

You are what you eat online

The phenomenon of mediated eating practices and their underlying moral regimes
in Swedish “What I eat in a day” vlogs

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Abstract

In Western societies, with increasingly salient mediation processes, eating, too, has become an entanglement of offline and online practices. Food as carrier of values has never merely satisfied bodily needs, which makes it essential to investigate mediated eating practices and emerging digital foodscapes in order to understand how they change everyday life, but also culture at large. However, most existing studies emphasise nutritional features of eating and individual relations to food and thereby neglect the at least as important socio cultural aspects of food as well as underlying structures and implicit symbolic value systems.

Through the use of practice theory, this case study on Swedish “What I eat in a day” vlogs balances individual agency regarding lifestyle-diet choices with structures of underlying food rules and values (regimes). Furthermore, as the food vlogs (re)present actual eating practices turned into texts, it becomes necessary to combine practice theory with structural and cultural perspectives.

By investigating how the food vloggers scenically, visually and narratively perform their lifestyle-diets, this study provides insight into the inner workings of the cultural field of food vlogs. Mechanisms of unspoken foodie hierarchies, internal struggles for positions and the negotiation of moral imperatives become visible. These processes, moreover, illuminate how everyday, bottom-up expertise in combination with the authority of a micro-celebrity can grant the position of cultural intermediary. As such intermediaries, the vloggers, in cooperation with their online community, define, change and spread everyday eating practices online as well as offline.

In addition to illustrating the workings of food vlogs per se, this case study, thus, also provides insight into more general processes of cultural reproduction and renewal.

Keywords: foodies; food vlog; aestheticisation; micro-celebrity; everyday expertise; eating practices; practice theory; field theory; cultural intermediaries; cultural change; Sweden

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Note: Due to copyrights on the video screenshots, all screenshots have been re-illustrated by the author. To see the original footage, please click on the links provided with the drawings and fast-forward to the specified time.

I: INTRODUCTION

“Tell me what kind of food you eat, and I will tell you what kind of man [or woman] you are.”

Brillat-Savarin (1825)

Why we are what we eat

What we eat determines who we are. Quite literally, through bodily ingestion, but also mentally through cultural values and rules attached to the food we ingest, making foodstuff far more than a means for satisfying biological needs (Poulain 2017:155, Eder 1999:15f.). Rather, what we eat becomes part of a “food culture”, a symbolic language to communicate with (Tellström 2015:9). Consequently, we make statements with our food – both unconsciously, through our everyday eating habits which are very much guided by customs and routines, and consciously, like when we choose a diet – about who we are, which communities we belong to and which morals we stand for. Throughout human history sharing food has thus not only meant sharing the food itself, but has also been one of the most immediate ways of expressing culture and exchanging meanings (Eder 1999:103f., Tellström 2015:280).

Today too, we share our experiences with food. However, in contemporary Western societies, where everyday experiences have become entanglements of physical and mediated spaces, statements are increasingly made in mediated forms (Silverstone 2007:5f.,13). The public interest in food as a topic of leisure, entertainment, health and politics has been growing since the 1980s, which, also not surprisingly, means food has become a staple of modern media, especially on TV and the internet (Johnston & Baumann 2010:xviii; Warde 2016:1). While traditional food media, like gourmet magazines or TV cooking shows continue to thrive, social media has contributed with new spaces in which to satisfy food interests (Rousseau 2012:xiif.). There are innumerable online recipe sites, Instagram pictures of meals, food blogs and YouTube videos, all of which become mediated food statements. Such statements are deserving of scholarly attention, in order to understand the mechanisms of contemporary, mediated food cultures. Another significant concern is that because eating is such a basic ingredient to life, food-rules and values affect us all in very fundamental and bodily ways and moreover entail consequences for the environment and humans’ as well as animals’ quality of life.

In order to explore mechanisms of food culture, this thesis will investigate the concrete case of “What I eat in a day” vlogs on YouTube. In these videos, vloggers film how they prepare and

usually eat all their meals of the day, meanwhile talking about anything from cooking instructions or their diets to their lives in general. Thereby, the vloggers present not only food, but a whole way of life, built on specific lifestyle-diets, which, according to Tellström (2015:198) are chosen actively with the intent to represent who one is or strives to turn into. It has become expected in contemporary Western societies that each person makes her or his own diet choices based on, for example personal ethics or scientific nutrition models, rather than communal eating traditions or religious rules (Higman 2012:207). Such choices induce increased personal responsibility, implying individual obligation both towards one's own body (fitting into current body ideals, keeping fit and healthy) and wider societal issues like environmental impact or animal welfare. This is symptomatic of the larger current Western individualisation process, which, however, isn't equivalent with an absence of patterns and structure, but rather becomes a compulsion to make choices (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002). That is to say, on the one hand, a time period's and a culture's social structures impact on which eating practices are seen as appropriate and on the other hand, many everyday activities, such as eating, become so habitual that they're performed without a lot of thinking, embedding individual choices in societal structures and everyday routines (Warde 2016:6).

Such structures are guided by underlying systems of rules and values, which in this study will be called *regimes*. The term is loosely inspired by the Foucaultian (2004) take on regimes as definers of what comes to be perceived as the "truth", the taken for granted state of things, which leads to a pervasive power guiding what ought to be seen as "right" or "wrong" and which creates an unspoken set of rules. Such guidelines of "right" or "wrong" will henceforth be referred to as *moral imperatives*. In accordance with Immanuel Kant's thinking, moral imperatives are defined as internal moral feelings, creating a consciousness, which directs a person's actions and results in guilty or shameful feelings should they be violated (Sullivan 2009). Moral guidelines do not only have to concern questions regarding justice or responsibility towards other people, but can also be about individual conceptions of what makes the world and one's own life desirable and "good" (Jansson 2001:128f.).¹ Consequently, diet choices as well as food styles can be perceived as morally right or wrong, depending on the regime which guides a person's diet choices.

Most existing food research, also in connection with social media, however, appropriates a nutrition oriented view, which neglects such underlying value systems and places the individual food relation above the equally important socio cultural aspects. Yet, even if still pretty rare, socio cultural

¹ While moral beliefs are moulded by individual social circumstances and everyday experiences, they are also grounded in socio cultural values and customs (Jansson 2001:128f.). Thus, media too, have come to form a crucial construction site for moral creeds (Silverstone 2007:7).

approaches are tentatively expanding, indicating that contributing research is up-to-date and in demand. This study will thus take on a socio cultural angle, by being positioned within the field of food culture and focus on food vlogs as lifestyle media (re)presenting online eating practices.

More concretely, practice theory will be merged with structuralist and cultural perspectives. These can be said to have different, even oppositional outlooks on the world, regarding their focus on structures, agency and the role of texts (Inglis 2012; Lorimer 2005; Warde 2016). However, the new phenomenon of mediated eating practices can best be understood by attuning all of the named aspects, as the boundaries between text and practice are getting blurred, when actual eating practices are simultaneously turned into “What I eat in a day” representations. Hence, there’s a need to not only, as advocated by practice theory, balance agency and structure, but also to equilibrate practice theory with textual analysis. Thereby the vlogs as representations can help highlight cultural food aspects, while wider societal food practices can be described by their incarnations as individual eating performances.

Accordingly, the aim of this thesis is, firstly, to attain a social understanding of the cultural phenomenon of mediated everyday food practices, and secondly, to gain insight into underlying regimes which govern such practices. By investigating food cultures’ dynamics, furthermore, light can be shed on wider mechanisms of reproduction and renewal in societies characterised by mediation processes.² In order to achieve these aims Swedish “What I eat in a day” vlogs as lifestyle media, will serve as a case study, exemplifying one instance of contemporary mediated eating practices. Apart from giving access to mediated eating performances, the vlogs also, through the comment sections, make it possible to investigate how underlying regimes are approached and negotiated by vloggers and followers in cooperation. To this end the following questions will be asked:

1. How can the phenomenon of “What I eat in a day” vlogs on YouTube be understood in relation to scenic, narrative and visual aspects?
2. How are these vlogs used (by vloggers and followers) in negotiating, appropriating and fixating lifestyle-diet beliefs as morally “right”? And in which ways do these beliefs, expressed in the vlogs, reflect symbolic value systems (regimes) regarding food and eating practices in contemporary Sweden?

² There is an ongoing academic debate on the terms “mediation” and “mediatization”. For this thesis, however, the important take from the discussion is not the terminology itself, but the non-media-centric approach which moves beyond the text and which, according to Driessens and Hjarvard (2017:1f.), emphasises the intertwined processes involved in changing media-communication, society and culture in a world in which, as Livingstone (2009) puts it, a “mediation of everything” takes place.

Disposition

The thesis is comprised of seven chapters. After a brief presentation of the “What I eat in a day” genre and its context, the second chapter will present the theoretical framework the study interacts with, based on a literature review. In it, socio cultural approaches towards food and eating are discussed, especially in relation to structuralist perspectives, such as represented by Mary Douglas’ work, cultural perspectives, like Rickard Tellström’s historical angle and practice theory, foremost as described by Alan Warde. Moreover, the food vlog is placed in relation to Annette Hill’s research on reality TV, with especial focus on Erving Goffman’s scenic front- and backstage workings. Furthermore, lifestyle media, as, for instance, defined by Mike Featherstone, are discussed, as well as the transformation of these genres with web 2.0. The chapter ends with a close look at concepts surrounding lifestyle – for instance as presented by Tania Lewis and Jayne Raisborough – particularly, however, in connection with Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory and cultural intermediaries.

The third chapter provides insight into how, starting from the methodological point of view that a socially constructed world can best be approached pragmatically through a case study, this research on 28 “What I eat in a day” vlogs and their comment sections, was conducted through an hermeneutically-inspired, qualitative textual analysis, incorporating elements of narrative and visual analysis.

Following that, in compliance with the research questions, the analysis is divided into three bigger chapters. First up is “Performing food”, which investigates how the lifestyle-diets are performed. This leads to the transition chapter “Looking backstage”, which examines how vloggers and followers approach and negotiate boundaries regarding what is seen as acceptable eating practices. Based on this examination of the phenomenon, finally, in “Two kinds of underlying food regimes” it becomes possible to inspect the two regimes “Style and status” and “Ideologies and belief-systems” which govern such drawings of boundaries.

Finally, the last chapter will discuss the results and connect them to wider mechanisms of cultural reproduction and renewal in societies characterised by mediation processes.

Emergence of foodies and the “What I eat in a day” genre

For most of human history people have spent a lot of time gathering and preparing food in order to survive. Cooking, consequently, became a compulsory task and historically, if affordable, was delegated, i.e. to servants or women. Only since the 1960s ready-made meals and kitchen machines have facilitated the cooking process or rendered it superfluous, while nevertheless offering a big variety of secure and easily accessible meals for contemporary people in Western societies (Higman 2011:1f.,144-161). However, the so called “slow food movement”, emerging in the 1990s, has aimed at bringing back the extensive process of cooking, often combined with political motivations, such as using organically grown food for sustainability (ibid.:145). Overall, contemporary food is highly interconnected with various discourses, be they overtly political or cultural, which turn food into something not only to ingest, but also to contemplate, criticise, discuss and fantasise about – in, through and outside of media (Johnston & Baumann 2010:xviiif.,43; Poulain 2017:xv). Lay people with a genuine food interest, both regarding cooking and eating, as well as voicing opinions about it online and offline, are called *foodies* (Johnston & Baumann 2010:xviii,61).³ The vloggers doing “What I eat in a day” videos are showcase foodies, as they give insight to their food interests and articulate them online. Thus, they also exemplify contemporary eating, which according to Rousseau (2012:96) is often an experience of offline preparation and eating intertwined with online publishing. Such practices result in new kinds of *foodscapes* – that is, “places and spaces where you acquire food, prepare food, talk about food, or generally gather some sort of meaning from food” (MacKendrick 2014:16). Given the mentioned orientation towards digital media, foodscapes too, are becoming increasingly digital and as such are still in dire need of more investigation (ibid.: 18). Alone on YouTube, anyone’s online foodscape may become extended by videos on cooking instruction, food testing, food challenges, mukbangs⁴ or, indeed, “What I eat in a day” vlogs.

The vlog format (a merging of video and blog) usually means one person is talking about her or his life into a camera or films experiences directly (which has become a lot easier with smartphone cameras). Thereby a filmed kind of diary is created for which new entries are aired in any periodical frequency the vlogger sees as appropriate (Abrudan & Chițea 2017:58ff.; Berryman & Kavka 2017:310). For instance none of the “What I eat in a day” vloggers record their eating practices

³ The search interest on Google for the term “foodie” has been constantly rising over the last decade, both worldwide and in Sweden, illustrating a rising awareness for and interest in foodies (please see “Appendix 1: Charts on the popularity of search terms”).

⁴ Mukbang videos are originally Korean and show a YouTuber sloppily and noisily eating gigantic amounts of food, while simultaneously talking about how it tastes or any other topic which may come to mind. For an example see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-POR3z-RW0>, 2017

daily, which, hence, turns the chosen days into showcases for their eating habits. The airing itself means that vlog episodes are made publicly accessible on platforms such as YouTube and thus enable interaction between vloggers and their audiences (Frobenius 2014:59). From such interaction communities with emotional bonds may arise, turning the audience into devoted followers (Wesch 2009:21). As the audience taken into consideration in this study consists of those viewers who leave comments, they will be referred to precisely as followers or commentators.

The specific “What I eat in a day” format seems to have emerged organically, both in text-picture-form on blogs and Instagram, but especially in vlog form on YouTube. It’s hard to establish when the first “What I eat in a day” vlog was posted, but they have been around since at least 2010, growing ever more popular so that they now can be said to have become an own genre.⁵

However, no genre comes into being in isolation and the “What I eat in a day” vlogs show traces of both reality and lifestyle TV. Defining characteristics of reality TV are banal everyday moments with “real” people, as well as spectacular or excessive moments (Hill 2004:10,23,159f.). TV3’s program “Du är vad du äter” (2016-)⁶ can be named as a Swedish prime example for food related reality TV, as overweight participants get confronted in their homes with the excessive amounts of food they eat weekly. Some YouTube vlogs, too, like mukbang videos, adopt all these features. In contrast the (Swedish) “What I eat in a day” vlogs only appropriate the “everyday” and “real people” aspects while refraining from becoming spectacles and rather supplement themselves with aesthetics borrowed from lifestyle media, in particular TV cooking shows’ camera work or ways to display food.⁷

⁵ The popularity and up-to-dateness of the “What I eat in a day” format can be exemplified by the fact that a search on YouTube on the 25th April 2018 gave 27.400.000 (international) video results, while the search interest on Google for the term “What I eat in a day” has shown an upwards trend over the last decade (please see “Appendix 1: Charts on the popularity of search terms”). For an early example of a “What I eat in a day” vlog on YouTube from 2010 see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2iOW2FhaRs>.

⁶ The show is based on the British Channel 4 original format “You are what you eat” (2004-2007).

⁷ TV cooking shows particular camera work and methods of displaying and presenting food creates an aesthetic called “gastro-porn” (Oren 2013:24).

II: THEORETICALLY POSITIONING ONLINE EATING PRACTICES

In order to encompass what has been done, the following chapter will start by presenting structuralist and cultural perspectives as well as practice theory in relation to research done on food and eating. After that the vlog as a web 2.0 specimen will be conceptualised in relation to reality TV and lifestyle media. Last but not least, there will be a discussion of concepts surrounding lifestyle.

A socio cultural approach towards food and eating

Malnutrition and starvation are life-threatening problems. Not very long ago, these were issues in Western countries too, making it reasonable that 150 years ago, some of the first research on food was focusing on scientifically determinable nutrition balances (Poulain 2017:118; Rundgren 2016:109ff.; Warde 2016:19). Since the first part of the 20th century, the Swedish government's public health politics have strongly advocated a similar view on food, aiming at optimised nutrition intake in order to ensure healthy and hence useful citizens (Tellström 2015:43f.). Still today, the main focus in food research either remains nutritionally and agriculturally angled, like for instance, Rundgren's (2016) research on globally interconnected food choices and sustainability, or centres on health perspectives (for example Caplan 1997, Lupton 1996). However, such views overlook the not less important values of food as bearer of meaning, pleasure and community – aspects which have been somewhat disregarded in research (Tellström 2015:43f.).

Structuralist and cultural perspectives on food and eating

Nevertheless, food and eating *have* been recognised for their cultural importance in research too, even if it has been a rather slow process. Around 1900 anthropologic interest in food consumption emerged, mostly focused on foreign cultures' food rules (Poulain 2017:117). One of the first to research food as part of the own culture, in the 1930s, was Norbert Elias (1978). Even if food isn't his main aim, evolving eating practices are examined as part of his work on the civilisation process. Roland Barthes (2008:29), in the 1960s, joins in on the view that eating is more than meeting biological needs and presents food as a "system of communication" which signifies different things, depending on a society's social structures and culture's ideas and values. A similar approach was taken by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1990), during the same time, when he investigates the lines between nature (raw food) and culture (cooked food) and suggests that there are some general structures in

the human mind which give food and eating meaning. Mary Douglas (1972; 1997) too, researched such structures, arguing that food items are socio culturally classified as either clean or unclean. She furthermore suggests that these structures can be investigated by looking at everyday, domestic settings in which people's eating habits reflect and connect them to their embedding culture. Thus, Barthes, Lévi-Strauss and Douglas all adopt a structuralist perspective as they focus on meaning and language in search for invisible patterns underlying food systems and eating habits (Poulain 2017:124; Warde 2016:26).

Following this tradition of "food culture", as symbolic meaning expressing values and zeitgeist, Notaker (2009), Tellström (2015) and Higman (2011) all research the cultural evolution of what people have eaten and are eating, while for instance Rebrovick (2015), Taylor (2010) and Coveney, Begley & Gallegos (2012) look at how, what is seen as the preferable food choice, is embedded in history. There has moreover been done research on the valuing (e.g. Arbit et al. 2017) or spiritualising (e.g. Hamilton 2000) of food more generally, as well as more specifically, in connection to moral choices, for example concerning meat-eating (e.g. Hamilton 2006; Hsiao 2015; McLeay & Apostolidis 2016) or whether it's regarded as morally superior to consume "natural" foods (e.g. Kooijmans & Flores-Palacios 2014) and locally grown foods (e.g. Peterson 2013).

Furthermore, since the cultural turn in the 1990s, culture has played a central role in social sciences, acknowledging how humans, as not only social, but also cultural creatures, constantly engage in the act of meaning-making (Du Gay 2013:xvff.). The turn influenced parts of media studies too, emphasising how media partake in constructing meaning and culture far beyond the media content (Carlsson 2007:223ff.). Stuart Hall (2013) and the British cultural studies tradition contributed a lot to make media recognised as an important factor in the construction of reality.

In this connection, consumption too, has come to be seen as a means of communication and meaning making, for instance through lifestyle choices of what to consume. Yet, although eating is consumption per se, food wasn't generally or automatically included into the idea of consumption (Poulain 2017:1,114; Warde 2016:3). Exceptions are, for example, Certeau, Giard and Mayol (1998) who show how ordinary people in their everyday doings – like cooking – are anything but passive consumers, or Lewis and Potter (2011) who investigate consumer culture regarding responsible consumption, also in connection to food.

Another aspect which can be regarded as a kind of language is aestheticisation, with its emphasis on visuals, or symbolic value over function. For instance, during the last decades the rising popularity

of food images has emphasised aesthetics and pleasure over a functional, nutritional discourse (Lewis 2008:57f.). Also, as Featherstone (2007:66ff.) points out, aesthetic preferences are not given, but constructed by the time and space in which they arise. He thus introduces the concept “aestheticisation of everyday life” to illustrate how surrounding images partake in creating desire for a certain kind of look, which, in turn, contributes to the perception of the own life as a “project of art”, which constantly needs to be worked on, for example by visually perfecting the own body. This also exemplifies how media address people’s feelings, rather than their reason. A focus which has been brought to attention and grown popular through the so called “affective turn”, which recognises emotions as an important instance between thinking and acting and in making meaning of the world (Papacharissi 2014:4,12).

