooking salt. Where taste was not directly talked about, it was important to ‘read between the lines’, therefore we carefully transcribed the interviews, making sure that verbal and non-verbal signs like pauses, laughter and the tone of voice are noted as well. After this, we carefully read through all the transcriptions and started coding the interviews. We gave “labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social world of those being studied” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 578). We used both ‘open’ and ‘selective coding’ (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 578). We used open coding to explore all the data that the participants had given to us, in order to not limit the participants’ stories. Selective coding was used to find motivations concerning health and taste within the choice of salt. This made it possible to compare the different participants with each other and see if patterns can be detected. Looking back at our research question we finalized with having seven main categories; the habit of salt; culturally defined; we are all influenced; the symbol of unhealthy; good healthy, high status; quality salt on the table and a chameleon for others’ taste. We listened to the interviews again with our coded transcripts to see if we did not make any misinterpretations. The categories given are used in the Analysis Chapter to explain our findings.

4.6 Limitations

The research contains several limitations that should be taken into consideration when evaluating the findings. Looking at the limitations within the research itself, the time frame of the research needs to be conducted, is our biggest limitation. As part of our postgraduate, we only have a ten-week time period for this research. This limits the research significantly in the level of thoroughness and extensiveness. Because of this, our sample size exists out of only six participants, making it hard to state any generalisations whatsoever. We researched consumers from different cultures and countries. It is an opportunity to research these cultural differences as this can generate different finding, but also causes limitations. Cultural differences can cause misinterpretations and bias, where the participants might have different cultural meanings. We therefore put a lot of emphasis on probing to find out what the participants exactly meant with their statements. Due to the fact that there are no sufficient research funds, interviews with

participants in other countries could not be conducted face-to-face, but were done through Skype. This distance can also have an impact on the accuracy of the interpretations as it is not possible to completely observe the participant and bad connection may cause noise. We tried to reduce these limitations to make sure that we and the participants were in an area with good internet connection. We also recorded all the interviews, making it possible to play back the interviews for transcription and this gave us a better understanding. Some of our Dutch participants had a lower level of English, which made it sometimes hard to explain themselves in English. As we are both Dutch, we let them talk in Dutch so they could express their feelings and motivations more freely. In the transcriptions we translated this to English text. To make sure that the transcriptions still contained the same meanings we were very careful with translating and ask each other for advice to make the translation as close to the original statement as possible.

Looking at ourselves as researchers we see the limitation of our lack of experience in researching on postgraduate level and conducting interviews. Although our education has prepared us for research on a postgraduate level, this is our first extensive research. We therefore appreciate the supervision that is given in this process to raise the level of our research. We try to reduce the impact of our lack of experience in conducting interviews with the use of semi-structured interviews, which gives us a good structure to hold on to.

Looking at secondary-data we encountered limitations with the availability of relevant information. Recent data and sales figures of cooking salt on the consumer market turned out to be unfindable or not accessible without substantial payments. Due to our restricted research funds this was not an option. We also encountered troubles retrieving articles and books on older theories mentioned in the conceptual framework. LUBsearch did not have rights into databases after a certain date, making it hard to retrieve older articles. Furthermore, books were lent or missing in the Lund University libraries. Also here our restricted research funds limited us from buying them ourselves. We therefore made use of the articles, books and data that we were able to access.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

As researchers we find it important to also express our ethical considerations we use during this research. We do not want to cause any ethical problems before, during or after the research. This means that this research should have no negative effects for any of our stakeholders. Our main concerns lie with our participants groups and secondary data that we used.

We want the participants to feel safe and express their behaviour, feelings and motivations freely. Therefore we have conducted the interviews on neutral grounds, picked by the participants themselves, to give them a sense of privacy. We also used pseudonyms in this research, so it is not possible to directly trace back the participants.

For this research we make use of secondary data to explore our own research field and search for contradictions and similarities. We want to honour the researchers, authors and their works. Therefore we were careful with using others' work and made sure to reference this properly to avoid plagiarism.

During this research we tried to comply with the *“International Code on Market and Social Research of the ICC/ESOMAR*. The code is based on the following key fundamentals:

1. *“Market researchers shall conform to all relevant national and international laws.*

2. *Market researchers shall behave ethically and shall not do anything which might damage the reputation of market research.*
3. *Market researchers shall take special care when carrying out research among children and young people.*
4. *Respondents' cooperation is voluntary and must be based on adequate, and not misleading, information about the general purpose and nature of the project when their agreement to participate is being obtained and all such statements shall be honoured.*
5. *The rights of respondents as private individuals shall be respected by market researchers and they shall not be harmed or adversely affected as the direct result of cooperating in a market research project.*
6. *Market researchers shall never allow personal data they collect in a market research project to be used for any purpose other than market research.*
7. *Market researchers shall ensure that projects and activities are designed, carried out, reported and documented accurately, transparently and objectively.*
8. *Market researchers shall conform to the accepted principles of fair competition.” (ICC/ESOMAR, 2008, pp. 4)*

5. Analysis

In this chapter we present our findings on our research questions; How do consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives and what are their motivations concerning their health and taste. We start by providing a background of our participants to discuss the context of their salt consumption. After that we analyse our findings based up on seven main categories; the habit of salt; culturally defined; we are all influenced; the symbol of unhealthy; good healthy, high status; quality salt on the table and a chameleon for others' taste.

5.1 Participants and their Practices in Consumption

A background of all the participants is provided to create an improved understanding of their motivations. All quotes given in the text are taken from the transcriptions (see Abstract 2) from that specific participant. We have therefore not referenced them.

5.1.1 Fred – Sportsman

Fred is 25 years old and is born and raised in the Netherlands. He lives together with his girlfriend in Lelystad for more than a year now and works as an accountant. He cooks three to four times a week and enjoys to cook from different cultural cuisines and especially appreciates Thai food. Cooking different meals keeps him interested in cooking. He mostly does the groceries and goes five times a week to the supermarket.

When he still lived with his parents he was eating typical Dutch food that was very salty, because his parents like to cook with a lot of salt in their food. Although he was active in sport, he used to weight a lot more. That is why he started dieting.

Since he started living with his girlfriend he changed his whole lifestyle. He is not using salt in his cooking anymore and is very health conscious. He does not see it as a diet, but really as a way of living.

“I think it is important that I do this all my life, and not just for a bit and then you know... ‘Ow now I am good I can start eating salt again’.”

He explains that his friends became more important as influencers than his parents. For this new lifestyle he got inspired by a friend, who did a health related education and is very health conscious. His friend sent him an article that explained the health effects of salt. He explains his reaction:

“I just read it, I've got a good friend of mine who is really into [...] the health thing and everything and working out and right food. I am not [...] really into it, but I've been thinking and I said to myself; there are a couple of easy things we can easily cut out of your normal eating habits, let's do that. Let's eat healthy from Monday to Friday.”

Fred sees salt as unhealthy, because:

“ [W]hen you are not using salt by yourself for the jar, you still get about five times your daily amount of salt [...]. For example bread has a lot of salt in it.”

Fred uses herbs, especially chili, in the preparation of his food for extra flavour. But he says that “*there is [...] not a replacement for salt, you can't get salty flavour through something else*”. He admits he is not totally skipping the usage of salt, he likes to call his food choice for 80% healthy and for 20% unhealthy. Fred does have salt at home, namely Mediterranean sea salt. He chooses this specific type of salt because he saw it in some restaurants and he sees the restaurants as experts.

Through the healthy lifestyle he feels better as he explains:

“I must admit you get more energy, it is easier for me to work-out that way. That was the most important part, when you have a healthy meal, the less fat you eat, the more energy you have in the evening.”

Fred still eats some food with salt in it as well, but only spontaneously. Most of the time he does this when he is with friends, but does not want to focus on a specific day of the week to eat ‘bad’ (as he calls it) because he does not want his body to long for salt.

5.1.2 Janine – Science is Expert

Janine is 25 years old and currently lives with her boyfriend in Havelte, in the Netherlands. She is working as a physiotherapist and studies in the evening hours for her Masters’ in physiotherapy. Janine cooks five times a week, mainly Dutch or Italian cuisine. She mostly cooks alone because of the tight space in the kitchen. Twice a week she buys her groceries in the supermarket.

She is influenced by her parents’ eating habits. At her parents, they only ate Dutch cuisine, but now she likes to experience a bit the other cuisines, as she indicates:

“[W]hen I lived with my parents they don't like Italian food, they only eat Dutch food. So now we can try more different things. A little bit different, not very different.”

Janine hardly uses any salt in cooking, only on “*an egg or for on the tomato on bread*”. Also in her use of salt she is influenced by her parents. She buys the same type of salt as her parents and likes the sea salt better than the table salt because of the ‘*bigger flakes*’. On the question why she hardly uses salt she replies:

“[...] I don't know, I like the taste but [...], I don't need the salt [...] my parents [...] don't eat salt. Since three years old I have never eaten salt. I don't know why...”

Sometimes she does add salt in her cooking for her boyfriend, who “*likes [it] more spicy*” or when there are more people coming over for dinner and she knows that these people would miss salt otherwise.

She describes herself as someone who is not so much influenced by health trends. She is very against light-products and slimming aids, “*I don't believe in those products*”. She is also sceptical about organic and biological food, as she is not sure if it is produced the right way; “[N]owadays *you don't know what you can eat, cause there is something wrong with everything*”.

Janine is very interested in health and knows a lot about it, through her profession as physiotherapist. She sometimes reads articles on health, but also here she is sceptical:

“If it is a medical magazine, or a scientific research, then I believe it. But then you can look at the level of reliability. And then yeah, you can see if you can trust it or not.”

She is a health conscious person, this also reflected in her salt use. She explains:

“[...] I never use salt, so I don't know how to eat with salt. But I know that it is not so good for you, [...], so that is also a reason that I don't take salt. But I don't miss it in the food.”

She thinks there is already enough salt in products like bread and cookies, so she does not need to use more salt. The reason behind her moderate use of salt, is that she thinks it is bad for your heart and circulation system.

Not too long ago, however, she passed out after exercising and the doctor referred her to the cardiologist. The cardiologist told her that she had a lack of potassium in her blood and this could increase by more frequent use of salt in her food. This change of behaviour is very difficult for her.

“I really don't think about it, I think that that is the main problem. I am not conscious of it at all.”

She tries to bring powdered stock with her now that contains a lot of salt, so she can take some in case she thinks that she needs it.

5.1.3 Manon – Independent Woman

Manon is a 25-years-old woman who lives on her own in Groningen, The Netherlands and works as an orthopedagogue. She cooks different food cuisines, such as Dutch, Italian and Indian cuisine, and prefers an easy style of cooking. She cooks only twice a week on her own and eats with friends most of the time.

Manon's parents cooked Dutch cuisine and use a lot of salt. So when she still lived with them she consumed more salt than she does now.

“[W]hen I lived with my parents, they use it with everything that they eat, so I used it every day then and I live on my own now for like six years and since then, I think, it changed, because I got my own cooking style.”

She does not see salt as a necessity while cooking and almost never uses it. She thinks that too much salt does not make food taste good.

“I don't like food when it's very salt, then the taste of the meat or anything else that you eat, it's gone, because everything is salted and I don't like it.”

Instead of salt, she generally uses other things like “garlic, different herbs and spices”, that she thinks taste good and are “better than salt”. She does use seasoning mixes that contain salt. She explains:

Well, I use other things for cooking, so I don't know when I don't use anything then it's also good, but I think I use things "Cajun herbs" and think there is also salt in this. I use it a lot for food. I also use chicken herb mix, that I use very often for chicken and it also contains salt. The herbs I use often for potatoes and also contain salt. I also use stock cubes and they contain salt as well. But I'm not using any salt separately, because I'm using all those other herbs and herb mixes and those mixes contain already salt, at least most of them."

Asking her if she is influenced by family or friends in her use of food, she answers:

"No, well it's when you eat together you find out new ingredients, because someone cooks for you, you sometimes don't know what is inside, so then I get influenced. But I don't get influenced by people who say I eat very unhealthy and should change, because then it's my problem and not theirs, so I think I wouldn't change it. I only change it when I want to change it and not because someone else is thinking that I'm going to change it."

When she cooks for others she tries to keep in mind what others like and this does influence her choices.

"[W]hen you cook for others you want everyone to appreciate the food, so then you keep in mind what somebody likes or not."

She wants to be independent in her choices and thinks that health trends do not help people any further.

"Well, I think that there is still much focus on what is healthy or not and that people get addicted to a way of life that is not healthy then."

5.1.4 Mathilda – In Control of Herself

Mathilda is 23 years old and was brought up in Luxembourg. Since two years she has been living in Lund, Sweden, for her study.

She still remembers how carefully salt was used back home. Her mother puts salt in the food, but never puts the salt for additional use on the table. So she did not eat a lot of salt. When she started living on her own though, she started using salt additionally, even when she would use it in her cooking.

"I think I just liked the taste of it... really. [...] I guess my mom wouldn't allow us to have salt, so when I moved I would eat a lot of salt."

She ate a lot of salt when she started living on her own. She started to get very fond of salt in her food; putting extra salt, sea salt especially, on meat and potatoes, was something she really liked.

It was her ex-boyfriend (she lived together with him for half a year) who was really surprised by her salt use and told her to use less of it.

“[He] told me like you eat maybe ten times more salt than I do, so... you should take it easy.”

But we also see that she was aware of it herself, as she explains:

“[W]hen I started feeling like ‘O, I have gained ten kilos since I have moved to Sweden’ and I [...] want to be healthy and start doing sports and then salt was just one of those things that I could take away for my diet.”

She took the rigorous step to stop using salt for two months, as she wanted to take a hold on her ‘addiction’, as she calls it.

“Addicted is that I don't like food that hasn't got salt on it. That I think, ‘O this doesn't taste good at all’. And then, when I put salt on it, I think it is amazing: that's addicted. Liking is just like: this tastes really nice, this tastes a bit nicer with the salt.”

In her opinion, an addiction is something that you can just get rid of. She has experiences with it, as she stopped smoking before and she is not longing for it anymore. She does not know exactly why she wants to be so much in control of herself and does not want her emotions or hormones to be in control of her. She speculates that the reason could be connected to things that happened in the past; the divorce of her parents that made her realize that *“you shouldn't be dependent on anyone or anything”*.

Mathilda wants to be in control of herself and her usage of salt and sees this as her lifestyle. Through this lifestyle she can attain status. Since she broke up with her boyfriend and moved the house with her brother and his girlfriend, her salt usage changed a well. Her brother and especially his girlfriend use more salt and because they cook together often, she started using more salt again and feels a little bad about it now.

“[Y]esterday when I was eating, when I did this garlic butter thing, and I put soo much salt and it is just like... it tasted really good but yeah... I felt bad about it. [...] you could actually see the crystals inside the butter.”

She wants to reduce her salt use again.

5.1.5 Olivier – Mister Classy

Olivier is 24 years old and has a French and Swedish nationality. He lived in France and England before and came to Sweden for his Masters' degree in Economics.

At home his mother cooked. So when he started studying he did not really know how to cook, therefor he ate a lot of ready-made-meals. Over the years he improved his skills. He likes to cook different cuisine styles.

“[I mostly cook] European, like Italian food, if you can call it that, because pasta it's quite easy to do, and pizza sometimes [...]. And also Indian food sometimes with rice and chicken, curry. And Swedish also, meatballs, patty panna or a salad or something.”

Because Olivier has lived in several countries, he really sees different cooking styles.

“When I lived in England, I've noticed that people use a lot more salt, but at the same time, people use less at home, they buy more ready-made meals [...] whereas in France, Sweden or in another country, you would do it yourself.”

When it comes to his use of salt, he says, he tries to be reasonable, because he knows using it too much can be unhealthy. He explains:

“It depends, while I'm cooking, I'm adding salt for some stuff, yes, but I'm trying to be reasonable, and then I taste it again and if it's missing I put some more, but... and I'm trying for example, if I buy you know ready-made meals, a dish for in the oven for example, to not put salt on that. Because I think, it's usually very salted for good conserving of the food.”

He got influenced by the experiences of his grandfather, who was told by the doctor not to use salt anymore due to health reasons. He told Olivier that the food did not taste anymore for him without the use of salt.

“[My grandfather] said that: 'Aah that food, it doesn't taste like anything and I'm really missing it.' And at the beginning, I thought he is over exaggerating and I tried myself without salt and then you really feel the difference. It's something you put automatically on food sometimes and you don't realize a lot. I started to think more about how much salt we have in our food.”

Olivier likes sea salt the most and his mother influenced the salt he uses the most, as she brought him high quality sea salts from France and even a pink salt.

When Olivier was still living with his parents, his mom would cook with different kinds of salt: a brownish sea salt for the cooking and a whiter, qualitatively better, sea salt would be available for additional use on the table. His parents did not use a lot of salt in the food, but his mother started experimenting with a pink salt at some moment. Olivier sees the fun of using it, as the colour is surprising and can be interesting for others. Pink salt was a ‘fun’ experience, although he likes the use of ‘classic salt’ the most, he would definitely buy pink salt again for the reactions that it can yield when people or eating with him.

“It could be fun to have for example pink salt, it's maybe not a conversation start, but it's a bit different, it's one way to make a conversation start indirectly. Or that salt grinder I talked about, that is something people remember”

5.1.6 Willem– Foodie

Willem is 30 years old, married and lives together with his wife in The Hague, The Netherlands. He has a German and Dutch nationality and works as lawyer. He cooks three to four times a week, the other times his wife cooks. He buys his groceries at the supermarket, the butcher, the special green grocer, biological, Chinese and Moroccan stores.

Willem moved out of his parents' house when he was eighteen. His mother cooked food from different cuisines, but did not use a lot of salt. When he is asked about his salt intake, he answers that it has changed, as he explains:

“I think it has increased because I come from a family where salt is almost a curse word in the kitchen. Also because there is high blood pressure in the family.”

When he started living together, he became more passionate about cooking. His wife influenced him as she is a “very talented in cooking”. He likes to cook, but only when following a recipe. If he would just “*mix stuff and create*” his own dishes he is “*pretty sure [h]e wouldn't have any guests after a while*”. They both fancy the taste of salt and he started experimenting with the use of salt and different types of salt. He adds more salt when he cooks European dishes than for other cuisines.

“I think in the European recipes that I use, there's more salt in there then for example in Asian recipes and I think that's because in Asian recipes you use a lot of soy sauce or other soy kind of liquids that contain a lot of salt already.”

On average he uses about a teaspoon of salt per dish, but different kinds of salt depending on the dish. The European dishes require very specific kinds of salts.

“We have Kosher salt, we have the standard iodized salt, we have two different kinds of sea salt and we have two other different salt, they are called black salts: one is volcano salt, from Hawaii I think and the other one is mined salt from a coal mine in Germany. The last ones are both black salts.”

He sees a big difference in the taste of the salt types he has and also in their use:

“Well, there is a big difference in taste between iodized salt and sea salt for instance. And the Hawaiian salt has a more grainy kind of taste and the black mined German salt for instance I mostly use those salts where I can actually see the salts on top, so where it doesn't have to, doesn't really mingle in the food, because it has a nice look.”

He is not afraid of his health through his salt use, but he watches it and does not want to increase his salt intake even more. Since a good friend of his told him that there is a lot of salt in cheap bread, he checks labels online. He started buying more expensive bread with less salt in it for his health.

Willem and his wife appreciate cooking a lot and have a whole book shelf dedicated to cooking books and TV-shows. He gets a lot of inspiration from Nigella Lawson who is “not a

professional cook, but she is really passionate about cooking”. She is also “very explanatory” about salt and how to use it.

He can spend between 20-30 euros on a half a kilo package of sea salt, because he likes the quality of this sort of salt so much.

5.2 Analysis by categories

We analyse our findings based up seven main categories; the habit of salt; culturally defined; we are all influenced; the symbol of unhealthy; good healthy, high status; quality salt on the table and a chameleon for others’ taste.

5.2.1 The Habit of Salt

The habit of salt refers to the Bourdieu’s *habitus*: “the set of acquired patterns of thought, behaviour and taste, and includes body techniques and practical skills” (Ekström, 2010, pp. 327).

It is surprising how many participants buy the salt that they are used too from their parents. For example Mathilda, who tries to explain why she is using the same salt as when she was living with her parents:

“I don't know, I think my mum just liked it, like we always had it, as long I can remember really. And.. It might have been just out of change that we started buying it, I don't know.”

Interview Mathilda

Also Fred has bought the same salt as he was used to from living with his parents.

“[...] Yeah definitely. They influence you in the choice of salt, and they influence the amount of salt you use. And my parents use a lot of salt, so I went, when I started cooking for myself, I also used a lot of salt in the beginning. It's the most important factor in how people cook I think, how your parents cook.”

Interview Fred

But consumers can also be influenced by more people than only their parents, as can be seen in Olivier’s interview.

“[I]t's like the salt I use here, for every day, it's a normal, regular salt that you can use for cooking. And I think my grandmother has this one as well, she has maybe influenced me, everybody basically, wherever I go, my family, basically everyone I lived with has this sold.”

Interview Olivier

In these processes Kahneman’s System 1 is at play. Subconscious decisions are based upon experience. Parents were the most emphasised factor on having influence on our participant’s first choice of salt after they start living on their own. Bourdieu argues that habitus is created and reproduced without people even knowing it (Bourdieu, 1984). Childhood experiences can play a part to what extent you like a type of salt, for example for Oliver:

“So you would say it’s not so much the brand as it is the family kind of product? Maybe, it is yeah, the brand, but it is more the association that I have with the brand and the experience of being with the family and seeing it every day on the table.”

