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OUR DAILY BREAD

*- a cultural analysis of
bread and other types
of everyday food*

Kulturanalys - ett
verktyg för att
arbeta med mat,
halsa och livsstil
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Cultural Analysis - a tool for working with food, health, and lifestyle

By: Hakan Jönsson

Health belongs to the most important contemporary mantra. Working to create, maintain or regain health, in many senses a high standard of living, occupies a large part of both private and public life. Spas, retreats, and health clinics belong to the fastest growing category of business registries, and health and medical budgets make new records annually within cities, municipalities, and counties. Despite all the attention and resources that are spent on health, the so-called lifestyle related sicknesses increase year by year. These illnesses are particularly connected to food and drink. Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and gastro-intestinal syndrome increases, even though we have both better availabilities of food and more information about what we should eat in order to be healthier than times before.

Increasingly, consciousness grows within the health sector that the choices we make are culturally influenced with regards to nutrition, health, and lifestyle. The demands about what we expect from ourselves, and the requirements about how we should feel, is associated with the relationships and the society we live in. Therefore, it's not enough to tell people what they should do; it requires a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which choices are made in order to promote a healthier lifestyle. Organizations that work with preventative health have pointed out that their work must, to a greater extent, be based upon experiences of health rather than the objectively documented 'illness,' in order to reach those they work with. Thus, there is a need to increase knowledge regarding the difference between what a person actually does and what they say they do. There is also a need to periodically critically examine the often unspoken premise upon which health work is based. Food, health, and lifestyle are, in other words, a field where the relatively young discipline of applied cultural analysis has good potential to be used in activities that deal with health questions, both within the public and private sector, as well as NGO's. Therefore, the Interreg project 'Culture Driven Innovation' brings together educational institutions in the form of the ethnological departments at Copenhagen and Lund Universities, students in the international Öresund region enrolled in the Masters of Applied Cultural Analysis (www.maca.ac) program, and activities on both sides of the sound that select food, health, and lifestyle as a focus.

In this digital publication, we would like to awaken interest for the possibilities of applied cultural analysis through a number of short and easily accessible articles. Therefore, we are working both across the sound and with students from all over the world by using the common English language, both for education and these texts.

Food and the Öresund

Originally, the project had a more prominent lifestyle focus, primarily because Region Skåne's Center for Lifestyle Issues unit was one of the original partners in the project. Unfortunately, the unit was closed down in 2010. Therefore, we chose to focus more purely on food as an applied area. This distinction proved itself fruitful for several reasons. Food and meals are such important cultural elements that it is obvious that the choices we make within the realm of food affects who we are, where we come from, and what we want to be. The social aspects of food and meals are especially important. Through eating, we mark whom we do and do not want to be associated with. Therefore, it is also a sensitive issue to decline an invitation to share a meal. Just think of all the diets that, despite all good intentions, are broken in order not to break the community of eating at the family table or employee canteen.

By studying food, it is also possible to question the borders between biology and culture, which the European research tradition has had an unfortunate tendency to emphasize since ancient times. In relation to food, biology and culture is often impossible to differentiate, as shown in the discussions regarding taste that reoccurs in several articles. It is simply impossible to separate where culture tastes or biology begins. Taste is as much a part of taste buds as it is a result of our culturally imaginative worlds. In this book's many examples of bread, we can see, for example, that the quick-fermented syrup loaf in plastic bags which guarantees a spongy consistency, now appears to be giving way to bread with crispy crusts baked from sourdough. Here, it may be appropriate to point out that this cannot be explained simply by the fact that long-fermented sourdough bread tastes better. It's quite true that syrup loaves were perceived as tasty to the baby-boom generation from the 1940's and their children. Who

knows, in a few more years maybe the syrup loaves will have a nostalgic value, as sourdough bread has today. This indicates the need to study phenomena through a historical perspective as well. Through following cultural processes, it is also possible to discern what may come in the future. Therefore, cultural analysts often make use of historical eye openers, even when working with current phenomena.