Other researchers focusing on aestheticisation of the everyday, are for example Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) who point out how the world has become a visual “spectacle”, or Highmore (2011:xf.) who also suggests that aesthetics found within the everyday – like a nice meal – affect subjective experiences emotionally, but also connect the individual (either through affirmation or guilt tripping) to the the bigger social realm and its values. Thus, lifestyles presented in media are not trivial, nor are they neutral, but part of defining which kind of self is encouraged and normalised within a culture (Raisborough 2011:46).

Practice theory perspectives on food and eating

Besides the just described perspectives which emphasise the importance of cultural expressions and underlying symbolic value, there is another view, which focuses on the practices – on what people do with these expressions – meanwhile balancing how much influence is given to either structure or agency.

For instance Jack Goody or Pierre Bourdieu have this focus. Goody (1982), in his comparative historical study of societies in Africa and Eurasia, particularly concentrates on how the different food cultures are interconnected and have resulted in widening consumption inequalities and class differences. Bourdieu (2010) too, while not mainly focusing on eating practices, illustrates how taste more generally defines relations between different social groups, in 1960s France. Just like Bourdieu in his research allows for personal agency while, through his notion of habitus also implies people have their society’s structure “programmed” into their bodies, the early “practice theory” approach in the 1970s tried to neither take a too individual or too holistic approach. Even if

there isn't one unified "practice theory", all interpretations share a focus on habitual, practical activities rather than individual actions, yet without overemphasising structures' importance (Postill 2010:1ff., Warde 2016:32).

At the turn of the millennium the so called "practical turn" resulted in a second wave of practice theory, which, led on by Theodore R. Schatzki, included more focus on the human body as well as cultural and historical aspects (Postill 2010:4). The critique to practice theory, that emphasis on habits fails to acknowledge change, is thus countered by pointing at how routines shift when new guidelines emerge (Warde 2016:138). For instance, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), focus on how agency and structure together generate change in societies. Besides, the new wave of practice theory was also a critical response to the cultural turn and its emphasis on lifestyle, identity and cultural choices, or more generally put, on representations and discourses, at the expense of the everydayness of consumption, as well as social structures' impacts on supposedly individual choices (Warde 2016:4,28ff). Regarding media studies, practice theory is still a quite new and seldom used lens, but Postill (2010:1ff.) advocates combining the two in order to "understand what people actually do with media".

Another area of practices which only tentatively has begun to be examined through the practice theory perspective, are activities around food. As examples Torkkeli, Mäkelä and Niva's (2018) investigation of the everyday practice of cooking can be named, while Warde (2016) is one of the even fewer, who examines eating practices per se. True to the practice theory tradition Warde emphasises how the individual performance of a practice may be singular, yet is grounded in people just "knowing" what is appropriate, as they act from within their habitus. This in turn is rooted in social patterns, shared understandings and recommendations from various sources. For example a person may first need to gather information on a diet, but over time, while appropriating it, the diet will get routinised and require hardly any thinking at all during instances of everyday eating (ibid.: 49-64,76ff.).

Food and eating in the media

Besides the field of food research itself, research on food and media also needs to be taken into consideration. The point of departure for this will be the food vlog. But as no new media arises without context, the vlog will be discussed in connection to reality TV and lifestyle (mass)media and these genres transformation with web 2.0.

From reality TV to reality vlog

Regarding research on food and mass media, Appadurai (1988), for example, has researched the social role of cookbooks, while Ketchum (2005) and Viviani (2013) have examined TV – Ketchum focuses on consumption and desires created by cooking shows, while Viviani studies the representation of food. Reality TV, including food and eating, has mostly been studied in relation to eating disorders and weight loss (see for example Bourn et al. 2015; Klos et al. 2015).

The “What I eat in a day” vlog bears some resemblances to all of these genres – like a cookbook it provides recipes, it’s a cooking show intent on aesthetics and it’s a form of reality TV. Yet the vlog is also distinct as it’s produced by amateurs, who, opposed to reality TV participants, are in control of how they become represented. The aspects which the vlog borrows from reality TV, however, are that genre’s diary form and public confessions, as well as its focus on the banal, with actual locations and people performing themselves. All these aspects provide a sense of authenticity, which plays a big role in reality TV’s appeal, as it seemingly gives access to the backstage of who someone “really” is (Berryman & Kavka 2017:311; Hill 2014:159f.). This, moreover, turns reality TV into a mediated (and somewhat more extreme) form of the “everyday role playing” everyone always does (Hill 2014:52). These notions lean on Goffman’s (1956) concept of the “presentation of the self”, and how everyone, through *impression management*, tries to appear at their very best in order to fit in and be accepted. Thereby the self becomes presented on a *front stage*, while less favourable aspects are kept hidden in the *backstage*. Especially since webcams have become more common everyone can produce his or her own reality TV and broadcast it online, making reality TV more of an attitude than a genre, which can take place anywhere (Hill 2014:141ff.,160). For instance in a vlog.

However, a vlog goes a step further than either reality TV or a diary for that matter, as it’s not only about making traditionally personal aspects public, but moreover encourages interaction between vloggers and followers in form of comments, which can result in communities (Abrudan & Chițea 2017:59; Wesch 2009:21).

From lifestyle (mass)media to lifestyle web 2.0 vlogs

Media, as part of society and not detached from it, plays a big part in the construction of people's social and cultural realities (Featherstone 2007:xv). Especially, so called lifestyle media contribute to the construction of ideals about how a life ought to be lived (Featherstone 2007:19; Raisborough 2011:5). Lifestyle media thus also adopt a moral, fostering aspect. For instance Skeggs (2005:976f.) has investigated how middle class values (in connection to gender) are enforced in various media, by projecting opposite, negative values onto the working class, who thereby becomes represented as immoral or worthless. Littler (2011:28ff.), too, in her research on ethical consumption, shows how middle class values (like organic products) become markers of distinction. Regarding food culture, lifestyle media hence partakes in (re)presenting what should be seen as good taste and provides guidelines, for example, on how to choose the appropriate diet (Poulain 2017:60; Tellström 2015:176,246).

Blogs and vlogs too, can be counted to the genre of lifestyle media. For instance, Nørgaard Kristensen and Christensen (2017:230ff.) show how fashion blogs are at least as much about a blogger's lifestyle-performance as they are about the presented content. Also, although similar to other lifestyle media, like magazines or TV, blogs enable interaction. Vlogs even take that one step further, in their capacity as a "televisual and interactive medium". This particular combination tends to deepen emotional bonds between vloggers and followers (Berryman & Kavka 2017: 310ff.). This interactivity is, furthermore, part of web 2.0's participatory culture, in which theoretically everyone can create content, share it and thereby build communities in which the audiences become "co-creators" or "prod-users"⁸ – a dynamic which may even initiate social change (Drakopoulou & Gandini 2017:5; Jenkins, Ford & Green 2013; Olsson & Svensson 2012:46). Nevertheless, even if web 2.0 seems to equalise power relations between producers and users, such assumptions need to be scrutinised, for example as YouTube is a commercial business model, using connectivity to spread personalised advertising, but also because many user-generated videos are getting professionalised and commercialised (Drakopoulou & Gandini 2017:5ff.; Olsson 2013:14; van Dijck 2013:126). Such commercialisation, which may happen through sponsoring, often also goes hand in hand with turning the self into a brand (i.e see Banet-Weiser 2011; Banet-Weiser and Arzumanov 2013).

⁸ Of course there are also many lurkers who are not interested in commenting or interacting, but they may still be called followers, as they nonetheless become part of a community and the values it stands for (Lundby 2014:31).

One of the first to connect web 2.0's social media with food was Rousseau (2012). Otherwise, food and social media are, once again, mostly investigated through the lens of the nutritional value of online recommendations (Missbach et al. 2015), health issues and body control (e.g. Depper & Howe 2017; Tiggemann & Slater 2017) or eating disorders (e.g. McLean et al. 2017; Nevin & Vartanian 2017). Similarly, studies concerning food and YouTube are dominated by either a focus on eating disorders (e.g. Holmes 2017; Pereira, Quinn & Morales 2016) or weight loss (Basch et al. 2017). Other studies investigate how people identify "safe" food by using social media, like after food scares (Desmarchelier & Fang 2016) regarding food chain safety (e.g. Raspor 2008; Gomez-Lopez et al. 2017) or generally, in connection with feelings of riskiness (e.g. Rutsaert et al. 2014; Henderson et al. 2014). Most of these articles are linked to worries about whether people get the right (scientific) nutrition, how social media is (mis)informing people regarding food choices and whether social media impacts body ideals or risky behaviour which might lead to eating disorders. All these different approaches, however, suggest that a high degree of reflexivity around food is taking place.

Diving deeper into lifestyle

After having established the food vlog as a combination of the media genres diary, reality TV and lifestyle TV (cooking shows) mixed with amateur production and interactivity aspects of web 2.0, the next subchapters will take the existing research to a more abstract level by diving deeper into concepts connected to "lifestyle".

Lifestyle – a promise of individual choice and betterment?

In contemporary Western societies there may no longer be clear authoritarian food rules which everyone is forced to follow. Nevertheless, there are still recommendations, with rule-like undertones which undermine the idea of completely free choice of what to eat (Warde 2016:93f.). In other words, there are different norms regarding eating, which people get their food-values from and attach their practices to.

As Bourdieu (2010:169) states, people's tastes get expressed both materially and symbolically through their lifestyles. Hence, choosing the "right" lifestyle has become an important quest and lifestyle media is one source which offers advice in order to make those "right" decisions, which will supposedly change the self into something better and give social status (Featherstone 2007:xv,

19). The same applies to diet choices, which, especially because of the large amount of accessible food to choose from, become markers of distinction (Poulain 2017:45; Warde 2016:26). However, an overly focus on self-betterment through lifestyle choices hides structural issues (Eriksson 2015:35). Even in Sweden, which tends to be seen as a very equal country regarding class and gender, people live under different economic and cultural circumstances, which determine the social position and affect lifestyle preferences on various levels (Oskarson 2008:125-131). Moreover, due to growing inequalities since the 1980s, the social differences in Sweden have become more visible (Eriksson 2015:21f.). This distinction is further fuelled by media. Jakobsson and Stiernstedt's (2018:f.) "katalys report"⁹ on media and social class in Sweden, for instance, presents how middle class views get normalised in the Swedish media landscape, while the working class is both underrepresented and stereotyped as morally inferior due to their consumer and lifestyle choices.¹⁰ Eriksson's (2015:20ff.) research on reality TV's role in Sweden arrives at similar conclusions. Lifestyle advice, thus, even if mostly subtle, tends to promote values and taste associated with the middle class (Lewis 2008:10).

Consequently, even if lifestyle (diet) choices are at large presented as something merely based on individual taste and aspirations, promising everyone the possibility of unlimited self-betterment, this doesn't eliminate the fact that some groups' tastes are seen as better than others or that a persons background may simply not provide the means for adopting the lifestyles presented as desirable (Lewis 2008:8; Littler 2011:28ff.; Raisborough 2011:31ff.). This illustrates that there are dynamics which structure culture as well as the social realm.

Lifestyle and taste advisers

While in the past, in Western societies, being an expert meant authority and was carefully separated from the personal or domestic, a shift has taken place towards advice coming from everyday life (Lewis 2008:2f.,51). For instance, lifestyle media advices and gives recommendations on new consumer trends and their appropriation for the construction of one's own lifestyle (Featherstone 2007:19). Of course, it's not media itself, but people who perform the promotion. Such people can be called what Bourdieu (2010:323) terms *cultural intermediaries*. In Bourdieu's original sense, cultural intermediaries were people producing cultural content for (mass)media, like TV or radio.

⁹ Katalys is an "independent trade-union thinktank which conducts investigative activities and opinion-forming" (translation by author, <https://www.katalys.org/om/>)

¹⁰ Even if potentially everyone can become a producer in the wake of web 2.0, there are social differences online too, due to knowledge gaps and different preferences in the use of the internet (Jakobsson & Stiernstedt 2018:14).

Consequently, they were not the original producers of the cultural topics in question, but presenters (intermediaries) conveying them to an audience (ibid.:324). This can be compared to Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955:32f.) "opinion leaders", who in a similar way, pass on ideas received through media in a two-step flow of communication.

However, as Lewis (2008:9; 2010:580) points out, in a contemporary context, the cultural intermediaries have rather become comparable to lifestyle-experts, who base their cultural authority as presenters of "good taste and style", in everyday experiences. Additionally, as Baym and Burnett's (2009:1,23f.) research illustrates, within web 2.0, amateur expertise is not only based in everyday, but moreover in personal experiences, making it possible for potentially anyone to generate and spread expertise. Consequently, vloggers, too, can be seen as cultural intermediaries, not only in Bourdieu's sense as presenters, but as actual creators *and* mediators of cultural values.¹¹ Even if the term "influencer" might also come to mind in this context, an influencer is more directly connected to brand promotion and advertisement (Berryman & Kavka 2017:307).¹²

However, even if everyone can potentially be a cultural intermediary there are differences regarding how much weight opinions are ascribed and how far they get spread. As in every field, people occupy different positions within it. More concretely, Bourdieu likens a field with groups challenging each other at a game of sports, where all players on the field have agreed that the values at stake are worthwhile the game. These underlying values, the *doxa*, unite all players, which nevertheless doesn't stop the participants from fighting for a high position, which will give the symbolic power to make one's own particular take of the *doxa* legitimate. This struggle results in a strict hierarchy of interdependent positions (Bourdieu 1992:127ff.,214; 2005:37).

Regarding lifestyle experts, these may gain a high position by either having the authority of being "one step ahead" regarding taste or by having become famous through media (Lewis 2008:9). Accordingly, it is beneficial for a social media lifestyle expert to also be a *micro-celebrity*. By strategically creating an active public persona, a micro-celebrity aims at attracting and keeping an audience (Marwick & Boyd 2010:121f., Marwick 2015:333). Having gained a high position in a field enables the promotion of the own views for others to follow (Bourdieu 2010:370). In an

¹¹ The validity of such a reading of cultural intermediaries is further strengthened by, for example, the upcoming symposium "Cultural Mediators in the Digital Age", September 2018 (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57eba5516b8f5be752cb5aeb/t/5a8186149140b73f5d6c1501/1518437908773/CMDA+CFP+2018-SCL.pdf>) or by Piper's (2015) study on Jamie Oliver as a cultural intermediary.

¹² According to Pham, for instance, the advertising industry regards YouTube vloggers as "influencers" when they have the cultural authority to make others value the brand they are representing (Berryman & Kavka 2017:307).

ambivalent way lifestyle experts thereby stress their distinctiveness, while simultaneously insinuating that there's no distinction (Lewis 2008:9f.) – once again giving the illusion of individual choice. People in lower field positions will thus strive to imitate the lifestyle of those higher up, with the hopes that some of the higher positioned's good taste will rub off on them and enable them to rise. This imitation however, also tends to make the imitator too self-aware to get across with the same ease as the cultural intermediaries they strive to copy (Bourdieu 2010:324,339). Newcomers to a field, on the other hand, may not seek to imitate, but rather to push through their own views in an attempt to change the field. Those currently dominating a field will try to prevent such attempts (Bourdieu 1992:127,214). Regardless, over time, such constant struggles will eventually make fields change (Schultz 2008:14).

All in all, it can be said that while Bourdieu's concepts originally are very class focused, the logics of his field theory can be adjusted to be used as a tool for investigating, for example, the journalistic field (Schultz 2008), the field of fashion (Rocamora & Smelik 2016), or indeed the *field of food vlogs*. Through such an application, field theory can moreover, not only be used to examine how specific fields function, but can also contribute to a more general understanding of field mechanisms (Bourdieu 1992:127) – which in turn can tell us something about how cultural production and symbolic power work in society.

Some implications for the study of “What I eat in a day” vlogs

As late as in the 2000s food studies constituted no field of their own and had a low academic status, both in an international and Swedish academic context. Today, there is a growing field of food studies, and while most research remains focused on nutrition or on medical, political-economic and psychological aspects of eating, socio cultural approaches are expanding as well (Poulain 2017:128; Tellström 2015:10; Warde 2016:1-16,58).¹³ This growth of socio cultural research on food and eating generally, and in connection to media specifically, indicates that there's still a lot to investigate, while it simultaneously confirms that a study on “What I eat in a day” vlogs is up-to-date and in demand and will assist in mapping our (new) digital foodscapes.

¹³ This is probably also a consequence of food having become an ever bigger issue in society and media, accordingly making it a more likely research topic. The bigger academic interest, for instance, gets visible in the journal “Food, Culture and Society” which, since its establishment in 1996 has had a continually growing amount of articles published each year (<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rffc20/21/3?nav=tocList>).

The interest is also mirrored in, for example, a call for papers (May 2018), for a guest edited issue of *Commentary and Criticism Essays* on “Feminism and Food Media” (<https://aasrn.wordpress.com/2018/02/18/call-for-papers-feminism-and-food-media-feminist-media-studies/>) or in the upcoming “1st biannual conference on food and communication” in September 2018 (<https://foodanthro.com/2018/03/19/the-1st-biannual-conference-on-food-and-communication/>).

Additionally to the need for socio cultural research angles, there is also a need to de-individualise (diet) lifestyle choices. These are, as shown, usually presented as choices based on individual taste and ambition, which thereby seem to promise the possibility of unlimited self-betterment and status accumulation for anyone with the right mindset. However, such a perspective clouds structural issues. Thus, the individual lifestyle-diet choices need to be positioned within society, culture and media, all of which (re)produce dominant values affecting the choices. At the same time it's crucial to remain aware that such structures are constituted precisely by individuals and their decisions. This study strives to do justice to that balancing act by using practice theory in combination with structuralist and cultural perspectives. In that way the vlogs as texts can highlight cultural food aspects, while wider societal food practices can be detected by looking at their incarnations as individual eating performances represented in the vlogs.

Before turning to how this study has been conducted, however, some decisions regarding the exclusion of possible angles and research sites need to be briefly addressed. To begin with, a gender perspective on the "What I eat in a day" vlogs would have been interesting, especially as food and the domestic sphere, historically, have, and still do, carry feminine associations. By bringing the "masculine" into these spaces, boundaries and values get renegotiated (Lewis 2008:6,29,45f.). However, aside from the fact that there has already been conducted quite a lot of research on gendered eating (e.g. Woolhouse et. al 2012) and gendered cooking (e.g. Holm et. al 2015), this study aims at investigating mechanisms of mediated eating practices which cut through all vloggers, regardless of gender. Apart from gender issues, commercialisation on YouTube and vloggers as influencers could also have been examined. However, none of this study's vloggers actively impersonate one particular brand, making those angles go beyond the scope of this research. Furthermore, apart from the chosen research sites of the text itself and its online reception in the comment section, a production study could have been fruitful, particularly in order to investigate other aspects of Bourdieu's field concept, such as capital and habitus. Finally, a reception study, examining whether or how, followers put advocated eating lifestyle-diets into practice could have been enriching. However, for this study, both a production and extended reception-site approach would derail too far from the focus on how the vlog, as a co-produced, publicly available text on YouTube contributes to (re)produce food culture in a society characterised by mediation processes.

III: APPROACHING THE CASE OF “WHAT I EAT IN A DAY” VLOGS

Now that the study has been positioned within its theoretical context, providing external validity, the internal validity needs to be ensured too, regarding transparency of the research process. Therefore, this chapter will first turn to the world-view, the methodology, underlying this study’s knowledge-production, and then to the methods, the actual tools needed for conducting the research.