Interview Olivier

Another way to see it, is that reference groups influence the habit of salt. A reference group is “a group of people that significantly influences an individual’s behaviour” (Bearden & Etzel, 1982, pp. 184). “Family, peers and colleagues” are example of reference groups (Ekström, 2010, pp. 381). Family is the most emphasised influential reference group of our participants. One of our participants was especially influenced by a family member. Olivier’s grandfather influenced him to be more careful with his use of salt, after he had to stop using salt, because of his high blood pressure. Olivier said:

“I tried [my grandfather’s food] myself without salt and then you really feel the difference. It’s something you put automatically on food sometimes and you don’t realize a lot. I started to think more about how much salt we have in our food.”

Interview Olivier

Also Bourdieu’s cultural capital can be retrieved from the participants. It is, for example, knowledge and attitudes on the use of cooking salt that parents can teach their children to give them better ‘taste’ and preferably a higher status. Other participants are influenced by their parents in their use or non-use of salt. For example Willem, when he is asked if the style of cooking of his parents has influenced his own in the use of salt:

“I think when I started out, I was very cautious with salt, but then I learned what it does with the salt, what kind of taste it adds or can add and since then I pretty much, I dropped the no-salt-during-cooking idea, I just started using it again.”

Interview Willem

Both users and non-users of salt have a habitus and formed cultural capital among their use and consumption of cooking salt.

5.2.2 Culturally Defined

The cultural background of the participants also plays a role in their salt use. One participant who particularly expresses this is Olivier. For him the specific French sea salts he got used to, came from his French background.

“But you haven’t bought it afterwards, after you went out of home? Some, because I went on holiday with my parents in Garant and we tried the salt there. No, actually it’s Marmoutier, it’s a place in France, where they do salt as well, in that place my mom bought a lot and I took some at home, but otherwise because there was already salt when I came to my house in Sweden. But I think that is something I would buy actually.”

Interview Olivier

Bourdieu's cultural capital can play a role and can be different dependent on the cultural background of the participant. Another participant, Manon, explains that in her cultural background she does not see any food trends.

“Well, I don't see it here. So, I don't know if it is anywhere else. And in my town and the people that I see, they don't do that.”

Interview Manon

This really shows the contrast of the participant's view of 'here'; 'my town', 'the people that she sees' and anywhere and anyone else. This explains what is normal according to Manon in Groningen (“my town”) in The Netherlands.

Mathilda also explains her cultural background from Luxembourg when she is asked about the changes in her cooking styles over the years.

“Well when I lived in Luxembourg I guess I cooked mostly pasta and I did not really care about what I ate and stuff. And then when I moved here I started eating really cheaply, so I only eat meatballs for like months, ha. And then after that I started thinking 'Ow maybe I should, you know, start eating other things and experiment a bit', I realized that I really loved cooking. So yeah.”

Interview Mathilda

5.2.3 We are All Influenced

Almost all participants state that they are influenced by others. They can be influenced by reference groups, as explained in ‘the habit of salt’, but also by experts, inspiration and aspiration groups. Fred really got inspired by his friend to stop using cooking salt in his own cooking, after he had sent him an article about the negative effects of cooking salt. The article, but also his friend's healthiness, outer appearance and cultural capital influenced Fred.

“I find it interesting, I think he has a really healthy style and he is really fit, he looks really fit and everything like it. Which eventually, we all like to look good, which is also important. I think it is the most important factor in the, in the entire eating healthy trend, everyone wants to look good, [...]. And [my friend] knows a lot about it, so [...] that is why. He did a [...] food study with [...] some specialisation about food and how to use food and right food and those kind of things. So he knows a lot about it. And I find it really interesting.”

Interview Fred

It is not only friends who can inspire the participants' use of salt. Willem explains how cooking books and cooking TV-shows of Nigella Lawson, a British food writer, are inspiring him and his wife.

“No, there is nobody really that has a big influence on my salt use. Wait, there is one person. I see a lot of shows from Nigella Lawson and she is also very explanatory about which salts to use and how much. I guess I could see her as an inspiration.”

Interview Willem

Both Fred and Willem are actively inspired and influenced by these people. They got help to make ‘more accurate judgements’ and ‘better decisions’ (Kahneman, 2011, pp. 396). Through this help they switched from their System 1 to their System 2 thinking and presumably make more rational choices as well. As we know from System 1, influence can also be very subconscious. We see this in our interview with Mathilda. When we talk about her reasons for not wanting to be addicted to salt it takes her a while to come up with people that might influence her.

“[L]ike my mum she never worked and stuff and then dad left her and then she had to stand up on her two legs and blabla. And... I guess that does a lot that she, she was completely dependent on him... and then it is kind of triggered that you have to be able to stand on your own legs, you shouldn't be dependent on anyone or anything. Yeah... maybe it was that. And well also one of my exes, he was very into mind control things... so maybe that has also influenced. [...] [H]e wanted to be able to, do everything with his mind and stuff.”

Interview Mathilda

Other participants put high value on experts, like Janine, she is willing to make changes if she thinks it is good to do, but only if it comes from an expert or if its “*scientifically proven*” (Interview Janine).

5.2.4 The Symbol of Unhealthy

Cooking salt is for the vast majority of the participants the symbol of unhealthy. Mathilda tries to explain how she got to know that salt was unhealthy, as can be seen from their statement.

“I guess I've read it on blogs and stuff. And also I think my mum talked about it a lot, cause she is very interested in like healthy foods and stuff. And maybe in biology class, we learned about it, that too much salt wasn't good for you and then we learned why.”

Interview Mathilda

Salt is something that almost all participants stated to see as unhealthy. Willem checks food labels of bread online to see how much salt they contain and “*found out that there were just a lot more salts to add taste that you could also get otherwise with baking*” (Interview Willem). Fred has found out through his friend that eating food with less salt is, amongst others, better for his work-outs. Janine learned through her health related education that salt is bad for your heart and circulation system and Olivier through his grandfather, who had to stop using salt due to health problems. Manon uses other herbs and seasoning, as she thinks that is “*better than salt*” (Interview Manon). The participants presumably went to their more active System 2 to learn about the unhealthiness of salt.

All the participants that use cooking salt to emphasise the line between using salt and using too much salt in some way. They state that they like the taste, but know that is unhealthy and

therefore do not want to use it in a conspicuous way. They state that they only use a certain amount. We can see that in a quote from Willem when he talks about his changing salt consumption:

“[I]t definitely has increased, because we have already used a lot of salt, not a lot, but like more salt than we used to do back then when I was living with my parents during that time.”

Interview Willem

We can also see this in Olivier’s use of cooking salt.

“It depends, while I’m cooking, I’m adding salt for some stuff, yes, but I’m trying to be reasonable, and then I taste it again and if it’s missing I put some more.”

Interview Olivier

The way the participants talk about their manners in cooking salt use does resemble Bourdieu’s symbolic power a little. “He argued that notions of ‘good taste’ function as a kind of symbolic power, which makes material differences in income and education appear as differences in individual sophistication” (Ekström, 2010, pp. 326). One could argue that the choice of not using salt or using less salt is a decision that shows good taste and with this symbolic power. In that way, the choice of using less salt could have the symbolic meaning of e.g. someone who is health aware. Health awareness could refer to someone with a particular income and education and this is how Bourdieu’s symbolic power can play a roll.

Furthermore, from a Bourdieudian perspective, as discussed in our Background, Chapter 2 before, “consumption practices are viewed as the embodied skills that people bring to bear in everyday activities and are shaped by consumers’ habitus” (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp. 135). Food choices are also consumption practices. Thus, “we see food tastes and food consumption practices as embodied, reflecting socialization processes that work directly on the body” (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp. 135). In Fred’s statement we see how he disciplines his body with a lifestyle:

“Like I said it is 80% healthy eating, [...] clean and 20% not clean in my opinion, and [...] the not clean eating [...] it tastes better when you don’t know when you are going to have it, it is more a surprise and everything, and when you don’t have a rhythm and it is also better for your metabolism. Because your body, we like to say that your body is lazy and it gets used to everything. And if you always eat fat stuff or bad stuff on Saturday, your body gets used to it having it on a Saturday, while when you rotate that cycle, your body doesn’t know when it is gonna have it, and it has work harder to digest al the fats and everything, all of the bad stuff. So that is why I try to rotate it.”

Interview Fred

The Foucauldian body, which is a “body to be disciplined by and for others” (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 153), also plays a role in how our participants see salt as unhealthy for their body. Our participants mainly emphasise this in the form of physical health (fitness and visual appearance). As we quoted from Fred’s interview before “*we all want to look good*” (Interview Fred). He started dieting and changing his lifestyle because “*he used to weight a lot more*” and “*wanted to be more fit*” (Interview Fred).

Another example of disciplining the body can be found with Mathilda's statement, when she talks about losing weight.

"[W]hen I started feeling like 'O, I have gained ten kilos since I have moved to Sweden' and I [...] want to be healthy and start doing sports and then salt was just one of those things that I could take away for my diet."

Interview Mathilda

It seems as if these participants find the gain to get a better health (losing weight, changed outer appearance) weighs higher than their loss (the reduced or stopped consumption of salt). This comes back to the 'prospect theory' of Kahneman. To make those changes, some of our participants stated that they got help from others to make 'better decisions' (Kahneman, 2011). To stay with Mathilda, she stated that:

"[My boyfriend] told me like you eat maybe ten times more salt than I do, so... you should take it easy."

Interview Mathilda

Through this help, consumers can go to their System 2 thinking and start practising new mental activities (Kahneman, 2011). After doing this for a long time, these activities can become automatic and part of System 1. This is when changes in behaviour become habits and part of our lifestyle and from their daily lives. Some of our participants emphasise their changing behaviour compared to their parents' situation, but have not yet made it a habit, for example Fred. Other participants, who have changed their behaviour in salt use longer ago, already made a habit out of it, for example Willem and Manon.

5.2.5 Good Health, High Status

All participants emphasise that salt is unhealthy in a certain way. Some of the participants go deeper into the health trend, for example Willem:

"I think there's a lot more unhealthy stuff in the pre-processed meat, not only salt wise, I think cheaper meat has a lot more salt in there, but it also has E-numbers that don't add something particularly to the taste and are not that healthy if you have too many of them. So I would rather use more natural products."

Interview Willem

Good health can mean a high, or higher, status. Veblen writes about two methods of showing people your wealth; *conspicuous leisure* and *conspicuous consumption* (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 21). Both conspicuous theories of Veblen, might be related to the way our participants deal with health in their way of consuming. The leisure activity of constantly working on your own health can be seen as a conspicuous leisure. We might see this in Fred's way of working-out. In this quote we are discussing government commercials that advice to be active for at least half an hour a day.

“Well I don't do it, cause when I work-out, I work-out hard and the next day I have an muscle ache. To be honest. And I know, I know it is not good exercise again with a muscle ache, as you are contradicting your own progress. But I try to work-out three to four times a week, but for much longer than half an hour. I think the half an hour is good when you go for half an hour bike ride, half an hour this, half an hour walking, half an hour running, but running slow, running like nine, then kilometres per hour. If you run every day like fifty kilometres an hour a full sprint, it is not good to do it every day, half an hour. Unless you want to burn calories, but you are killing your own muscles.”

Interview Fred

We might see this as conspicuous leisure as Fred really has the time for a proper work-out compared to others. We also detect Bourdieu's cultural capital in this quote. He has knowledge on the subject of working-out and doesn't think it is healthy to work-out every day. Fred states to be very health aware in his way of living and with the knowledge he gained he is now an influencer for his girlfriend. Symbolic power comes into play, as he also has influence on the way she cooks as well.

“I would say my friends have some more inspiration but they started before I did. So they influenced me. I influence my girlfriend.”

Interview Fred

5.2.6 Quality Salt on The Table

From the participants' statements we presume that they want quality salt on the table. Olivier indicates that he buys one brand in France:

“[...]I don't know, for example in France, it's very famous, it's called "Salle de la Baleine", so the whale-salt and the logo is really famous and everybody buys it. If I'm in France and I buy salt, it buy this brand. I don't know where it's coming from, it's maybe because we always had that at home.”

Interview Olivier

Also Willem states that he wants high quality salt. He stands out in our group of participants, as he has as many as six different kinds of salt at home. He is willing to spend money on his salts as well, although he has limits.

“[I]t depends on the amount of course, [...] I think it was around 20-30 euros for a kilo of sea salt. But the salt that I like the most, but that we don't buy, because it's so expensive is like 50 euros.”

Interview Willem

Fred, who does not want to use salt, even has quality salt. He has the Mediterranean sea salt that he has seen in restaurants and he sees the restaurants as experts of salt, he explains:

“[W]hen you see something in a restaurant you think that has to be good. Or else they don't use it in a restaurant. I don't know if it is true but I think that's my thought process, I think, 'well, they have it in a restaurant, so it is probably better than a normal table salt, so I am gonna get that one.’”

Interview Fred

Olivier state the use of pink salt is “*a bit different*” “*something people remember*” (Interview Olivier). This aligns with Holt's theory that people from high cultural capital want to individualize themselves through distinctive consumer goods much more than people from low cultural capital (Holt, 1998). They seek for “fun, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, and enjoyment” and use hedonic motivations in their consumption (Carr, et al., 2001, pp. 513).

Although it is not stated by our participants, we might see some materialism or conspicuous consumption with some of our participants. Despite the participants' higher cultural capital they like to have different types of salt in their kitchen, for example Willem, who has six different types. This materialism does not fit to our participant group, according to Holt for consumers with high cultural capital, “[m]aterial abundance and luxury are crass forms of consumption because they are antithetical to the ethereal life of the mind” (Holt, 1998, pp. 11). We will go into this issue further in chapter 6, discussion and conclusion.

Our finding suggest that Bourdieu's economic capital has less influence on the participants than the cultural capital of the products and the signifying-value of Baudrillard. Baudrillard argues that objects of consumption “don't only have a use-value, but also a signifying-value” (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 47). We see this because some of our participants emphasise the importance of quality over the importance of price. For example in this quote by Mathilda:

“I don't really have the money to spent on something as simple as salt, but at the same time, I do buy, I think it might even be the most expensive salt that they have. (The sea salt?) Yeah, cause it is not just sea salt. It is like a special box that I have, like we had it at home. You know, and then I just kept buying it. So yeah... and yeah I like that one so... ha.”

Interview Mathilda

A quote that shows the signifying-value of salt is from Willem, who explains his use of the ‘black mined German salt’:

“[T]he German salt, I like to use it on top of stuff when it's almost already finished, like for drinks, when you put it around the top of the glass for instance, because of the looks.”

Interview Willem

By using this type of salt, Willem seems to use Baudrillard's signifying value, to show off to others and create high status.

5.2.7 A Chameleon for Others' Taste

It is notable how many participants state to have different kinds of salt on the table. When they are eating with friends, then they use it in the kitchen for cooking the food. Mathilda uses for

example iodized salt for her cooking, but puts ‘fling salt’ or sea salt on the table, as she explains here:

“Is it with iodine? Yeab exactly yeab, so I use then when I just cook like pasta. But when I, like on the table, I will have the fling salt, which is like the sea salt that is in big crystals... I think that tastes really good, haba.”

Interview Mathilda

Here Mathilda seems to use salt as a sign of good taste. She wants to show her friends the ‘nice’ type of salt she uses. It is something we see with more participants. Quality salt, as explained in the last paragraph, is something most of the participants state to show to others when they are over for dinner. Even people who do not or hardly use any salt for cooking, still put salt on the table, because they do not want to disappoint others’ tastes of their food and in that way adapt to the tastes of others as ‘chameleons’. For example Mathilda:

“[W]hen I cook for other people, I usually do whatever I feel like is good. [...] the only thing that happens is that people add salt, but you know, I have salt on the table, so that's fine. I'd rather do [...] not enough salt than do too much salt.”

Interview Mathilda

We also see that our participants change their cooking style for others or when they eat with family or friends. We also see this in the interview from Olivier when he is asked if he would see it as a bad thing if someone would say he uses too much salt in his food.

“That's also why I try not to put too much salt in there, because else people don't taste the food anymore and can change anything anymore about that.”

Interview Olivier

Mathilda states to use more salt in her food, now that she lives together with her brother and his girlfriend, as they like to use “really a lot” of salt on their food.

“[N]ow I live with my brother and his girlfriend and she eats a lot of salt, like a lot, more than I did from the beginning, so when I cook for them I will always add extra. [...] And the reason why you put extra salt at the meals with your brother and his girlfriend is because you don't want him to say like 'Onw there is not enough salt'? Yes exactly. So it's... like they, they will complain about it. So that is why.”

Interview Mathilda

By being a chameleon our participants want to fit into their or another social group. They want to show Bourdieu’s ‘good taste’, and do not want critique on their cooking and use of salt. In the examples given, the participants state to use an active thought process of System 2. Although this has not been said, the reduction of salt use might also be linked with the negative effects of salt. Perhaps the participants do not want to show their bad habits to their visitors, as they are being afraid not to act upon the social laws concerning health.

6. Discussion & Conclusion

In this chapter we will provide a discussion of our findings compared with the theory in the literature reviewed. We will discuss how we added to literature and explain our academic contribution. Furthermore, implications, limitations and suggestions for further research are given.

The aim of this study is to conceptualize the field of consumption of mundane products, in specific cooking salt. To the best of our knowledge little research has been done on the influence of taste within the consumption field of mundane products, let alone cooking salt. Previous research focused mainly on health associated motivations and had a more Behavioural Decision Theory (BDT) perspective (Chapman & Hammond, 2008; Benavides, et al., 2012; Joubert & Poalses, 2012; Hartmann, et al., 2013; Hzami, et al., 2013). Our research focused on how consumers in the contemporary society use cooking salt in their daily lives and their motivations concerning their health and taste. In general, our findings for this specific consumption field, support previous theories, but we can also see some contradictions. First, we will discuss the use of cooking salt and then the consumer motivations concerning health and taste.

6.1 The Consumption of Cooking Salt in Daily Lives

We look at the way how consumers in the contemporary society construct their consumption of cooking salt in their daily lives. Our findings suggest that Bourdieu's 'habitus' highly influenced our participants as it is the most emphasised on according to their statements. 'Family upbringing' as well as 'educational experiences' and 'peer networks' (Arsel & Thompson, 2011, pp. 793) were all reasons for our participants to perform a particular behaviour or to change their behaviour. Within our participant group, family is emphasised as the most influential sociological factors. Our participants employed cultural capital and with this habitus to use salt in a seemingly proper way. We will elaborate on this later in this discussion part.

The way consumers construct their use of cooking salt has with one of our participants almost a materialistic or conspicuous form. Although the participant does not state any negative assumptions with having more types of cooking salt, and other participants have not made any comments on the idea, this does not align with the consumption patterns of high cultural capital consumers according to literature. It contradicts with findings by Holt who states that for consumers with high cultural capital "[m]aterial abundance and luxury are crass forms of consumption, because they are antithetical to the ethereal life of the mind." (1998, pp. 11). Holt, however, notes that consumers with high cultural capital make 'materialistic acquisitions' and even for large amounts of money if this product or activity "supplies (or, at least, can be rationalized or imagined to supply) desired metaphysical experiences" (Holt, 1998, pp. 11). Holt does not explain the concept of these 'metaphysical experiences' but other sources define metaphysical studies as "generally seek[ing] to explain inherent or universal elements of reality, which are not easily discovered or experienced in our everyday life" they "help define reality and our understanding of it", a "reality that exists beyond the physical world and our immediate senses" (Anon, n.d., cited in Haydam, 2012, pp. XXVII). We find it hard to place cooking salt within such a metaphysical experience and doubt that our participant rationalizes or imagines his salt use to supply this. We

know that Holt's study (1998) focusses on the American society and does not necessarily has to be true for the West-European societies that our study focusses on. However, we see a lot of similarities with the other parts of Holt's research, as far as this is possible with our own limited research subject. As well as the fact that we also see this contradiction with theories from Veblen and Bourdieu. Veblen sees conspicuous consumption as "method of demonstrating wealth and claiming status" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 26). However, he notes that to create status you cannot merely consume, you have to consume in a "proper and seemingly manner" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 27). This is also reflected in Bourdieu's cultural capital. We do not know if having several types of cooking salt is really a form of materialism or conspicuous consumption. When we, however, compare it with our other participants, who are in the same social class, age group and also from a Western European country, this participant's consumption really contradicts and might signify some materialism. This might be because the different types of salt are only visible and used within the boundaries of the kitchen and not in the more social areas like the 'dining room'. It could also be that the participant might justify it because the preparation of food is seen as 'production' or 'craft' and therefore of 'higher moral value' allowing consumers to be more materialistic and conspicuous (Campbell, 2005; De Solier, 2013). Further research on this topic is necessary before any conclusions or generalizations can be made.

Our findings suggest that both taste and health play an important role in the way consumers use cooking salt in their daily lives. The conflict we see in our phenomenon is therefore also very visual within most of our participants according to their statements. The way these participants state to use cooking salt in their daily lives, is closely connected to their motivations for taste and health. We will go further into both of these motivations.