Food has also been an important element in the creation of national identities. Here, the Öresund Region is a good example. Although Skåne and Själland belong to the same geographical area, and traditionally also have a strong similarity in diet, clear differences emerged with the arrival of industrialization. Today, there is much more similarity between a meat or dairy dish in Scania and Uppland than between Skåne and Själland. This is largely due to the building of national production, sales, and distribution companies. However, political decisions have also played a role. Sweden and Denmark have chosen different paths for food in schools and in workplaces. While in Sweden it was seen as an important step in the realization of the welfare state to offer cost-free school lunches and subsidized work lunches, Denmark chose to leave the responsibility for healthy lunches (madpakke) to each individual household. When one of the project's partners, Copenhagen's Food House (Københavns Madhus), worked with a project on school food, Sweden served as both a source of inspiration and a daunting example. Inspiring in terms of their ability to reach out to all, but also with a too one-sided emphasis on nutrition and logistics, particularly the creation of an attractive and educational mealtime environment. Here, the overall Öresund experience formed the basis for many interesting discussions on the perception of meals and how, through an emphasis on mealtimes, cultural dimensions can create better eating habits among children and youth.

In order to establish a concrete entry into this large field, we have chosen to emphasize several different examples from field studies in this publication where cultural analysis has a potential to bring new insights and lead to new innovations. We will have several examples from sports halls and supermarkets, places where the difference between private and public consumption of food and meals become clear. In both places, the difference between what we say and what we do is clearly visible. The choices of food in supermarkets or dishes in canteens are places where we must constantly reflect over our social situation as it is and how we want it to be.

The point of departure for most of the articles is a particular food: bread. There are several reasons for this. Bread is, at least in the Judo-Christian tradition, the most symbolic food. In the Bible, bread is synonymous for food. Bread is also a symbol for community; through sharing bread one can invite another person into the community. Hence the word companion, who's original meaning is the breaking of the bread – from Latin's' panis. Bread is also a significant element in mealtime rituals on both sides of the Öresund. Nevertheless, significant differences have arisen between how bread looks and how it should be eaten in different parts of the sound. A Danish and Swedish sandwich can look quite different, but it is perhaps their imagined contents that differs most of all.

Origin, identity, and lifestyle

To an outside observer, our approach to bread is an entry to understanding questions surrounding nationality and belonging. For example, this is evident in Solomon Akele Abebe's article about the Nasis bakery, located in the multicultural Möllevång square in Malmö. Bread can function as an identity creator for both bakers and their customers. Food's ability to get us to travel in time and space and remember places and occasions that we are no longer in, is one of its most important qualities. Abebe also

describes how food receives a new and deeper meaning for immigrants in their new country. That which has been experienced as commonplace and fairly uninteresting food in their homelands can become a significant symbol for cultural community in their new country.

The meaning of place in our experience of eating recurs in several of the articles. Maria Hoppe describes places as a secret ingredient, which is important especially in the many new bakeries that have emerged in recent years as part of what can be called the lifestyle industry. The search for origins and simplicity is an important component in these bakeries' recipe for success. In a study of Emmerys, Greta Hadley describes how the organic bread, kneaded by hand, fermented for twelve hours, and baked in a stone oven creates a picture of the 'traditional' - a time where things have presumably taken longer and when nature and humans were in harmony. This late modern critic of modern industrial production is important in order to understand the changes of food selection in recent years. Emmerys demonstrates what it is like to pay more despite fewer ingredients in bread. This stands in direct contrast to a fifty-year tradition of increasing food production on a growing scale, with ever more advanced processes that in turn require progressively more additives in order to modify and standardize the end result. Slowly, the food industry is beginning to clean up their ingredients, marveled by how consumer preferences change. If food producers used ethnographic methods in their market research, which understands individual consumers directly, and which is consistently used in this book's articles, they would almost certainly have become aware of these changes much earlier. This is demonstrated, as Michael Humbracht points out in his article, in applied cultural analysis' potential for product development and sales.

Culture is alive, and therefore constantly changing. This is especially true for bread culture. The fieldwork completed in this project has been done in close cooperation with Denmark's National Museum, which completed a major project on the meaning of bread both in the past and present. In previous years, we can see both a clear element of integrating other nationality's methods of baking and handling bread, as well as a boom in the supposedly traditional bread, especially with sourdough's return. We are served all of this as stories when we go about our daily shopping. Giovanni Acerbis describes supermarkets as "A schizophrenia of narratives", where tales about the supposedly traditional and hypermodern supermarkets' rationality, efficiency, and differentiation exist side by side.