Socially constructed eating practices

What makes human culture such a complex topic to study is that what defines it, is mostly invisible, accepted as normal and hidden in everyday habits (Altheide 2013:6). Nevertheless, these socio cultural structures, which we experience as natural in our lives, can’t be taken for granted and need to be critically investigated as they are constructed (Seale et al. 2004:8f.). This, however, doesn’t imply a search for an underlying “truth” or universal explanation of human behaviour, as any external reality is beyond human senses. The instance a person tries to describe the external reality, it becomes an interpretation and, once again, is turned into a social reality (Burr 2003:4,13; Inglis 2012:93ff). Therefore, rather, as advocated by pragmatism, there’s a need to investigate people’s takes on reality and how we together construct culturally and historically specific worlds (Baert 2005:130, Burr 2003:7ff.). Eating practices, for instance, vary a lot across time and place, showing there’s no inherent “truth” of what or how to eat. However, every culture does construct its own guidelines and values and thereby a “right“ way of eating.

Social sciences pursue precisely that goal, to make underlying structures more apparent by becoming society’s “nose, eyes, and ears” (Flyvbjerg 2001:56ff.). By depicting the world’s social construction awareness can be raised towards how no current state of being, and no taken for granted routines or practices are carved out of stone or, indeed, unchangeable (Burr 2003:2f.,13; Couldry & Hepp 2017:27; Warde 2016:138). To reach such knowledge, however, contextualisation is crucial. Case studies form a solid base from which to start, generating situated and reliable knowledge. The deep and specific understandings of a limited case can moreover be transferred to wider socio cultural processes, thereby generalising the produced knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2001:66,140). One major contributor to the simultaneous construction and expression of culture are texts, which thus become excellent cases with which to investigate human meaning making and reality construction (Altheide 2013:5).

One way of looking at food vlogs is through the methodological lens of practice theory. Through it practices are seen as individual performances, yet also as embedded in structures, like customs and routines, which partly put the practitioners on “auto pilot” (Postill 2010:1ff., Warde 2016:32). In order to investigate these structures, aspects from structuralist perspectives need to be added, which entail that there are underlying systems of cultural meanings and rules, which navigate people through their lives (Warde 2016:26, Poulain 2017:124). For instance, in this view, food as a language, conveys codes which mirror bigger societal patterns (Douglas 1972:61). However, in accordance with practice theory’s methodology, such structures shall not be viewed as all-determining. Rather, the individual performance is also recognised, by adding aspects of cultural perspectives, the methodology of which assumes that humans as cultural beings constantly are engaged in cultural meaning making (Du Gay 2013:xvff.). Such cultural production, for example, takes place when eating practices are turned into representations by being posted on YouTube. Thus, even if the methodological view-points of these three perspectives are not in agreement, new phenomena, such as mediated eating practices, may benefit from new combinations of perspectives. As Fay (1996: 223f.,238) points out, the choice of perspectives doesn’t have to imply an either or situation. Instead, a merging of perspectives can prove to be constructive and complementing, as it creates new frames, or ways of seeing.

However, I’m of course not saying that I, as a researcher, am somehow aloft and outside of society, able to see invisible structures no one else sees. Rather, I’m embedded in socio cultural frames just as much as everyone else.¹⁴ The mere fact that I’m interested enough in food, not only to cultivate my own sourdough and get inspiration from online recipes, but also to write my thesis about eating practices, shows that I too have gone along with the increasing food interest of contemporary Western societies. But as Bourdieu (2010:4) points out, even if everyone is embedded in the inescapable “game of culture” through the use of theories [and methods] it becomes possible to glimpse the mechanisms of how this “game” works. Moreover, in order to conduct qualitative research – a social activity in itself – it’s not a drawback to be socio culturally coloured as long as it’s handled self-reflexively. Quite opposite, it actually enables the subjective researcher to understand the world which she or he studies (Altheide 2013:13; Flyvbjerg 2001:32f.,81). Hence, being embedded in Swedish eating practices and routines, as well as engaging with mediated food, gives me, as a researcher, the means to “read” the language I’m investigating. By combining that skill with the use of theories it becomes possible to look deeper into taken for granted, underlying mechanisms.

¹⁴ As Fay (1996:72) states, all knowledge is connected to frames, through which humans see, understand and express the world.

How to examine online eating practices

One such means for making sense of underlying processes and structures is hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation (Bazeley 2013:203). Additionally, qualitative methods are suitable for understanding human meaning making and reality construction (Altheide 2013:1f., Brennen 2012:4). Thus, for a deep qualitative analysis, Hill (2012:304,314) recommends staying open-minded, situating the research and combining various methods. The method used for this thesis, consequently, is an hermeneutically inspired qualitative textual analysis, incorporating elements of narrative and visual analysis, applied on the case study of “What I eat in a day” vlogs and their comments.

Through the use of a case study the research becomes situated and close to lived realities (Flyvbjerg 2001:72). This makes it easier to understand people as “embodied, emotional, interactive [... selves], striving for meaning in wider historically specific social worlds” (Plummer 2001:255). Yet, the aim is not to investigate the individual vlogger, but underlying, shared mechanisms. Therefore, the vloggers can rather be seen as what Torkkeli, Mäkelä and Niva (2018:15f.) term “carriers of social practices”. In order to investigate the carried practices, especially filmed research material can be fruitful, as it allows both sayings and doings of actual practices to be studied (ibid.: 15f.). This makes video-vlogs a suitable choice of case study, especially as the vlogs yield the additional advantage of having been created unaffectedly by me as a researcher. Rather, the vlogs embedding in YouTube generates a further situated context.

Regarding the concrete procedure, the first step was the decision to only use Swedish “What I eat in a day” vlogs. This delimitation was made in order to ensure an adequate contextualisation of the vlogs, which would enable the investigation of changing eating practices within the frames of a specific culture.¹⁵ Subsequently, an extensive search on YouTube was started in order to make sure the whole panoply of different Swedish vlogs was found, including less popular videos. While some vloggers may have been missed, the search was stopped when the same vlogs repeatedly turned up in different searches and the vlogs’ content started to resemble each other, indicating saturation. Out of the resultant 56 vloggers a strategic sample of 16 vloggers, with 28 vlog-videos amongst them, was selected by creating vlogger-profiles. These profiles allowed the detection of distinct examples and thereby ensured a diverse array of lifestyle-diets. The time span was set from January 2016 to

¹⁵ Of course YouTube is international and Swedish vloggers and followers will not limit themselves to Swedish vlogs. However, the other way round, only people speaking Swedish can take part of the Swedish vlogs. (Vlogger Sv3rige is the only one to speak in English in my sample).

February 2018 to ensure up-to-dateness, yet also enough time for comment accumulation. Thereafter the chosen vlogs were watched repeatedly, their sayings transcribed, their doings described and the resulting texts descriptively coded and turned into preliminary categories.^{16 17}

As people, through narratives put their experiences into coherent stories, one can achieve insight into people's most basic way of making sense of the world by looking at narratives (Bazeley 2013:201ff.; Plummer 2001:185). Therefore, a more specific coding, in the form of a small narrative analysis was added. Through it, each vlogger's day narrations were mapped, resulting in a list of eating routines and meals, from which more preliminary categories arose.¹⁸

Besides the sayings and doings, another major part of the vlogs are their visuals. As Plummer (2001:59ff.) points out, visuals have become a central part of how people document their lives, for instance through filming. Such films [or vlogs] become ideal research texts, as they provide records of life lived. In the case of online eating the imagery becomes particularly important, as it's the main access to virtual food, deprived of taste and smell. Loosely lead by Rose's (2016:56-81) guide for compositional interpretation, the visuals therefore first were put through a "literal description", followed by "associations", from which preliminary categories crystallised.¹⁹

Finally, as Hall (2013:xxviff.) points out, it's in "shared cultural spaces" that meaning and reality are produced amongst senders and receivers through the use of a mutual language. For this study, that meant that not only the vlog-texts needed to be investigated, but also the comment sections, as the vlogs derive part of their meanings from the interaction with followers.²⁰ Thus, all 28 vlogs' comment sections were read completely (on average 270 comments per vlog) and coded descriptively, which resulted in the last preliminary categories.

At this point, after all the empirical material had been gathered, openly coded and sorted into preliminary categories, the findings needed to enter into dialogue with theoretical concepts. Through an abductive approach a balanced give-and-take of empirical material and theoretical

¹⁶ Sound and music was also acknowledged during the transcription, but didn't turn out to add anything significant enough to become an own area of investigation for this study.

¹⁷ Please see "Appendix 2: Selecting a strategic sample" for more details and data information, as well as an example of a profile. See "Appendix 8: Complete sample of the "What I eat in a day" vlogs" for more information on each separate vlog, "Appendix 3: Excerpt of one translated transcript" for an impression of how sayings and doings were approached and "Appendix 6: Preliminary categories", for an overview of all the preliminary categories.

¹⁸ Please see "Appendix 4: Mapped day narratives" for a detailed list.

¹⁹ Please see "Appendix 5: Example of one visual analysis" for more details.

²⁰ This, in a sense, results in double hermeneutics, which means that other's interpretations are interpreted (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015:354) – which is exactly what is done when interpreting followers sense making of vlogs.

knowledge can be facilitated, as, similarly to the human way of thinking, one draws on previous experiences or concepts in order to interpret new occurrences (Bazeley 2013:336; Peirce 1903). As Rivas (2012:375) suggests, descriptive categories need to be turned into explanatory categories. Therefore, the preliminary categories of sayings, doings, visuals and comments were merged, complemented with theoretical concepts and so turned into categories. This simultaneously became the first step of analysis. In accordance with the abductive approach, the analysis too, became an interplay of empirical material and theories. Some of the theories used, naturally, stemmed from literature I had previous knowledge of, while other concepts were added, in accordance with the direction the empirical findings were pointing towards.²¹ In this way, gradually the four categories “front stage presentations”, “staged backstage presentations”, “style and status” and “ideologies and belief-systems” took form. Eventually, the final step was to fashion more abstract themes from the explanatory categories (Rivas 2012:376). At this stage further reading, as well as going back and re-watch the vlogs became necessary, in order to once again, through dialogue between theoretical concepts and empirical material, switch between understanding parts and seeing the bigger whole. In the end, the themes turned out to be “The performance” (both as a literal performance and as an instance of a practice) and “Regimes” (underlying guidelines arising out of moral imperatives).²²

Ethical considerations

When collecting and using data from the internet, ethical considerations are just as important as research conducted offline. What is written and shared online can be said to reside in an in-between state of private and public (Waskul & Douglas 1996:130f.). However, Hookway (2008:105) suggests that even if what has been written on a blog [or said and showed in a vlog] may be personal, a blogger [or vlogger] always has an audience in mind during production. While the “What I eat in a day” vlogs are personal, they’re also clearly intended and produced to be watched in order for the advocated lifestyle-diets to spread. Nevertheless, the data was, of course, treated carefully, in order to not harm the vloggers or represent them in any disrespectful way. Regarding the commentators, I decided to anonymise them to ensure their integrity, especially as their individual identities, in their role as vlog-mechanism-exemplifiers, become secondary.

²¹ For example the concept of foodies was one such empirically inspired theory that got added quite late in the research process.

²² Please see “Appendix 7: Overview of themes, categories and subcategories” for more details.

IV: PERFORMING FOOD

For a vlog to work it needs to follow vlog-logics of “communicative performances”. These direct the vlog to foremost become a vlogger’s self-presentation, and only secondary a conveyor of content (Nørgaard Kristensen & Christensen’s 2017:241). “What I eat in a day” vlogs, consequently, are not merely about communicating food, but also become performances of lifestyles. Leaning on the genre of reality TV the “What I eat in a day” videos show personal, everyday experiences of food and eating habits, as they happen. The reality TV elements are supplemented with aesthetics borrowed from lifestyle media and particularly TV cooking shows. These aesthetics together with the narratives of the filmed eating practices and underlying symbolic meanings form representations – a kind of food language, which partakes in constructing the reality of lifestyle-diets. The lifestyle-diets themselves are presented by the vlogger in a mix of front and backstage performance. As Goffman (1956) points out, through impression management performers choose what to show and in which way to perform themselves on their front stages. However, for the “What I eat in a day” vlogs to feel authentic, at least some insight is required into the backstage. This is granted, firstly, by the vloggers showing their homes and ordinary everyday lives and secondly, by them giving insight into what they see as morally acceptable lifestyle-diets.

Narrating food practices

Telling about life is different from experiencing it. Yet, telling stories is a fundamental part of how humans make sense of the world and their lives (Plummer 2001:86,185). The “What I eat in a day” videos are one such way of making everyday practices meaningful, by putting them into the form of day-narrations.

Inserting what is eaten into the structure of an (ordinary) day moreover connects individual food choices to a wider collective practice of how and when to eat. As Warde (2016:6,42,83) points out, practices are repetitious parts of everyday life, which are collectively appropriated and carried out without a lot of thinking. Each individual appropriation of a practice becomes a performance, which needs to stick to certain standards in order to be recognised as part of a particular practice. Three such main standards for embedding the performance of eating in routines, are “occasion” (time, place, company), “menu” (food content and meal format, resulting in dishes) and “techniques of incorporation” (Warde: 2016).

Concretely, the first act of the performance is staging the morning. That it's early is indicated by the vlogger lying in bed, coming from the bedroom, not being fully dressed or having messy hair, by the use of natural lighting, the greeting of the followers and the preparation and eating of the first menu of the day - breakfast. The day then takes its course, all vloggers pursuing different activities, yet all displaying a similar structuring of the day through lunch, dinner and often one or two snacks. Finally, the day ends with the vloggers heading off to or filming themselves in bed. The lighting now tends to be very dark, indicating it's time for sleep. Such a day-narration shows there is a basic, collective routine²³ of eating times, the internalisation of which gets further confirmed by the vloggers' need to justify themselves if they should violate the routine: "Now it's one o'clock so this is actually totally wrong [...] but I've been up all night yesterday so it gets wrong now, but I'll pretend it's morning, ok?" (Kristian Taljeblad 2017; 01:10).²⁴ Without this breakfast-catch-up the "What I eat in a day" narration would be incomplete. But outweighing that, eating at the "wrong" time means dis-attaching personal eating habits from collective meal patterns (Warde 2016:71). For example vlogger 2GETHER's (2017; 3:25) statement, "I have to eat now. Because soon we'll eat dinner, like, so I really have to eat lunch", indicates that skipping lunch is unacceptable as it would put her out of sync with everybody else, but especially with her boyfriend with whom she intends to have dinner. This shows how socially constructed patterns of meal-times have come to feel "natural" and necessary, regardless of feeling hungry or not, and most vloggers follow them out of habit.²⁵

Depending, not only on when, but also on where and with whom, very different food-occasions arise (Warde 2016:61). For instance vlogger Emil, when alone, eats in a wholly functional and mindless way at his desk in the hallway while working on his computer. But when his girlfriend arrives, and they eat dinner at the dining table, with lit candlesticks, the meal becomes symbolic, communicating romance and presence (Wilma & Emil 2016; 02:46). But also what the actual meal consists of is crucial. Vlogger Sv3rige's (2016; 2:50) habit, for example, of eating a piece of raw meat whenever he feels hungry, isn't what most contemporary Western people would call a meal. As Douglas (1972:67ff.) states, certain structures need to be followed in order for a meal to

²³ Routines are tasks or activities that a person has become used to always perform in the same order. Routines that are collective become customs (Warde 2016:129). The "three meals a day" pattern, established in Western Europe since the 16th century is one such custom (Higman 2011:156).

²⁴ All vlog quotes, except for those from vlogger Sv3rige, who uses English, have been translated from Swedish by the author.

²⁵ It actually takes a conscious effort to break these rules. Because of vlogger Sv3rige's (2016; 02:50) conviction, that humans should live more "naturally", he aviates from putting his food into a day-narration and merely presents the daily amount of meat he consumes, stating that: "I don't have an exact eating schedule or something, so if you care about exact times I couldn't possibly tell you".

legitimately be called so. Therefore, a meal is only perceived as a meal if it's performed at certain times with certain menus (Warde 2016:60). Of course, what classifies a meal as "legitimate", is not inherently given, but gets defined by structures created through repetitive habits and behaviours deemed as admirable (Douglas 1972:67ff.).

One such structure, established in traditional Swedish culture, is that a "real" main dish needs to be warm and consist out of potato, meat and (cooked) vegetables, accompanied by sauce, turning an arbitrary structure into an unwritten, taken for granted rule (Tellström 2015:215ff.). Such rules form languages, which for instance make it possible to communicate the eatability of new dishes. By imitating existing structures, for example, new dishes get more acceptable (Poulain 2016:156). Vlogger Jessica Pamlin's (2017b; 04:30) dinner of oven-baked nachos (instead of potato), soy minced meat (instead of meat), raw salad (instead of cooked vegetables) and dip (instead of sauce), keeps the main structure and thereby ensures it's identifiable as a main dish.

Such behaviour, where individuals make small changes (which might potentially become socially accepted and thereby the new taken-for granted state of things) illustrates how, while people tend to see their contemporary society as completed and taken for granted, it's always in a process of making (Elias 1978). Consequently, behaviours and actions are moulded and facilitated by structures, while these structures simultaneously are created by people's activities (Shove, Pantzar & Watson 2012: 3). This, in turn fabricates the dynamics of culture. Diets and eating habits too, are caught up in such dynamics of change. The vloggers, for instance, (mostly)²⁶ present their cooking and diets embedded in recognisable patterns of eating-times, eating-manners (using plates and cutlery) and food-preparations and thus make any "new" elements in their diets seem less alienating. For example, if a traditionally typical Swedish breakfast could be oatmeal porridge, the vloggers might latch on to this by enhancing the porridge with toppings, by exchanging the oat for chia or buckwheat, or by keeping the oatmeal, but turning it into the form of pancakes. Thereby the vloggers guide new ingredients or formats through, what Tellström (2015: 96f.) so aptly terms, *food limbo*.

This also illustrates how humans, while liking structures which give security, at the same time are curious and wish for new experiences (Jansson 2001:124). In regard to new food, Poulain (2016:71f.) bases such ambivalence on humans' biological urge to eat diversely while simultaneously facing the need to keep the eating habits in accordance with prevailing cultural

²⁶ Vlogger Sv3rige (2016; 01:07) for example refuses cutlery and "simply eat[s] the meat with [...his] hands as we are supposed to" and, following the same line of argument that contemporary eating habits are not "natural", also rejects to cook his meat: "Everybody in nature eats raw meat [...] Cooking is very new. All animals eat their food raw" (Sv3rige 2016, answer to a comment)

agreements of what's eatable. Thus, even if new food always starts in limbo, it will become categorised as either eatable or uneatable within a community (Tellström 2015:97f.,169). When vlogger Therese Lindgren (2016b; 02:05) expresses that, "I had no idea of how to prepare it [gnocchi] or how it tastes or how you eat it in the first place. But the way I did it turned out to be really yummy", she takes a new food item and guides it out of food limbo. However, such an individual assessment still needs to get legitimised. In this regard, the comment sections serve to reflect whether a vlogger's classification gets accepted. For instance, one follower comments: "I tested this gnocchilunch and it was very, very good!" (Therese Lindgren 2016b). On the other hand, food classified as eatable by a vlogger may just as well get dismissed, if it deviates too far from the norm, as another follower's comment, on vlogger Sv3rige's habit of eating raw meat, illustrates: "Do you ever worry about getting parasites or diseases? Cause [...] there's probably a reason no one eats it [raw meat] like that" (Sv3rige 2016). Thus, not only the food items themselves, but also the state they're in get considered when determining their eatability.²⁷

Overall, as Warde (2016:43) states, other people's evaluations of individual performances play a major part in either legitimising or dismissing the interpretations of a practice. The vlogs thereby also shape reflexivity regarding what we eat and provide a platform to discuss, for instance how to banish meat into the category of un-eatables:

One follower: "I wish I [...] had the possibility to become vegetarian 🙄 but my dear father serves meat each day"

Another follower: "I had the same problem, but now I'm vegan [...] It's really helpful to come with facts about all the pros" (Therese Lindgren 2016b; followers' discussion)

By the mere discussion, moreover, meat's taken for granted status as eatable gets disrupted and it passes into limbo. Consequently, what is seen as edible (which in turn is connected to how menus and food occasions are shaped) very much depends on routinised practices and customs embedded in societal structures, which can be ritual (e.g. meal-times), cultural (e.g. cooking meat) or symbolic (e.g. communicating romance) in their kind. However, every individual, besides wanting to keep these structures and customs in place as they give security, is also driven by curiosity and a drive for renewal which makes us change our eating habits slightly all the time. Vloggers contribute to make such individual changes spread wider, but only if they don't deviate too far from established practices.