6.2 Cultural Meanings of Taste

Our findings suggested that our participants employ different cultural meanings of taste. We will elaborate on those cultural meanings and how they influence the participants' use of cooking salt in their daily lives.

The majority of our participants see it as taste if you know how to use cooking salt, this has certain requirements. The pattern we see is that it is taste to use cooking salt if; (1) you use the right amount, (2) you use the right type and (3) you use it in the right way. Almost everyone states to be aware of the fact that salt is very unhealthy; we argue that it even symbolizes unhealthiness. Therefore, it is not appropriate to consume large amounts of salt in a conspicuous way. Veblen's conspicuous consumption in a "proper and seemingly manner" (Corrigan, 1997, pp. 27) is seen here as well. It is also seen as a sign of good taste to know what type of salt to use. Independent from their economical capital and use of cooking salt, most participants emphasise the importance of a quality salt product in their kitchen. They picked this product for aesthetic, brand or concrete taste reasons. Looking at this, consumers employ a more 'hedonic motivation' (Carr, et al. 2001) when it comes to their choice in cooking salt. The rich variety in salt types that our participants state to use aligns with Holt's statement that consumers with high cultural capital use taste as "a realm of self-expression, a means of constructing subjectivities" (Holt, 1998, pp. 8). What the participants group values as quality salt, tends to be set by reference groups (e.g. family, friends) or by experts (e.g. restaurants, blogs, celebrity chefs). Asking them about concrete taste differences, little real taste differences were found between the different types of salt. The participants can only

distinguish a difference in texture between table salt and sea salt and that sea salt “tastes more salty” (Interview Mathilda). This is in line with Wilk’s (2006) findings that consumers are willing to pay more for mundane products which they presume to have more ‘quality’ even if they do not taste a concrete difference. We connect the use of quality salt to Baudrillard’s system of goods, meaning that the right type of salt has more a signifying-value for our participants than use-value (Corrigan, 1997). We can also see this ‘in the right way to use cooking salt’. Table salt, also ‘lesser quality’ or ‘normal’ salt, is often used inside the boundaries of the kitchen. But the cooking salt that is visual for others, that is used on top of the food or on the table, is a high quality salt. The participants emphasise the important role of the appearance, it should be an aesthetically appealing packaging or a type of salt where they can differentiate themselves with (e.g. ‘pink’ or ‘black’ coloured salt). Here we can also see the importance of Baudrillard’s signifying-value and the influence of others on consumer behaviour.

Our findings on taste and cooking salt fit with Bardhi’s statement that food shapes consumers’ ‘individual and collective identities’ (Bardhi, et al., 2010). Therefore, it is not only important to show that you are health conscious through the amount of salt you use (Crawford, 2006; Chandola, et al., 2010), but also that you know how to use salt in a proper manner. This is a form of Bourdieu’s cultural capital and is mainly constructed through habitus from family upbringing and peer networks (Arsel & Thompson, 2011). Where most participants emphasised these points, it seems as they have the same cultural capital in their use of cooking salt, although exact norms varied from one to the other. We suggest therefor that it is a generalized cultural capital to use cooking salt in a proper manner among our participants group.

Although our participants state to follow the cultural meaning of having taste within the use of cooking salt, which we have defined, they do not seem to be very conscious about it. This suggests that they apply this form of taste through their System 1 thinking. Where System 1 is based upon the ‘experienced self’ (Kahneman, 2011) this fits with Bourdieu’s habitus. Due to the small sample size, more extensive research should be done before any statement can be generalized to the upper middle class or perhaps consumers of more classes.

The findings on this cultural meaning of taste confirm existing theories on the importance of taste within food consumption (Parasecoli, 2008; Bardhi, et al., 2010; Baumann & Johnston, 2010), and the use of cultural capital, habitus, signifying-value and System 1 in making choices on the mundane product of cooking salt (Corrigan, 1997; Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). It suggests that the consumers in our participant group also employ identity building processes within their choice for the mundane product of cooking salt. This finding requires more extensive research before we can generalize this to a larger group than our own participants.

Another cultural meaning of taste is related to health. We will discuss this and health related motivations in the part below.

6.3 Health Related Motivations

Looking at how consumers in contemporary society negotiate health related motivations in their choice for the mundane product of cooking salt. We see that these negotiations are very closely related to the second cultural meaning of taste that we found in our participant group. It is taste to be healthy if; (1) you are health aware in your use of salt and (2) you look healthy. As said before, consumers in higher social classes are very health aware (Crawford; 2006; Abel, 2007; Chandola,

et al., 2010; Davis & Schneider, 2010). We recognize this in our participant group, the participants state to be aware that salt is unhealthy and therefore use a proper amount of cooking salt in their food as explained in the previous part. By using a proper amount and avoiding overconsumption, they protect their identity value that they invested in health (Arsel & Thompson, 2011). This could be part of Kahneman's 'prospect theory' (2011). It might be that although our participants like the taste of salt, they would not use it too much, afraid for losses in their good health. Most of participants emphasise that they are helped by others in making 'better decisions' in their salt use by others (Kahneman, 2011). Later we will go further into this.

There are however some participants that drastically reduced their salt intake or do not add any cooking salt to their food (anymore). This is due to Bourdieu's habitus, but with some participants we also see health related motivations. The biggest triggers for those participants with health related motivations to reduce salt intake concerns their physical health and more particularly fitness and outer appearance. As food consumption practices are seen as an "embodied, reflecting socialization process that work directly on the body" (Bardhi, et al., 2010, pp.135), the body belongs to the social world and is not completely our own (Corrigan, 1997). This connects to Turner's 'double-sidedness of the body' and Foucault's 'disciplined body' (Corrigan, 1997). Not following the 'principles of health' is seen as irresponsible for your own 'self-improvement' and failing to act upon the social laws (Crawford, 2006, pp. 407). As physical health (e.g. weight, fitness, mobility, appearance) is the form of health that is most visual to society, this is the part of health that our participants emphasise the most as motivations to change their salt use. All our participants state to be confronted in some form with their salt use by reference groups, experts or the media. In our participants group, the most emphasis was on reference groups when it came to impact on the participants and their motivations to use a proper amount of cooking salt, to reduce it or stop adding it at all. Through this help from others our participants were able to make "more accurate judgements' and 'better decisions' (Kahneman, 2011, pp. 396).

A few participants became so interested in health and even the health in relation to salt use, as evidenced in the interviews, that they actively seek for more knowledge and apply an involved strategy during their grocery shopping to reduce the overall intake of salt in their diet (e.g. checking the amount of salt processed food contains). They seem to apply their System 2 thinking for their salt use as these participants are more conscious about their salt use and make rational decisions. We might even say that these participants have deepened their cultural capital in this specific field. According to Arsel & Thompson they now apply field-dependent cultural capital (Arsel & Thompson, 2011).

Looking at the findings on health related motivations we confirm existing theories on protection of identity values, the prospect theory, habitus, the double-sidedness of the body and the disciplined body (Corrigan, 1997; Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). Our participants protect their identity values invested in health and they seem to be afraid to lose their good health if they would use more salt. These findings also require more extensive research before we can generalize this to a larger group than our own participants.

Looking at all these findings we might suggest that our phenomenon, the conflict between health and taste, is even seen within our participants. The consumers in our participant group prioritize their motivations in taste for health or the use of salt depending on their own health, but know how to use salt in a proper way. One of the participants reduced for example her salt use

dramatically as part of the fact that she wanted to lose weight, but this became less important when she reached a 'healthy weight' and prioritized her more taste related motivations in using cooking salt. Perhaps motivations within health and the use of salt rotate in importance within a consumer, depending on their health. A longitudinal study will be necessary to see if this is true and if this applies to more consumers in the upper-middle class. This type of research allows following consumers over a longer period of time, making it possible to really find patterns or rotations in their use of cooking salt.

6.4 Academic Contributions

With this research we conceptualize the field of consumption of cooking salt for health and taste motivations of consumers in the upper-middle class, aged 20 to 30 with a Western European background. To the best of our knowledge little research has been done on the influence of taste within the consumption field of cooking salt. We see that previous research mainly focused on health associated motivations and used a more Behavioural Decision Theory (BDT) perspective (Chapman & Hammond, 2008; Benavides, et al., 2012; Joubert & Poalses, 2012; Hartmann, et al., 2013; Hzami, et al., 2013). Our research is very in line with previous research by Arsel & Thompson, Bardhi, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Crawford, Foucault, Kahneman and Veblen. Due to the small sample size it is not possible to make any generalizations further than our participant group. The research offers therefore small academic contributions in the more specific field of consumption of the mundane product cooking salt within a CCT-perspective. We add to literature that, given this participant group, taste plays an important role in consumer motivations in the choice of the mundane product cooking salt. Consumers have however different cultural meanings for taste within their choice and are mostly restricted in their choices due to health issues. We also suggest, based on one of our participants, that consumers can show materialistic or conspicuous forms of salt consumption. In part 6.6 we will elaborate on the end limitations of this research and suggest future.

6.5 Implications

Our findings can have implications for different managers. Given this particular research group; (1) consumers can show materialistic or conspicuous forms of salt consumption, (2) most consumers have subconscious salt manners, (3) habits in usage of cooking salt are influenced by their upbringing, (4) consumers pick quality salt, almost independent from their economical capital, (5) consumers employ both health and taste motivations in their choice of salt, (6) health, especially physical health (fitness and outer appearance), is the main health related trigger for consumers to reduce their salt intake and (7) consumers are helped to make better decisions by others, mainly reference groups. These findings might have implications for consumers in the upper-middle class, aged 20 to 30 and from a Western European background, but we cannot say this with certainty.

Managers in companies, in specific companies that produce and sell cooking salt to the consumer market, can use all of the findings to imply marketing strategies that fit to the consumer group.

Managers in government and health organisations, who are e.g. working on consumer awareness for salt and the importance of salt reduction, could use the knowledge that consumer motivations are mainly triggered by health related motivations, especially physical health, to change

salt habits and inform consumers on the health related consequences of salt use. Also the finding that consumers are helped making better decisions, mainly by their reference group is something that these organisations can anticipate on.

For users this research can be of interest to consumers who want to explore their own motivations within their choice of salt. We also hope to be an inspiration for other researchers to do more research on this important research subject.

6.6 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

As already indicated in the discussion, our research has the large limitation of a sample size of only six participants, with whom we conducted in-depth interviews. These participants are consumers in the upper-middle class, aged 20 to 30 from Western European backgrounds. Further research is needed before any generalisations can be given. This research should be repeated over a larger consumer group in the upper-middle class to see if any of our statements can be generalized. The research can also be adjusted to a research with interviews and observations, to see consumer's true behaviour, or other methods. To see if consumer behaviour within the choice for salt really changes based upon their health, should be researched thoroughly, preferably with a longitudinal study. As said before, this type of study makes it possible to find patterns or rotations in consumers' use of cooking salt. A bigger sample size is also necessary in this study to make any generalisations. Furthermore, no other mundane products have been researched for their motivations on taste and health, to the best of our knowledge. This is necessary if we want to conceptualize the consumption field of mundane products further and explore the motivations on taste and health within these products.

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Abstract 1 – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Contextual questions

Do you cook?

How often a day/week?

Do you cook alone?

Do you cook for more people?

Do you buy your own food? Who buys the food in your household?

How many times a week do you buy your food?

What kind of cuisine styles do you cook (French, Chinese, Italian etc.) ?

Has your style of cooking changed over the years? (If yes, why, and how)

Are you aware of the global health trend at the moment?

Are you aware of the global food trend at the moment?

What does this mean for you?

Salt Cooking

How do you use cooking salt in your daily live?

Is there a difference of your use salt in meals?

(Then separately breakfast, lunch, dinner, does it depend on the dish?)

How much? Has it increased/decreased? Do you think you use a lot or little?

In which food preparation processes do you use salt? (What kind of dishes?)

How have you been made aware of your personal salt use/health-/food trend? (Does your reference group family or friends play a role in your decision making for salt purchase?)

More or less salt in some dishes?

Do you use salt differently when cooking for others or for yourself?

How many times a year do you buy cooking salt?

Decision Making Process

What kind of salt do you use?

Do you buy your own salt?

Where do you buy your salt? (Grocery store / specialized store?)

Do you always buy the same one? Do you have more types of salt?

How do you decide on this choice? (Spontaneous choice or thought through one?)

Does price play a role?

Does display play a role?

Does packaging play a role?

Does brand play a role?

Does media play a role?

Do commercials play a role?

Does government information (like labelling on packaging) influence you?

Has the type of salt you buy changed? Why?

Trends

Does the health trend have an influence on your decision making process?

How? Why?

Does the foodie trend have an influence on your decision making process?

How? Why?

Do you think you should use less salt?

Are going to change your salt use?

Which aspect influences this decision the most?

Abstract 2 – Transcription Interviews

Interview with Fred

Fred has the Dutch nationality and was interviewed on 27-04-2014 at 12:15 pm

How often do you cook? How often do I cook? **Yes.** It is about three or four days in the week. Mostly three, my girlfriend does the rest.

Ok, so you're cooking alone or together? Sorry? **Are you cooking alone?** Well eu... well mostly it is one, it is one of us. **Ok.** We have a small kitchen and it is kind of annoying when everybody eu... keeps turning around each other. **Yeah, yeah, I understand.** When we have a bigger kitchen, we cook, we cook together. **Yeah, but at the moment...** At the moment it's mostly eu... just one our one does the rice for example and the other does the meat and vegetables, etcetera. **Ok, really nice.**

Do you also cook for more people? Eum... no I don't. **Ok.** It is mostly just for the two of us, and when we do have people who come over to eat, she cooks. **Yeah.** I help with cutting of the vegetables and everything but the actual, actual cooking is something she does. **Yes, ok.**

And what kind of cuisines do you cook? Do you cook for example a French or Chinese or Indonesian? Fresh... I would say Asian **Asian yeah** it is, is a broad, it is a broad spectrum, but I would say mostly Thai. **Thai.** If I have to go with something it is probably Thai. **Yeah.**

And eu what kind of food would that be? Is that spicier for example? Its, its more spicy its off course how spicy you make it, but for example a curry with you can have different versions of it, it could be yellow curry, it could be green curry one is hotter than the other but, mostly it's spicy. **Ok, yeah.**

And eu.. has your style of cooking changed over the years? Yes. **Yeah.** I've eu... since I've start living on my own, or with my girlfriend it started getting easier. Easy in yeah, easy food...

And that is why? Because eu... when you come, when you come back from home you are tired you have to go to the store when you come in you want to eat (**yeah**) you want to eat fast, so it is easier to have eu... a simple a simple meal, (**yeah**) because when you have a large meal you will start to snack in between eu... before it is done. If I have to wait two hours I'm gonna get a cookie (**yeah**) or something else. **Yeah ok.**

And do you buy the food yourself in the supermarket or eu.. are you dividing the work? Well, mostly I buy the foods but that is because I'm , I'm half an hour more early (**ah ok**) then she so, when I get home with food, she gets home and one of us starts to cook. But is mostly just a

selfish reason, cause otherwise I am waiting for an hour here on the couch until she is home. **Ah I see, yeah.**

And then how many times a week do you do it? Eum.... five times a week, Monday to Friday. **Yes ok.**

Than something else. Are you aware of the health trend at the moments and if yes, what does that mean for you? The health trend. No I haven't heard of it to be honest. **Ok, eu... like for example that people are becoming healthier and are thinking more about what they eat.** Yes (**yeah**) yeah, I've been noticing the trend is it is called that way. I didn't know it had a name (**yeah we gave it a name**). I see that people buy more healthy foods, etcetera. **Yeah for example the organic eu.,. foods that is more important nowadays, less process foods and yeah..** No E-numbers those kind of things.

And also yeah, that also goes together with the food trend eu.. that there is more special foods are you also aware of that? Eu, yes.

What does this mean for you eu... this food trends? Well it, doesn't mean really much to me, I do read it and I find it very interesting (**yeah**) although I think the entire super foods thing is just some some hype, I, it, it's of course it's good but its' not very that much better, like for example you can have a Goji berry which is fabulous at the moment (**yeah**) to call it like that, but it's not really that much better from a normal piece of fruit. You have for example a strawberry which also has anti- antioxidants and everything (**true**). Only if, I think it is more a hype than there actually super foods. **Yeah ok.**

That is the food trend and about the health trends, for example that people are doing far more sport at the moment than eu... last years because, well it is kind of the trend that they really have to do at least half an hour a day. eum.. what does that mean to you that health trend? Well I, I don't do it, cause when I work-out I work-out hard and the next day I have an muscle aches. To be honest. And I know, I know it is not good to again exercised again with a muscle aches, as you are contradicting your own progress. **Yeah.** But I try to work-out 3 to 4 times a week, but for much longer than half an hour. I think the half an hour is good when you go for half an hour bike ride, half an hour this, half an hour walking, half an hour running, but running slow, running like 9, 10 kilometres per hour (**yeah**). If you run every day like fifty kilometres per hour a full sprint it is not good to do it every day, half an hour. **Yeah, no I understand that.** Unless you want to burn calories, but you are killing your own muscles. **Yeah there is always tension between that, if you want to train you muscles of want to lose calories.**

Ok now I want to go to the topic salt and cooking, eum... how do you use cooking salt in your daily life? I try not to use it.

Ok, not at all? Maybe, when I am making a stake or something on a Saturday I use salt on it because I really like it. But when normally cooking from Monday to Friday I try not to, I don't use salt. **Yeah.**

Why is that? that you don't... Because it is bad (**yeah, ok**) we eat, I know it is bad it is been proven we all get, when you not even using salt (**yeah**) when you are not using salt by yourself for the jar, you still get about five times your daily amount of salt eu... inside. For example bread has a lot of salt in it (**yeah**). So you see I, I like my food spicy and get really good flavours without using salt, but using other herbs. **Yes.**

But then, so you make your eu... mm sauces for example yourselves and not from a package from the super market. I don't eat sauces.

Ok, but I mean like when you spice your food example you can have like in the Netherlands you have the brand Conimex eu.. stuff like that, where already some salt is in there. Well I don't use the Conimex, or the packaging (**yeah**) with the herbs because that also contains salt. **Yeah that's what I mean.** You see a lot of salt and a lot of sugar, most have about fifty percent too much sugar to get the sweetness. I try to use eu... I look at the package and you see what herbs they are using and I buy the herbs themselves so I have a lot of jars with chili and like those things (**yeah**) and I make eliminate the salt and the sugar from those (**ok**) recipes. And I try to go along and make recipes that taste the same without using the sugar and the salt.

Yeah so what is kind of eum.. what would be for you like replacement for salt. Is there one thing? For example pepper or... or is it more herbs that together.. I use chili (**ok**), I use sweet flavours, but there is in my opinion not a replacement for salt (**no**) you can't get salty flavour through something else, unless you are cooking with bacon, but that has a lot of calories in those kind of meats. Then there, on the other hand, we've been doing it for half a year now and we are getting used to not eating salt. It does, in the beginning it tastes wrong, it's not as nice, (**no I see**) but you get used to it after some while.

And eu.. the exact reason for this. Eu that you've done this half a year ago, you started this. What is that for you? Eum... I just read it, I've got a good friend of mine who is really into eu.. the health thing and everything and working out and right food. I am not, I am not, really into it, but I've been thinking and I said to myself; there are a couple of easy things we can easily cut out of your normal eating habits, let's do that. Let's eat healthy from Monday to Friday and .. I must admit you get more energy, it is easier for me to work-out. That was the most part, when you have a healthy meal, (**yeah**) the less fat you eat, the more energy you have in the evening. And we work both forty hours a week, so we don't have, so we need the energy to work-out in the evening. And when you eat too much fat you get tired and you hang on the couch (**yeah**) And I won't work-out because I am lazy than. **I see.**

And you did like from one day to the other eu.. you used salt and then you stopped it or did you eum.. have like a week or two that you used less salt and then nothing? We started

using less salt and eventually nothing. And still sometimes we do use it. When you are, when you, it is more like, we want to eat healthy, but it is not like, we don't want to call it a diet, we are not on a diet. And when, in my opinion when you say I can't have it and you won't have it for four weeks or six weeks, you are dieting, you don't have a healthy food style. You, everything goes with eu.. with curves.

So it is for you more, would you call it a lifestyle for example? Well I am not as serious to call it a lifestyle, for what I am doing. But for example a friend I have he eats a lot though, he eats lots of.. once in a while he does eat a bag of chips or something like it or when there is football on TV or anything like it, but like 80, like he always said to me, and I think he is right, 80% is clean eating and 20% isn't clean and that way you have a healthier lifestyle. **Ok, yeah, that makes sense.**

Eum.. Some of the questions don't apply to you cause the are much more about if you use salt more or less for different meals. Eu... but for you nowadays you are cutting totally on salt? Yes, or I won't add salt myself, let's call, let's say it like that. Because a lot of packaging or things, or a piece of bread you eat or anything is still, there is still a lot of salt in there. It does not matter what kind of bread you buy there is always salt.

Let's talk a little about the past then. What kind of salt did you use when you were using salt more often? I believe it is called red table salt, table salt or sea salt (**yeah**) It, it, it's to be honest, mostly just dependable on what we have in the in the cover.

Did it taste different for you the table salt and the sea salt? No not for me, in my opinion salt is salt and maybe when I get them, do it in a cup and try it like this and like that, I'd say 'O it's different', but I haven't actually noticed it myself.