As consumers, we have the possibility for a more pronounced and perhaps more varied manner of building our identity and lifestyle than in the past with the help of consumption. Maria Hoppe makes a review of conceptions of lifestyle and illuminates how, for example, bakeries can be an arena for shaping personal identities. The performative aspect, that bread can be used to show who one is or wants to be, is important in the development of successful marketing concepts, but also in order to understand the need for clear origins of food from the eateries serving people who don't have the possibility to prepare their own food. Food which tastes like childhood and which comes from nearby areas are, for example, an important factor for wellbeing in elderly homes, which is too seldom considered when the public agencies procure the food to be served.

Community and exclusion

Not only dough is kneaded with bread, it is also a manner of negotiating and renegotiating relationships in the home. Michael Humbracht describes how he was struck by the fact than young men bake bread

in Sweden with the express purpose of contributing to increased gender equality in both the home and society. This need not be seen as a selfless sacrifice on the part of men, rather it is part of an ongoing negotiation of who should take the initiative and responsibility for food in the home, which has been gaining increased status in the recent decade's romanticization and aestheticization of the idea of the good home. A growing number of men are also becoming aware of the power inherent in the ability to cook food. To choose what another should eat, and thereby be able to influence both the values that food carries to other family members and to actually physically affect their body, is a form of power that should not be underestimated.

Bread, as a symbol for community, doesn't mean that it isn't also active in processes that create hierarchies and exclusions. Marie Bredager Nielsen writes, in a contemplation of how a Danish supermarket chain chooses to market a Persian baker's bread as oriental, an analysis about how labeling the country of origin on food is not only a way of neutrally describing geographical places but also a way of maintaining hierarchical structures between different ethnic groups. A tale of the exotic and attractive other is formulated at the bread counter, but also a tale about how origins are valued differently on the commercial market.

Some may find it difficult to be part of the bread community at all. Meghan Cridland, who suffers from Celiac disease (intolerance to gluten) herself, describes the feeling of finding oneself outside the eating community. To be unable to share bread on account of one's body creates social tensions that are difficult to escape. This is evident in food's ability to dissolve clear boundaries between biology and culture and also in the need for awareness about how one can manage when they simply cannot share common mealtimes that various activities want to promote.

On the way towards cultural driven innovations

With an interest for the growth of cultural analysis in the business industry, Aaron Frey has become acquainted with the emergence of an experience economy, where the association of products and opportunities to positive experiences has received an increased commercial value. This makes the economic growth-driven culture into something it hasn't been before. The result is a range of new possibilities for innovative products, concepts, and services based on an increased understanding of cultural phenomena. It is precisely this that is at the center of our project 'Culture Driven Innovation'; to initiate, and especially to inspire, new innovations with the help of cultural analysis. These innovations do not necessarily need to be targeted towards the commercial sector, or have increased profitability as a primary objective. They can also bring about innovations within the public sector, or within so-called NGO's, with the aim to improve health and quality of life. Matteo Marrasco offers, in a study of a canteen located in a sports hall, reflections on the importance of considering people's actual behavior when new plans are to be implemented. One example is how the introduction of organic food and drink led to a sort of informal resistance movement where the previous menu, filled with "bad ingredients", was still being sold in secret. New innovations, even in the public sector, can grow if one focuses on mealtimes and the cultural aspects of lifestyle, instead of parameters which are easy to measure, like nutrition and health. We hope that the articles in this book will generate inspiration and development for actors who work with food, health, and lifestyle in the Öresund Region whether in the private, public, or civil sector.

Bread, Identity and social connection

By: Solomon Akele Abebe

Bakeries are not only places to sell bread; they are also spaces of identity formation and cauldrons of social connectedness. The recipes, aromas and rituals of baking seem to build identity and evoke strong memories. In line with this argument, this short article primarily intends to investigate the ways in which bread can be used as a reflection of cultural identity, and its role in the reconfiguration of past memories using a Persian specialized bread type called nan-e barbari.