²⁷ Since ancient times people have been putting up rules regarding what food ought to be eaten in cooked or raw form (Higman 2011:103). These habitual rules originate in both functional reasons, like food-safety or eased food consumption, as well as in reasons of pleasure, such as enhanced flavours and new tastes (Rundgren 2016:35).

Visually performing food practices

For a successful vlog-performance of the meals of the day, besides a narration, visually aesthetic food items and dishes are of immense importance. This is especially so, as Western societies have come to mainly rely on sight when interacting with the world (Rose 2016:3).

The aesthetic context

But not only the aesthetics of the food, also the context in which the food is presented plays a role. As Bourdieu (2010:70) states, a lifestyle is also represented through the looks of the home and the way a person dresses. Thus, the home and vlogger's personal appearance can be said to provide a "scene" for the food-vlog performance. Not all vloggers show all of their homes, but everyone shows their kitchens. The kitchen could be seen as a very private area. But as Willén (2012:86,160) points out, the contemporary trend of open plan homes, makes the kitchen a more social, visible space.²⁸ Of course all the vloggers' kitchens, open plan or not, become public spaces, serving as main scenes and may thus forward overarching themes, like airy whiteness (Gabriella Joss) or a more bohemian look (Anna Maja Astrid).

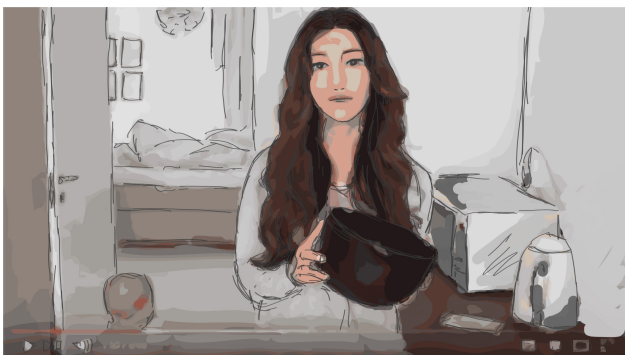


Figure 1: Gabriella Joss (2017; 01:50)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=Hb7OZDhNreo>



Figure 2: Anna Maja Astrid (2017; 01:18)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f10KeoAqGiE>

According to Willén (2012:90ff.) kitchens have, furthermore, become status symbols to show off one's food interest with, making the aesthetics more important than the functionality. Thereby beautified kitchens become one instance of the aestheticisation, which is going on in contemporary Western societies. Yet, while the kitchens do become aesthetic status symbols, their functionality, quite contrary to Willén's observation, is central for the vloggers, as they use their kitchens very much.

²⁸ In the old Swedish agricultural society, kitchens used to be a part of the "storstuga" – one big room which functioned as both living and cooking area (Willén 2012:160).

The other part of the context for the aesthetic performance is linked to the outer appearance of the vloggers, which, as they are presenting themselves to an audience, can be regarded as a conscious decision. The vloggers will think about what they are wearing, not least as it can be used as a narrative device: for instance a bathrobe indicating morning (Wilma & Emil 2016; 00:05) or heavier make-up accentuating the dinner as a more important food occasion (2GETHER 2017; 11:05). Besides that, the outer appearance helps to establish a *lifestyle package*, for instance by matching clothes with the environment of the home, like Gabriella Joss' clothes which are as colourless as her apartment or Anna Maja Astrid's more bohemian dressing style. Besides the outer shell of clothes, the body shape itself also becomes part of the performance. As Bourdieu (2010:188) suggests, the body becomes the most unquestionable materialisation of taste, exposing a lifestyle through physical appearance. In accordance with the current, Western body ideal, practically all vloggers showcase a slim or lean body.²⁹ Maintaining such a body shape supposedly only requires self-control, but at the same time structural factors do play a role. Time and money is required for a lifestyle which includes fresh food items, home-cooked meals and exercise (Higman 2011:200). By praising comments from followers, such as, "you are crazily beautiful 😊" (Therese Lindgren 2017) or condemning follower comments, like "Dumpy Doris" (Sara Nygren 2017), the vloggers' body shapes, and thus lifestyles get evaluated. Thereby the comment section partakes in (re)producing and legitimising the predominant body ideal.

Overall, as Douglas states, people use different objects, like clothes [and here also kitchens], as theatre-props while performing roles in the social game of life (Douglas 1997:143).

The aesthetic food

Now that the aesthetic backdrop for the visual performance is established, the food itself will be turned to, firstly as items being prepared and secondly as dishes during the process of eating.

Similarly to TV cooking shows, the preparation process in the vlogs tends to start with ingredients lined up on a kitchen counter.³⁰ As the kitchens are predominantly white and black the brightly coloured ingredients become the main focus. The first step of preparation is also influenced by

²⁹ As Poulain (2017:99ff.) points out, the aesthetic preference of the slim body began when food became an easy accessible item of abundance in Western societies. A body ideal which has now become omnipresent – one needs only to take a look at any magazine rack for confirmation.

³⁰ A wide array of different food items tends to be presneted, ranging from vegetables and fruits to packages containing everything from quinoa, eggs, pasta, protein powder to semi-manufactured products. The brands which are mostly clearly visible also emphasis the large amount of organic food which is used.

cooking shows, as it usually includes chopping food items, in fast-forward, focusing on the vloggers' hands (indicating handmade-ness) or presenting pre-chopped foods in small dishes, ready for use: “And I have, as one says in TV programs, pre-prepared a little, with vegetables” (Wilma & Emil 2016; 04:20). Preparations are followed by cooking, often including the use of various kitchen-machines, during which the vloggers, like TV-chefs, explain all the steps. Equally TV show inspired is the elimination of messiness (which unavoidably is part of cooking) through film cuts, during which assumably cleaning is done. While this approach leads to a more aesthetic result, vloggers showing more mess become less TV-like and more everyday-authentic.

Next, the food is set up for eating. In this context, especially the plate acts as a scene, or as a “cultural food space” (Tellström 2015:22). The plates, once again steer the focus towards the food, particularly as they are predominantly round and white, which puts a halo of purity around the food, or black, which intensifies the colours. The food is usually carefully placed in eye-pleasing arrangements on the plate.



Figure 3: Green Warrior (2018; 01:29)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vLgXgbNCc>

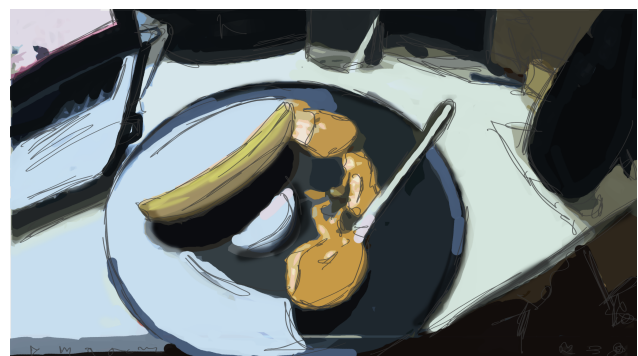


Figure 4: Sara Nygren (2017; 05:30)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7uIZY9y-DI>

For instance, vlogger Green Warrior’s (2018) sweet potato chilli is arranged circularly, forming a nest of rice, which encircles the red chilli topped by contrasting green hummus. The spinach and lime are equally contrasting and, together with some sprouts, serve as decorative toppings, resulting in an overall impression of harmony and cleanliness. Contrary to that, vlogger Sara Nygren’s (2017) banana-peanutbutter-snack is less carefully arranged and instead calls forth associations of sloppiness, aesthetic discordance and loss of control. Such feelings, according to Douglas (1997), are mainly evoked when disorder emerges. Even at a micro level disorder uncomfortably disrupts the illusion of an ordered and stable world. However, by for example arranging the food pleasingly, control can be gained over it and a sense of being in charge reconquered. Visual mastery becomes particularly crucial in connection to mediated food, as the consumption of “imagised food” out of

necessity is non-material. Thereby visual food consumption becomes dependant on an attractive surface, which needs to hide any “messy materiality” (Lavis 2015:1ff.).³¹ In this sense, the lighting, too, plays a major part in making the food look orderly and tasty. Generally, food presented in natural light looks more favourable, while interior lighting tends to make the food look dull, flat and oily. Hence, some vloggers are using professional filming equipment, like film-lights and reflectors to create seemingly “natural” light, which even is aesthetically superior to real “natural” light.

Finally, the last step is eating. Often there are extreme close-ups on the finished dish when the vlogger is about to eat, once more leaning on the visual language of cooking shows, which give the feeling of being in front of the meal oneself. Again, followers’ comments become a good indication whether the vlogger has managed to create a visually appetising representation of a dish, the highest accolade being when the food looks so tasty, that in order to get the whole experience a follower re-cooks it and thereby converts virtual into material food:

“Really, I saw your afternoon smoothie, I thought ‘hell I want one of those too’. I went to the store, made my smoothie and continued watching the video!” (Therese Lindgren 2016a; follower comment)

Some vloggers don’t eat their meal in front of the camera or just take a first bite, especially when eating with other people. This indicates that the act of eating may be too intimate for some to show in its full extent on their front stage, or that it would destroy the picture they perform of tidy, aesthetic surfaces, once more conjuring resemblance to cooking shows. The vloggers who do eat in front of the camera mostly eat very carefully, not spilling anything, taking small bites and using cutlery. This also illustrates that (table) manners do matter. And while individuals may violate these standards, even while doing so, they are aware that the standard exists. As Elias (1978:71ff.,144) points out, no table conduct is “natural”, but has evolved through what becomes perceived as embarrassing behaviour. For instance, when vlogger Sara ends up with food sticking out of her mouth she reprimands herself, by editing a text into her video: “Could I not have taken a bigger bite?!” (Sara Nygren 2017; 04:55).

During the visual performance, there is an overall, reoccurring pattern of a scale balancing aesthetics and authenticity. Everyday authenticity and being “like everybody else”, connect the vloggers with their followers. This can be exemplified through a follower’s comment: “With each video I thought, that ohhh my God, she [the vlogger] would be my best friend in real life

³¹ Lavis (2015:ff.) goes on to call these kinds of attractive food images “food porn”. However, as Dejmanee (2016:429f.) suggests, “food porn” is only one of many terms used to indicate “an aesthetic of excess”, and therefore not necessarily about sexuality, but rather about the extreme care going into producing food that looks appealing in every detail and will make the viewer feel desire when looking at it.

[...]!!” (Therese Lindgren 2016b). But at the same time the vloggers need to show that they have style and know about taste by aestheticising their everyday lives, making everything from kitchen, clothes, body shapes, food preparation and serving the dishes, to eating manners fit together in order to become someone to follow in the first place. However, if this is taken too far and becomes too TV-like, the vlog might be rejected: “Looks like a tv program, I don’t like that” (Therese Lindgren 2016b; follower comment). Or the followers may challenge the authenticity of what the vlogger is showing: “Well, don’t believe that people who do these videos and eat ‘healthy’ [...] eat like that all the time. [...] They only show off an exemplary day” (2GETHER 2017; follower comment). Thus, in general, while the vloggers need to present an aestheticised and stylised front stage on which they perform their lifestyle-diets, they also, true to the reality TV genre, need to show at least some parts of their backstages, which the next section will deal with.

V: LOOKING BACKSTAGE

As the word in itself indicates, a “performance” is a staged activity. Still, where there is a front stage there is a backstage too, where individuals hide what isn’t shown during a performance. Through such impression management people want to ensure they come across in the best possible way (Goffman 1956: 27,69f.). However, according to Hill (2014:70) a distinction can also be made between the actual backstage [in the case of the vloggers the off-camera realm] and a “middle region”, which is positioned between the actual backstage and the front stage. In the middle region a person chooses to reveal certain things in order give insight into the “real” self. This is a common strategy in reality TV, as it creates a sense of authenticity, shining through the acted performance. A vlog too, works in that way. It invites people to watch other people in the intimate³² surroundings of their homes, experiencing the ordinariness of the everyday while expressing their thoughts (Wesch 2009:21). The “What I eat in a day” vlogs moreover create this intimacy through food. As Higman (2011:149) points out, the ultimate show of inclusion is to offer others something to eat in a private space. The vloggers, of course, don’t physically offer food to their followers, but visually they invite them into their homes and let them “sit” at their tables, forming a new way of visually “eating together”. Yet, while it’s an intimate experience to be allowed into the vloggers lives, the vloggers

³² In Western societies the clear separation of the private home from the public sphere has been the rule (Thompson 2001:152).

are of course aware that they're making their homes public and will adapt their practices and behaviours accordingly. As seen in the previous chapters, all vloggers narrate their days carefully and try to perform themselves, their lives and food in visually aesthetic ways. Consequently, even the most intimate-seeming scenes are *staged backstages*.

Looking at the staged backstage through the process of filming

The filming and editing process means that the vloggers can do a further step of impression management. As people are aware of each others impression management, everyone tries to spot inconsistencies which allow glimpses into the “true” self of somebody (Goffmann 1990:18ff.). However, as the vloggers can check for these inconsistencies themselves, not only during the performance, but also in post-production, they leave very little opportunity for their communities to discover their “real” backstages. Simultaneously, or maybe to make up for this, the vloggers don't aim at hiding the fact that the scenes are staged, which, paradoxically, anew gives the impression of backstage access. For instance, vlogger Adam Larson (2016; 0:20) exemplifies this, when he comes into the kitchen with bed-messy hair, saying:

“Well it's bloody obvious with YouTubers, well like when I do things like this, then one knows that they have gone and put on the camera and then gone back and then gone forwards again only to sort of [...] well sure, it looks cool but if one thinks a little, then one is always aware of that they actually put on the cameras before they come in, sort of”

While Adam Larson seems confused by the practice of staging, such make-belief is necessary for any narration to work, even if both storyteller and audience know the shown is not reality. Of course, in the “real” world there is no intro indicating a new day has started, no happy, up-beat music accentuating cooking, no fast-forwards to skip the repetitious dullness of chopping vegetables, no outro for the evening and no like-buttons. The “What I eat in a day” vlogs thus are fiction, even if they aim at showing reality. As Bignell (2002:132) points out, realism in TV depends on the use of generic conventions. Every genre, furthermore, brings expectations of how the depicted, fictional world needs to work in order to create plausible and authentic realism, so called “generic verisimilitude”. This in turn determines whether people will perceive a performance as the “real” world they know from their everyday lives (Gledhill & Ball 2013:356). So even if Adam Larson could be seen to destroy the realism of his story by talking about the filming process, in another sense exactly that creates realism – the followers expect the vlogger to use a camera in order to narrate everyday experiences.

The performance of “being a vlogger” also becomes evident when filming equipment, like studio-lights or reflectors (Therese Lindgren 2016a; 05:13) are detectable. Furthermore it becomes apparent when the filming process itself becomes visible, for instance if the camera, held in the hand, gets in the way: “It’s hard doing this [frying minced meat] single handed I can tell you” (Wilma & Emil 2016; 04:21), or if the filming disturbs offline interactions: “Now I’m at work [in a bakery] and I’ll sort of eat lunch – [unexpected cut] Ok God, that was awkward, a costumer just came when I was saying that [...] God, he looked at me like I was mental [...] but, well, I mean, I’m just vlogging” (Jessica Pamlin 2017a; 08:25). All such glimpses into the backstage of filming only strengthens the feeling for vloggers and followers of sharing a mutual space. Mediated social interaction is of course not superimposable with an actual physical place (Thompson 2001:108). And for the vlogger the presence of the followers is time-delayed. Not until the ready vlog has been uploaded to YouTube, interaction becomes a possibility. Therefore, as Wesch (009:24f.) states, during the filming process the vlogger’s spoken words come to resemble an inner monologue, recorded in the safety of the home, encouraging intimate revelations. At the same time, not knowing who the audience³³ will be can create a feeling of awkwardness. Vlogger Sara Nygren (2017; 13:45) for instance shows some feelings of both awkwardness and intimacy:

“I’ll continue doing videos in vlog format, because I feel more comfortable with that, than just sitting down and tarding myself up. And like you see, I really look a mess, but it feels like less pressure and a little more relatable, well one doesn’t get so far away from those watching”

At the same time as the vlogger is alone with a yet imaginary audience during filming, in another sense it’s as if the future followers are within the camera. For instance, when she needs both hands, vlogger Filippa Mollstedt (2017; 01:45) tells the camera, and hence followers: “Now I’ll open the raspberries and you can stand here”. In the same time-detached way, later on the followers may feel as if they were present with the vlogger in the actual place of the vlogger’s home: “so nice hanging out at the stove :)” (Gabriella Joss 2017; follower comment). Thus, the vlogs become spaces of time-delayed co-presence where vloggers and followers feel as if the other part were “there”, which, once more, creates both a sense of closeness and strangeness.

Overall, the vloggers carefully choose how to narrate and perform their “What I eat in a day” vlogs. By lending the concept of a staged backstage from reality TV narration, the vloggers are able to be in control of the story they want to tell. Thereby, they create a narrative, which while staged, yet

³³ Although it has to be noted here, that some vloggers, especially those with faithful followers or an established community, probably have some sense of who they are addressing.

also is casual and backstagey enough to be *perceived* as authentic, “real” life without actually giving access to a “real” backstage.

Approaches towards boundaries

Another aspect of the backstage, besides the filming process, is the revelation of private eating practices. While the performance of cooking and eating may seemingly give a “neutral” account of what is eaten, it namely also provides hints at how food rules and boundaries are re(produced) and approached.

While a diary is usually a space in which people confide their most inner secrets, a vlog, as a public kind of diary, intended to be shared, only gets entrusted with certain intimate matters. This aspect of the vlog, the diary-like confessions made public, furthermore picks up on the “confessional culture” which has emerged from reality TV (Berryman & Kavka 2017:311). Confessions or revelations made by a vlogger are one way of giving insight into (chosen) parts of the “true” self. The anonymity of the future audience which arises due to its invisibility during filming in the security of the own home, can make it easier to reveal private everyday experiences and confess intimate matters (Wesch 2009:21ff.). For example vlogger Estonian Sisters (2018; 03:40) confesses: “After breakfast I’ll always have some sweets, you see, I don’t know why, but I always take something sweet”. Nevertheless, talking to a camera, with the knowledge at the back of one’s mind, that the finished vlog can potentially be seen by the whole world, makes a person self-reflective as to who one is and which image one wants to convey (Wesch 2009:21). Thus, once again, impression management takes place. For example Estonian Sisters could have chosen to not show and tell her habit of eating sweets after breakfast, but by doing so, she conveys to her followers that she is a “normal” person without inhuman self-constraint. Hence, such confessions are staged, because anything a vlogger might accidentally reveal, but not wish to make public, could easily be avoided by re-filming or editing in post production. Yet, even if staged, the confessions do also give unintended glimpses into the “real” backstage, as they hint at values and rules the vlogger is (unconsciously) attached to. As Seal (2000:169) puts it, confessions become a way of defining what is morally acceptable. And eating choices, for instance, are confirming people’s beliefs regarding food (Tellström 2015:57). Thereby, confessions partake in staking out boundaries of what is to be regarded as “good” food within different lifestyle-diets. For example, by confessing what she perceives as unhealthy snacking behaviour, vlogger Therese Lindgren (2016a; 08:00) reveals what is acceptable within her diet:

“There’s someone here in my block who makes french fries [...] because it smells so much french fries in my apartment and I like, oh my God, I just need to have french fries [...] And do you know what I’ll do? I’ll make some of these [french fry squares from her freezer] and sit here and eat. [...] Not a particularly healthy snack, but I’m so tempted. Honestly, damn neighbours.”