Ok. Back then, you would, how many times would you buy a package of this salt a year? Eu... that is a though one, I would say.. eu.. about 3 of 4 times a year, we would just buy it when we run out. And I think we normally, we go, nowadays we buy about one a year, and before we yeah, one every quarter, every three months I guess. **Yeah.**

You said you have used sea salt and normal table salt. Yes

Why did you change those styles of salt? Eu.. no idea, it depended what I saw. It depends on what you see in the store, I think, 'O right I need to get some salt, I go to the salt and see O salt here'. And one time it was table salt the other was sea salt. It depends where my eyes felt on. **Yeah.**

It could be hard to imagine now, but can you try to imagine how it was in the supermarket. For example the displays or the packaging of the salt, did it influence your choice of salt? Yeah, I think the sea salt packaging is just nicer, it looks better the table salt is kind of boring to be honest it is just white and some red logo on it. And eu.. the sea salt is nice thing which you can grinder and everything. So off course it is probably much more expensive I didn't even look at the price, but that is probably the reason why I chose it. And it is to, because I didn't care what I

bought I guess I am pretty sure I bought the thing that was one eye height. **Like on the visual level?** Yes.

Did also brand play a role of the salts? No, I actually don't know if they, I didn't even know they had brands.

Maybe you know the brand Jozo, the Dutch brand, eu.. I don't know it is Dutch, but I think it is kind of big in the Netherlands. I actually don't know, actually.

Maybe other brands Maybe it was the one I had, I don't have it at the moment the table salt. But I know that we have the eum middle sea salt, Mediterranean area, that brand I know as it is really big on it and most restaurants also have it. That is where I know it from, and we have the table salt and it could be Jozo, it has a red package or a blue package and a white jar. Only it is the salt we got at home, when I was a kid so I recognize it from going up. And it is like 'Ow right, that salt lets go'.

So do you think that, your parents, home, influence your choice of salt? Yeah definitely. They influence you in the choice of salt, and they influence the amount of salt you use. And my parents use a lot of salt, so I went, when I started cooking for myself I also used a lot of salt in the beginning. **Yeah.** It's the most important factor in how people cook I think, how your parents cook.

Why do you think that parents are so influencing your salt choice? Well I think you parents influence you in everything you do, it is the things you see from a little child to when you leave your home to be, because you are going to live on yourself. It's the people you look up to the most, the most of time in a normal environment. And I think that way what you parents do, you automatically assume it is right. I think with kids or at least it was, when my parents did like that I thought alright that is a good thing to do, cause my parents are doing it. And I think that influences on a lot of things, but especially on cooking, because you know what you like, your favourite dishes are something you mother used to make on a special occasion your mother used to make. It is probably not the best dish, but it is your favourite because that is what you know. And eu... I think we humans are herd animals, to be honest, and we always chose the things we know. So I think that is why your parents are such a big influence. Because you know what they do, you know what they cook. **Yeah.**

Is this still.. are your parents still influencing you choice of salt now? No, no really different, they still use a lot of salt and that is there choice. And when I eat there, when I eat at my parents I also eat normal there food, with the salt in it, that is no problem for me, but I eu... at this moment they don't influence my style of cooking. And that is because I have a lot of, I developed a different taste then my parents, my parents don't like rice, they don't like garlic, they don't like eu.. spicy food, which I happen to love. But I learned to eat it after I eu,.. after I.. (you left your parents).. yeah our after I start cooking for yourself (ok, yeah). And I don't know why because me and my brother really love it, we really love garlic in the food, and my parents both don't like it so we never

had it until we were 18 or something. And for some reason we both like it a lot. **Yeah, that is nice.**

Eum.. do you think that media also played a role in your choice of salt, for example TV commercials or newspapers, or maybe articles in the news. I think the media played a role in not eating salt. I think that is better description, because lately you have the entire hype and trend about eating healthy. And salt is important on that trend as well, because we do get too much salt, so you, so you hear it on TV you hear it from a friend and you start Googling it and you find certain eum.. blogs or those kind of things, these healthy people who explain why salt is bad, you find researchers.

So for you the media would be the internet websites, the blogs. Yes, yes.

Ok and eu.. you visit them by yourself, or you eu.. people send you for example those blogs or news articles? It is a combination, the first things I got from a friend, he whatsapped it to me and he said you better read it, so I read it. And nowadays I have my own blogs I read which I find interesting. And now, now I do my own. It's mostly just one to one communication and it gets set up by a friend of mine or something else. I, I, I didn't wake up one morning a thought hey.. let's go find food blogs. **No, I see I see.**

Why is it important what you friend sends to you? Ehm, I find it interesting, I think he has a really healthy style and he is really fit he looks really fit and everything like it. Which eventually, we all like to look good, which is also important. I think it is the most important factor in the, in the entire eating healthy trend, everyone wants to look good, that is the most important part. And he knows a lot about it, so, that's, so, that is why. He did a study and he did some food technology, eu some food study with it some specialisation, to eu, some specialisation about food and the using of food and right foods and those kind of things. So he knows a lot about it. And I find it really interesting.

Do you see him as an expert your friend or more as an aspiration? It, it, it started as an inspiration, but nowadays when he finish his studies and he does really know a, a lot about it, he is just an expert. He got his education, he knows a lot about it, he not only knows the fact that it is good, but he knows why it is good, which substances it should contain or which should, or which things you should eat to have a whole, cause just eating healthy, one healthy food isn't healthy. You have to make a couple of combinations **(yeah)** and you have to get a lot of different substances like fats, fats are still very important to eat **(yeah)**, so in that case he is just an expert to me. If I have questions, because I don't know something, I ask him.

Did your friend have more influence as an inspiration or as an expert? Eventually he influenced me more as an inspiration, because as an expert I want to know something, but then I am very stubborn, so when I just don't like it I don't do it, because you see him as an expert or as a physical therapist or something like that, and when you don't like what they are saying, you just don't do it. While, when they are your inspiration, when you look up to someone, Oh he does it,

I must do it as well. So I think at the end he influenced me more as an inspiration than he does now as an expert. **Yeah, I see.**

Is actually the food trend or more the health trend that triggered your whole new of, like new way of cooking and using salt nowadays, at first? Mmm I think it is the health trend. I want to be healthy, I used to be a lot more fit, but I got a lot of injuries last year, I had an operation on my knee and I want to get again and I want to get fit fast. And I, I, well I think with a healthy lifestyle it is easier to get fit and it is easier to work-out more because you muscles they eu.. **They regain better?** yeah they, you feel better when you work-out when you eat healthy, but more, but most importantly to me is when you are done working you muscles need to recover. And when you eat the right foods your muscles recover a lot fast and that is why it is important to me. So I can keep working out like 4 times a week, not in the beginning, to work-out once and have four days of muscle aches. So, that's why it's, it's important to me. Because when I don't work-out four times a week I get kind of lazy and when its only two times or one time a week I think the next time I only work-out once this week it doesn't matter if I don't work-out today. But when I do have a steady rhythm in it, like four times a week, I make myself go. For some reason in my head it is important to work-out four times a week, cause then I want to work-out again. But when I do it only one time a week, I am more likely to say, Ahh not today.

Why is that for you? You said for some reason, but do you know the reason behind that?

Eu.. Because I want to get fit.. eu you want to see results and if you work-out once a week it takes a really long time before you see results. And results are, my experience, I used to weight a lot more, I started dieting and I a lost a lot of weight. The best motivation you can have is results. When you see results you get extremely motivated it's the best motivation there is and I want results really fast so I get that motivation again to go on, to go on, to go on. But to see results you have to work-out four times a week and not once so..

So could we say that you are a result driven person? Yes, I don't, if I don't see any results I don't see the point in doing something.

You just said like that if you already went twice a week then you would not go that often anymore, because it is like O you don't have to go anymore, while you could say like if I at least go three times a week, why don't you feel that pressure anymore to at least go three times? Mmm.. that is a difficult one, I have to think about it. I think, that its, its, subconscious, to be honest. When eu.. when I go four times a week, you know you have done good, you feel good about yourself. When I only went two times a week or one, I would say 'Well even though I would work-out today which is the third time, I still haven't reached my fourth work-out this week. So it's not good enough, so why do the third time, while that would not be good enough as well. If it is one or two or three times, in all those cases I am not happy. Because I want to reach four, so I am not happy when I work-out two times and I am not happy when I work-out three times and in my head I guess I think 'Well I am not gonna be happy anyways, so why do the third time'. But that's what I'm thinking, that's my head, but you have to ask a psychologist to be sure.

Why would you be happy when you work-out four times? I don't know, because it is a goal that I set for myself, it's a goal. It's a result to say it like that, I am goal and result driven, so when I set a goal for myself I want to reach it. And when you reach it, you're happy.

Ok, so you're not happy when you have worked out three times because you haven't reached your goal? Yes, and I don't feel good about myself. But when I do reach my goals I, I feel good about myself.

Those goals where you are talking about, do you set them for example once a year or maybe more times a year? It depends how the work-outs is going, I, I, I have a special run in September, it's an obstacle run and it's a special goal, so I, I am now making a really long plead of working out to get to the point which I wanna be. When I don't have a run or, or something like it. I eu, I eu change my goals every three four weeks. It depends on how everything feels, but for example, I could have an injury, I could strain my ankle or something and get, have to sit at home for three weeks, which could happen. Which also costs, me to reset my goals, because with three weeks no training you have to start but when you have three weeks not training you start back on the point where you ended. You're gonna drive yourself insane and gonna injure yourself again.

Yes, but for example, from my own experience I am gonna say, I see like; Summer is coming up, I want to have a nice vacation, I want to work on my, I want to have good body. But then at some time I reach my goal I have vacation and then I start with a new goal. For you that would be different, you would say like for three or four week I have this run and I have to train for that and then after that I set new goals? Yeah, that is eu., I eu., I try not to focus on vacation or anything, I know myself and when I focus on vacation I wanna look good on vacation, and I do look good on vacation, I am gonna go completely berserk on vacation, I'm gonna eat, I'm gonna drink, because I reached my goal. So I try to focus my goal on sporty challenges, on running's, special occasions. Eum and I've always, before my injury and now again, I've already entered myself for a run in September 2014, I have entered myself for a run in December 2014 and I've entered myself for a run on April 2015. So you have to register really early for those things so you have at least one year of challenges or goals which you already know. So I try to focus on that once, so when I do reach my goal, I do have, I already know what my next goal is gonna be. So I keep focus, so I keep getting focused, for some reason I don't have discipline or self-control to keep going with it if I don't have a goal.

If this works for you this is really good. Well yeah it is personal for everybody. And I now for myself, for, for, let's say a vacation, you go on vacation, you have a good body but after the vacation you get home and 'O well I am gonna eat a little dirtier, winter is coming up, everyone where's sweaters, Christmas is coming up'. And when it is February I be able to, to do the entire thing again, so I'll be fit in the summer again. But I kind of find it a waist for the second half year, because at that point you are not. And eu.. there is nothing more difficult in my opinion to lose your fitness and then gain it. It's easier to stay on a certain level of fitness than it is to go back and go up again. To go up is really hard. And unless I have an injury or something, I really try to maintain a steady fitness level so I don't have to go through the entire way up again.

So does it also mean that if you are going on vacation, for example in the summer, that you still doing your training for your goals? I do some small training, not really hard, but we go on vacation for 11 / 12 days, not three weeks. I try to do some other things, like, eum.. we are going to Italy this year, last year it was Greece. In the morning at two or three times a week I get up and go for a little run on the beach. And it doesn't has to be long, but I especially choose the beach because in Holland it's mostly rainy or the beach is hard. And there the beach is really lose sand, so you have really different kind of training for your upper legs. But it is not as intensive when it is at home, it should be a vacation and I think you should enjoy your vacation, and of course I have my girlfriend with me and she doesn't like to run, so she doesn't go with me. And in that case, so, it is a light training but I try to do it at least three times when I am on vacation. And it's also because I, when I work-out I feel good.

So it's the healthy part, the working out for your, and it is also the food part, you eating less salt now, and that is also healthy. Is there also another reason for working out? There are two reasons for working out, one is to not get fat, which is kind of important, it's to stay fit and, well actually there are three reasons in that case. I don't wanna gain to much weight, I might wanna lose some weight, but the most important part is, a lot of my friends are really fit, like the food guy and I have a friend of mine who is in the marine core and like that. And those are really fit guys and when we go play soccer or something than I don't want to be the first one to *gasp* give up. And we are pretty competitive all of us so that is why you want to stay fit.

So actually your friends are keeping you fit? Yes they are, they, decently are. I think if you have fit friends or healthy friends its, its, they really contribute to your own fitness. Because you, nobody want to be the last one. And especially when you have a group of friends that is really competitive like mine.

Did it also change from like first you parents that were you reference groups and now it are like your friends? Yeah, it, that has decently changed. But that started to change when I lived at home, when I got older. When you get older friends get more important, you start to have a live of your own and your parents don't make any play dates anymore to call it like that, you go to sport or in my case soccer by yourself on the bike. Your friends start to get really important and your parents are starting to get less, less and less important. You're developing your own opinion, your developing your own friends, your own lifestyle. And in that case I think friends are important than parents. And at a given time, it is not that you wake up at one day and you think 'O I do care about my parents anymore'. it's a steady go, but it starts when you are like 16 and hitting puberty and it goes until you, well your entire live probably.

You said that you eat healthy from Monday to Friday, does it mean that you do something different in the weekend? Well I try not to make it a weekend mad or a cheat day, that is why, because I, well I gave Monday to Friday as an example because I don't really want to cook long and everything. But I, a cheat meal or a cheat day, but I like to use the word cheat meal, because a cheat day enhances binge eating, so for example if you have a cheat Saturday you are gonna eat

that the entire Saturday, while a cheat meal is not so bad once in a while. And I try not to do it on steady days, because when you do it on steady days your waiting for it, you are waiting for it on Friday 'Ow it is almost Saturday' and when it is Saturday you, you are going to binge eat. You are going to eat a lot which you shouldn't. While, when you don't have a steady day and you eat a couple of days healthy and it's a Sunday or it could be Thursday or anything **(yeah)**, 'well today I really have a craving for pancakes with cheese and bacon' for example and you eat it then, it is not a problem. Like I said it is 80% healthy eating eu.. 80% clean and 20% not clean in my opinion, and only the not clean eating is based more, in my opinion, it tastes better when you don't know when you are going to have it, it is more a surprise and everything, and when you don't have a rhythm in it, it is also better for your metabolism **(yeah)**. Because your body, we like to say that your body is lazy and it gets used to everything. And if you always eat fat stuff or bad stuff on Saturday, your body gets used to it having it on a Saturday, while when you rotate eu.. That cycle your body doesn't know when it is gonna have it, and it has work harder to digest all the fats and everything, all of the bad stuff. So that is why I try to rotate it. Example, but for example Saturday is mostly the bad day to be honest, because you go out and you are gonna have a pool or gonna have a drink or you are gonna have a beer or something. And I don't wanna, and I don't want to say to myself you can't have it.

No ok. But how does the salt influences your unhealthy day on Saturday for example?

I still don't use it, myself.

But for example, I don't know if you would go to a football canteen and would eat something there after a game? It could be salt in there... Yes, in that case I would eat the salt. Salt is really easy for me, I don't put it in myself. What I eat at home is fresh, so it doesn't have any. But when I go out to eat and I eum.. And it does have salt well that's kind of bad luck because I can't pick it out of it. And eu.. What I get somewhere else and has salt I eat it. Salt is really the most easy part, you don't add it yourself, you don't touch it, and the rest that has it in, well to bad, you eat it. But because you don't go to the canteen every week anymore or every day, you don't get a lot of stuff in it **(yeah)**.

You said you had a girlfriend, and you said that you don't put in salt yourself, but does she? Not anymore, I believe. I can't be a 100% sure because I don't check her or I don't film what she is doing in the kitchen. But I am pretty sure that she doesn't use salt anymore.

Ok, but also not in her food? Once in a while she does make her own food, with some sauce and I don't know if she ads salt. I'd never ask her. I think it's, I think it's a personal thing. If she wants to do it she should. I am not going to dictate what she eats.

But does her way of cooking influence what you eat as well? Well actually my way I eat, influences her cooking. She adjusts her cooking to what I, what I would like to eat and as I said every once in a while she makes a different pan with like protein, chicken or something with some sauce, or with some Commix, or with some things, which is for her. But eu.. My style of eating influences her cooking and it is not the other way around.

Why not? Eum.. Because I asked it. I asked her if she could cook the healthy stuff for me without those things and she said yes (ok). And I set to her, she is, she doesn't have to completely, to do it as well. So sometimes she does eat completely healthy with no salt or sauces or anything and the other day she does have some potatoes with some mayonnaise or something like it, but as I said, it is my own choice and it should be her own choice as well. I really hate people who force their lifestyle up on others. I think when you do that, you have the wrong reasons for doing it. You have to do it for yourself and not because someone else is not eating healthy, well it is their choice and to be quite honest I think a normal meal with potato's some green beans and some meat has never been bad for you. So it still isn't for her. I try to eat healthy, I try to not eat cheese or anything but eu.. Since when is brown bread with some cheese really bad for you? It still isn't in my opinion.

No, but would you see your friends and your parents, than more as an inspiration and a reference group than your girlfriend? No, my friends have some more, I would say my friends have some more inspiration but they started before I did. So they influenced me. I influence my girlfriend and my parents laugh at me, to be honest. My parents really don't care about it, they eu.. Quite stubborn, there typical stubborn Dutch people so they eu.. Still cook what they know and they will always cook what they know until they die. I'm positive about it.

And are you influenced by that, that they are laughing at it? No, not really.

Why not? Eu.. Because I, I know what I do is better than what they do. But as I said I am not gonna force my lifestyle up on my parents. If they don't want to do it. I've told them about it and they said no, no your crazy that doesn't work, what does it matter, I'm still alive, I don't know what they say, but those kind of things. Well fine for them and they really should do it and when I go over to them I will eat their food, not a problem or anything. But I am not that impressed with my parents anymore that I always do what they say. I have my own opinion, I live on my own and what they do or say, yeah.. Let them do it. But I, I don't always listen to it anymore.

Ok. Than we missed one last thing about the blogs you check on the internet. (yes) how do they exactly influence you? Well they influence you on what products you used, when you use them, for example what you eat for breakfast or what is the best food to eat for breakfast. And you can have a lot of, a lot of, you can have a good meal with rice, chicken and vegetables, it's really healthy, but would you really eat it in the morning? Or is it better to eat it after your workout or before your workout? Or what is better for in the morning, could you better have fruit or could you better eat some for example like eu.. quark, what is better in the morning, what is better after workout, what's better in the evening or for exercising and those kinds of things. And that is where the food blogs influences me. And recipes, I want to have nice recipes, cause you are constantly trying to get new recipes, because I don't want to get, a habit of eating the same thing every day, which still isn't good. You can eat very healthy, but if you eat the same thing every day for the evening, or every Monday to Friday you eat this and always that, it is still not healthy. Variation is a very important factor.

Does it also, taste and fine eating influence your choice of food? Because you want to see new recipes every time, does that influence you? New choices of food are really interesting for you for example nice Chinese recipes that you haven't cooked before? Yes definitely. I've, I, for example I learned, I used to really hate avocado's. I really didn't like the thing. When you have an avocado and you put it in some whole wheat wrap with some chicken and some eu.. red onions and some bell peppers and everything, it actually isn't bad, it actually is pretty good. I do, I am learning to eat new stuff, I am learning to combine new foods which I normally wouldn't like but in combination with other things I really, I actually do like. So in that case it, it influences me a lot. And I am eating a lot of stuff which I used to, didn't get at home, because my parents didn't eat it. My parents only eat what they know.

Would you say it is kind of an adventure for you? To eat new ingredients and try them out? Yes of course it is interesting. And I, sometimes it goes wrong and you cook something you really don't like, well to bad, but it's kind of an adventure, it's a kind of a funny surprise to actually eat something which you never eaten before. It keeps you interesting and it keeps me motivated to cook healthy food. If I have to cook the same thing every day I get bored. And when I do eat different kinds of food, or different recipes or new recipes its, it, if there are new flavours and it keeps getting interesting for me. So it motivates you to cook right.

You said in the beginning that it changed when you got out of home, maybe also student live, did it change after student live that you started working, you're eating style and work-out style. I eu.. when, I started working when I was 19, I finished my, let's say community college, I think that is the best reference to it, and I started working for my company which I had my internship because it would pay for my follow-up study. So eu.. when I moved out of my house, I wasn't a student anymore. About two years ago, a year before that I eu.. half year before that I got a relationship with my current girlfriend who was living Zwolle and I was three/four times a week in Zwolle already at the beginning, and those kind of things. So it is kind of blurred with me. I moved out of the house really slowly, I moved out, after I started working, I started working before, I moved out so the really the student live I never actually done.

I see, ok. You just said that the blogs from the internet influenced you, why and how do they exactly influence you? Eum.. why do they influence me? Because I find it interesting, I think, I think, yeah I am try to answer the answer as good as possible, but I think everything you see, do, or smell influences you. So I check out the blogs to, I, I go to the blogs to get influenced.

So it is out of your own curiosity? Yes of course, it is because I want to find new recipes, because I want, I like it it's fun, it's a hobby to cook new things. I just like to do it, that is an easy thing. The best place to find those recipes is on blogs, or websites or on own websites or those kinds of things from those health gurus, I don't know if you like to call them that.