Nansis Bageri

Nansis Bageri is a multi-cultural neighborhood fixture built along Möllevången; which contains a mosaic of nationality specific groceries - generic Asian, Persian, Thai, Vietnamese and generic Middle Eastern. Möllevången is the southern city area of Malmö, where people can find the cheapest items - especially when it comes to food. On Saturdays, Möllevångensquare (the epicenter of Möllevången) becomes a big market place of vegetables that starts early in the morning and continues until late in the afternoon. The streets on Möllevången bestow a feeling of being somewhere in the Middle East with all the shops having their signs written in Arabic or Turkish languages. It is common to see idyllic faces, hear loud voices and different languages from almost every corner of the world. Nansis has been in the neighborhood for sixteen years. The owner is an Iranian middle-aged man, who is in charge of both the baking and selling activities. The bakery specializes in making an authentic version of the Iranian flat bread, nan-e barbari; but it is also possible to find some rolls and small breads, cookies, pastries, nuts, cheese and olives. Besides, a lot of space in the shop is dedicated

for imported Persian food items like snacks, candies, treats, teas, cheese, olives, nuts, etc. The owner claimed that the bakery is a place where mostly Iranians come to find similar comfort foods, or grocery items for cooking since it is the only store that sells them in Malmö.

Nan-e Barbari – more than staple food

“Nan-e barbari is far more than just a staple food in Iran. It is an indispensable part of Iranian culture.”

An informant buying the bread at Nansis Bageri, Malmö

Nan-e barbari is traditional bread that was made by the Barbarians, hence the name. Barbarians were a group of people who inhabited the areas near eastern borders of Iran, which was historically known by the name Khorasan¹. It was believed to be introduced into Persia (now known as Iran) in the 1700s, and became popular during the time when the country was ruled by the Qajar dynasty from 1794 to 1925². Since then, the bread gained publicity to become among the major staple food in the Persian diet. The baker further elaborated that nan-e barbari is the most widely used bread type in Iran even nowadays. It has perhaps become an essential part of the Iranian culture through time. A piece of nan-e barbari served with Persian tea and some feta cheese or butter or yoghurt usually comprises the traditional breakfast for a lot of people in Iran. Many Persian restaurants usually serve it with “Tabriz cheese” made from ewe’s milk, which is similar to feta cheese. Informants disclosed that many people also use the bread during lunch and dinner with Shiraz salad³, kebab, or different entrees etc. The baker gave me a loaf while having a short conversation with him inside the baking room. The bread is crisp, with golden color on the outside, but soft and white in between the crusts. Although it is quite generously salted, nan-e barbari is tasty enough to eat on its own as well. I was captivated by its golden color and unique fragrant smell. In no time, I asked the baker to explain it to me. According to him, the golden color and aroma of the bread emanate from the specified sauce which is used to brush it before baking. This sauce is known as ‘Romal’ in Iran and prepared from mixing a small amount of baking soda with water.

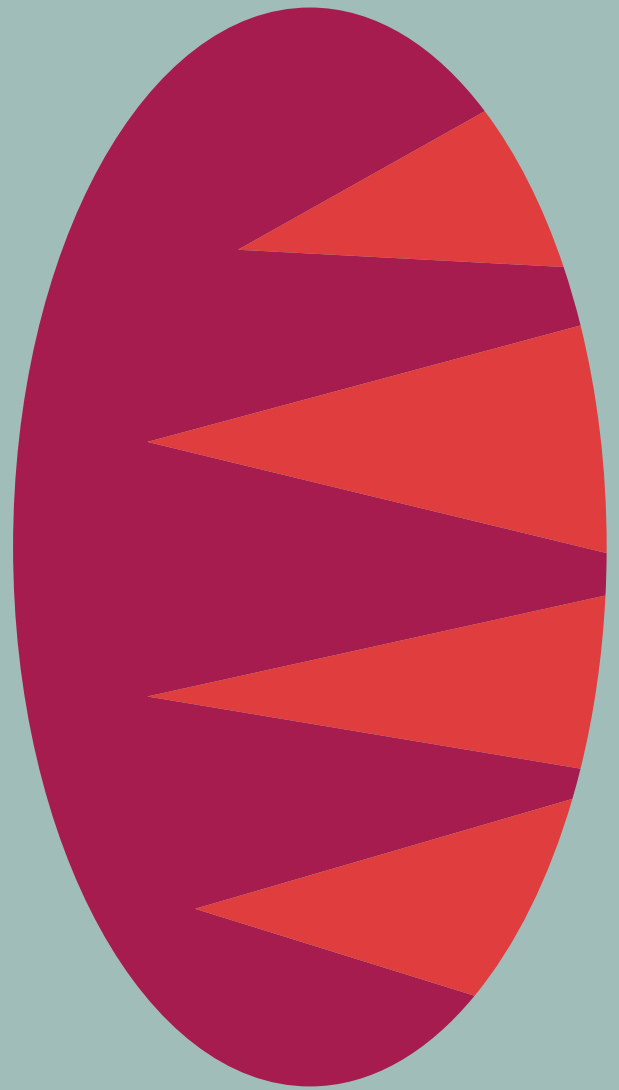
Ethnologist Anna Burstedt lucidly argues that ‘there is no such thing as food without a certain geographical belonging’. All food belongs to a certain definite location; and when the national or regional origin of a specific dish is emphasized, ‘the food, or the recipe, appears as an alternative, something different’ (Burstedt, 2002: 147). Informants explained that food in Iran is a fundamental part of the country’s Heritage with the ingredients reflecting its geography. Usually Iranians associate their cuisines with various social events, ceremonies and rituals in which culinary traditions are intertwined with the country’s history. “Iran has rich cultural traditions around food, and food is a sort of way to access the Iranian identity. One of the real reflections of this Iranian identity is nan-e barbari – bread that is readily available fresh all over Tehran and Iran” the baker explained.