Therese Lindgren here uses her neighbours as pretext for breaking her own rules (although she already broke them by having fries in her fridge in the first place), which shows her need to excuse herself, which in turn indicates a codex of rules she feels bound to. As Lupton (2012:41) suggests, eating food that has been classified as “bad” results in guilty feelings. Confessions are one coping mechanism to seemingly regain control again (Seale 2002:169). Another such mechanism Therese Lindgren (2016b; 02:50) uses is to replace a craving – “I’m errrm ... craving sugar” – with something within her acceptable range of food – “so I ate a watermelon instead” – again hinting at unwritten rules guiding food choices. Where the lines of eatable and uneatable are drawn, however, is varying widely. While sugar and fries are categorised as bad by Therese Lindgren, vlogger Rawvegane (2016; 04:05) classifies raw vegetables with a persimmon-purée as: “really, this is such damn junk food”. Sometimes eating rules also get visible when vloggers confess their fear of misinterpreting their diets, indicating uncertainty on how to classify the food concerned: “These [chia seeds] are surely one such thing I consume to much, which might not even be good [...] I’ll surely die the chia death” (Therese Lindgren 2017; 02:10). Yet another way eating rules get illuminated is when vloggers refuse to abide them:

“You see, I eat a lot of junk food and stuff, but if one wants to live the good life, one has to eat well. So I do my thing. You go for exactly whatever you want to munch.” (Jessica Pamlin 2017b; 00:30)

However, this statement also shows how omnipresent certain unwritten eating rules are and that one needs to take a stand on them, even if one disagrees. For example, even if vlogger 2GETHER (2017; 04:50, 10:40) expresses how, “Everyone who makes these videos always just has like super healthy food [...] And, I mean, it’s true that the body sort of benefits from healthy stuff and blablabla but [...] to combine [healthy with unhealthy food], I think that’s the best, cause then the head is well, the body is well and one has a good life, I believe”. At the same time she feels a need to convey that she, too, is healthy sometimes and thereby still does obey predominant eating rules: “Then some days, I might just eat a salad [...] Well it totally depends”. This indicates that, while individual interpretations and rule-systems are theoretically possible, cultural negotiations, based on a shared language of how to “read” the world, are a strong force as they connect the individual to the community (Jansson 2001:91ff.).

Part of confessing, is of course also, that someone listens and judges the revealed (Foucault 1990:61). Here the vlogs go a step further than confessions in reality TV, insofar as the vlogs allow the followers to comment. By judging eating practices shown in the vlogs, followers, either by pointing out wrong food choices – “Bloody many calories, [...] even deficit of protein. If one eats like this one will weigh 3 digits in no time” (Herbivore Stories 2016a; follower comment) – or by refuting supposedly good choices – “Soy certainly is wholesome” (Therese Lindgren 2016a; follower comment) – partake in staking out the borders of what to eat, especially when different diets clash. When followers themselves confess own, bad eating habits, they furthermore acknowledge the vloggers interpretation of what to eat and in a way contribute to fixate those rules: “And here am I, making coco-balls ...fun 🤪<3” (Therese Lindgren; follower comment).

Thus, the followers’ comments, judgements and own confessions partake in approving or disapproving vloggers’ food choices and contribute to turn the vlog into an intimate, yet interactive public-diary-space, in which boundaries of “right“ food choices get negotiated. However, due to the vloggers’ awareness of this publicity, they will control and stage which confessions they make. Regardless, glimpses into the “real” backstage do shine through, as the revelations hint at underlying values and rules the vlogger is (unconsciously) attached to. How these boundaries concerning eating and food choices are approached gets visible when vloggers follow, but even more so, when they break against them. Through the vlogger’s choices (and the followers reactions to them) these rules get interpreted. Moreover, simply by being acknowledged, the rules are to some extent legitimised. Through what is *not* said underlying rule-systems, which will be looked at as regimes in the next chapter, can be glanced.

VI: TWO KINDS OF UNDERLYING FOOD REGIMES

In the previous two chapters the phenomenon of “What I eat in a day” vlogs has been mapped, establishing that the vloggers through their performances build a language with which to communicate lifestyle-diets and that vloggers and followers together negotiate boundaries of what to eat. The next step, therefore, is to scrutinise the underlying regimes and the moral imperatives constituting them, as well as investigate how they work, get defined and are used.

As mentioned earlier, even if there may be no obligatory food rules in contemporary Western societies, there are recommendations from various [increasingly mediated] sources, with rule-like undertones, undermining the idea of completely free choice of what to eat (Warde 2016:93f.). For instance, officially recognised food perspectives focusing on function and nutrition exist alongside discourses of animal welfare and sustainability and discourses of entertainment and (excessive) pleasure. As follows, there are a lot of factors and underlying moral implications to consider when choosing and optimising a diet, like body- and food aesthetics, cooking as a fun leisure activity, healthiness, fitness, environmental impact or animal welfare. All this confuses the issue of which food is the “right” to consume, creating a great demand for advice (Lupton 2012:41). The “What I eat in a day” vlogs become another expert voice in this jumble³⁴, albeit one which may feel personal, trustworthy and authentic as it leans on individual vloggers’ own everyday experiences as foodies. As such they, moreover, present themselves as knowledgeable and well informed food-enthusiasts and thereby as entitled to draw boundaries between morally admirable or objectionable food. This, however, shows that the borders are socially constructed and, what is more, therefore are based on various moral values, ranging from aesthetic principles to political ideologies (Johnston & Baumann 2010:65-68, 207f.).

³⁴ Both state and non-state advisers’ expertise appears all over the media. On the one hand, the Swedish government agency, Livsmedelsverket (National Food Administration) advocates a “plate-model” recommending which nutrients ought to be ingested (<https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/matvanor-halsa--miljo/kostrad-och-matvanor/tallriksmodellen>) and SVT (public service TV) airs documentaries like “Ren mat – den smutsiga sanningen” (2017) in order to halt “unscientific” food myths. On the other hand, services like Netflix present documentaries such as “Cowspiracy” (2014) or “Chef’s table” (2015-), newspapers and online forums and blogs offer diet advice and innumerable recipes, while commercial TV presents cooking challenge shows (“Sveriges mästarkock” TV4:2011-) or food reality shows (“Du är vad du äter” TV3:2016-).

Regime 1: Style and status

As shown in the previous chapters, a visually aesthetic performance of lifestyle-diets plays a major role in turning vloggers into people with taste and style worthy to look up, follow and listen to. This chapter will focus on visual taste, that is, aesthetics expressed through everyday eating and the positions on the field of food vlogs implicated by the moral imperatives resonating therein.

Appearances and pictures generally have become evermore prominent and valued in contemporary Western societies, giving visual surfaces a lot of power (Jansson 2001:135). Such an aestheticisation and stylisation of the everyday moreover pushes people to see themselves and their lives as aesthetic projects to be displayed (Featherstone 2007:84). By presenting a lifestyle package which visually showcases an aesthetic self, home and food vloggers implicitly provide moral pointers towards what they perceive as the “right” style and taste. One such underlying moral guideline is that visual appearance is of uttermost importance for keeping up an image of perfect taste, even more so, ironically, than actual, sensual taste. For instance, vlogger Therese Lindgren (2016b; 02:50) puts in time and effort to make an aesthetically mouthwatering dish, both regarding arrangement, colours and filming, finishing off the preparation with a tempting close-up.

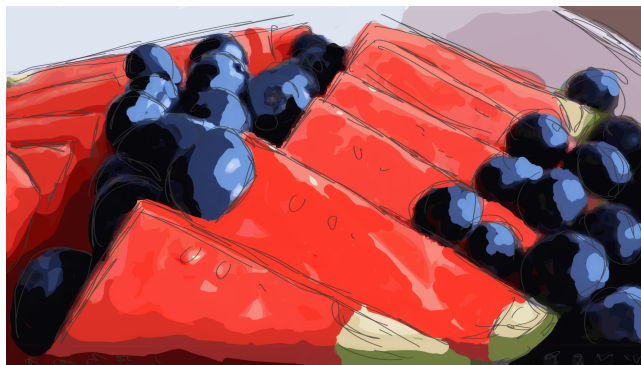


Figure 5: Therese Lindgren (2016b; 02:59)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcHIRDLcuSE>

However, then she says: “The watermelon tasted shit, but I forced down that half anyway”. This very clearly illustrates how the tangible taste comes secondary as Therese Lindgren (just like her followers) was left with a visual treat only. The underlying moral obligation to ensure visual tastefulness is always present, even when it is disobeyed. For example, at one point, vlogger Rawvegane presents a buckwheat porridge, which, “is not exactly the prettiest food, but it’s so incredibly delicious” (Rawvegane 2018; 10:15).



Figure 6: Rawveganesse (2018; 11:13)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_bMTvwlqfU

Rawveganesse's statement as well as her try to visually enhance the dish with vibrant slices of blood orange, indicates that she isn't only aware of, but more importantly, conscious of transgressing the implicit moral imperative by giving in to tastiness at the expense of aesthetic taste. Hence, clearly there are taste guidelines which should not be broken. Eaten food literally becomes a physical part of the body, but also mentally the cultural values attached to the food get transferred to the eater, mirroring that person's taste and lifestyle materially and symbolically (Bourdieu 2010:169; Poulain 2017:155; Warde 2016:26).

Theoretically, everybody who is enthusiastic about food can be a foodie (Johnston & Baumann 2010:14). Likewise, every foodie can start a vlog and evaluate food. However, as within each field, people occupy different positions and challenge each others interpretations. Nonetheless, every field has underlying values everyone needs to agree on to make the struggle worthwhile in the first place (Bourdieu 1992:214). In the field of food vlogs the doxa is that it matters greatly not only what a person eats, but also how visually aesthetic a diet is implemented. Which criteria decide whether food looks aesthetic, however, have at some point been socially constructed (Johnston & Baumann 2010:207). Therefore, while the concept of foodies encourages and theoretically makes it acceptable for everyone to express their food opinions, some of the tastes enjoy higher status (ibid.:xvff.). Accordingly, people may want to be advised by experts or cultural intermediaries presenting what is currently regarded as good taste (Bourdieu 2010:323). Vloggers can be such cultural intermediaries, who detect (for example through media) or create new lifestyle-diets, appropriate them into their own everyday and then, in turn, pass them on, in a personalised and therefore trustworthy version.³⁵

³⁵ As Eysenbach states, people will rather trust information from lay people who in some way seem similar to them and who apparently have been able to reach what they preach, rather than relying on for instance research (Simunaniemi et al. 2012: 66). In the "What I eat in a day" videos this gets tangible as the vloggers actually show their everyday experiences and their followers get to see the result in the vloggers' body shapes and happy-life-performances.

However, being able to have “good” taste is not seldom influenced heavily by life-circumstances, such as having the means and the time to live out food interests (Johnston & Baumann 2010: xvff.). For instance, meals made from scratch have become a status symbol in a time of easily available manufactured meals, as it requires money as well as time. Yet, additionally the meal needs to be home cooked because the cook, with pleasure, chose to do so, not because circumstances made it necessary (Willén 2012:106ff.). The same dish, accordingly, can position a vlogger differently on the field, depending on motivation, combined with the aesthetic outcome. Vloggers Herbivore Stories and Estonian Sisters both cook a one-pot-pasta from scratch.



Figure 7: Herbivore Stories (2016a; 01:20)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsQSAXkM_0M

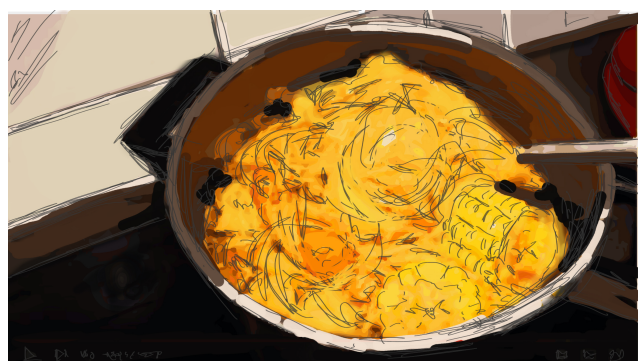


Figure 8: Estonian Sisters (2018; 11:31)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bvad0Z_Cak

But while Herbivore Stories motivation for choosing this dish is based on being a “lazy vegan” (Herbivore Stories 2016a; video description), indicating the cooking is everything but a burden, vlogger Estonian Sisters (2018; 00:50) explains that “Well it’s been Christmas and then it gets a little tight with money, you know right? But I have food on the table. That’s the most important thing”. This makes the latter dish ambivalent, as it simultaneously claims to be part of the foodie discourse as a “What I eat in a day” performance, yet was not cooked out of choice but necessity. Moreover, while both vloggers choose to present their pots in the making, the visual outcome looks very dissimilar. Herbivore Stories’ pot presents the food items at their best, looking neat, with embellished colours on a uniform background, while in Estonian Sisters’ pot the ingredients have become an entangled mess with everything roughly the same colour in front of a more heterogenous background. Allover, the first pasta communicates taste, style and skill, while the second indicates a lack thereof and almost comes to feel like a mimicry of a “What I eat in a day” vlog. This also happens, because people with lower positions on the field, who imitate those higher up, become self aware “presenters” who don’t get across with quite the same ease in their role as cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu 2010:324,339).

Other vloggers feel much more at ease in their role, indicating a high position on the field. For example vlogger Ida Warg talks about how she simply needs to “listen” to her body in order to know what she ought to eat. Ida Warg’s field position has provided her with the confidence of “knowing” about food and taste.

“I have done them [“What I eat in a day” vlogs] before and then it was very much like, oh, why do you eat this or that [...]. And please, I am totally in control of what I eat [...]. Some days I simply feel, today I only want to eat raw food [...] and then I’ll do just that. [...] My best tip is to always listen to the body” (Ida Warg 2016; 01:30)

The same goes for the aestheticisation of food, where originally constructed visual standards become part of how things “naturally” ought to be, like using nice plates or decorative toppings on everything. Self-evidently, each performance of a practice still takes place as a singular incident. But the execution itself is performed by people simply having come to “know” what is appropriate, without having to think (Warde 2016:57ff.,76ff.). Thus, a lifestyle, as a combination of reflectivity and routinised taken-for-granted practices, forms seemingly stable frames and makes it easier to make everyday choices (Jansson 2001:122f.). Yet, a vlogger, consciously engaging in turning her or his lifestyle into a performance to be published as a vlog, will be more self-aware and not unreflectingly cook by routine.

Moreover, through the struggle for high positions on the field a strict, yet unspoken hierarchy of interdependent positions takes form with similar positions forming groups (Bourdieu 1992:129; 2005:37). For example, the confident, more professional cultural intermediaries (some of whom earn their living with vlogging), form their own group, within which they legitimise each others’ status as food-lifestyle experts:

“Vlogger Anna Maja Astrid: You rock! I [...] have consumed all your [Ida Warg’s] food diaries in one go! Thanks for the inspiration [...]

Vlogger Ida Warg: Thanks darling and happy you dropped by :) <3” (Ida Warg 2017; comment section)

On the other hand, people in lower positions on the field – like new vloggers, vloggers with few followers, or followers (who don’t produce vlogs)³⁶ – will, as Bourdieu (2010:324,339) puts it, imitate lifestyles with the hopes of rising themselves. For instance, a follower (who also is a vlogger) asks high positioned vlogger Therese Lindgren: “Did you get the sweet potato mousse with chick peas from me? ;))<3”. To which another follower answers: “I don’t think so, she [Therese Lindgren] probably doesn’t watch your channel”. (Therese Lindgren 2016a; comment section). Had Therese

³⁶ Although the followers do become co-creators of the vlogs through their comments, that naturally doesn’t give them the same position as the main producer, the vlogger.

Lindgren been inspired by the follower-vlogger's recipe, that would rub off some of Therese Lindgren's status onto the follower-vlogger. This illustrates that the moral imperatives the professional taste-makers (re)produce and spread do work as others wish for recognition and want to become part of the promoted tastes' group.

By offering guidelines to follow, those highly positioned in a field, show off their high position and right to be taste-makers. Yet, simultaneously, they indicate anyone could rise in the field and become like them by adapting the "right" – namely their – interpretation of lifestyle (Lewis 2008:9f., Bourdieu 2010:324,370). For instance vloggers Herbivore Stories (2016b; 00:00-01:00) suggest that it's possible for everyone to imitate their lifestyle when they say:

“Viktor: Many think in order to be vegan one needs to be privileged, [...] because who has the money for all these expensive products? But in that case one comes from a faulty train of thoughts which is to [...] replace] animal products with the identical vegetarian version of the same kind of food, that is minced meat with soy mince [...]

Lisa: It becomes cheap if one cooks what one eats from scratch [...]

However, Herbivore Stories here, even by downplaying it, show off their high position. Firstly, they do so by assuming everyone has the time and skill to replace any ready-made with home-cooked food and secondly, by taking for granted that their followers will want their advice. As follows, the vloggers positions also depend on how their followers receive them. Because, as Bourdieu (2010:4f.,11f.) points out, groups on a field compete against each other in order to make their own world-view the predominant one. If there were no followers, the vloggers as cultural intermediaries would have no one to convey any cultural opinions to. Nevertheless, the vloggers constantly need to defend and update their positions and food vlogs in order to keep their followers. Because newcomers to a field may try to push through their views and change the field and its hierarchies (Bourdieu 1992:127,214). For instance vlogger 2GETHER (2017) states in her comment section: “I find that others who do such videos show a pretty skewed picture of what one ‘ought’ to eat and I feel that it’s important that people such as me can do these kinds of videos, too”.

Nevertheless, just demanding to want to be taken serious, doesn't result in a high position on a field. Rather, authority, like a good nose for taste or some kind of famousness are necessary (Lewis 2008:9). Accordingly, it's advantageous if a vlogger is a micro-celebrity, who actively creates and maintains a mediated version of the self, with which to attract and keep an audience [followers], by providing them with continuous content and interaction (Marwick & Boyd 2010:121f., Marwick 2015:333). Additionally to occupying varying degrees of micro-celebrity-ness the “What I eat in a

day” vloggers are also *ordinary experts* as their authority is rooted in everyday experiences. This combination leads to a new kind of cultural intermediaries.

One aspect which makes this mixture possible are the reality-TV elements, discussed earlier, which produce an emotional bond and a sense of authenticity (Hill 2014:159f.). Additionally, these feelings are enhanced by the immediacy of moving pictures, letting followers experience vloggers’ everyday life as if they were actually present (Berryman & Kavka 2017: 310,316). Such an (imaginary) virtual closeness can further be reinforced by combining personal content with commenting functions (Rousseau 2012:9). However, if the strategy to attract an audience gets too obvious or dominant, a micro-celebrity might be experienced as inauthentic (Marwick & Boyd 2010:128). One follower’s comment exemplifies just that: “The most kitschy food video in the world lol” (Therese Lindgren 2017).