So they have to be an expert in health or can it also be other people who have recipes on the internet? It can also be other people who have recipes. In my opinion they are not experts because on the, on the, also on their pages I read things I'd say, I wouldn't do that, that's not

healthy, that is not something I would do, or something like, it is just for inspiration. It could also be a normal website, because a lot of normal dishes, can be changed into healthy dishes. So it could also be the eu.. I don't know Master Chef or what you see on TV, because you can change current recipes to something that would be really healthy.

You said that commercials, we talked about it before, you have a lot of commercials for example from the government that it is not good to eat salt and those things. How does that influence you, or do you know of the commercials at all? I know about the government commercial, but it doesn't influence me really much, because I try not to get influenced, or at least not my lifestyle by commercials. Because commercials are mostly, well government isn't but most commercials are, have the goal to get you to buy something or something like it. I, government commercials aren't like that but for that reason I try not to get too influenced by commercials. I think commercials, is kind of old fashioned and we all know why they are there so. Most of the time when there is a commercial on TV I go do something else.

Ok, but it does influence you a little bit or not at all, in your opinion? No, it might, it might influence me subconsciously, to say it like that, but I don't think it influences me. Like eu.. the commercials, but at least not the commercials on TV. Maybe the billboard do, I think the billboard would influence me and things you see on websites or what people talk about, but for some reason TV commercials, eu.. don't.

What is the difference there for you? Eu.. well I can't explain why there is a difference, but I do know, if I know myself a little bit, I get more, I do get influenced by everything else, but not by the TV commercials, I don't know why that is. It is probably because, to be honest it has already been done. It's not new, and we all know TV commercials. I think if you check in in a normal family, and there is TV commercial on TV, I think about 80% of the couch leaves. You go and get something to drink you go eu.. smoke outside, you go upstairs, you go feed the cats I don't know. Everybody comes up from the couch or you turn around and you start talking to each other. I think the effect of TV commercials is eu.. sliding away.

And something a bit different, but in the beginning you said when you bought sea salt you bought the meditation one, cause they have the big logo on it and they have them in the restaurants. Does that influence you? Yes, of course.

Why? Because, well, when you, when you see something in a restaurant you think that has to be good. Or else they don't use it in a restaurant. I don't know if it is true but that's, that's, I think that's my thought process, I think well, they have it in a restaurant, so it is probably better than a normal table salt, so I am gonna get that one.

Ok, and why do you think that then? Because restaurants are eu.. professionals in making food, so when they have it is probably better than the other. Because they are the experts, they are professionals, they have the chefs. They know what good combinations are. So if they use that salt and not the table salt, so why would they use that salt if the table salt was better and cheaper.

Because table salt is cheaper. So they use the more expensive option, because, and eu.. they want to have their food taste good, because the ultimate goal in a restaurant is not, is, is to sell your own product, which is the dish, the food, and the food has to be the best because you want to sell it and you want to have people talk about it how good your food is in the restaurant. So you use the best stuff. The best quality of stuff, so I guess that is why you see the salt and you think 'O the restaurant has it, so it bound to be better than the table salt my mum had' because the food in the restaurant is also better than my mother made. I think that is why you choose the, that is why I chose the Mediterranean salt.

Ok, good. Do you think the way of how you live and everything is gonna change in the future? Like your healthy lifestyle or.. Well, probably. Eu.. we, people, myself included change all the time. Maybe in ten years eu.. we find out strawberries are really bad for you healthy. I doubt it, but it could be, about twenty years ago milk was the healthiest thing you can have, and it was healthy, and everybody needed to drink milk. But nowadays full milk is bad for you, half full milk, they say is not really good, you have to have low fat milk. While twenty years ago every kind of milk was really good for your bones and for your teeth and those kind of things so. I think what we now see as really healthy, could not be so healthy anymore in twenty years. We as a society or as people are constantly developing, even if, I think it affects us most in our lifestyle. As well as I think that the all super foods thing is a trend, is hype, it will end in three/four years. There will be a new thing by then.

What do you think will influence you in that the most? I think, I think if they want to influence me, it is not really the healthy aspect, it's the aspect you have to, you have to highlight the part to, to get fit, to work-out. I think healthy eating, most important for the healthy eating, for the less salt or everything with me, is because it is better for my workout. It's, you get, you get better workouts, you get fitter, it is easier to run, those kind of things. When I, when I hear about something which would be really good for your workout, I probably try it.

But is it then, do you need do hear it on a blog or from your friend or from your girlfriend? What would influence you the most? Or in a restaurant maybe even... I think it would be from my friends, my friends would influence me the most. After that it would be my girlfriend and finally it would be the blog. I find the blog interesting but as I said, I lot of blogs also have mistakes in them. So I, I, I tend not to take them seriously. And when I so read a recipe on a blog, I always change it a bit, I always so 'No, I wouldn't do that, I will do this' or yeah. So blogs are fascinating, but they really don't influence me very much other, other than sometimes a good recipe.

Have you also tried eating organic food? I have, but I don't really use it all the time because it is more expensive. The, the main reason is because I have to pay about fifty per cent more for most organic food, especially for meat. So I don't buy it. I've tried it, but the big problem with that is that it, it is for me, it is a good thing and a bad thing at the same time, but it tastes the same, there is nothing different between a processed food or organic food. It tastes, I don't see a difference, so why would I pay fifty per cent extra, for, with money I don't have, for a thing that tastes the same.

That is one thing and is it also the health aspect? Eu.. for example that there is less salt in the organic food? Eu.. Well, that does contribute, but at the end of the day I think the money is more important. I think you can get processed food, if you just buy your, if you buy fresh vegetables, eu.. I would say, in Holland we call in 'scharrelkippen' [Free range chicken] it is running around free chicken and you buy like brown rice, you really do, already have a really healthy thing, so why buy the special brown rice which is organic, when you have to pay double.

But can I ask a critical question then? Yes of course.

Why do you pay fifty per cent more for sea salt, just as you said before, while you don't taste the difference either? Because for some reason I guess I think it was better. I, to be honest, to be honest I really don't know why I did it. I really like to explain, I don't know, I just did. Because maybe, maybe it is because you don't buy salt every day, but we do go through two packages of rice, every week.

So that would be something that has to do with exclusiveness or something? Yes like that, I think if I, maybe they do have it, but I don't know because I don't pay really, a lot of attention, but if I have to buy something organic, which I only have to buy every two or three months, I would decently buy the organic stuff. But if I have to buy it two or three times a week, then the price difference is going to be very high.

So it has less impact on you at the end? Yes. **Ok, that is clear.**

Interview with Janine

Janine has the Dutch nationality and was interviewed on 29-04-2014 at 9.30 pm

Do you cook? Yes, sometimes.

And how many times is sometimes? Eumm.. about four or five times in the week.

And do you cook alone then? Yes I cook alone, or sometimes with my boyfriend, but most of the times alone

And why do you cook alone and not with your boyfriend? Well, the kitchen is very small and then you stand together... no, it doesn't work.

Do you cook for more people? No for two people, sometimes for more, but it is not normal.

So mostly just for the two of you? Yes.

Ok. And do you buy your own food. Yes, I buy my own food.

Are you the only one in the household who buys food? Yes, sometimes, my boyfriend, but most of the time I buy the food.

How many times a week do you buy your food? One of two times in a week.

If we look at the style of cuisine you cook, do you cook like the French cuisine or Chinese? Mm.. different, no Chinese and the French, more the Dutch kitchen and Italian kitchen. Different dishes.

Which one do you think the most? I don't know, we eat a lot of pasta, lasagne, pizza, so maybe the Italian.

Had the type of dishes you cook changed over the years? Yes, but when I lived with my parents they don't like Italian food, they only eat Dutch food. So now we can try more different things. A little bit different, not very different.

Do you like to experience in cooking? Yes, when I have time and everything for cooking then I like it, but when I have to cook fast, fast, fast then I do more easy dishes.

Ok. We are looking the health trend and there is a food trend at the moment. Are you aware of that there is a large health trend, like a lot different trends all connected to health? Yes, there are a lot of different trend for health, healthy food and different opinions about it. You don't know, you never know what is the right thing.

What does health mean for you? Mm... normal food, the vegetables, fruit, potatoes, pasta. Just the normal food, no different or special things.

What do you mean by special then? Light products, I don't like light products and all those goods that are on the market such like slimming aids. Cause they say this is good and then that is good. We are not for that, I don't believe in those products. I see it with the physiotherapy and in the gym (work), then they do this, then they want to try that, and losing weight there. For me normal, healthy and regular eating, the regular eating is more important than what you eat I think.

We also see like a food trend, so that people buy a lot of organic food and that they go to special stores to buy their food or go to really luxurious restaurants, do you see that as well? Yes I see that it happens, but I don't know if the organic or biological food, is really what they say it is. Nowadays you don't know what you can eat, cause there is something wrong with everything. Then you have to produce it yourself, than you know for sure that it is good.

So you don't really believe in organic food? No, I don't believe anything of it. Cause biological meat isn't biological if the cow is standing on the grass field in the Netherlands, in the grass itself is a lot of bad substances. That is where it starts already.

Now I am gonna ask some specific questions about cooking salt. So that is the salt you use in cooking, so that can be table salt or sea salt or kosher salt, etcetera. Do you use cooking salt in your daily life? Little bit, not so much.

Why not? In the normal food there is salt enough, like bread and cookies. So you don't need more salt.

You said that you use a little bit, how much is that? If you should say it in teaspoons per dish. No, not a teaspoon, less than half a teaspoon I think.

Does it differ in dishes? Like if you cook Italian you use more and in Dutch food you use less, or the other way around? Well, in Dutch food you use less than in Italian food I think. But, maybe, I only use salt in or over an egg or for on the tomato on bread. But I never used salt in Italian or Dutch food for dinner.

Ok. And why not? It is not healthy for you? It is bad for your hart and circulation system.

Ok. And why do you think that? That is the truth. I have learned that during my Master. My little sister studies Medicine, she knows all about it.

So she knows a lot about it.. Yes.

But you also have a health background? Yes I have, I am a physiotherapist. So I think I know what is good and bad for my body.

Did you use more salt before in your dishes? No, no I don't like salt, that.. yeah.. only in the chips.

And why don't you like it? Don't you like the taste? Yeah.. I don't know, I like the taste but.. mm I don't need the salt.

And is that because of the health? I don't know, my parents don't, don't eat salt. Since three years old I have never eaten salt. I don't know why.. Sometimes I use it but I don't miss it when I don't use it.

And do you think it is health related? I don't know, I think, but... I forget to cook with salt, that is also a problem.

Do you use salt differently than when you cook for others? Mmm sometimes...

And in what way? Eumm.. I sometimes, for my boyfriend he likes more spicy and then I use it. And when there are more people coming for dinner then I use a little bit, but not a lot of salt.

But you do it because you want it to taste good for them? Yes, because I know some people like salt and they would miss it when it is not in the dish.

So, would you ask them before? No, I don't know. I did it before and I think I did well, I don't know if they like it.

Do you have salt on the table that they can add themselves? No, no I don't do that.

No, that's ok. And how many times a year do you think you buy salt? Mm.. eu.. Well, one time a year..?

Can you remember the last time you bought salt? Well, that was in the Christmas package from work. So I didn't buy it, I got it.

And what kind of salt was that? I have to look... It is sea salt, sea salt.

Have you bought salt before? Yes, also this one, or this type of salt, sea salt.

And do you like that type of salt? Yes it is good, it is salt.

Do you think that there is taste difference in different types or brands of salt? I don't know, it's more, it's more, it has more taste, because it has a bigger flakes, than the normal salt, table salt. I think I like this more.

And it is because it is bigger and more salty than? Yes, more of another taste of salt, a more intense one.

The last time you bought salt, why did you pick that one? Yeah... I don't know, this is a good salt, I buy this one all the time.

Is it the salt you use at home as well? Yes, yes, sometimes, but at home there is also table salt. In a very big jar. My parents inherited it from my great grandparents and it looks like an urn kind of thing, very antique. And that is where we always had are salt in, just table salt, but like half a kilo or something. So that, we never use it, so I think that that half a kilo is already in the closet for ten years or something.

And it is still there? Yes, I think that they refilled it max one time now. That is a lot of salt.

So you bought this salt because you recognize it from home? Yes.

So you bought this salt because you recognized it from home? Yes.

And is it the type of salt or the brand that you recognized or is it exactly the same? Mmm.. I don't know, are there more brands of salt? **Yes.** I don't know, I don't pay that much attention to it. I go to the supermarket, I need salt, I take salt and I don't look at the brands.

So it is like the first one you see in the shelf..? Yes or which is in the sale or..

So price does matter for you? No, when I look and it is in sale I take it, but when I need salt, I don't especially look for sale. But when I see there is a sale, ok, than I take that one.

Ok, and does the type of packaging, for example that it is a glass jar, matter? Yes I look for, for the, for one that is easy to use, with a grinder. And that it fits easy in your hands and I look at the size, I don't use a lot so I don't want a big jar. That is where I look for.

And are you influenced by media, commercials or blogs online? No not for salt, no.

And if you look for advice for health, are you influenced by it then? No I don't think so, salt is salt..

But if you want to know more about health? No, I sometimes read something, but then I have to come across it accidently. But I am not targeting my search on it. But I don't read a lot of magazines.

But is it then something you find very interesting? An article about salt? haha

Or about health? About health, yeah.. of course about health I, that is interesting.

If they would give you advise in an article would you follow it up or would you believe it? Mm.. it depends on the type of magazine. If it is a medical magazine, or a scientific research, then I believe it. But then you can look at the level of reliability. And then yeah, you can see if you can trust it or not.

But would you use it on yourself then if you read it in those articles if it is very reliable? If it is well reviewed, if it is scientifically good reviewed than yes.

Yes, and does government information, like labelling on packaging influences you? No, I don't think so. I don't know that they exist.... so no then.

Has the health trend or being healthy for you, has that influenced you in what type of decisions you make in food and use of salt? Yes, no, probably not.. because I never, I never use salt, so I don't know how to eat with salt. But I know that it is not so good for you, so then, so that is also a reason that I don't take salt. But I don't miss it in the food.

Ok, so you don't know the taste, because you never really used it, but you wouldn't start because you know it is unhealthy? Yes that is right.

Well we also talked a bit about the food trend. I know you did not really believe in it, but does it influence you? eu.. No, no. It doesn't influence me.

And why not? That is a difficult question. Because I believe I eat healthy when I eat normal. No special things.

And what do you think influences your decision process the most? Is it like, so I don't use salt because I don't like the taste or because it is not healthy? What would be the one? Yeah... difficult. I think that, that it is also for the health. Subconsciously I am going for the health (yes?) yeah I think so.

And why? I don't know, I think you do experience a lot of sick people, which need to have a salt free diet and the behaviour of certain people that causes that. Maybe that I, subconsciously, think that I should not do it. But it is not that I think about it a lot.

And in a lot of food that is processed, like marinated meat, does contain a lot of salt...I will eat it.

Yes, cause is that something you pay attention to? No, no. No if it tastes nice I will just eat it. I really don't think about it, I think that that is the main problem. I am not conscious of it at all.

Is it something you want to be more conscious about? I still have a healthy heart, I have been approved by the cardiologist. So I don't have to be conscious about it yet.

Is that something you keep testing to know if you have a healthy heart? I don't hope that I have to go there more often. No, rather not. I, actually, they warned me that I should eat more potassium, so I should eat more salt.

Ok. So would you eat more salt now because you got that as advice? No, because the biggest problem now is that I need to put it in the food. But I don't think about it when I cook dinner that I should put salt in there. Because I am not used to it, so I don't do it.

Is it something you would want to change? Well, maybe it is good to try, yes. It should be good for me. But on the other hand... yeah... the cooking is ok like this as well and maybe we eat too much salt after a while, that is not good as well. And like you said a marinated piece of meat also contains salt, in those packages you use to make pasta, there is always a lot of salt in there. So I think that already compensates a lot. I think that, unconsciously, you eat enough salt.

Are you gonna try to eat more salt? Or do you just want to keep it the way it is? Well I know, when I feel like having salt, when my body is craving for it, than I have salt deficiency and then I should eat salt. So than I take some stock to fill up my salt. Then I know it, but I can feel it when I need more salt. So I am not planning to eat a lot of salt now, cause that is not good for you.

But then more in other products like stock or processed food? Yes and especially, if you, I think your body really tells you when you need salt. If you exercised, your body craves for salt. Your body has lost those nutrients and then you have to fill. If you eat the whole day all those kinds of food that contain a lot of salt, than you don't need that extra salt. I really don't think about it, I think that that is the main problem. I am not conscious of it at all.

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Do you have something like dextrose sweets that contain extra salt that you can take? No, no, well dextrose sweets also contain salt and that works as well, there you find potassium as well. But I rather take some stock or just eat some flakes of salt.

Ok. And a more related to the questions I asked before, do you know why your parents don't eat salt? No, eu... I really don't know. I do know that my mother has to eat more salt, because she also has her blood pressure way too low and needed more salt as well. But yeah.... my grandfather and grandmother, all my grandparents also don't cook with a lot of salt. So where it comes from eu... I don't know. I do know that one of my grandmothers uses a lot of salt, because my grandfather could not have it, but that hasn't been like that their entire live... so yeah... I really don't know where it comes from... actually no herbs at all, we don't really use herbs. Or maybe sometimes they did use it but I did not notice... But compared to other people really little anyways, why.. I don't know.

Interview with Manon

Manon has the Dutch nationality and was interviewed on the 28-04-2014 at 9.00 pm

Do you cook? Yes, most of the days of the week.

What are most of the days of the week? 5-7 days.

Do you cook alone? I think once or twice a week alone, because I lives alone and the rest of the week I eats with friends. When I eat with friends, I cook together.

Do you buy your own food? Yes.

How many times a week do you buy your food? Too many times, most of the days I go shopping to the supermarket. It depends: 6 times a week or something.

Do you cook for more people? Sometimes I cook together.

What kind of cuisine styles do you cook (French, Chinese, Italian etc.)? Well, very different, I cook Italian but also Dutch cuisine and I think Indian food.

Has your style of cooking changed over the years? (If yes, why, and how) Hmm, well no, it's still easy, easy cooking.

Ok and what does easy cooking mean for you? Well, most the dishes I make, are finished in half an hour.

But you do make your dishes fresh or are they already prepared when you buy them? No, everything is fresh.

Some more general questions now. Are you aware of the health trend at the moment?

E.g. that people are becoming more and healthy and focussed about it? Well yeah, I see it more general, but I don't focus on it, I eat what I like.

But was the health trend mean for you? Because it can mean something different for everyone. Well, just eat everything that is healthy and that I like, but I also eat unhealthy things, so it's not something where I focus on.

But how would you describe the health trend around you, maybe not with you, but with others? Around my friends or around the world? **Friends?** Well, I think that there is still much focus on what is healthy or not and that people get addicted to a way of life that is not healthy then.

And why not healthy then? Well, because there's so much focus on one thing, they think that is everything and they forget everything else.

Ok, so for example good eating, but not sporting? Yeah, or eat nothing or a little bit or eat only beans because they say it's healthy. **Ok, that's clear.**

And are you also aware of the food trend we see at the moment? For example that people are really focussed on cooking, they really like to cook and the want to cook organically and want to go to specials stores to buy their foods. Well, I don't see it her. So, I don't know if it is anywhere else. And in my town and the people that I see, they don't do that.

Well, over to the more specific questions about cooking with salt. Do you use cooking salt in your daily life? Sometimes, on my eggs and when I cook rice.

But you don't use it yourself? No. **Okay.**

And why do you use it with rice then? For the taste. **Okay.**

So you don't use salt in different types of meals? Only in with rice you use salt and when you cook with eggs or friends, maybe? Yeah, I don't know, probably with eggs and with friends some times. But I use most of the time garlic.

And why do you use cooking salt with friends and not with yourself? I don't know. I don't think about using it or not. I just think, oh I need it and then I get it.

But not in your own food? No, but when I cook with my friends, I think, I don't use it often, sometimes. Well, we do when we eat potatoes or something, but that's really not very often at all. We don't eat that a lot.

And why do you use it or don't you use it? It's for the taste, but you can use other things than salt, like garlic, different herbs and spices.

But is there a reason why you use other herbs and spices instead of salt? No, I like the taste, I think that's better than salt.

Have you used more salt before? Yeah, when I lived with my parents, they use it with everything that they eat, so I used it every day then and I live on my own now for like six years and since then, I think, it changed, because I got my own cooking style.

Ok and that style mostly has to do with taste, that you like the taste better with other spices? Yeah, my parents cook more stuff like potatoes and meat and it's more normal that you use salt with potatoes or something.

Do you still buy salt then when it's out? I still have the same jar since I live here in Groningen, so that I have the same jar that I bought 6 years ago. **Really?** Yeah.

Can you still imagine the last time you bought salt? When I moved here to Groningen, I think that was 2009.

Well, if you imagine that last time. We're curious how you made your decision for that type of salt. But what kind of salt do you use? It's table salt from Nezo.

You bought it in a grocery store? Yeah.

And when you bought that salt, because we would like to know what influenced your decision. Did price play a role when you picked that one? I needed a big one and I think this one was the one that was just there.

So it was mostly the size? Yeah, mostly and it's fine too.

Did you also look at the packaging? No.