Through specializing in nan-e barbari bread, which is the Persian denomination for sesame bread – ‘sesambröd’ in Swedish, the Nansis bakery uniquely expresses its geographical affiliation. The bread basically lacks an explicit selling story, signals of refinement, and exclusivity similar to those fancy

lifestyle bakeries like Vendel Organic Bakery in Malmö. But the owner obviously takes pride in the fact that he uses genuine Persian ingredients, recipes, baking tradition and incorporated history while making the bread. He also refers to its hand-made production as opposed to other machine made mass supermarket bread. He was also thrilled in contributing his share to maintain the Iranian tradition and history alive in Sweden. At the beginning, sixteen years ago, most of the people did not know about the Iranian bread so they would go inside and ask, but they learned fast and started consuming it. The bakery has a lot of regular customers now, mostly Iranians, but also Swedish and other people with different ethnic background. He was very lucid in pointing out that “everyone (alla)” comes to get the bread from his store.

I never came across any feelings of cultural belongingness as an Ethiopian through food until I came to Sweden. The most valued food type in Ethiopia, which is eaten daily virtually in every household is, ‘injera’. ‘Injera’ is yeast-risen flat bread, with a unique spongy, sourdough, crepe-like texture, traditionally made out of ‘teff’⁴ flour. The injera tastes sour, because it ferments for a few days before it is baked. On top of the injera there are different kinds of ‘wot’⁵. ‘Injera’ and ‘wot’ constitute the basic foundation of Ethiopian cuisine every day. It’s nearly two months since I started a new life in Sweden without eating ‘injera’, which I consider as the major part of my life for the last 27 years. Unfortunately, there is no Ethiopian bakery or restaurant either in Lund or Malmö. So I happen to eat European dishes daily. On September 11, 2010 - a new year in Ethiopia, I was invited to celebrate the holiday with the Ethiopian community in Malmö. The people prepared the traditional cuisine of Ethiopia - ‘injera’, ‘doro wot’⁶ and ‘kitifo’⁷. As it is very difficult to find the genuine recipes and ingredients here, they brought the food items directly from Ethiopia. For Ethiopians, no holiday meal is complete without ‘injera’ with ‘doro wot’.

I was extremely joyful to eat ‘injera’ after two months. Why did I feel so much happiness while eating this typical Ethiopian food? It was because I ate the food that belongs to my country and culture. According to Anna Burstedt (2002:153), food offers “the possibility to assign a place to belonging and identity”. While eating ‘injera’, I reaffirmed my belongingness to my country, and expressed my cultural position. Most importantly, ethnic food preferences become identity markers when one goes abroad (Yano, 2007). I never felt happier, as I was at the holiday celebration, eating the same food items as Ethiopians. Similarly, nan-e barbari granted the Iranians with an inherent power to express their cultural position and geographical belongingness to their country and reflect their identity.