Therefore, in order to ensure authenticity a micro-celebrity needs to interact with the followers for real, not just pretend to do so (Marwick 2015:345). In the “What I eat in a day” videos the interaction is ensured through various strategies, like direct address, answering questions, “taking” the followers along through the day or being active in the comment section of the vlog. This interactivity moreover contributes to create a “participatory culture” in which the audience is actively partaking in shaping any emerging community (Jenkins, Ford & Green 2013, Olsson & Svensson 2012). Hence, through closeness, immediacy, interactivity and community-building the followers get bound more tightly to their vloggers, which in turn legitimises the vloggers positions as trustworthy and entitled cultural intermediaries, thereby also adding weight to the moral imperatives the vloggers are attached to and convey. That the vloggers are accepted as tone-setters is confirmed by innumerable, admiring comments from followers, like: “wish I could be like you <3” (Therese Lindgren 2016a). This also shows that the moral imperatives the vloggers are promoting are working, as they are seen as goals worth aiming at. Not everyone, however, is able to live up to them:

“One follower: Love your food diaries, I get so much inspiration. But in many of the meals one is supposed to use for example, a whole package of mango [...]. In my family we can’t really afford to eat like that. What should I do?

Another follower: [...] For instance buy ICA basic and so on, gets much cheaper that way :)” (Ida Warg 2016; follower discussion in the comment section)

As is illustrated here, rather than not having huge amounts of fruits for stylish smoothies and aesthetic toppings, the solution is to search for cheaper options. The quote also shows how

followers interact and form a community, trying to help each other follow their vlogger's lifestyle best they can.

The underlying value everyone agrees on in the field of food vlogs, is that food and its aesthetics matter a lot and can be used to show a person's taste and status. Everybody who identifies as foodies can enter this field, but it takes effort and fighting to get to a high position. Such unspoken hierarchies thereby mark distinctions between different food vloggers, who are perceived as more or less entitled to intermediate lifestyle-diets, yet also promise the possibility of rising in its ranks through imitation of the morally "right" taste, which includes the stylisation and aestheticisation of food. However, in the case of vloggers doing "What I eat in a day" videos, the "right" taste is not enough. The taste needs to be mediated convincingly too, as the vloggers' positions also get acknowledged to a high degree by the followers, especially as it's the followers' comments which show that the moral imperatives the vloggers implicitly convey actually work. Hence, anew, the performance means balancing authenticity, closeness and emotional attachment with the demonstration of being distinct by taste and style. By simultaneously being an ordinary expert and micro-celebrity the vloggers can gain a high position within their field and become cultural intermediaries with the right to define what ought to be seen as tasteful lifestyle-diets. Thus, in an ambivalent way, as Lewis puts it, lifestyle experts show they are distinct and at the same time stress that there is no distinction (Lewis 2008:9f.). On the one hand the vloggers want to create a sense of intimacy and authenticity, stressing their normalness and closeness to the followers, while on the other hand their belonging to a distinct group of lifestyle- and taste-setters gives them status and may make their ways of life seem unattainable. In other words, it takes uniqueness to "become someone", because if everyone were exactly alike, there would be no distinctions.

Regime 2: Ideologies and belief-systems

Besides implicitly conveying moral imperatives regarding aesthetic taste and position through the performance of "What I eat in a day" videos, the vlogs are also expressions of the vloggers' more explicit moral belief systems of what "good" food or diets are supposed to be.

The definition of "good" food always includes moral considerations, some of which may be of political kind. In the foodie discourse the political issues mostly taken into consideration are animal welfare, sustainability and eating locally produced food. However, these issues are not automatically connected to being a responsible citizen, but are often based on a consumer ideology

and personal win-win situation³⁷, for example, while ecological food is environmental-friendly it may also taste better and be seen as healthier (Johnston & Baumann 2010:139-152,206). That most food-vloggers motivation is not mainly political, does however not mean there aren't deep-rooted beliefs beneath their diets. Especially so, as food and eating have become a form of secular religion to many people in contemporary Western societies (Tellström 2015:57). Having a belief provides a structure of guidelines regarding how to live life, replacing unpleasant feelings of uncertainty, and for that reason humans always strive to find a belief system to stick to (Peirce 1877:4f.). Two food-related belief-systems, to see the world through and adjust life after, are “veganism” and “healthism”. The next sections will, by using these ideologies, illustrate two mechanisms, namely how food-borders create beliefs and communities, exemplified by “veganism” and how the individual categorises food as worthy or unworthy, exemplified by “healthism”.

Veganism

Being vegan doesn't only mean following an animal-products-free diet, but carries with it moral implications of how to approach life, based on the belief that human animals have no right to use other animals in any way (Francione & Charlton 2015:3). The “What I eat in a day” vlogs provide a space for vegan vloggers to define and exemplify how they enact a vegan world-view. For example vegan vloggers Herbivore Stories combine their food preparation with giving information on why everyone should become vegan. But even if Herbivore Stories emphasise the political aspects of their diet, they still exemplify the win-win thinking:

“To be vegan sounds more complicated than it is. It doesn't need to be more complicated than any other diet. Eat plants. For the sake of the animals, your health, the planet and future generations.” (Herbivore Stories 2016a; 4:20)

As Johnston and Bauman (2010:134ff.,154f.) put it, foodies may care about the welfare of animals, advocate ecological food as better for earth and present themselves as knowledgeable on these matters, yet still combine such a view with a focus on health and tastiness. In other cases, however, the vegan belief-system is not understood at all, or disregarded, and the win-win situation tips completely over towards the individual's well-being. For instance vlogger Jessica Pamlin (2017a; 00:22) wants to “try out what it's like to be a vegan for a day”, but decides it's difficult, as the food she eats, like a dry bread without any spread, becomes drab and she concludes it's “hard to know

³⁷ According to Johnston and Baumann (2010:161) this may also explain why hardly ever social injustices are touched upon by foodies – as it becomes harder to construct a win-win situation. This illustrates that being a citizen is not the main aim, even when political issues are advocated.

how I should eat” (Jessica Pamlin 2017a; 10:04), thereby reducing veganism to a superficial diet-trend. The same happens when young vlogger Filippa Mollstedt (2017; 03:02), trying hard to be professional in her performance, explains how she mixes dairy-milk with non-diary YogOat because even if “it’s a bit strange [...] but it’s only because, well I don’t know, I take a little milk only to like, thin it down”. Her statement indicates that she has picked up veganism without really grasping the underlying ideology, as she mixes vegan with non-vegan products due to taste and texture.

However, what is morally acceptable as a vegan, isn’t only defined by the vloggers themselves, but also by their followers. Through comments it becomes possible to see whether a vlogger’s personal take on a moral imperative is embraced and thus working, disputed or outright rejected. Affirmative comments like, “SUCH a damn good video and incredible message [veganism]! When will more start getting that it’s. not. hard. You rock! <3” (Herbivore Stories 2016a; follower comment), partake in fixating the regime a vlogger is advocating and, what is more, may even partake in a potential spreading. As Warde (2016:145f.) suggests, a person doesn’t become vegetarian [or vegan] in an isolated environment, but a like minded, supporting community makes a diet change more probable. For example, one follower becomes inspired by vloggers Herbivore Stories to “eat less animal products” (2016a), while another follower asks them for direct advice on how to turn vegan:

“Follower: Why would one want to eat a dead animal we are not created to eat? [... I’m] now convinced that the vegan diet is the best. But my parents are not especially assured [...] Would need tips and advice on this [...]

Herbivore Stories: I understand it’s a challenge! [...] Explain to your mother that a vegan diet can vary a lot [...] Crisps and coke for instance are vegan, but that doesn’t mean it’s good for you” (2016b).

In such a dialogue it becomes visible how veganism as a moral imperative gets negotiated. The main arguments here are about the naturalness or healthiness of vegan diets, which thus in this case becomes the morally “right” approach towards veganism and not, for instance, animal rights. Within a strong community a belief may even become fixed to the point that it seems to be the universal truth (Peirce 1877:7). Being enlightened by the “truth” can cause life changes:

“You have totally changed my way of thinking. [...] I’ve now been vegan for some weeks and I have never before felt so good in my body [...] that change is even something people in my surrounding have commented on. I find you talk about veganism in such an incredibly inviting [...] way and it’s really rare you meet people who make you become a better version of yourself. And for that I want to thank you so very, very much!” (Herbivore Stories 2016a; follower comment)

But while following a belief may be comfortable as it gives peace of mind, humans’ social drive means interacting with other people, who may have other convictions and thereby un-fix beliefs (Peirce 1877:6f.). Humans interacting, thus, becomes part of negotiating moral imperatives. For

instance, one commentator accuses all vegans of double morality, pointing to the win-win situation incorporated in the kind of veganism advocated on the “What I eat in a day” vlogs:

“They [vegans] don’t make any difference because the fruits and so on are shipped anyway. And even if they are grown organically they are still fertilised artificially and destroy the soil. If you [vlogger Therese Lindgren] want to make a difference, stop living like a consumer whore!” (Therese Lindgren 2017; follower comment)

Other disputers are less concerned with the details of vegan, moral imperatives as they don’t agree veganism should be a regime in the first place: “[I] at least don’t have to care about the animals. Animals are so bloody tasty” (Therese Lindgren 2016b; follower comment). Accordingly, what a vegan lifestyle ought to be doesn’t only get defined within a community, but also by the clashing of different lifestyle-diet beliefs. As Higman (2011:149) points out, the refusal of the “others’ food” draws borders between groups. Diets become one such way of indicating who is part of a community and who isn’t (Johnston & Baumann 2010:33). For instance, in the comment sections, vegans are ridiculed and stereotyped by non-vegans as annoying, delusional, animal-loving people (Sv3rige 2016; follower comments) or even accused of being “mentally ill” (Therese Lindgren 2017; follower comment). This exemplifies how, from the attackers point of view, being non-vegan is seen as “normal”. However, what is defined as “normal” is always socially constructed and thus depends on the regime advocated and followed in a certain community.

While the vloggers' diets may be based on originally political ideologies, as exemplified by veganism, the fact that the vloggers are foodies also means the focus on taste and texture is at least as important, if not more so. The vloggers and their communities construct a belief-system out of a mix of values, which is then shared and defended against other lifestyle-diet beliefs, during the process of which boundaries are drawn regarding what the own belief is and what not.

Healthism

The healthism-belief, too, is mainly about moral responsibility towards oneself, focusing on “good”, health-improving food.

The more scientific approach towards food in the early 20th century, not only introduced food as built of nutrients, but also presented the idea, still in use, of measuring food as calories (Tellström 2015:147ff.). Hence, one moral imperative suggests that in order to be healthy, different nutrients need to be carefully balanced for the most effective diet:

“Well this is sort of a smoothie which is pretty easy to make, easy to ingest and one gets a lot of proteins and carbohydrates [Emil pours in protein powder]. With this you get yourself a substantial breakfast which is quick to eat and ... pretty tasty” (Wilma & Emil 2016; 1:50)

Taste, here, becomes no more than a nice side-effect. Instead, the main focus in the healthism-ideology³⁸ is to avoid any unhealthy choices which might risk bodily (becoming obese) and moral (losing control) integrity (King & Watson 2005:229, Lupton 2012:41f.). As follows, good health becomes proof for a life lived “right” (Lewis 2008:54f.) – as does a lean body. Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012:111) point out, how the two originally unrelated practices of eating and doing sports get connected through the goal of preventing obesity. Exercise then becomes a crucial moral imperative and part of cooking and eating practices, as vlogger Anna Maja Astrid (05:45) exemplifies:

“I’ve also changed into training clothes [...] as I want to be able to be bendy and also have a little jog-on-the-spot workout session [while preparing food] and if life just invites you to do a squat than I want to be prepared to just burst into it”

It’s almost as if she fears to get to many calories by just being in the kitchen³⁹, indicating that within healthism it’s just as important to get rid of calories as it is to let the right ones in. As Leichter (1997:366f.) points out, control and power over the own body shape and health condition gives a sense of security in a world which offers no such thing. On a personal level that consequently also means that the individual is responsible for evaluating which food is impure, damaging to the body and thereby potentially visual “proof” of living un-righteous (Douglas 1972:76f.). Vlogger Rawvegane (2018; 08:08), for instance, classifies all “soy-things” as inedible:

“Such stuff – miso, tempe, tofu – I’m totally unscared of [...] but] all these things which are artificial, soystuff, these processed things [...] they are just a big No-No.”

This is characteristic for contemporary Western societies, which value natural – that is ecological, seasonal, local, unprocessed – food items as authentic, therefore healthy and desirable (Tellström 2015:19,52f., Rundgren 2016:117, Johnston & Baumann 2010:23). Vlogger Anna Maja Astrid (2017; 01:40), for example, films how she especially drives to a small ecological farm to buy locally produced vegetables and berries. While originally, industrially produced food was welcomed as good, clean and safe, since the 1970s it has been perceived as “bad” due to the use of ingredients

³⁸ The ideology of healthism requires that the individual should act responsible in all lifestyle choices and constantly work on being healthy. The reward is supposedly a fulfilling life, while failure would lead to self-inflicted illness (Crawford 1980:368, 375ff.).

³⁹ This behaviour may even indicate a somewhat unhealthy attitude. Overly focus on trying to be healthy, often also in combination with excessive exercise, can turn into an unhealthy obsessions or eating disorder (Oberle, Samaghabadi & Hughes 2016:304).

like white flour, sugars and fats which have become connected to health problems – something which has made people suspicious towards food industries and politicians motivations (Tellström 2015:53, Rundgren 2016:106f.,117). Vlogger Sv3rige's (2016; 10:45) statement that “you live in an illusion [...if] you believe that your government wants you to be healthy [...] Reality is that they are trying to make us die and poison us”, is a radical take on the imperative advocating self-responsibility for the own health.

Even if most vloggers don't go that far, as foodies they are interested in the cooking process and prepare a lot from scratch. Beside the satisfaction of being creative (and being admired for that), the time invested in home cooking also gives more control over the ingredients.

“Above all I love to get inspiration for as ‘clean’ food as possible. I try to only eat semi-manufactured food once a day [...] because it's not especially good for the health.” (Therese Lindgren 2017; video description)

Vlogger Therese Lindgren certainly tries to live up to the moral imperative stating that non-industrial, home-cooked food is the best, and thus *clean*.⁴⁰ As Douglas (1997:10,54) states categories of clean and unclean are highly symbolic, as there is no universal “truth” behind them, but they rather signify a desire to maintain order. The moral imperative of eating clean hence makes it desirable to keep the own body (functions) in order by avoiding all *unclean* substances, which for one vlogger may be “fatty food, [...] processed stuff, white sugar, white flour and [...] dairy products [...] which] make us sort of clog ourselves” (Rawvegane 2018; 12:52) and for another “no gluten, no lactose, nothing which is tough for my stomach to digest” (Therese Lindgren 2016b; 1:00).

However, the individualism in deciding on what is healthy also leads to very different definitions of the healthism-regime. While for vlogger Rawvegane (2016; 03:57) raw vegetables with persimmon sauce become junk food, vlogger Jessica Pamlin (7a; 03:30) feels healthy because she skipped french fries at McDonalds'. Hence, it's not surprising that a lot of negotiation is taking place between vloggers and followers regarding what morally healthy food ought to be. Vlogger Estonian Sisters (2018; 11:55) declares: “Soup is always healthy”. But a commentator disagrees: “Soup isn't always healthy. You have fried everything, 3 bouillon chicken cubes, deep-fried spaghetti AND potato in that soup. Please”. In this example the commentator feels superior to the vlogger, but in most other cases the high moral standards the vloggers are keeping make the followers feel inferior

⁴⁰ “Clean eating” is a lifestyle-diet in which one eats food that is considered to improve health, like whole, not processed food items, while avoiding, for instance, dairy products, refined sugar or certain carbohydrates which are classed as unclean (McCartney 2016:1).

and deficient: “Sat here eating popcorn while watching your video and you were so healthy and I felt so unhealthy so I went and fetched a real big glass of water 🥰” (Therese Lindgren 2017; follower comment). This follower even feels the need for “cleansing” through water after interrupting the unhealthy eating. The statement, action as well as the laughing-crying smiley express the pressure the underlying moral health imperative is putting on people. Which also makes the relief understandable which one follower feels over rejected healthism: “I like that you don’t try to be a healthy/ vegan YouTuber and that you eat as ever much unhealthy food you want each day” (Jessica Pamlin 2017b). But the sheer existence of such a comment again acknowledges the existence of the regime.

It could also seem as if “unhealthy” vloggers are attached to an oppositional food ideology emphasising the pleasure of eating and cooking. But as Lewis (2008:64) notes, the food-pleasure discourse is still part of the bigger discourse of self-control. Eating too much or eating out of pleasure has been perceived as morally wrong for a long time⁴¹ (Tellström 2015:38f.). Therefore, even if the meals presented in the “What I eat in a day” vlogs definitely are focused on an aesthetic appearance and how nice everything tastes, there is also an omnipresent regime of holding back – not for religious reasons anymore, but for health and body shape, expressing the moral premise that one should not indulge and lose control. This can be illustrated by excuses, such as that the portions only look “really big” (Gabriella 2016; 12:40) because vegetarian meals need to be bigger to contain enough nutrition or that a meal contains so much fat only because “I’m going out into the cold later on” (Rawveganese 2018; 09:50).

Based on self-responsibility- and nutrition discourses, healthism too puts actual taste in second place. Instead this lifestyle-diet belief requires individual reflexivity and responsibility with the prospect of good health, a good body shape and a happy life. The moral imperative advocated in healthism thus values self-restriction and the exclusion of any “unclean” food. Even if the definition of what is unclean food, may vary and what is morally right gets compared and disputed (often ending with the followers feeling inferior to the vloggers), there is a general desire to avoid industrial or semi-manufactured food. Instead, ideally, the food should be as natural and authentic as possible, which for instance may mean cooking from scratch and using local food. Also, even when following a food ideology which emphasises the pleasure of eating, the self-control regime is always subadjacently present and even if rejected it demands to be taken into consideration.

⁴¹ In traditional Swedish agricultural society, indulging in food was regarded as morally wrong, both because of necessary rationing due to food scarcity and because giving in to bodily desires, was seen to be a religious sin (Tellström 2015:38f.).

VII: COMING TO A CLOSE

As a practice eating is one of life's necessities and as everyday as it can become. At the same time "we don't simply *eat* food – we think about, talk about, dream about, and philosophize about food" – in unmediated as well as, increasingly, in mediated forms (Johnston & Bauman 2010:43; original emphasis). In this sense eating reaches far beyond satisfying any biological need, and food becomes a carrier of its time's cultural values and rules (Eder 1999:15f.; Tellström 2015:203). In the case of "What I eat in a day" vlogs borders between media text and practice fuse as eating practices and their mediation are turned into representations while taking place. This made it necessary and fruitful to combine practice theory with structuralist and cultural perspectives, in order to reach understandings of the cultural phenomenon of these vlogs.

Combining these perspectives also made it possible to investigate the mechanisms through which these vlogs are used in negotiating and appropriating moral imperatives (derived from underlying regimes), which guide and motivate individual beliefs regarding what is perceived as the morally "best" lifestyle-diet. Furthermore, it became possible to examine how such negotiations and appropriations lead to different positions within the field of food vlogs. Such workings not only explain one specific case, they also permit insights into wider mechanisms of cultural reproduction and renewal in societies characterised by mediation processes. This will be addressed after a discussion of the findings.

Recapping the findings

Overall the "What I eat in a day" videos (re)present performances of lifestyle-diets. On the one hand these performances, through narration and aestheticisation, create a food- and lifestyle language and on the other hand, by giving controlled insight into staged backstage areas allow a glimpse into how underlying food rules are approached.