Did brand play a role, that you know the brand from home or something? No my parents have a different one, I think they have a big one, I think Jozo salt.

Did you media play a role in your decision? In Holland we don't have any commercials or something like that, so no.

Media could also be like a blog with a recipe which says that you have to use a specific kind of salt or. No.

Was there then a blog that told you to not use sold? Yes, but I don't read it.

But why did you stop using salt after you went out of your parents' home, because you thought it was used too often at your parents', or? No, I just don't think it's not necessary, so I don't want to use salt.

But why do you think that? Well, why should I use something in the kitchen that is unnecessary?

Why do you think it's not necessary? I don't like food when it's very salt, then the taste of the meat or anything else that you eat, it's gone, because everything is salted and I don't like it.

So did your parents use a lot of salt, that you got like, you didn't like what they cooked or? Just normal but, I got used to it now, that I don't use salt. **Ok. Then you really taste the difference?** Well, I use other things for cooking, so I don't know when I don't use anything then it's also good, but I think I use things "Cajun herbs" and think there is also salt in this. I use it a lot

for food. I also use chicken herb mix, that I use very often for chicken and it also contains salt. The "herbs" I use often for potatoes and also contains salt. I also use stock cubes and they also contain salt. But I'm not using any salt separately, because I'm using all those other herbs and herb mixes and those mixes contain already salt, at least most of them.

Maybe we can talk about your decision to use those products then instead. Yes, that's fine.

So what about the Cajun herbs, how many times do you buy them? Well, it's I think, once a year. **Ok!**

And in your choice for the product, what plays a role, is it the brand? No, it's just, when it's empty, I go to the supermarket and then I get the first thing I see. If I see, Cajun herbs, it's fine.

If it's like the private brand of the grocery store or a real brand. It doesn't matter to you? No, it tastes the same.

So, would you pick the cheapest one then, or it doesn't matter? Well, most of the times, there's only one choice. It's a private brand from the supermarket. **Okay.**

If it's only one choice, does still the height of the product in the shelf matter to you? Well, I think, when it's on eye height then you see it first and then it's the first thing that you get.

And is it, that you put on your list, those herbs, or is it something where you get reminded on when you're walking through the supermarket, like oh yeah, I should buy that as well, when you see it? No, when I have to get it, I write it down, otherwise I will forget it.

And does for this product commercials play a role? Well, I have recipes with these herbs, so I see something on the internet, like a blog or something and then I get my recipes from cooking books and stuff like that. I think commercials in there play a role, also the advertising in the cooking magazines from a supermarket here. They say something, like use these kind of herbs.

How did you get to know of these herbs for the first time? Well chicken, I know it from home.

Through what did you get to know it? Through a magazine or through a friend? Through a recipe that I found on the internet for something that I wanted to cook for friends, I then I found this recipe with Cajun herbs.

And then you tried it? Yes, then I tried it and I like it very much. **Okay.**

What kind of dishes do you use it? Well for dishes with potatoes or something and with wraps, also oven dishes and with some kind of vegetables.

How many times a week would you use the herbs then? I think once or twice in a week.

Has the type of salt you buy changed over the years? No.

Are you expecting to change the kind of salt you use, for you then the herbs or mixes of herbs? Well, I don't know, when the salt is expired, I go to the supermarket and I don't know what to buy. It doesn't matter. So I don't know if I end up if I'm going to change it.

We want to go a little more into health. Does health matter when you pick your food? Yeah, well, just what I like, I like healthy things, so that's good and I also buy chocolate, so that's good, so I buy everything that I want.

And do you think this will change in the future? Well, of course when I get fat then I have to change.

How would you like to change it then? Don't eat chocolate and eat more apples or something. Okay.

Has the food trend, so the trend that people want to eat more organically and fresh meat or vegetables, has that influenced you? No, organic food is very expensive. I choose for cloths instead of expensive food.

And if you would have more money, would it be an option for you? Well then yes, because they say it's better. But then I think, first I would change my meat, to biological meat and then my vegetables.

And why are cloths more important to you than health? Well, I think I eat healthy enough and I like cloths, so that's why.

Which aspects influence you the most when you go to a grocery store, how the product looks like, if you get a suggestion from a friend or something? It depends to what I like at the moment: what I would like to eat or something. So I've learned not to do any groceries anymore when I am hungry, because then I buy a lot of chocolate and stuff like that. So most of the time I decide what I want to eat before I'm going to the grocery store.

And if you buy chocolate? How do you pick it then? More is better, price doesn't matter then, I just like it.

Does the opinion of your family or friends or maybe someone you really like about your food choices influences you? No, well it's when you eat together you find out new ingredients, because someone cooks for you, you sometimes don't know what is inside, so then I get influenced. But I don't get influenced by people who say I eat very unhealthy and should change, because then it's my problem and not theirs, so I think I wouldn't change it. I only change it when I want to change it and not because someone else is thinking that I'm going to change it.

Are you more influenced by your food choice when you cook for others than when you cook for yourself? No, when you cook for others you want everyone to appreciate the food, so then you keep in mind what somebody likes or not. When I cook for myself then I can do everything I want.

So when are cooking with your friends, are you putting extra salt in the food, even when you're not using the salt for you own food normally when you cook alone? No, I just put the salt on the table then. **Ok, that makes sense.**

Interview with Mathilda

Mathilda has the Luxembourgish and the Swedish nationalities and was interviewed on 28-04-2014 at 4.00 pm

How often do you cook a week? Mm.. I guess I cook like nine times a week, maybe. I sometimes do like a big thing that I can heat up for lunch and stuff, eumm.. but then always for dinner I will cook. yeah.

Do you cook alone or with other people together? Most of the time with other people, because I live with two other people, eu.. so we usually cook together, eumm and then we always have like, twice a week we have lots of people coming over and we make like a big dinner together, and then it is always people running around giving tips and advice on how to cook and stuff. So yeah.

What kind of cuisine styles do you cook? For example French. Mm I like to experiment a lot so I do everything really, the basic Swedish stuff with just potatoes, meat and sauce I so a lot, but then I also do Mexican and Asian a lot.

Has your cooking style changed over the years? Yes, it has.

And in what way? Well , when I lived in Luxemburg I guess I cooked mostly pasta and I did not really care about what I ate and stuff. And then when I moved here I started eating really cheaply, so I only eat meatballs for like months, ha. And then after that I started thinking 'Ow maybe I should, you know, start eating other things and experiment a bit', I realized that I really loved cooking. So yeah.

So do you buy your own food? Yes.

How many times a week do you buy your food? Maybe two times.., yeah.

Are you aware of the health trend at the moment? Yes I am.

And what does that mean for you, that health trend? You mean like.. well... the thing with everyone is organic and stuff..?

Yeah for example. I guess everyone has its own interpretation of it. Ow ok, well yeah for me it's like, you should start eating especially bananas and coffee I here are really important to eat organic. Because they really put a lot of stuff on it, that is bad for the environment, but also for your own body. I think about that a bit when I go shopping.

Ok. We also want to talk a bit about the food trend, but you started about coffee and bananas. But is there a difference for you between the healthy tend and the food trend?

Mmm... I don't know, for me not really, because I think they kinda go hand in hand, and eu.. what is bad for the environment is also bad for your body so, yeah.

Ok, than we start with salt now. How do you use cooking salt in your daily live? Eu.. I salt quite a bit maybe, like I try to do less, I did a couple of months when I didn't eat salt at all, to let my, like, addiction of salt go down and that actually worked. So I don't do it that often anymore.

Ok, and why did you do this? Eu.. because I put a lot of salt on my stuff. Eu.. While cooking I would add and then I would always have on the table, like mm sea salt. And I would always crisp it over, especially like on salad or meat I would go crazy. Eu.. so...

And you recognized this thing, this habit by yourself? No actually it was my boyfriend that told me like you eat maybe 10 times more salt than I do, so.. you should take it easy. And, yeah it is true. And eu.. than finally.. Now I guess I don't use it that much anymore.

Why had your boyfriend so much influence? Why he had so much influence?

Well yeah, you believed him when he said that..? Well, yeah, because I could see that I was eating a lot more salt than him or.. than my family and eu.. I can see that I do put a lot of it on to my food. Which you know..

But was it than a health reason or what was the reason you changed? For the unhealthy reason, yeah. And also that I don't like the fact that I feel addicted to something, eu.. I want to be like, what I, you know, I can decide for myself what I'm supposed to eat. It is not my body that needs or wants something. I can just do it, yeah.

Ok, and you said that you were a bit of addicted, but that your family had different, that you have different habits than your family. How did it come that you eat so much salt than? Eu.. I think I just liked the taste of it.. really. Like and I guess my mom wouldn't allowed to have salt, so when I moved I would eat a lot of salt.

At home you couldn't eat salt? Well, you know, we weren't allowed to have salt on the table, she would add salt in the cooking. But she didn't want us to put extra while the food was on the table. Eum.. so yeah, maybe that's why.

And what, which foods like meals do you still use salt? Well, I always add salt while I am cooking. Like you know when you bowl paste I add a lot. But I guess when I, when I do stews and stuff I don't add salt anymore. It's more when it's.. like on potatoes in the oven and things like that. Eu.. then I always do it. But when it's like spaghetti bolognese or something like that I don't add it, these things.

Do you also use it for breakfast, lunch? Eu.. no for breakfast I don't, but except if I have like, but that doesn't happen very often but you know, like sandwiches and you have tomatoes on the

top, I like salt on the tomatoes. But usually I don't have a fancy breakfast, so I just, you know, take whatever I have.

Do you use more or less salt on different dishes, that maybe one or two dishes that you prepare that need more salt? Yeah, eu.. like if I eat, like, just boiled vegetables or fried meat or something like that, I like to have a lot of salt. Like I make this, like garlic butter, and then I put a lot of salt in that garlic butter and I have that for my vegetables. And then always put it on the meat, because I like it.

So your salt intake has decreased? Yes it has.

And since when did it start the decrease? Yes, maybe a year after I lived here (Lund, Sweden) so now one year ago.

Do you use salt differently when you cook for others than for yourself? Yes, I use it really differently, because.. mm since I said I don't use salt anymore when I do, big cooks, if I do a stew or something. Eu.. but now I live with my brother and his girlfriend and she eats a lot of salt, like a lot, more than I did from the beginning, so when I cook for them I will always add extra. But otherwise like, when I cook for other people, I usually do whatever I feel like is good. And eu.. like the only thing that happens is that people add salt, but you know, I have salt on the table, so that's fine. I'd rather do too, or not, not enough salt than do too much salt. So..

And the reason why you put extra salt eu.. at the meal with your brother and his girlfriend is because you don't want him to say like 'Oww there is not enough salt'? Yes exactly. So it's.. like they, they will complain about it. So that is why.

And do you say something about, that it is too much or..? Yes I do. I decently talk to them about it, like I don't anymore, but I talked to them maybe two times seriously about it that it is not good. And I even made here do one week without salt, and she hated it. But I think that one week isn't enough for your body to stop wanting it. Eu... so you know, one month, like I did two month, but one month I think is enough.

To come back to those two months that you stop, didn't you also eat outside? Like going out for dinner? Oww yeah yeah of course, if I went to a restaurant like I didn't care. But what I did was, like the thing that was the hardest when I made a salads, and I had like mozzarella, tomato and stuff and I couldn't put salt in it. Cause it didn't taste like anything in the beginning. It really enjoyed me, but now I eat it without anyways and it is nice.

What kind of salt do you use then? Eu.. well I use, eu.. John salt?

Is it with iodine? Yeah exactly yeah. eu... so I use than when I just cook like eu.. pasta. But when I, like on the table I will have the fling salt, which is like the sea salt that is in big crystals, eu.. I think that tastes really good, haha.

Why do you think that tastes good? Eumm.. I think it, maybe it's because you get like a chunk of salt, that it tastes nice to get that. But I wouldn't want all of my food to taste that that salty. It is just nice that sometimes you get that different, extra. But I wouldn't want all my food to be super salty, it is just not nice.

And do you think that, besides that it is like a big chunk, that it really tastes different as well? Yeah well maybe. Could be, I am not sure, I haven't really, you know, put them next to each other and mmm (tasted).

But you always used the one with iodine in the cooking and never the one with sea salt? No, because the one with sea salt is expensive. So I don't use it when I cook. Except if I it on potatoes in the oven, than I'd use that, because it nice to get the crystals on top.

Ok, but you have it on the table when there are guests there, is it also different like, would you rather have the 'nice' salt on the table than the John salt? Yeah, true but I also like that nice salt more, so it is not only for guest, it is also for myself.

Do you always buy the same salt? Yes.

Ok, and where do you buy it? I go shopping at ICA.

And do you approximately how many times a year you buy salt? No... it is really hard to say, because the first year that I lived here, eu.. I lived in a corridor and then I never bought salt, it was just from the corridor. And then now, than I lived together with my boyfriend for half a year and then we use the salt together. And I think that that box that we bought together, I still have it. Eu.. so.. it's a year now and maybe half of the box, (Shows size) how much salt is that... So not that much actually.

When you are in the ICA, it is maybe difficult to think of it now, but try to imagine you are in front of the salt shelf, what things play a role in you decision making. There's lots of things, for example, does price play a role and why? Yes, the price because I don't really have the money to spent on something as simple as salt, but at the same time, I do buy, I think it might even be the most expensive salt that they have (the sea salt?) Yeah, cause it is not just sea salt. It is like a special box that I have, like we had it at home. You know, and then I just kept buying it. so yeah.. and yeah I like that one so.. ha.

That salt that you had before at your parents, why especially that salt? I don't know, I think my mum just liked it, eumm.. like we always had it, as long I can remember really. And eu.. It might have been just out of change that we started buying it, I don't know.

Why did you keep buying it? Well the sea salt, because I like the taste, but the normal like the normal salt for in pasta's I don't care, at all. about this. Eumm. So yeah.

Is that then the cheapest one you buy, the normal salt? Maybe I would not buy... if they have a ICA Basic or Willies Basic or whatever there called. Maybe I wouldn't buy that one.

Why not? I don't know. I don't know...

So brand does play a role as well? It does, I don't know why, but I just feel like, if it is super cheap than it is not done in a good way, kind of a thing. I don't know I just feels like that.

Do you also think that packaging influences your choice? Yes it does. Eu. If I, like, in the way and how to use it, it is important. Like I need the sprinkler thing on it, already, so I don't have to put it in a sprinkler myself. Eu... so like these plastic containers with the wholes is good. haha yeah.

Is it also because, I don't want to make assumptions, but if there is a really pretty package or something that attracts you does that also work for salt? Yeah could be. Well, yes, kind of. I think the sea salt has a pretty package. So maybe that one.. eu.. I don't think I would care so much about the normal cooking salt,... no. And I don't really know how, I've never seen a pretty salt bucket, so. I don't know.

But why does it differ for you than the package of the normal salt and the sea salt? Because the normal salt I just use it for basic boring things, the sea salt I use when I want it to be extra special. You know, I put it on top my food, I like to see it.

But then the package itself also matters? No... but it just feels like if the package looks pretty, the salt is pretty.

Ok. When I get it right, you never put the normal salt on the table? Exactly.

So the packaging doesn't play a role? That's true, but the thing is, I actually have a special little bucket for salt on the table, haha. And it is a very nice little thing.

Does like media play a role, like TV commercials or internet sites or blogs? No.... I don't think so.

And governments, does the government influence your choice of salt? I don't know. I have never really thought of it, so no I am not aware off. Eu.. I guess.... Eu.. I guess if you see salt in, on commercials and on TV, than you would start buying that one. I never really thought of it like that..

So you can't remember a salt commercial that really influenced your choice? No, I don't.

And if you see media as like someone has a blog online and is talking about healthy or

nice food, and you have to add so much salt or this brand of salt, would that influence you?

Eu... I don't know if that has, but, there is something like kosher salt, that has influenced me, to use that. Eu.. Because I have read a couple of recipes and stuff that, were you were supposed to use that, so I bought it. And but not a special salt, or brand of salt..

And do you taste the difference between the salt? No. I don't think so.

And why did the blog, like the recipe influence you to buy a different type of salt? I don't..

Cause I don't know what kosher salt is. And I thought maybe it was something special. And you had to have it. I actually still don't know what kosher salt is. So it is like.. you know, I don't know what they've done.

So you have three types of salt, like the normal iodine salt, the sea salt and the kosher salt?

Yeah, but the kosher salt, I only used it once.

So you still have it..? I still have it, yeah.

But you don't use it anymore? No, cause I thought there was something special with it, I don't know....

But why won't you use it now any more then? You would only use it for special things then?

Yeah... because, it thought there was something different with it, and I don't wanna use it in normal food, if it was gonna do something weird to it. I don't know...

But than you would see, if I can put it in other words, the blogs a bit of experts, because you won't use it differently because you are not sure what to do with it, so the blog people do..?

Well, yeah.

Ok, and the government? They have a lot of campaigns going on about, that people are eating too much salt. And that people are using more than the advised amount of 6,5 grams and that there is a lot of salt in processed foods.

Ow ok, yeah I have definitely heard people talking about that, like the eu.. you know. I mean in all the ready meals that you buy and like McDonalds and stuff it would be a lot of salt.

But how did you noticed this, was it the government?

Well maybe not the government... I don't know, I guess I've read it on blogs and stuff. And eu.. also I think my mum talked about it a lot, cause she is very interested in eu.. like healthy foods and stuff. And maybe in biology class, we learned about it, that.. too much salt wasn't good for you and then we learned why.. yeah.

OK, makes sense. And if you have those three now, can you order them in most influencing you and least influencing you?

My family, most influencing me... and my ex... yeah I guess I would put him into family thing, like family and friends would influence me the most. And then eum,, like, I don't know....

Can you also make a distinction between family and friends? Because maybe you have a group of girlfriends here that say something in another way than your family, which one would you choose? Yeah ok, I would choose my family than I think. Eu.. because I feel like my mum she cares to much to say something bad. Yeah I don't know, but it is also at the same time, if, if I have decided that eu... that.. Cause that is something we talk about a lot, it is not about salt but it's about olive oil. I don't think that it is good to eat too much olive oil when you fry things, eu... but my mom uses it a lot and I try to convince her that it is bad, so... there is an example that media has gone past family so. You know it is hard, it depends, I guess my family has influenced me the most from the beginning and then right now, I am being influenced by media and... Eu friends more.

And do you also have someone who you aspire, like, you would like to be like that..... a model, or your mum or a friend? If you don't have it, you don't have it... Well no, I don't really have it. Like of course if I hear about a friend that is being healthy or trying out a new thing or something like that, I want to try it as well, eu.. To see if it works or you know. I tried detoxing for a while, all these things, just to see. Eu... yeah. Does that answer to your question?

Yeah definitely. Well eu.. Clearly the health trends has influenced your decision making process. Yes.

But, did it influence your decision making process more than the food trend? Eu... What do you mean with food trend... is it like..

Well the food trend is like fine eating, people want to eat really nice food, they want to eat organically and from cows who lived nearby and all those kind of things. It could be going out dinning at an expensive restaurant, but also the best restaurant in Lund although it is cheap, and people want to cook nice food themselves... Well... I definitely think that both of them influence me.. But I think eum.. Like the health.. Well it hard. I guess like the health trend definitely influences me. Eu.. Because I want to be healthy and I want to live long and stuff. But like the food trend... Yeah mean I would eat unhealthy food if it is trendy I guess. Rather than, just skipping it. But like, yeah.. It is hard because... for me the food and the health trend are so connected. You don't want to eat processed food, you want to make it yourself because it is nicer, but also healthier. So it is hard to see which one influences me the most.. Both I guess.

Does the place in the store influence you, if you go and buy salt? Yeah I think if it is there, it is the best for me. (Description of there: 20 centimetres under my eyes) That is because I will walk around the store and walk around like this (looking down a bit) and then I look up, I don't look up all the way I look just like, you now.. there (just a little bit). I don't' want to go down to the bottom and get something, and I don't want to go to the top and get something. I just want it in the area where my eyes fall naturally. Yeah.

Why changed a lot in your salt behaviour, maybe we can go a little bit deeper in that, like before and after. Yeah.. well.. why I did it?

Well was there one point in time where you said like Ok, now this has to change..? Yes there was.

And what kind of moment was that? Well eu.. I guess it was... you know when I started feeling like, 'O, I have gained ten kilos since I have moved to Sweden' and I... I want to be healthy and start doing sports and then salt was just one of those things that I could take away for my diet. Like I kind of had a eu.. instead of taking away all the.. all pizza and ice cream and stuff, I wanted to take away like I, I didn't need o much candy and I stopped eating so much salt and these things. And then when I realized that that was good and working for me, I decided that I wanted to go two months without salt, to make sure that I would stop being addicted to it. And I did the same with sugar as well...

And why did you change it, did someone suggested it or did you come up with it yourself or...? Well the fact that I wanted to do two months I came up with it myself, but eu.. I guess that my boyfriend he eu.. the fact that he was encouraging definitely influenced me. Because eu.. you know you get that extra feeling from it.

But, not using salt for two months is a pretty drastic decision, did you read it somewhere that it worked or did someone advice you to do it? I guess, I kind of just understood that if I would go two months without it I would be good. Like I smoked before and then after you know a couple of months of not smoking eu.. I didn't feel like smoking anymore. So then...