Looking back on life through the lens of Nan-e Barbari

“It is hard enough leaving your homeland, and there are obviously so many things that you miss. No matter how much you miss things that are essential parts of your day, there are also things that you take for granted, like nan-e barbari.”

An informant at Nansis Bageri, Malmö

We interviewed another regular customer at Nansis, a middle-aged Iranian man, who lives in Södervärn, Malmö. He has been coming to the bakery for the past three years. He does not eat the bread every day as he is conscious of his health at this age. However, he sometimes stops by Möllevångstorget on his way back home to buy some nan-e barbari. Especially, he gets the bread whenever he has Iranian guests to share it with them. He explained that nan-e barbari gives him a home feeling and a real taste of Iran. He further explicated that the bread is common in Iran, and there are many of this type of bakeries, “two per street”. In Iran, people call it “Turkish Cake”, as it is popular among the Azeris⁸. He said that there is a popular joke how the Azeris eat nan-e barbari that “they chop the bread into pieces and put it in a bowl filled with coke - that’s the way they like to eat it”. He elucidated the intrinsic value attained from nan-e barbari as,

...“coming to the Nansis takes me back to my neighborhood in Tehran and makes me remember the smell of fresh nan-e barbari, long queues of people in front of bakeries, and swapping jokes with the baker in Farsi. Whenever I eat it, either with my friends or family, I find myself sharing stories from Iran. It’s not only the bread that we share, but also our traditions and memories.”

Anna Burstedt also explicated that

“...national food cultures are often associated with a nostalgic “then,” and people’s attention is turned to a place and a time long ago as if they possessed an inherent power”

Burstedt, 2000: 115

During one of my visit to the bakery, I happened to meet a young Iranian man in his late twenties. It's been more than a decade since he has started living in Sweden. He often comes to Nansis to get nan-e barbari and other Persian snacks. He mentioned that whenever he visits the bakery, he immediately recollect about his childhood memories.

“I remember that I used to sit at my mother’s kitchen table always in the morning for breakfast. We had similar breakfast routine every single morning before I left for school. Most of the time, she used to serve me fresh simple homemade nan-e barbari with feta cheese. While eating breakfast, she used to tell me Iranian legendary stories. To be honest, no one made my breakfast time so special since then. Whenever I step by Nansis, I will envision the clear picture of my mother’s kitchen – her hand rolling out the dough and the fragrance of fresh nan-e barbari rising from the oven.”

In the course of the interview, I was thinking about the feeling I had while celebrating the 'Ethiopian New Year' in Malmö. It stroked all the memories of celebrations with my parents and friends back home - eating traditional food, drinking local liquors, and dancing to traditional songs. When we closely scrutinize this nostalgized reconfiguration of the past, what make the 'good old days' good was the close friendships and relationships formed between people through food - eating together and sharing a meal, discussing over issues, swapping jokes, celebrating special occasions, etc (Yano, 2007: 61).

Conclusion

Identity can be defined as the individual's identification and belongingness to particular social groups on the basis of differences socially sanctioned as significant (Shuman, 2007:141). The idea of identity is the fundamental aspect of how we define who we are. Even if we all claim that we are individual beings, it is our attachment to a particular social group that regulates our sense of identity (Yano, 2007). Food offers the possibility to assign a place to belonging. It defines people, and governs their communication provided that it is an integral part of their identity. I witnessed these arguments through my own observations, the interviews I made, and my group mates' field notes in Persian specialised bakery, known as Nansis. The distinct culinary qualities expressed in the recipes and baking style give nan-e barbari bread a distinct geographical belongingness and authentic Persian identity. The bread also evokes strong memories and serves as one of the major ways to construct emotional links to distant family members and broader social connections.

Endnotes

- 1 - The word Khorasan, which means “where the sun arrives from” in Persian language, currently designates the north eastern region in Iran; however, it represented much larger areas in the east and north-east of the then Persian Empire historically (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khorasan_Province).
- 2 - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/485405/Qajar-Dynasty>
- 3 - It is a Persian salad type that consists of chopped pieces of tomatoes and cucumbers with lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper to add flavor to it.
- 4 - ‘Teff’ is an annual grass, a species of lovegrass native to the northern Ethiopian Highlands of Northeast Africa.
- 5 - A thick stew, served atop ‘injera’
- 6 - It is a tender chicken leg or thigh marinated in lemon sautéed in seasoned butter and stewed in red pepper sauce, flavored with onions garlic, ginger root and pinch of cardamom
- 7 - It is a traditional dish found in Ethiopian cuisine, which consists of minced raw beef, heated and marinated in a spicy chili powder based spice blend, and a clarified butter infused with herbs and spices.
- 8 - Azeris are a Turkish speaking people in northwestern Iran /http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijani_people/