The narration is centred on the meals of an ordinary day, showing how individual food intake, menus and food occasions become routinised practices connected to wider, collective culinary customs and societal structures, like meal times or dish formats. Such customs legitimise individual eating practices and make them ritually, culturally and symbolically meaningful. People's curiosity, however, means that new experiences are sought beyond established food-structures, which leads to a balance between keeping conventions for social cohesion and recognisable eating practices, and guiding new habits and foods through limbo. This shows how eating practices are not something stable, but always made to change.

Vloggers are especially open to various new food influences and spread their own takes on these through their performances of aestheticised lifestyle packages (stylised home, personal appearance, beautified food), which moreover legitimise them as experts of “good taste”. While such aesthetics, leaning heavily on how lifestyle media and particularly cooking shows represent food, bestow the vloggers with an air of food authority, they also need to provide some insight into their “real” selves if they wish to appear authentic and thereby trustworthy. The diary format of the vlog, which picks up the concept of everyday banality and confessions from reality TV narration, creates such a sense of closeness and realness. Through the exclusion of more sensational or excessive reality TV elements, the vloggers furthermore ensure they’re not reduced to a mere spectacle, but keep their appearance as authorities of taste. Additionally, the vloggers themselves are in control of the production and aware of the vlogs publicity. Thus, they will control which revelations and confessions they make and edit their performances, whereby the “real” backstage is kept hidden. Even staged confessions, however, give an unintended glimpse into this “real” backstage, as they hint at underlying value- and rule systems the vlogger is attached to. Despite their unconsciousness, such moral guidelines are still “felt” and evoke guilt if violated against, which makes it possible to adumbrate them. Departure from or rejection of a particular lifestyle-diet, consequently, still implies recognition and awareness of the basic value system, or regime, underlying the diet. This also illustrates how eating choices are never truly individual, but embedded in socio cultural food structures, which determine the choices available in the first place. A vlogger’s individual eating performance becomes one interpretation, one belief system with certain moral imperatives derived from the underlying regime. Depending on the performance, the vloggers reach different positions within the hierarchy of the food vlog field. These positions, accordingly, determine how much weight a vlogger will have as a cultural intermediary and consequently how much right to define what ought to be seen as a morally “right” lifestyle-diet.

Possessing the “right” taste, however, isn’t sufficient to ensure that a vlogger will attain a high position in the hierarchy of the field. Instead a position is to a large degree legitimised by followers as well. Through their comments, opinions and judgements followers become co-producers of the vlog as a text. Without the right kind of followers (like “high-positioned” vloggers in combination with a high number of “regular“ followers) a vlogger’s advocated interpretation of a lifestyle-diet, would not have the qualification or impact to spread. Thus, it’s absolutely necessary to consider the followers in the production of the videos. This consideration reinforces the necessity to balance a demonstration of superior taste and style, with intimacy, authenticity and emotional bonding.

Besides glimpses into the backstage area, that also implies interaction between vloggers and followers. If done skilfully, the vlogger becomes a cultural intermediary who simultaneously is an ordinary expert and a micro-celebrity.

As such, the vloggers acquire the right to (re)define the moral imperatives which constitute lifestyle-diets and (re)create belief-systems. While there may be political considerations involved, such as sustainability, animal welfare or environmental concerns, the vloggers, as foodies, put taste over everything else. Even more important than the actual pleasure of eating, however, is the call for the “right” food choices, which will mirror a person’s taste and status. This paradoxically puts tangible taste secondary, but makes the vlogger appear tasteful and prestigious and hence morally immaculate. What’s seen as morally “correct” is not explicitly stated, but hinted at by the vloggers behaviours and practices. Thus, each vlog implicitly conveys different moral imperatives, which, through followers’ reactions (such as expressing feelings of deficiency) are negotiated and appropriated. This demonstrates how moral imperatives are defined by what is *not* explicitly said and that they actually work.

In this study, the moral imperatives emanate from two main regimes. Those moral imperatives which originate in the regime of “style and status” advocate appearance-based taste (visual expressions of stylised and aestheticised food and eating practices) as morally desirable, while the moral imperatives stemming from the regime of “ideologies and belief-systems”, aim at giving guidance regarding how to become a (morally) better version of oneself. For instance, veganism stands for a particular position within the field of food vlogs, presupposing certain aesthetic expectations (like sumptuous salads with beautiful toppings) and certain ideological expectations (stating that no animal products should be used). The two regimes are, hence, highly interconnected, making it impossible to determine which regime originated first. Individual reasons (for instance personal health) for following the regimes’ recommendations in turn form personalised moral imperatives. Importantly, this illustrates how moral imperatives never come out of nowhere, but are influenced by and influence existing structures (like the regimes) and habits. Therefore, individual beliefs, resulting in practices, are not as individual as they may sometimes seem to be. Also, while personal diet-beliefs contribute to the formation of a lifestyle, that lifestyle is simultaneously embedded in social structures. These structures, in turn, influence which individual beliefs can arise. This illustrates how agency and structures are interdependent in a loop of mutual influence. A social setting, for example, which values individual interest in food, will consequently facilitate an environment in which personal takes on any particular lifestyle is encouraged.

Wider mechanisms of cultural reproduction and renewal in societies characterised by mediation processes

This thesis, as an in depth study of one specific case, has focused on the cultural phenomenon of “What I eat in a day” vlogs, giving insight into the dynamics of how eating practices function as subtle moral imperatives. It has moreover illustrated how everyday food-vlogging isn’t only about reproduction and representation, but partakes in the shaping of new practices around food. Thereby, this study has provided a glimpse into the inner workings of a specific cultural field (the field of food vlogs): for example, into mechanisms of unspoken hierarchies, internal struggles for positions and the mediation, negotiation and appropriation of moral imperatives. Furthermore, it has become clearer how, as cultural intermediaries, vloggers acquire the potential power of introducing changes to eating practices, for instance, by intertwining offline with online eating practices.

This evolvement of offline to mediated eating practices entails changes at various levels. On a visual plane the food, as well as the kitchen are aestheticised and stylised. On a technical level, having to handle a camera while cooking and eating, changes how tasks can be executed. Finally, on an attitudinal level, the awareness that the performance will become public, potentially watched and judged affects the vloggers’ conduct while, for instance, using their kitchens or eating. These largely unnoticed workings, consequently, partake in changing and shaping practices. As Warde (2016:40) states, each individual performance carries the “practice forward, expressing, affirming, reproducing and transforming it”. However, as shown, these changes do not only take place at an individual level, but are negotiated and spread within a field. Additionally, no field is an isolated occurrence, but, in its turn, is defined by its relations to other societal structures, such as the bigger field of cultural production (Schultz 2008:ff.).

Therefore, the workings of one specific example of food culture in a society characterised by mediation processes can provide insight, more generally, into cultural reproduction and renewal regarding food. Furthermore, on a even more abstract level, these insights can also help understand cultural mechanisms and how reality gets constructed and becomes taken for granted. For instance, one conclusion which can be drawn from the case of “What I eat in a day” vlogs, is that mediated bottom-up, everyday expertise, in combination with the authority and self-assuredness of a micro-celebrity, can grant the position of a cultural intermediary. Such an intermediary has the potential power to, in cooperation with an online community, define, change and spread everyday practices, online as well as offline. This also confirms how, even if media per se doesn’t mould a practice, it provides the language needed for a practice to be expressed, thereby come into being and spread

(Storey and McDonald 2014:221ff.). In other words, this close study of one case's concrete underlying mechanisms helps to shed light on *how* culture changes in connection to web 2.0. Even if culture has always been changing, current society, characterised by mediation processes, has allowed for potentially anyone to mediate culture, which gives contemporary cultural intermediaries a new kind of more pervasive power.

To understand that new power and the mechanisms of cultural reproduction and renewal even better, further studies need to be conducted. Other new, mediated, everyday practices (like mediating grocery shopping or a pregnancy) can be investigated to complement the picture of intertwined online and offline expressions of everyday life. Moving outside the texts themselves may also yield valuable insights into how mediated practices become produced, received, expressed and used in offline environments beyond the publicly available interface of the text. This is particularly true, as the meaning of a media text is not bound to the text itself, but moves and changes through time and space (Silverstone 1999:13ff.).

The practice of combining physical offline cooking and eating with recording, uploading and online showcasing is still rather new. But as Couldry and Hepp (2016:197f.,222f.) point out, any new media practice can eventually get habitual and feel natural. It may be the case that, some years from now, the aesthetics of a dish might be prioritised over actual taste, that handling a camera becomes a taken for granted part of cooking or that we will join each other at virtual tables as a broadly-accepted means of sharing food. The important point, however, is that by becoming aware of contemporary online eating practices and foodscapes in a (Swedish) society characterised by mediation processes, as well as by understanding the underlying mechanisms, we can become more aware of new hierarchies, logics and markers of status, which no longer solely derive from economy or traditional cultural competences, like education. With such insights in mind, it becomes possible to be more conscious about underlying structures and to some degree partake in deciding which direction we want eating practices, but also society and culture at large, to take.

Finally, while human culture is in constant change, there are aspects of food culture which will probably always remain the same. Even in a society characterised by mediation processes, with virtual eating habits and tables, we still need actual meals in order to survive, just like all our fellow humans before us. As long as we eat, to return to the introductory quote, it's just as true in 2018 as it was in 1825, that we'll use our food to tell each other who we are.

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VIV: APPENDICES

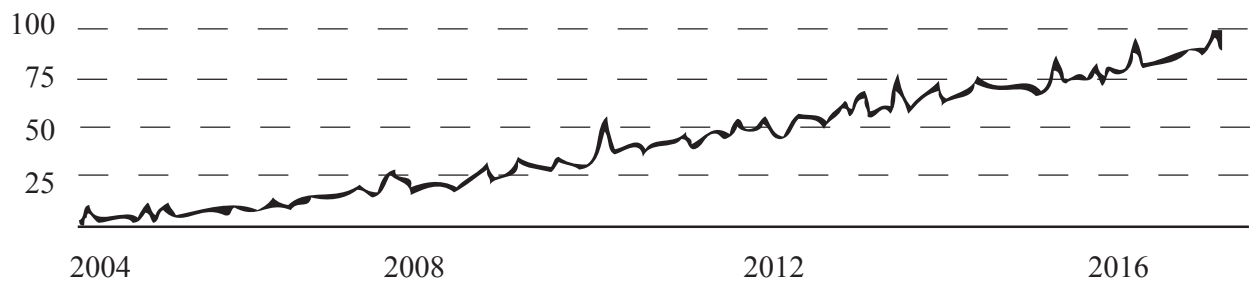
Appendix 1: Charts on the popularity of search terms

In the following charts, the numbers “represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. A score of 0 means that there was not enough data for this term.” (Google trends: information on the feature “interest over time”)

(All the charts were obtained 6th May 2018)

Search term “foodie”, worldwide, 2004-present

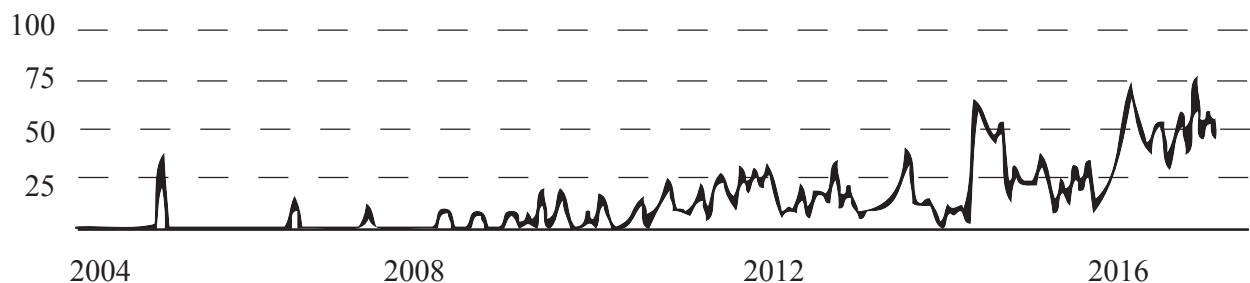
Interest over time



(<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=foodie>)

Search term “foodie”, Sweden, 2004-present

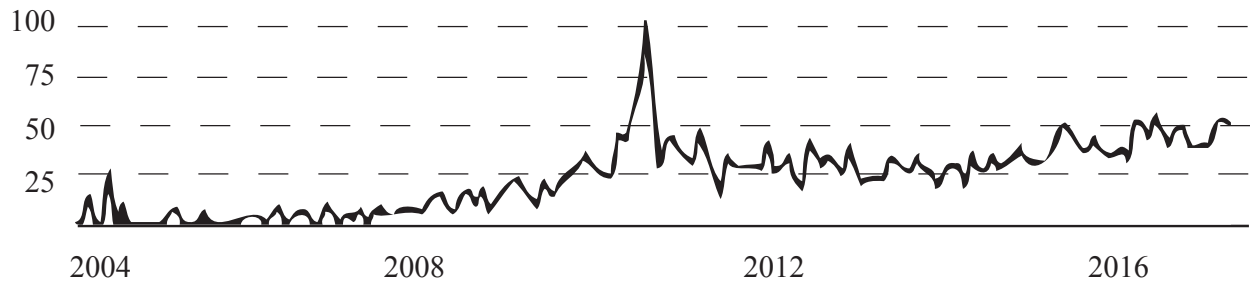
Interest over time



(<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=SE&q=foodie>)

Search term “What I eat in a day”, worldwide, 2004-present

Interest over time



(<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&q=what%20i%20eat%20in%20a%20day>)

Appendix 2: Selecting a strategic sample

A search on YouTube with the words “What I eat in a day” leads to approximately 27.400.000 international video results (25th April 2018). The sample for this study, however, consists out of Swedish vlogs, which were initially found by searching for terms such as “mat dagbok”, “What I eat in a day Swedish” or “Jag äter idag”. Each successful result furthermore lead to YouTube suggestions for similar videos, producing a chain reaction of results. Many hours were spent clicking through these videos until the same vlogs started to appear. The outcome were 56 Swedish vloggers doing at least one “What I eat in a day” video each. YouTube’s algorithms may of course have biased the search results, but different filters like “most relevant” or “upload date” were used and also actively videos with few clicks were sought for, as the goal was to find the whole range of videos existing. While some vloggers may still have been missed, the vlogs’ content did start to resemble each other, indicating saturation – which is reached when taking in new information leads to no new aspects (Bazeley 2013:50).

Still, out of all these videos a selection had to be made. In order for the sample to provide the material necessary for understanding the case, it’s advisable to choose strategically and not randomly (Flyvbjerg 2001:77ff.). As the intention of this study was to find patterns of underlying mechanisms, the vlogs which represent the most distinct examples, contributing to a wide array of lifestyle-diets became the most relevant, rather than the most represented or most popular vlogs. Therefore, one vlog from each of the 56 vloggers was watched and profiles, exemplified by the following, were created:

Who is the vlogger?

Filippa Mollstedt (student); 2680 followers, 297 videos on Youtube

Which kind of other videos does she/ he produce?

a little bit of everything, not overly food focused, some “healthy recipes“ videos

How many “What I eat in a day“ videos has she/ he produced?

4 “what I eat in a day“

Which are the “What I eat in a day“ videos? From when are they?

How many clicks, comments, likes, dislikes?

- “MATDAGBOK <3“, vlog from 13.05.2017, 499 clicks, 9 comments, 18 likes, 1 dislike
- “What I eat in a day <3 Swedish“, vlog from 21.09.2016, 1096 clicks, 11 comments, 24 likes, 3 dislikes
- “WHAT I EAT IN A DAY<3“, vlog from 01.11.2016, 528 clicks, 8 comments, 13 likes, 0 dislikes
- “MATDAGBOK<3“, vlog from 30.03.2017, 731 clicks, 3 comments, 16 likes, 3 dislikes

Content of the “What I eat in a day“ videos

everyday meals, some vegan products, eats meat too

Through these profiles it became possible to make a strategic choice of vloggers based on:

- whether there were subscribers (indicating a community)
- comments (necessary in order to investigate the negotiation of moral imperatives)
- from when the videos were (the set range being January 2016 to February 2018, to ensure the vlogs are up-to-date, yet also had time to accumulate comments)
- a mix of female and male vloggers (overall there were more female than male vloggers)

This resulted in 16 vloggers, of which 13 are female and 6 male. In three cases there are two vloggers behind one vlogger-name (Herbivore Stories, Wilma&Emil, Gabriella Joss) which is why there are 16 vloggers, but 19 individuals. The 16 vloggers have made between 1 to 24 “What I eat

in a day” videos (on average 5), ranging from 2 to 19 minutes (on average 9 minutes), they have between 94 to 631.941 subscribers (on average 76.600 subscribers) and 0 to 3.807 comments per video (on average 270 comments). All except for one vlog (Sv3rige's) are in Swedish language.

For each vlogger approximately 2 of their “What I eat in a day” videos were chosen, thus ensuring access to at least some comments for each vlogger (there was one vlog with 0 comments). If a vlogger only had 1 “What I eat in a day” video, but this vlog still had an unique lifestyle-diet which enriched the sample, they were included nonetheless. However, an absolute prerequisite for the inclusion was, that the vlog needed to have comments, as it could not be supplemented with a second video.

(All data was obtained 19th February 2018)

Appendix 3: Excerpt of one translated transcript

All except one (Sv3rige's) vlogs are in Swedish. Consequently, the vlogs were transcribed in Swedish, and during the analysis process the Swedish material was used. Only as a final step the quotes which ended up in the actual thesis text, were translated. However, in order to give an impression of a transcription, the following excerpt was translated:

Therese Lindgren (2016a)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK3rHye6F3o>

Intro: happy music with a moving, round logo saying “Follow me around 17 April”. Out of focus rain is splashing down on a black table.

Cut to Therese making her bed in a very white, spartan bedroom. The camera is positioned to show the whole room, the slogan “Today is a good day” is framed on the wall. Therese wears an off-white pullover, tight, torn jeans and her hair is styled. It doesn't look as if she's wearing makeup, but her face looks flawless so she might. The music continues.

Cut to the kitchen (a small YouTube add appears). Therese puts her bedlinen into the washing machine. The camera is standing somewhere behind her.

Cut (the add disappears again). Music has stopped. Therese is jumping up and down, holding her camera, so that the viewer is also “jumping” with her. In the background we see her kitchen. Some items are standing on the counters.

“Good morning! Hope you're all doing really well. I do, thanks! It's really, really bad weather outside which is perfect because that means I will be able to write well again today. It's my washing machine making noises, in case you heard anything in the background. But as I'm going to sit and write the whole day today, as I did yesterday, I'm thinking this video will more be like a ‘What I eat in a day’ video. Because the only things I will be doing today are eating and writing. And many of you are interested in, like, vegan food. So this is the perfect opportunity to show you what I might

eat during an ordinary day. So we start with breakfast” (00:20-00:40). Her voice is very enthusiastic. Cut to a close up of one of the counters. “The clock is already 10 so I’ll make a light breakfast, that is, a smoothie because I’ll be having lunch in two hours, like, so it’s enough with a little smoothie.” (00:55)

We prominently see her “magic bullet” blender and the ingredients she will use in their packagings. The working surface is wooden, the tiles black. We see her hands working in close-up while we hear her talking. We see parts of her white pullover and her long, polished pink nails. She mixes banana and spinach. “And in my smoothies I always tend to have a banana and as much spinach as will possibly fit. These cups are pretty small so there is no space for exceedingly much. Raspberries, my favourite berries” (01:05) She adds frozen raspberries and then “Spirulina” from “active”, which she presents prominently to the camera.