So that triggered you that you could also skip on other stuff... Yeah yeah, exactly, definitely. Cause addiction is something that you can just, you know, take away and stuff.. and I think it is good to do it. That's why I don't drink coffee, I don't want to get addicted to that, because I don't like addictions.

Why are you so against addictions? I guess it is because I don't want... like if I can't get it, I don't want to feel bad about it. Like, you know, people that really need coffee, they can't wake up without coffee anymore. People that really like salt they can't eat a salad without crunchy salt, you know.

I don't want to be a psychologist, but does that also mean that you want to be in control of yourself? Yeah, exactly, differently. Eu... yeah but just, that I'm the boss of myself it is not just my, my eu hormones or my emotions that do it.

And does that come from somewhere or is it more a personality thing?.... Eu... that is a really though one... well if we are gonna go that deep... eu...

If it is to personal you don't have to answer it. No, no it's fine. eu.. like my mum she never worked and stuff and then dad left her. And then she had to stand up on her two legs and blabla. And eu.. I guess that does a lot that she, she was completely dependent on him.. eu.. and then it is kind of triggered that you have to be able to stand on your own legs, you shouldn't be dependent on anyone or anything. (ok) Yeah.. maybe it was that. And eu.. well also one of my exes, he was very into mind control things.. so maybe that has also influenced. It was like controlling his own mind, not other people's minds, so it is ok. No he wanted to be able to, do everything with his mind and stuff. Maybe that is why as well...

But that inspired you or....? Maybe... I am just trying to think of why things inspired me... could be like a deep down, what is it called, subconscious thing that is happening.

And now.. you want to change it even more, would you like to reduce salt even more or are you happy with it now? Yes I would like to reduce it more, because right now, since I moved in with my brother and his girlfriend, I have started eu.. eating salt more again. So I would like to reduce it again. Because I realized, eu... like actually yesterday when I was eating, when I did this garlic butter thing, and I put so much salt and it is just like..... it tasted really good but yeah.. I felt bad about it. So eu.. you could actually see the crystals inside the butter. Eu.. and that felt bad.. that I went back to, that I, I was good and then I was like perfect and then, you know I go to good again.

So you don't see it like as a, some kind of diet you see it like a real lifestyle. Yeah, yeah definitely. Cause it's, I think it is important that I do this all my live, and not just for a bit and then you know.. Ow now I am good I can start eating salt again. I see it as a... yeah as a lifestyle for sure.

And you said you liked it again now.... Yeah..

So would you like stop eating it for a while again, or..? No I just try reduce it again, cause I am not addicted to it yet.

But what is the difference then between liking it and addicted to you? Addicted is that I don't like food that hasn't got salt on it. That I think, 'O this doesn't taste good at all'. And then when I put salt I think it is amazing. That's addicted. Liking is just, this tastes really nice, this tastes a bit nicer.

Interview with Olivier

Olivier has both the French and Swedish nationalities and was interviewed on 29-04-2014 at 4.00 pm.

Do you cook? Yes.

How often do you cook a week? Depends, I guess what you mean by cooking, if you mean like preparing... **Yes, preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner.** Ah ok. Well, every morning I have breakfast. It's usually bread, yoghurt, cereal and milk, but always bread. Lunch... it depends, now I sometimes I prepare something in the evening that I take with me, but otherwise I buy a sandwich, or something at a cafeteria, or something close. **Why?** Because it's practical for me. And... in the evening, I cook, every evening pretty much.

And do you cook alone? It depends, but mostly yes, I cook for myself. I live in a kitchen with other people, so we are cooking at the same time, but we usually cook for each other, like alone.

But never like altogether? Well sometimes, when I have friends coming over, but otherwise usually no.

Where do you buy your food? ICA

How many times a week? Ooh, quite often, because I live very close and it's on the way to school, so I think, I'm stopping there on average, twice a day, because it's very convenient, I don't need to buy too many things at once, so on the way, I just grab, bread or milk or something like that, it's usually very small.

What kind of cuisines styles do you cook? For example Chinese or French. I would say mostly European, like Italian food, if you can call it that, because pasta it's quite easy to do, and pizza sometimes, you know the pizza that you can do yourself. And also Indian food sometimes with rice and chicken, curry. And Swedish also, meatballs, pittypanna or a salad or something.

Has your style of cooking changed over the years? Yes, especially when I started studying, I didn't know really how to cook, so it was kind of ready-made meals, like pizza or ravioli or some basic stuff for example: warm sandwiches, not very healthy or not very well cooked.

But it was enough for the evening? Yeah, it was usually enough and I was often living with roommates, so the first year I lived with another guy and we were not very keen on cooking and over the years you learn, because you go and cook with friends and you improve your skills.

So now you really have learned some skills? Aah well, some yes, I am not really an expert and usually I don't have so much time.. so it's still quite simple things.

And are you aware of the health trend at the moment? Yes.

And what does for you the health trend mean? What I've seen is the way, what people eat nowadays it's maybe more, like for example salads, vegetables, are more cooked, at least for students, I think, compared to a maybe couple of years ago where people eating were eating a lot of ready-made meals, now everybody cooks a bit, I think and I've noticed it myself as well, I'm maybe buying more salad than I used to in the beginning and try to eat a bit more healthy.

Are you also aware of the food trend? Yes. What does it mean for you? Yeah I mean, because it is not the same in every country, for example where I live, I'm living with different nationalities and people still cook a bit local, for example, I have an Indian guy who living in my house, he still eats rice for breakfast for breakfast. So you can still see the way Swedish cook, it's a lot of Swedish food, I would say, but I think every nationality is maybe being a bit more careful, I don't know, that's the impression I have. Maybe, it's only a small selection of the population.

We thought more about the food trend that people are eating more organic food for example and like fine eating in restaurants. Are you aware of this trend as well? Yeah, people definitely spend more time cooking, and it is something I like and maybe in France it's always been normal to cook a lot. But maybe in other countries, it wasn't so normal and it's something that people are trying to change, that they are inviting friends over for dinner and spend more time cooking.

Now over to cooking salt. How do you use cooking salt? I think I use it well not for breakfast usually, but for other meals, I usually use it, when I put salt in the water for cooking pasta and some oil as well. And of course, depending on what I eat, I usually have bit of salt, but I always try to avoid putting salt in my food, before I have actually tasted it first, because I think it's a little bit dangerous.

So you're cooking, you're mostly not adding salt? It depends, while I'm cooking, I'm adding salt for some stuff, yes, but I'm trying to be reasonable, and then I taste it again and if it's missing I put some more, but... and I'm trying for example, if I buy you know ready-made meals, a dish for in the oven for example, to not put salt on that. Because I think, it's usually very salted for good conserving of the food.

Then separately, if you have breakfast/lunch/dinner, you don't add salt then? No, because usually I eat more, I eat bread with just butter and ham for example, or something sweet, so I don't add any salt there. But the two other, yes.

But for the dinner, does it depend, the amount of salt you use? Hmm, yeah, it can depend, sometimes if you cook badly, putting a bit more salt can make it taste a bit better, but I guess it also depends, some meals you don't put any salt, others you put more salad on and I mean, if have a salad, you put more salt on it, but if you have meat with some potatoes, yes I would put salt on it.

Have you been made aware of your personal salt use by someone else for example? Yeah, because my grandfather, he was told by the doctor not to use salt anymore, nearly no salt at all for his blood pressure and I remember that, because he complained a lot about that. And he said that: 'Aah that food, it doesn't taste like anything and I'm really missing it.' And at the beginning, I thought he is over exaggerating and I tried myself without salt and then you really feel the difference. It's something you put automatically on food sometimes and you don't realize a lot. I started to think more about how much salt we have in our food.

Do you personally use much salt? I don't think that I use too much salt, but it is hard to tell, because now I am using the salt with other people in my house. So I can't be precise in how much salt I have used the last time.

But do you get remarks from other people on your salt use? No, I have never had that, I've seen that on other people, and I don't like for example when people don't even taste the food and put salt on it straight away. I think that's really bad and you know, I've been raised like you first taste the food and if you need salt or pepper, you put it on there, after you've tasted it. It's sad to put salt on there and then you realize it's always salty, so you don't taste anything anymore.

Do you also change your salt use when cooking with others? I don't know, I've never really thought about it, maybe I ask sometimes is it okay if I put salt in the food, because I know that some people don't like it for example and I try to take that into consideration. I don't know, I don't put too much salt in the food, so I never really think of asking, but maybe I should.

Do you would see it as a bad thing if someone would say that you use too much salt? No, I mean, it is a taste thing, I never had that. I would be honest, sorry. That's also why I try not to put too much salt in there, because else people don't taste the food anymore and can change anything anymore about that.

How many times a year do you buy the cooking salt? I would say, I usually I would say, I would buy one, in Sweden it is one of those big ones a year of 300 gram.

What kind of salt are you using? Regular salt I would say, it is nothing special. The ones with the orange top, classic salt. It's iodized salt.

So you bought this one yourself? Yes the last time that I had to buy salt for my house, I bought that one.

Is it the same salt that you have used when you were living with your parents? No, it's a bit different, at home we have two types of salt, my Mom uses sea salt for the cooking, when doing pasta or when you need to salt meat for example. And then on the table we have we have a more normal salt in a grinder, but it is a better quality salt in the grinder. It's still real French sea salt: Salt

de Garant, because we went there on a holiday and she bought a lot there and the one she uses for the cooking, it's still a bit brown and a lesser quality I think, but she only uses that one for cooking.

But you haven't bought it afterwards, after you went out of home? Some, because I went on holiday with my parents in Garant and we tried the salt there. No, actually it's Marmoutier, it's a place in France, where they do salt as well, in that place my mom bought a lot and I took some at home, but otherwise because there was already salt when I came to my house in Sweden. But I think that is something I would buy actually.

And do you also taste the difference? I think it's easier for the cooking, because it's always hard to tell in those boxes if you pour it if it is a lot or not and I like the feeling when you take the salt. You really feel it then, you put a little and I think it's easier to balance the quantity.

So that's also the real reason for you buying the sea salt? When you taste it as well, the salt from Marmoutier or Garant, when you put a finger in the salt and you lick your finger, you still taste it, it still tastes different, it tastes a bit better. It's one reason, but the main reason is that I like the feeling that you can control the quantity a bit better.

You said that your mother uses sea salt for cooking, does it taste different for you? I think it's the price first of all and if you taste it, the taste is a bit finer with the real more high-end salt and the colour as well, because the other one is a bit, is not pure white and think lots of people think that salt has to be really white, then it's really good, so I think that's why.

So why do you think it is, that your mother puts the white one on the table? First because I think it tastes a bit better and also for the colour reason, when you have guests and so on, it is a bit weird to have like another type of salt, so she prefers to have this more traditional white salt on the table.

But in cooking it doesn't matter? In cooking maybe less, because it's less about presentation, it usually disappears in the water or you mix it with the meat.

When you go to the supermarket to buy salt, please imagine, what influences you there? For example which height of the product placement? Yeah, I think, the height, the location of the shelf, play a role, but most important, I think the brand, because I know for example in France, there's one brand I really know, in Sweden there's once as well, so that would help me to locate, first where salt is and then based on that brand, I would look around what other brands there exists and how they are different and then I guess it's mostly the size of the box for me. Because I don't want to buy a kilo or half a kilo of salt, if it's only for myself, so that plays a role and then I think I would go maybe for a brand that I know.

Rather than the price? I think when I buy salt, I don't see it as a very expensive thing to buy and it's something I buy once a year, so I don't think I'm too sensible for the price, unless one is like

twice the price and then I would think about it, but otherwise, I don't think it's gonna be the first thing I look at.

So does brand play an important role for you? No, the brand is not that important for me, haha, when I buy salt, because I'm a sensitive guy don't worry.

And what about the packaging? Packaging would be important as well, because I have bad experiences with packaging made out of cardboard, especially because when it's humid for example, yeah if for example typically in student houses, you have insects that come and then they can get in. **Really?** Yes, here in Lund there's small insects that eat the bread, if you leave it open for two weeks. And we still have a very clean corridor, so... it happens everywhere apparently. So I guess you have a better feeling of freshness of reservation in a way, especially salt, because you can feel straight away if it's a bit humid it doesn't flow as well as when it's dry, so packaging is actually a good point, but I wouldn't think of it automatically, I think I would buy automatically something with harder packaging, so no cardboard anymore.. but then the shape, maybe round makes it a bit easier to get a grasp. Or glass for the grinders, but if I buy classic food, I don't need it to be transparent, because I know how the salt looks like inside.

What about media, do they play a role when you buy salt, maybe commercials or internet or blogs? I think I have never seen any advertisements on salt, I think, not something that caught my attention, I think maybe it is off topic for the question, but what influences me more is what my parents buy. I think that is the main thing that would influence me. I don't know, for example in France, it's very famous, it's called "Salle de la Baleine", so the whale-salt and the logo is really famous and everybody buys it. If I'm in France and I buy salt, it buy this brand. I don't know where it's coming from, it's maybe because we always had that at home.

And you use this salt for cooking (for pasta for example)? Yeah, it's like the salt I use here, for every day, it's a normal, regular salt that you can use for cooking. And I think my grandmother has this one as well, she has maybe influenced me, everybody basically, wherever I go, my family, basically everyone I lived with has this sold.

So you would say it's not so much the brand as it is the family kind of product? Maybe, it is yeah, the brand, but it is more the association that I have with the brand and the experience of being with the family and seeing it every day on the table.

Why is that for you so important? I don't know, I think it's not easy, because salt you maybe buy it once a year, so you don't really want to test things, while I don't know. For example when I buy yoghurt and there is a new taste, I would maybe try the new taste, because I know I can come back to the other one, I buy yoghurt every week, so that's no problem, but salt... I buy it once a year and I don't want to spend too much time thinking or testing, so I go with that, because I know what it is, I've used it all my life and I'm happy with it, so I don't see any reason why to change or spend much more time on it than choosing something else.

Does also government information, like labelling on packaging influences you? I remember the packaging, because as a kid we had this salt on the table the whole time, so you know as a kid you read what is on the package and you remember they had added fluor in the salt. And I remember that because my Swedish grandmother told me when they were kids they got a tablet, because they didn't add that in the salt, that's why the government apparently to add salt, I don't know, if that's true, but that's what I've heard and that's the only thing I noticed from the packaging. I don't know if have seen eco-salt for example, I don't know if that exists.

Has the type of salt you are buying changed? No, I usually go for, classic salt, that you, you know fine salt that you can use for cooking or for food, for me it's no problem. Sea salt sometimes, because my mom gave it to me or when I am home, I have that, but otherwise.

So you wouldn't buy that sea salt yourself? I would buy it, as I said, but for the moment, it is more that I'm sharing with everybody, but maybe later on, I think I would definitely buy it then and my mom tried.. you know she had a period with different salts, she bought salt from the Himalaya, because she read about it in an article and it's fun, because the salt is pink, so that was kind of funny. But apart from that, I never tried any different salts.

Would you buy that pink salt yourself as well? Yeah, to make it a fun thing. **Yeah okay.** I can't remember, I tasted it, but it didn't shock me as being completely different, the only thing that is really shocking is the pink and I think it would be fun, if you have friends or people visiting you and they are trying the salt and they it's pink, just to see how they react. **Yeah.** But maybe it's dangerous, people are using more salt then, just they want to see the pink. Yeah, that actually happens, because my parents they got as a present a grinder, an electric grinder by Peugeot and it's a grinder where you press a button and then it grains and you have a little light that shows how you salt. We have gotten it as a present and used it and it was really funny at the beginning: you press, it makes the noise, you see the light and in a way it's good then you really see how much salt you put, but the problem with it was my younger brother, who is two years younger, he used it a lot and put a lot of salt on the food.

So has the health trend also influenced the decision making process for using salt? If anything, maybe I use a bit less than I used a couple of years ago, I don't if it is because of my taste changed or because of this healthy trend, but I think, the healthy trend, because I realized I started using less, when my grandfather for example had to use less and I realised, maybe I should be more careful in a way.

Did the food trend also influence your use of salt? I don't think so, it depends on what you cook, but I don't think that changes my food choice.

Do you think you should use less salt? I don't know what is the recommended quantity but I think technically I don't use too much salt myself, but maybe there's already a lot of salt in the products we use and I think that is the bigger danger: more than people putting too much salt on it's eating too salty products or having too much salt already in the prepared food, for example

deep freeze pizza has a lot of salt in it. But yeah, maybe we should be a bit more careful, I guess, you can always improve.

Does that also counts for you, are going to use less salt? Yeah, I think should use less salt. As I said, I don't think I use too much salt, at the same time it is really good, it brings out flavours, I can't imagine myself not using it, especially for certain dishes.

Is it right, when I say that family influences your salt use, but also the health trend? And if you have to prioritize those, which would be like the first thing? While the family influences you, but they influence me also in a healthy way, because you always have you parents who are telling you when you grow up don't put too much salt, or my grandfather directly influences me, but also a health aspect that influences me, because he is sick and he has his problem and can't use salt and you start thinking, maybe I should already now start less using salt. Both the family and the health aspect.

But do you see them as experts then? Not on the health aspect. My family I don't see them as experts on salt for example. My mom is enthusiast about all sorts of salt, because she went visit those "salt farms", so where they collect the sea salt, so she's interested in to that. She likes to bring the salt home to give away as a present, but it's more of a fun, trendy thing, then the healthy aspect. She sees salt as something fun to bring into the kitchen, I guess.

Is there maybe also someone who influences the way you cook or use salt? No, I don't look at media, to choose the way I cook.

You said your mom uses salt to bring more fun in the kitchen. Are you going to do the same thing? No, as I said, but I can see myself having two types of salt in my kitchen. But that salt type is a nice way that makes it a bit different.

Why do you think it becomes different? Because you have the feeling that you're using two different kinds of ingredients when you're cooking, I don't think it changes anything to the taste. It could be fun to have for example pink salt, it's maybe not a conversation start, but it's a bit different, it's one way to make a conversation start indirectly. Or that salt grinder I talked about, that is something people remember, so maybe it's the way you cook, sea salt that you can really touch..

And why are those things important to you? Because I think that's important to me when it comes to cooking, I'm more of classic person when it comes to like traditional meals, than doing fusing cook, where you mix sweet and salt.

And we also talked about the amount of salt you use, do you compare your salt use with others? Now that you ask me and I've thought about it, but indirectly, that's something that you notice when people are sitting at a table, you see some people that go straight away for the salt, so that's the kind of thing you notice, but I wouldn't say it makes me better or worse than another

person. But I guess it's coming mostly from the way you've been educated and the way your parents have raised you. For example, when you have had a lot of ready-made meals when you were young, you adapt to the salty taste of it, but if someone cooks at home and you're used to home cooked meals, then I guess, maybe you taste more nuance in the food and you don't need that much salt to fill or cover the taste of food. **Okay.**

And the way you're educated, what does that mean for you? When I lived in England, I've noticed that people use a lot more salt, but at the same time, people use less at home, they buy more ready-made meals. That is of course changing, you asked already about the food trend, but they use, it's quite normal in English families to go buy ready-made lasagne at Tesco for example, whereas in France, Sweden or in another country, you would do it yourself. I think it's also a bit of social class, if you go a lot to MacDonald's, it's very salty food and then you get used to the salty taste and salty food reminds you of the food of the MacDonald's. So regional and social class have to do with it as well.

Do you think will influence you in the future as well? No, I think they already had a big influence, that is something that stayed, but maybe I will have someone else that influences me. Someone that can explain it to me, all the dangers of having too much salt, or why I should use this type of salt instead of this one, yeah I would be listening and maybe changing then.

Who should do that, an expert or someone that inspires you? Either an expert or someone that I trust. Maybe a girlfriend or someone like that. Someone that has a valuable opinion and that I listen to, but if someone randomly, so a person that I've never met before starts explaining, I wouldn't directly get inspired. For example a doctor or is a chef, then I listen.

What influences you the most when you want to use salt? How I use salt, it is family and the health aspect and when I buy sold, it's what I bought before, so the past experience influences me and in that regard family, but also personal experience, like I said that cardboard package experience. The brand would come after that, because it makes it easier to make a choice of a product I only buy once a year, so I don't want to spend too much, I don't want to spend 10 minutes in front the salt self. After that comes the price, to compare the price differences of the salt.

Interview with Willem

Willem has both the Dutch and German nationalities and was interviewed on 29-04-2014 at 12.30 pm.

Do you cook? Yes, I do.

And how often a week do you cook? I think 3/4 times a week I cook and the other days my wife cooks.

What are most of the days of the week? At least 2 of the days I do and the other days I cook together with my wife.

Do you cook for more people? Not very often. I think my wife normally does the cooking if we have more than one guest. **Okay.**

But you do cook for her when you cook? Yes. **Okay. So for the two of you.** Yes.

And do you buy your own food? Yes, I do.

Are you the only person that buys food in the household? No, that depends on who is home, but I think I do the most of the shopping. **Okay.**

How often a week is that then? Like twice a week I do the large amount of groceries and then the smaller like specialized shops I do that whenever I have time, I think in total I do it over 4 different days.

Can you explain a bit what you mean with specialized stores then? The butchers, special green grocers, a Chinese store, a Moroccan store, those kind of stores, biological stores also.

What kind of cuisine styles do you cook (French, Chinese, Italian etc.) ? I tend towards Asian style cooking, so Chinese, Indonesian, Korean cooking and I also do some French style cooking, but I think my wife is better at that, so I let her do that.