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Place - the secret ingredient

By: Maria Hoppe

Space is a society of named places.
Claude Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind

People are not only buying bread. The criteria for bread selection can demonstrate the world view of consumers, their lifestyle, e.g. whether a sense of environmental or social responsibility or simply judgement of taste influences the bread selection. Furthermore, the criteria for bread selection can display the financial status of consumers or show how people set up priorities when it comes to the quality of the product. Studying bread preferences reveals also very personal, even intimate information, e.g. childhood memories - a barbeque with family and friends at the Mediterranean Sea on a beach in Sour/Lebanon - or people's anxieties when it comes to the quality of the bread. The question "is this good for me/my family/my friends" and the advice of so called experts seems to affect bread culture more than ever.

Therefore, lifestyle bakeries seem to offer an alternative to mass products in supermarkets or conventional bakeries. Consumers can see where the product was made, they can smell the freshly baked bread, and they know the local baker and the shop assistants and can ask the staff about the ingredients, the baking procedure and historical origins. After all people taste the flavour and seemingly the quality of the bread. Lifestyle bakeries seem to offer authentic, safe and high grade products.

In this article I am going to argue that the place - the bakery and its environment as a performative

space (Fischer-Lichte 2004) - has a great impact on how the bread is perceived and this image of trust is produced. To put it in different words, the bread would not be the same bread without the place, where it is produced, represented, bought and sold (cf. Burstedt 2000). Thereby I will in particular reflect on the interrelation between Lifestyle and the place as field of action and representation. I will use St. Jakobs Stenugnsbageri in Lund and their sourdough bread as a case study and an example for how the place makes the difference and how an atmosphere of trust is created within this place, who it will affect and what kind of symbolic cultural meaning (sourdough) bread in a certain context has.

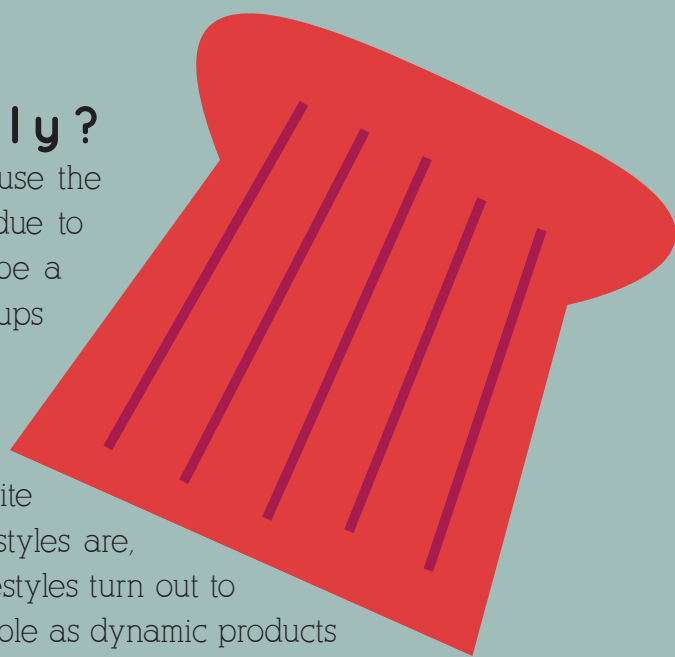
Aiming at a deeper insight of what people seek in their lives, the article will show a historical, but dynamic and changeable snap-shot of what a group of people believes is a good product. It will reveal patterns of consumer behaviour and the role of memory and trust. Finally, these findings will lead to new questions about whether the private and public sector can or is willing to fulfill these desires.

What is lifestyle - really?

Generally speaking, lifestyle is a problematic term, because the content of the concept is dynamic and ever changing due to historically and social change. However, lifestyle seems to be a powerful approach to understand and describe social groups as well as consumer behavior.