“‘Spirulina’ which I got from Ida Warg [another vlogger], the dear heart. I’ll link to her ‘wellotek’ down here” (01:18) She points to where, later when uploaded to YouTube, there will be a comment section. Then she adds hemp seeds. “Then I have also bought ecological hemp seeds. Well, I remember that I used to eat them, or had them in my smoothies some years ago. And I think I remember that that was really tasty, so I just bought this when I was shopping last time. I think that what is good with hemp seeds is that they’re full of protein. That’s good if you’re vegan because then you might not get as much protein. And then I take blueberries” (01:20 - 01:40). She adds frozen blueberries. “Blueberries have so much antioxidants plus they are incredibly tasty” (01:50). Lastly she adds soy milk, first showing the package to the camera. “To that I add soy milk. It might have been better with almond milk, I think that might be a bit healthier than soy, but I don’t like the taste of almond milk and I’m not super into oat milk either, so actually I take soy even if it’s maybe not the healthiest option” (02:07)

Then she puts the cup with all the ingredients into the blender and we watch the blending, which turns the smoothie into a lilac colour.

Cut and a small “swish” sound. Therese presents the smoothie in a close up in her hands. The smoothie is in the blender-cup, Therese’s fingernails are matching the pink stripes on the straw in the cup and they also match the lilac coloured smoothie. “This is how my little smoothie looks, stuffed full with spinach and frozen berries and banana and hemp seeds and ‘Spirulina’” (02:15)

Cut and small “swish” sound again. Close up on one of Therese’s hands with four pills in it. A small green, round pill, a round pink pill, a longish white pill and a small oval translucent pill. “In the mornings I also take these four pills. This is B12. Everyone who is vegetarian or vegan ought to take that. Because B12 you only get through animal flesh, as I have understood. This green one is copper, because I had a hair mineral analysis made which showed that I was lacking copper in my body. So I take some copper. And this white one is calcium as I also had a calcium deficiency. You get calcium through milk and that stuff and I, well, don’t drink milk. And then this little D-vitamin which all Swedes ought to eat because it is so dark and one gets most D-vitamin through the sun – it’s also from Ida’s shop ‘welloteket’”(02:24 - 03:00).

[...]

Appendix 4: Mapped day narratives

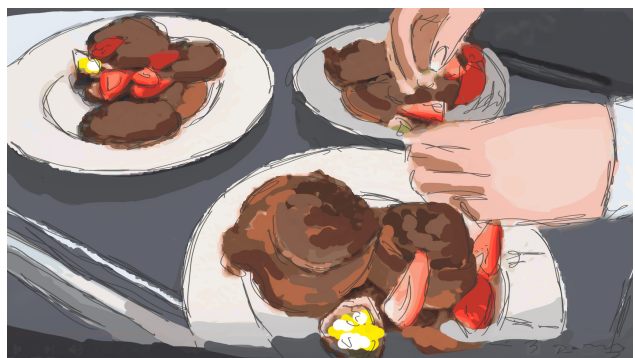
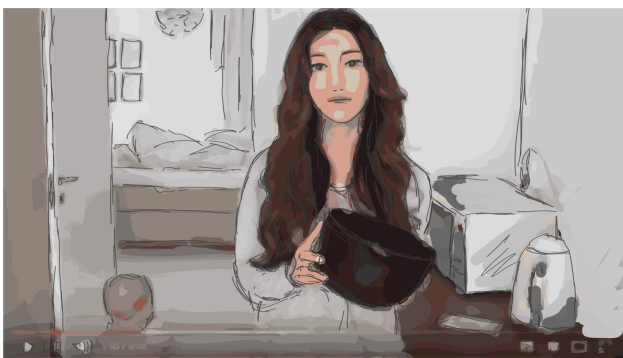
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bedroom • wishing followers “good morning” • messy hair, little/ no make-up, not fully dressed • preparing breakfast • breakfast (smoothie; vitamin pills; acai bowl; chia pudding; oatmeal porridge; banana pancakes; casein shake; coffee; vegan hamburger from McDonalds; bread-rolls; nice cream; raw steak with butter; salad with sprouts; scrambled eggs, bread with ham and keso; yoghurt with home made granola; raw eggs in smoothie; bread with butter and cheese)
Between morning and noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excerpts of daily activities are sometimes shown • snack (smoothie; fruit; bread; chia pudding)
Noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • around 12-13 o’clock • often includes preparations, cooking • lunch (sweet potato mash with cooked vegetables and hummus, sprinkled with read onion and cashew nuts; soup from day before with avocado on a hard bread (knäckebröd); taco; hard bread (knäckebröd) with hummus and a salad; salad; vegetables, potato, bean-hummus; vegan lunch buffet; smoothie; pasta with minced meat; dry bun; halloumi burger with sweet potato fries; one pot pasta; lentil’s soup with rice; vegetable stew; raw porridge with blood orange as topping; plate of raw vegetables; potato gratin with minced meat and soy beans; protein meal and bread with ham; salmon and potato; meat patty and fries; meat and potato)
Between noon and evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excerpts of daily activities are sometimes shown • snack (vegetable juice; fruit; muffin; protein bar)
Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparing food, cooking • more fancy clothes, more make-up • dinner is often eaten with other people • dinner (salad and warm sweet potato; sweet potato and root beats; bean pasta with vegetables; quinoa and vegetable/ bean stew; salad; nachos in oven with vegan minced meat; ordered pizza; wrap with veggies and falafel; chick pea pasta with tomato sauce, onion and avocado; sweet potato chilli; salad and sprouts; sprout fruit smoothie bowl; pasta and meat; tacos; lasagne; chicken stew; semi manufactured falafel and pita) • sometimes after dinner or instead of dinner an evening meal (apple with almond butter and cinnamon; oatmeal porridge; avocado on bread; propud with raspberries; dark bread with avocado; date balls; chocolate milk, bread with butter and melon; bread) • saying “good bye” to the followers • going to bed

Appendix 5: Example of one visual analysis

Concretely, the visual analysis was not conducted frame by frame, but on some representative screenshots as well as more overall impressions of each vlog, by looking at the components “colour and lighting”, “objects” and “settings”, which are loosely inspired by Rose’s (2016:56-81) guide for compositional interpretation. First a “literal description” was done on each component, which was followed by more interpretative “associations”.

Gabriella Joss (2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb7OZDhNreo>



Colour, lighting	
literal description	association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - white floors, white doors, white walls, white or grey curtains, white kitchen machines and pans/ pots, white kitchen cupboards, some darker (grey or black) details, like the kitchen counters or picture frames; some light wood on the chairs; white dinner table, baby’s toys are kept in white, grey and beige 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole apartment almost feels unnaturally white and bright. There is an overall feeling of airiness, cleanliness, whiteness and freshness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all their clothes are in grey, white, beige, black; Gabriella’s make-up is “nude” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The same applies to the people living in this space. They are carefully dressed in clothes matching their environment. Even when it’s morning and they are in more leisurely clothes they look carefully dressed and Gabriella for instance has curled her hair and uses make-up even if it is down-toned and indicates naturalness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lighting goes from natural, bright light in the morning to more artificial, yellowish light in the afternoon and evening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lighting follows the cycle of the day and strengthens the day-narrative and authenticity. The lighting in the morning is more favourable for the food than the artificial light though, which makes the colours of the food a bit duller and allows for unfavourable light flares, which make the food look oily even if it’s not. Therefore especially the breakfast gets an aura on healthiness and freshness to it.

- mostly white, round plates	- The generous, big, round white plates, with some discreet structure at the rim as only decoration moreover heighten the purity of the food on them. They function like a (picture) frame or scene for the food, almost encircling it like a halo. The food itself is placed carefully on it's intended space on the plate and put into eye-pleasing arrangements. For instance pancakes with different kinds of fruit and nuts as toppings or ingredients for cooking chopped up and sorted by kind in a bowl or pan. However, the pasta from a lunch box does not look as pleasing or fresh, but still the framing on a nice plate makes it more appealing. And it also heightens the authenticity and gives this overly-perfect family something human.
- colourful food packages and food, especially the fruit and vegetables	- As the only bright colours come from the food packages and the food itself, the food really becomes the centre in this home, shining in the midst of all the whiteness.

Objects	
literal description	association
- kitchen machines (retro look), kitchen utensils	- Everything very white and fitting together from the chosen style, indicating no object has been bought randomly or only for its functionality.
- a few, carefully placed decor objects	- Everything seems to have it's place and there is no excess of objects, indicating a "simple" life with focus on the essentials.
- dining table, bed, sofa	- All the furniture is also fitting together from style and colours. The furniture looks like designer furniture, indicating it might have been expensive.
- baby's toys	- Even the child's toys are fitting the overall style and colour scheme, as if they were more decor objects than actual play-things.

Setting	
literal description	association
- for vlogger: open plan kitchen and living room	- As the kitchen and the living room are connected, this indicates that food, cooking and eating is an essential part of life and not something hidden away behind closed doors.
- for food: kitchen counters, the pots and pans, the plates and bowls	- The dark kitchen counters equally well as the white plates or pans contrast the food, heightening it's colour. It's interesting however, how the unprepared food items go from a dark surface to end up on a bright, halo-like surface before eating. It almost glorifies the process of cooking which turns the food items into a meal.

Appendix 6: Preliminary categories

This table lists all the preliminary categories, which arose from the descriptive coding of the transcriptions (sayings and doings), from the small narrative analysis, from the visual analysis and from the descriptive coding of the comment sections.

Sayings, doings and narration in the vlogs	Visuals in the vlogs	Comments on the vlogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • media use in connection with cooking and eating (like watching tv, checking mobile) • practices of preparing food and eating food • trying new foods/ recipes • ordinary life (like showering, doing laundry, working) • the filming process itself (mostly visible when something goes wrong, equipment visible) • interaction with viewers • why the vlogger makes this video/ the vlogger sees herself/ himself as inspiration or adviser • good vs bad food (semi manufactured food, junk food, soy, meat, sugar, chia, treats, cooked food, vegan, organic, homemade, pasta, fruit, beans, gluten etc) • nutrition/ calorie discussions - how much food is the right amount • financial considerations • training/ body and food + from narrative analysis: • morning • noon • evening • in between 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the home and the plate becoming settings for the food • lifestyle packages (everything fits together from style and colours: home, vlogger's appearance, food) • the food's visual appearance is enhanced by toppings, arrangements, choice of ingredients • colours indicating focus on food • lighting enhancing or diminishing the attractiveness of the food • objects (kitchen utensils, packages, furniture ...) • smooth surfaces and controlled arrangements vs smears • visual professionalism or not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • love the video, want more • food looks delicious/ beautiful • seeing the vlogger as role-model/ inspiration • advising or giving tips to the vlogger • general advice for everyone/ recipe ideas • (mildly) criticising food choices or habits of the vlogger • the vlogger's food/ lifestyle makes the commentator feel bad/ unhealthy • how real is this? • vegan/ non vegan discussions • healthy/ not healthy discussions • what is natural to eat, what not discussions • financial aspects of eating like the vlogger • how to change family eating habits (especially younger people living at home asking this) • the individual knows best what is the best diet for the own body • comments/ questions on furniture, utensils, clothes • comments on the vlogger's looks/ body • comments on format or quality of filming/ editing • referencing to other vloggers/ other vloggers writing comments

Appendix 7: Overview of themes, categories and subcategories

Themes	Category	Subcategory
Theme 1: The performance	Front stage presentations	Narrating food practices (routinised and new practices: occasions, menus, incorporations)
		Visually performing food practices (aesthetic context and aesthetic food)
	Staged backstage presentations	The filming process
		Approaching boundaries
Theme 2: Regimes	Style and status	Visual taste (aestheticisation, stylisation)
		Positions on the field of “food vlogs”
	Ideologies and belief-systems	Veganism
		Healthism

Appendix 8: Complete sample of the “What I eat in a day” vlogs

The following list comprised all vlogs which constituted the empirical material and served as basis for the analysis. Even if not all vlogs were quoted in the main text, they were all analysed.

(All data was obtained 19th February 2018)

2GETHER (one female), 46.528 followers, 250 videos on YouTube, 1 “What I eat in a day” video

- INTE SÅ NYTTIGT SOM ALLA ANDRA WHAT I EAT IN A DAY VIDEOS! - Olivia Ring Hedlund
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUEbCOKHheQ>
Posted 26.09.2017, 12:43 minutes, 35465 clicks, 84 comments, 359 likes, 60 dislikes

Adam Larson (one male), 180 followers, 28 videos on YouTube, 3 “What I eat in a day” videos

- VAD JAG ÄTER UNDER EN DAG | VLOGG 1
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYg4tKxSxBM>
Posted 15.06.2016, 10:03 minutes, 2804 clicks, 10 comments, 10 likes, 1 dislike
- FULL DAGS ÄTANDE | VLOGG 6
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEVL0QnQvdk>
Posted 04.07.2016, 07:34 minutes, 804 clicks, 0 comments, 10 likes, 0 dislikes

Anna Maja Astrid (one female), 94 followers, 6 videos on YouTube, 6 “What I eat in a day” videos

- WHAT I EAT IN A DAY. VEGAN. MATDAGBOK
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1OKeoAqGjE>
Posted 17.09.1017, 09:53 minutes, 711 clicks, 2 comments, 11 likes, 1 dislike
- WHAT I EAT IN A DAY. VEGAN. MATDAGBOK
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiZl-6f3Qr0>
Posted 28.01.2018, 05:02 minutes, 290 clicks, 5 comments, 6 likes, 0 dislikes

Estonian sisters (one female), 46.576 followers, 111 videos on YouTube, 1 “What I eat in a day” video

- What I eat in a Day ? När jag INTE har Pengar
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bvad0Z_Cak
Posted 20.01.2018, 13:03 minutes, 38.813 clicks, 73 comments, 577 likes, 34 dislikes

Filippa Mollstedt (female), 2680 followers, 297 videos on YouTube, 4 “What I eat in a day” videos

- What I eat in a day ❤️ Swedish
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6GsHEXSlE>
Posted 21.09.2016, 04:25 minutes, 1096 clicks, 11 comments, 24 likes, 3 dislikes
- MATDAGBOK <3
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw_gQoKDKaY
Posted 13.05.2017, 07:25 minutes, 499 clicks, 9 comments, 18 likes, 1 dislike

Gabriella Joss (one female, one male), 30.826 followers, 109 videos on YouTube, 2 “What I eat in a day” videos

- VAD ÄTER VI EGENTLIGEN!?!//vlogg - WHAT I EAT IN A DAY, vegetarian
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8F4gbOqaOo>
Posted 19.12.2016, 12:53 minutes, 30.696 clicks, 62 comments, 502 likes, 10 dislikes
- VAD ÄTER VI EGENTLIGEN!?!//vlogg - WHAT I EAT IN A DAY, vegetarian
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hb7OZDhNreo>
Posted 23.02.2017, 08:36 minutes, 26.669 clicks, 88 comments, 443 likes, 13 dislikes

Green Warrior (one female), 1153 followers, 45 videos on YouTube, 14 “What I eat in a day” videos

- Matdagbok 8: Vad jag åt idag (vegan)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3nchNW2uZM&t=54s>
Posted: 18.07.2016, 05:55 minutes, 6.161 clicks, 28 comments, 144 likes, 4 dislikes
- Vad jag åt idag: Vinterspecial (Vegan) | Green Warrior
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vILgXgbNCc>
Posted 22.01.2018, 02:12 minutes, 186 clicks, 2 comments, 8 likes, 0 dislikes

Herbivore Stories (one female, one male), 6.593 followers, 78 videos on YouTube, 3 “What I eat in a day” videos

- VAD VI ÅT IDAG - eko & vegan för 60 kr/pp
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbBxV6jfZQU>
Posted 26.06.2016, 07:51 minutes, 18670 clicks, 102 comments, 1 tsd. likes, 8 dislikes
- VAD JAG ÅT IDAG som lat vegan
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsQSAXkM_0M
Posted 14.07.2016, 04:57 minutes, 21.130 clicks, 108 comments, 1 tsd. likes, 14 dislikes

Ida Warg (one female), 171.553 followers, 704 videos on YouTube, 24 “What I eat in a day” videos

- MATDAGBOK VEGAN | What I eat in a day
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oi3-xXOJRGg>
Posted 02.11.2016, 07:16 minutes, 50.986 clicks, 187 comments, 2 tsd. likes, 29 dislikes
- MATDAGBOK ☆ What I eat in a day (vegan)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A20uUNSnWr0>
Posted 17.10.2017, 06:49 minutes, 42.730 clicks, 69 comments, 1 tsd. likes, 39 dislikes

Jessica Pamlin (one female), 71.451 followers, 430 videos on YouTube, 3 “What I eat in a day” videos

- WHAT I EAT IN A DAY (INTE SÅ NYTTIGT MEN GOTT!)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9beNN1vX-U>
Posted 04.07.2017, 04:56 minutes, 53.535 clicks, 260 comments, 994 likes, 35 dislikes
- VEGAN FÖR EN DAG
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VR8xqYzrr6M>
Posted 09.10.2017, 15:38 minutes, 33.625 clicks, 180 comments, 639 likes, 23 dislikes

Kristian Taljeblad (one male), 8.806 followers, 11 videos on YouTube, 1 “What I eat in a day” video

- Det här äter jag på en dag
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyyqSnYOL54>
Posted 14.02.2017, 09:10 minutes, 9.654 clicks, 40 comments, 108 likes, 7 dislikes

Rawveganse, (one female), 4906 followers, 104 videos on her Swedish channel on YouTube, 5 “What I eat in a day” videos

- Vad jag åt idag, se på när jag gör min mat! Raw & veganskt!...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fk8IeDM8XzA>
Posted 22.11.2016, 06:13, 13.087 clicks, 40 comments, 154 likes, 36 dislikes
- Raw matdagbok+ Q/A detox, soja, vad jag unnar mig, äta vid tv:n...
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_bMTvwlqfU
Posted 31.01.2018, 18:32, 1.213 clicks, 23 comments, 43 likes, 0 dislikes

Sara Nygren (one female), 154 followers, 108 videos on YouTube, 4 “What I eat in a day” videos

- What I Eat In A Day #4
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7uIZY9y-DI>
Posted 27.05.2017, 14:21 minutes, 179 clicks, 9 comments, 4 likes, 0 dislikes
- What I Eat In A Day #2 || Sara Nygren
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-Hjgl0_Tdk&t=2s
Posted 10.02.2017, 09:33 minutes, 180 clicks, 2 comments, 4 likes, 0 dislikes

Sv3rige (one male), 20.454 followers, 399 videos on YouTube, 1 “What I eat in a day” video

- What I Eat In a Day (Updated, Raw Meat)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weRKIBGszhY>
Posted 23.09.2016, 10:55 minutes, 116.304 clicks, 815 comments, no like and dislike function

Therese Lindgren (one female), 631.941 followers, 872 videos on YouTube, 3 “What I eat in a day” videos

- WHAT I EAT IN A DAY |
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK3rHye6F3o>
Posted 18.04.2016; 10:51 minutes, 797.827 clicks, 3.807 comments, 13 tsd. likes, 165 dislikes
- What I eat in a day ♡ Vad jag äter en vanlig dag [VEGAN]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcHIRDLcuSE>
Posted 09.06.2016, 03:27 minutes, 466.513 clicks, 836 comments, 13 tsd. likes, 183 dislikes
- Matdagbok What I Eat In A Day [VEGAN]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iMyk7kAk14>
Posted 27.06.2017, 06:04 minutes, 297.497 clicks, 599 comments, 9 tsd. likes, 166 dislikes

Wilma & Emil (one female, one male), 182.645 followers, 216 videos on YouTube, 1 “What I eat in a day” video

- WHAT I EAT IN A DAY
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBuWAW-Bmz4>
Posted 21.11.2016, 12:08 minutes, 89.567 clicks, 106 comments, 2 tsd. likes, 31 dislikes