Do you cook a different kind of cuisine than your wife? Yes, I like to use the wok more, because I'm a very impatient cook, so I like large amount of heat where I quickly cook and the wok is perfect for that. And I like to do everything by simple recipes and at least Chinese cuisine is really helps me out with that. Whereas my wife for instance does a lot longer recipes of the Italian and French style and you need to have patience, cook slow and I a lot more time for pursuing stuff, where I don't have that patience.

And why don't you have that patience, like why do you want to cook easy? It's not that I want to cook easy, but it's just that I don't want to have too much bother with timing like how long the meat has to go, I just like to cook it quickly without thinking too much about it. **Okay.**

Why do you like that? Because when I cook I tend to lose sight of it, so I just like to throw everything in a pan and then I hope it gets out the way I want it. **Okay.**

Has your style of cooking changed over the years? (If yes, why, and how) Yes, I'd like to think that I have gotten better at thinking out of the box and just doing stuff by myself, I just to do everything by the recipe and the longer I cook I think that my ability to you know add my own stuff to a recipe, tweak it, my intuition, has gotten better, that is what I wanted to say. **Okay.**

But does it change the style of cuisine you cook or is it more that you now add things yourself that are not in the recipe? I don't think it changes the cuisine that I choose to cook. **Okay.**

Now some more questions towards health, we are actually curious if you're aware of the big health trend that we see around us at the moment? If yes, what does this trend exactly mean for you? What do you think that it contains? Healthy food or the trend itself? **The trend itself.** I think it's big business nowadays., because you see a lot of biological stores popping up, you see the Food trends, where one trend says 'don't eat any bread', the other says 'eat the bread with this special kind of grain, for instance now in Holland, there is actually a gigantic shortage of that kind of grain. So the popularity is definitely growing. I don't think that a lot of trends surpass each other, which means that everything gets hyped very quickly and dies a quick trend again.

Okay. So you don't think that the health trend will stay for a long time? Oh, I do, but I don't think there's one health trend. There's not one certain kind of product that you really should use, but I think that everybody will come up with newer, more healthy stuff and the other products will disappear. **Okay, that's clear.**

And you think that the health trend mainly relates to food or also to other things? Nowadays it's mainly related to consumer products and I guesses mostly food, because I think that's the easiest way for people to make an impact on their lives, without, you know, doing too much physical stuff, like a different way of walking as a training, stuff like that, I mean, you cook the stuff the same way, you just use better products. Does that answer your question? **Yes, that does, thank you.**

And the same goes for a large food and fine eating trend, where people really pick their food carefully, it is a bit connected the health trend, but then health is not that important, but more the special type of food. Do you see that as well? I see that actually in restaurants, yeah, for instance, visiting a friend, and we saw that there were a lot of new smaller restaurants, that just really specialized in once specific thing and then fused it a lot with different cuisines. I think, especially the bigger Scandinavian cities, are frontrunners in that trend.

Do you also see that in consumer's own kitchen, or only in restaurants? Well, I do see, more specific for instance, mixes of spices, for the rest, not really. **Okay.**

Then we go on with more specific questions on cooking with salt. Do you use cooking salt in your daily life? Normal cooking salt? **It can be the whole range actually, so it can be table salt, sea salt, kosher salt etc.** Yes. **And how do you use it?** Well, besides actually the salt that is just in pre-packaged bread, but I mean when I cook, I have a lot of recipes that contain salt. And different kinds of salt actually. **Okay.**

Well, let's go into the recipes first then. Can you describe it where you use salt a bit more and where a bit less? Okay, yes I think in the European recipes that I use, there's more salt in there then for example in Asian recipes and I think that's because in Asian recipes you use a lot of soy sauce or other soy kind of liquids that contain a lot of salt already. And do you also want to know when I use salt in a recipe? Or?

Well, in what different kind of meals you use salt? And if it's different for example breakfast, lunch or dinner. Okay, only if I have like hard-boiled egg I might use salt, like loose salt, for breakfast, otherwise I wouldn't use it or like for American pancakes, but other than that, I don't use it for breakfast and not really for lunch either. So it's mostly dinner.

So why don't use it for those two dishes? Because I mainly eat bread for breakfast and for lunch like salads or bread and don't use any salts for those either. **Okay.**

Is there a reason behind it or is it taste? It's taste, yeah.

So you like the taste without salt better? Yes, well, for instance, I couldn't imagine any kinds of bread where you put spread on and salt for instance. So salt doesn't go with bread for me. Salads, well maybe very specific salads salt would be very nice. But not in the salads that I would make. I just mix, whatever I see in the fridge and create my own dressing.

So you use it for the dinner then? Yes.

And it depends on dishes you just said? Yeah.

How does it depend then? First of all, as I already told you, I like to cook by recipe, or recipe as a basis for my cooking and I see this answer goes also to trends already of cooking, I see that the European dishes I cook, the amount of salt is never that much, but they need very specific kinds of salts. But I think on an average, I use a teaspoon of salt or something for a dish.

And why do you like to cook by recipe? Because I have to do everything out of my head, I'm pretty sure, that it wouldn't taste very well. For instance my wife is very talented in cooking and she had a lot of experience with it as well and she can just mix stuff and create her own dishes and it actually tastes nice. If I would do that, I'm pretty sure we wouldn't have any guests after a while. **Okay. But she is still there?** She is still there. **Well then you must do something good.** That's mainly because I use the recipe just a bit.

You said you used a lot of different kinds of salt. Which types of salt do you use? We have Kosher salt, we have the standard iodized salt, we have two different kinds of sea salt and we have two other different salt, they are called black salts: one is volcano salt, from Hawaii I think and the other one is mined salt from a coal mine in Germany. The last ones are both black salts. **Okay.**

And why do you have so many different types? Well, there is a big difference in taste between iodized salt and sea salt for instance. And the Hawaiian salt has a more grainy kind of taste and the black mined German salt for instance I mostly use those salts where I can actually see the salts on top, so where it doesn't have to, doesn't really mingle in the food, because it has a nice look. **Okay.**

And is it the structure in the mouth that makes it a different taste or does it really have a different taste? For instance the sea salt compared to all other salts, you can really taste the difference.

What is so different about it then for you? Well, it's not the structure in your mouth, because it dissolves already, it has a fuller taste, if that makes any sense. **Yeah.** It tastes fuller than compared to iodized salt.

Is it saltier taste than as well? Yes, definitely, it's far more powerful, yeah. **Okay.** And with other, like the Hawaiian salt, it has a very specific, more like a grainy taste and if it didn't dissolve already, you can definitely feel the different structure in your mouth as well. **Okay.**

And where do you use those different kinds of salts for? Well, the German salt, I like to use it on top of stuff when it's almost already finished, like for drinks, when you put it around the top of the glass for instance, because of the looks. The French sea salt, I mostly use it in French cuisine, Italian cuisine, well not all of the Italian cuisine, if you bake in Italian things, you shouldn't use the sea salts, because it doesn't dissolve very well in the dough.

So do you use the other French sea salt in other dishes than the first French sea salt you talked about? Yes, the other French sea salt, that one my wife mostly uses, I think she uses that more also for like Mexican food and hotter food, so for spicier food.

So you have your own favourites, you both in the household? Yeah, but I think that is more related to the dishes we make than to the salt, while I mean, if would taste all the salts, I think the French sea salts would be favourite kind of salt, because it just has the fullest salty taste, otherwise it would be related to dishes.

And has you use of salt increased or decreased over the years? I think has increased because I come from a family where salt is almost a curse word in the kitchen. Also because there is high blood pressure in the family. **Okay.** So I think mostly people would use, or add salt to their food afterwards, like when it's on the table, so it definitely has increased, because we have already used

a lot of salt, not a lot, but like more salt than we used to do back then when I was living with my parents during that time.

Has that style of cooking of your parents influenced your own style in the use of salt? I think started out, I was very cautious with salt, but then I learned what it does with the salt, what kind of taste it adds or can add and since then I pretty much, I dropped the no-salt-during-cooking idea, I just started using it again.

So taste is very important for you? Yeah, definitely.

And are afraid of your health? Not afraid, but I do watch what I eat, mostly, yes.

Can you explain what you mean with that? For instance, I don't go to MacDonald's or eat that kind of food, I just rather eat my own hamburger or fries. This question was not only salt related, was it? **No, no, not only, no.** Okay, great. So that's what I look out for. I try not to eat too many saturated fats. But on the other hand, that's why I say mostly, obviously, I also like to indulge sometimes in very unhealthy stuff.

What is very unhealthy to you? Like a take-away pizza or like pigs meat or stuff with fatty pigs meat for instance. Or ice cream, because the factory made ice cream can be very unhealthy.

If you look to your health in then in relation to salt, how do you see that? Well, I have stopped eating very cheap bread, because they use a lot of salt in the bread, but otherwise I wouldn't say that I'm very cautious about eating salt. Well, sometimes when I look like at stuff in the supermarket, like canned food or for instance Indian noodles and think I think I would choose the ones with the least amount of salt, but that's only with products that I know might potentially have a lot of salt. **Okay.**

So is it something you worry about or something you feel fine with and you feel good about? Well, I think, with those products, I would definitely pick the less salty ones.

And in your own cooking? In my own cooking, I don't really worry about it, no.

And have you been made aware of your own personal salt use by someone? Yes, I have been, I've already told you about it that I already use less salty bread and somebody made me aware of that.

Who was that somebody? That was a friend of mine from America and then I just started looking into it, I looked on the internet and also checked labels of the breads and found out that there were just a lot more salts to add taste that you could also get otherwise with baking. And also my wife did some baking courses and also came to that conclusion actually, like why bigger companies, like factories, baking factories, they use a lot of salt. **Okay.** So, mostly of the bread part, I've been made of aware of that, yes. **Okay.**

And would you see your wife and friend from America as influencers or inspirer? Well, I definitely see my wife as a great influence if you talk about cooking. **Yes.** But that is also because she is by far a better cook than I am. And this friend of mine, I normally don't take him seriously, but he was very clear on that point and very convinced on that point, so then I took him seriously. **Okay.**

And looking at your wife then. Would you see her as an expert? On salt use? On food, or on cooking in general? Yes, I would, yeah. **So that's why you take her advice then?** Yes, I do. **Is she standing next to you?** No, she is actually at work, so I say this in all honesty.

And your friend. You said he was very passionate about it. That changed how you saw him, or how you looked at his uhhh? Well, he is American and I see that my American friends, that they are very easily triggered in trends, so normally I don't take them seriously on certain stuff, but he was serious about this and he had the data to back it up.

So was he an expert then as well? Well, on the rest of cooking, no, but I think on this issue he was an expert yes and I saw him as an expert, yeah.

And you also have someone, really in your salt use, who you see as an inspiration? Like I wanna be more like that person, or? No, there is nobody really that has a big influence on my salt use. Wait, there is one person. I see a lot of show from Nigella Lawson and she is also very explanatory about which salts to use and how much. I guess I could see her as an inspiration.

Is it a TV-show, I guess? I haven't heard of her, could you tell me more about her? Yes, Nigella Lawson, is not a professional cook, but she is really passionate about cooking, she has her own cook books and she had her weekly TV-show and she now does like series of TV-shows on the BBC. And like every cook book has its own cuisine, so the last one was about Italian food, the other ones are about quick dinners, or about Christmas dinners and she just explains what the different ingredients -also salt- add to a dinner or a plate of food and why you should use more or less.

And do you see her as an inspiration or as an expert that you would listen too? I think an inspiration.

And why so? Well, the term expert in this case, I mean she is a great cook, but she doesn't have the education for cooking or for instance like health issues, so I wouldn't say she's an expert. **Okay.** But she does inspire you to you use certain products or make certain dishes and use certain ingredients in there.

And is that where you also have the different kinds of salts from in your own cooking? Yeah, from her or from other cooks that we have recipes from: we have a whole closet of recipe books of different cooks, because my wife is very passionate about cooking. **Okay.** I think we have like 12 books of her. **Okay.**

So you're influenced by the books, but also by other things then, or is that the only thing that influences you to buy different types of salt? By the books, by the cooking TV-shows, I think that's it, yeah, oh and online recipes.

Then we go a little bit into like your purchasing process of salt. Like how many times a year do you buy cooking salt? I think, because I mostly do the larger shopping, I also try to large amounts of salts, at least the salts that we use very often. I'd say like twice a year, I would buy salt, but then in larger amounts.

And what is a larger amount for you then? Well, depending on the kinds of salt, we buy like a can of a kilo or like half a kilo.

So those you buy two times a year? Yes. And the other ones? The very special ones, I think, once a year and smaller amount, because we don't use them that often, because there are very specific dishes that we use them for. **So they don't empty that quickly.** True, yeah.

So you buy them only when they run out or would you buy new different ones if you see a new recipe? Yes, I would, I would definitely consider buying different kinds of salt from a different recipe and if it would make sense to buy it. If it wouldn't make a big difference, I would use just one of my own salts.

And what does, it doesn't make a big difference for you mean then? For instance, the newest salt has a very specific taste or a very intense taste, like if it has a more salty taste than sea salt for instance, I would definitely consider buying it or if exchanging it with a different salt would give a completely different taste, I would also consider buying a different salt. **Okay.**

So that it tastes more salty is very important to you? I guess it would, yes.

And why? I like the taste of salt and I would prefer using, if it would only be about the salt taste, I would prefer using a little amount of a very intense tasting salt, than bigger amount of a less intense tasting salt.

Okay. And that, I guess, is health related. **Why is that, that you don't want to use too much salt?** For instance, if you have like a teaspoon of sea salt, again only about the salty taste, it has the same strength, I guess, like a table spoon of normal salt, so I would prefer to use the sea salt, if it would make any other difference in a recipe.

And do you think different kinds of salt can be more healthy or unhealthy? I do, I guess that's why iodized was invented, because it was healthier than other salt, I'm not sure which other salt, but again that's why they invented it. So yes, different salt can be healthier.

Do you also have that feeling with the different kinds of salt, you use? Well, back to Volcano salt, from Hawaii, it should have different minerals, I don't use it that often, so I guess it's healthier than other salts.

And why do you think that then, because of the minerals? Because of the extra minerals that are in there. Can you remember the last time you went to the grocery or special store to buy salt? Yes, I can. Can you explain a bit how it went? It was a special store for French and Italian cooking, they had like one cupboard of different kinds of salt. **Okay.** And I've bought a new sea salt to replace the other one of the same brand, that I already had and I bought a large package, a kilo package.

And why did you pick those two salts? No, it was just one salt. That one, because already have that brand, the size, because it was the biggest size, so it was convenient, I guess and I went to that shop to buy that brand, because it's a brand that you cannot really easily buy in a supermarket for instance. So the brand played an important role.

Why? Because we like the taste of this salt and it has very convenient package, because it's like a tube that you can open and you can actually get your hand in there to get the salt out, whereas other brands have very thin tubes or like an opening that you can only pour the salt out. **Yes.** So that makes a difference, taste makes a difference and it's not extremely expensive, so price also makes a difference.

If you look more in general, how much does price play a role in that, when you decide on the salt? We just buy the cheapest iodized salt that we can find.

And why is that difference there? Because like with normal salts, I don't taste the difference, with iodized salts I really don't taste the difference between brands and the recipes where I use iodized salts in there, are mostly recipes where you don't have to use a pinch of salt, but just like a table spoon for instance. So it doesn't really matter if you pour from a package or from a can or whatever. All the other things that I mentioned about, you know, it is convenient to use your fingers that doesn't really matter for iodized salt.

And for the other ones, you said, special salt has played a bigger role. And what would be a price range, what would you pay for it? Oof, it depends of the amount of course, I have no idea what I paid for the kilo package of that salt. Well, wait, I think it was around 20-30 euros for a kilo of sea salt. But the salt that I like the most, but that we don't buy, because it's so expensive is like 50 euros.

And why is that then a difference? I mean, you like it a lot, but you buy it because it's so expensive? Yes, it definitely is het price why I don't buy it.

And this one is a good substitute? Yes, I think it has a little less taste, but it is just as strong as like with the salty taste.

So you would rather pay more for a more salty taste salt, then add more salt that is cheaper. Yes, in general, I think you're right.

And does media play a role in the salt type you use? Yes, definitely, like I said, we have a lot of cooking books, I watch cooking shows together with my wife sometimes, we do follow certain health cooking blogs and they talk about salt as well, so I guess that is an influence there.

Is it a big influence? I think so, yeah, because for instance, my lack of cooking intuition, I would not, out of myself, exchange salts in a recipe, just to see if that would taste better, so I guess I would definitely get influenced by that. **Okay.**

Do you see these media influences as an inspiration or an expert or? That depends on the type of media. I guess the cookbooks in general are more of an inspiration to me, but very specific health blogs for instance, I would also see them as an expert.

And do commercials play a role? First of all, I don't see that many commercials for that, I think the only salt related commercial I have ever seen are in American health magazines, health mugs, or cooking or sports mugs, but I first of all, probably you wouldn't be able to buy the salts here, but second of all, I don't really have any reason why I would buy that salt. So I don't think there would be any influence there.

To go a little bit back to the media. Do they actually tell you to buy a specific type of brand or they just tell you to buy a specific sort of salt, for example kosher salt or sea salt? There are certain cooks for instance, that say you have to use sea salt or an intensive kind of sea salt and do mention a couple of names there, I guess, just to make it more convenient for people to find that kind of salt, I do tend to listen to that as well. **Okay.**

And then you pick one of the brands that they advise? Yes, unless it's extremely expensive. **Okay.**

Are you also influenced by the information that the government provides, for example labelling on packaging on things that are not healthy. Is that an influence for you? No influence.

Why not? Because the cheaper salts are mostly the same in what's in there, but I think it does make a difference in how it's produced and that would be in that government regulated information, I guess, so on the labels. **Okay.**

And has the type of salt you buy, changed? I guess when I started cooking on my own, I bought the cheapest kind of salt in the supermarket. But since I watch more cooking shows, read more cooking recipes, follow more blogs, I am prone to buy specific kinds of salts, I am not sure if it can increase even more in the future. I think I'm at my salt-high now.

Do you think it's gonna decrease then? Well, I tend to think that this would be right amount of salt that I use.

And if you notice in a year or two years from now that you're using more salt, is that a reason to change? If that would be in the same daily routine as know, for example a breakfast with a bread with more salt inside, I guess I would try to lessen the amount of salt I use. **Okay.** But types of salt, not really.

Why would you change that then? Because I think if salt doesn't add anything to the taste I would avoid it. Does that make any sense? **Yes, it does.**

And has the health trend, where we just talked about, have an influence on you decision making process? Salt wise? **Yes.** Not really, I think I already used less salt before there. Well, indirectly maybe, because this American friend of mine probably follows or was influenced by some kind of health trend, so I guess like indirectly yes.

And how then? Like did you change in brand? **Yes, I changed in brand.** I also try to use not too many store bought unherbed, unprocessed meat and I like to add my own spices to it or a doughy crust or something instead of buying it readymade in the supermarket. **Okay.**

And why? Because I think there's a lot more unhealthy stuff in the pre-processed meat, not only salt wise, I think cheaper meat has a lot more salt in there, but it also has E-numbers that don't add something particularly to the taste and are not that healthy if you have too many of them. **Yes.** So I would rather use more natural products.

So because of health reasons you not only buy specific types of salt that are more expensive, but also buy different kinds of food that are more expensive? Yeah. **And why?** Because I see a lot of people around me that do not make that difference and they tend to get very unhealthy, they have health problems, so I guess I don't want to get those health problems as well and I also like to see what I'm eating.

And what do you mean by that? Well, I like to know what I'm eating and I guess, if you make dinner yourself, you are really aware of what is in the food that you eat, it also gives you a better feeling and I guess it's more healthy, because you also weight between different stuff that you would like to eat and way actually be able to pick the healthier food. **Okay.**

And looking like the foodie trends, so that taste is more important and where it's from. Does that influence your decision making process? Yeah, I would definitely say yes. It doesn't really matter where it's produced, but more how it's produced, so I wouldn't care if the meat would be from Holland or from Ireland or Bulgaria or something, but I would really be interested in how they produced it there, so if it's industrially made or free ranged meat. I would prefer for example chickens that had more living space and were not fat with antibiotics

Is that information you look up? I think I would rely on specific labels, because there's specific labels for instance for the quality of meat or the life quality that the animals had and taste-wise, I guess that is not related to it, but more health wise, how it's produced, I would definitely look on labels.

The food trend is pretty wide, just like the health trend, so you have like organically made products, but you also have like products that taste nice, but what a get from yours story about salt, is that taste really has an influence on your decision making, for example that you buy a more expensive one. Definitely. I guess I would find that out because of labelling or something, but more actually physically tasting different kinds of salt.

Would you go to a salt tasting if there would be any? Yes, that would be very interesting.

Which aspect influences your decision the most, is it taste, price, the media or friends? Taste, price, media, is the way what influences me the most from top to bottom.

Does like your wife, your family or friends have an influence on you as well? Yes, I think, somewhere between price and taste. **Okay.**

What is the health trend exactly for you personally? That is a very general question. I do like to watch what I'm eating because of health trends, but there's so many different health trends, you know.

But which health trends influences you the most? I guess, mostly meat wise, so all health trends that go to meat and it doesn't go only the health trend of the animal that I'm eating, but also what certain meats have that other don't. **Okay.**