The concept seems to refer to arbitrariness and unlimited options, external characteristics, like a certain outfit, favorite music or preference for certain restaurants. However, Lifestyles are, and this is often overlooked, visible cultural structures. Lifestyles turn out to be an expression of specific reality. Lifestyles become visible as dynamic products of power relationships between certain habitual practises and social, political, economical, technical or other social external forces. They do not only indicate an individual taste, but also indicate, in relation to other lifestyles, always the identity with a group and the symbolic fight over the things with which one surrounds herself/himself in order to belong or to distinguish oneself from others. Lifestyle is a way to consciously or unconsciously define oneself against other people or groups of people and to claim recognition. Also small differences can determine fundamental possibilities and options. Hence, these differences always produce social inequality. Lifestyles express social distribution of power. They can be a product of the market, but they also can express the needs of the market. Lifestyles reflect political, temporal and spatial situations. However, lifestyles can also reveal how people perceive social inequality. People answer through their lifestyles actively or passively questions that their living conditions entail. Lifestyles become manifest as social and temporal ways of life, as expressions of social life, local or global roots (Katschnig-Fasch 2004: 301).

Important to mention is also that a way of life is linked to objective conditions and constraints. Seemingly endless opportunities are limited by socio-cultural barriers. People can not completely



free choose their lifestyle. Lifestyles deserve attention, because they do not only show the impact of dependencies, but also people's resistance against power mechanisms.

St Jakobs Stenugnsbageri - a lifestyle bakery

The linking between culture and economy is increasingly reflected in the creation of things like lifestyle, cultural identities, and the aesthetics of everyday life (Ibid12). Lifestyle bakeries literally sell a certain way of life, a notion of tradition and authenticity. They "are places in which cultural and economic processes are intimately entangled, and are in this sense part of a larger phenomenon which some scholars have described as a 'cultural economy'" (cf. O'Dell 2010: 11)

A lifestyle bakery is also a perception space, which appeals all human senses and even might manipulate them. Before people eat the bread, they can smell it, see it, and touch it. Customers in a lifestyle bakery can more easily interact with the staff and other customers, than customers in a supermarket. Therefore, the lifestyle bakery is the place, where the cultural economy and experience is organized.

The bakery as a place can be understood as a geometric entity, but also as a performative space that suggests with the way it is designed certain behaviour from customers and at the same time gives space to the customers to perform their identity. A performative space opens up opportunities for the relationship between actors, audience, movement and perception; moreover it structures and organizes these. The structure of a place suggests, but can not determine a certain relationship between actors and audience, ways of movement and perception. However, this implies that the presentation and the specific structure of a place can generate a certain perception and behaviour among the audience. Moreover, the performative space is at the same time an atmospheric space. Therefore, spatiality does not only result from how actors and audience use the room, but is also generated through this special atmosphere of a room (Fischer-Lichte 2004). Accordingly, the bakery as a place and performative space with a certain atmosphere has big impact on the overall impression of the audience. The atmosphere is the first thing that affects customers and will influence further perception of the purchaser.

Several interviewees at St Jakobs Stenugnsbageri stated the quality of the bread, the taste and health factors as different reasons for buying the sourdough bread, but almost all of them emphasized the high price of the commodity. Why did they emphasize the price? I only asked them why they bought the bread. None of the interviewees criticized the relatively high price of St Jakobs sourdough bread. Decisive factors to buy the bread were the attributed positive qualities of the bread like the taste. Hence was the price-performance ration seemingly convinced customers to pay the relatively high amount of money.

The sourdough bread seems to be a symbol of superiority; a in which economical resources are transformed in a so called high quality product. Moreover, due to the fact that these customers can afford to purchase this bread they consciously or unconsciously indicate their identity with a group;

they show belonging. Since the bread is quite expensive, it is therefore a commodity that can exclude people. Buying bread at St. Jakobs Stenugnsbageri is a massive statement; customers look for an alternative to mass production. They want healthy, tasty quality products. While escaping from the conventional market industry customers of lifestyle bakeries serve an industry, which is aware of culture and creates a culture sensitive commodity.

St Jakobs Stenugnsbageri was one of the first bakeries in Lund that started to sell sourdough bread in Lund. Later several other bakeries started baking sourdough bread as well, but St. Jakobs Stenugnsbageri still seems to be the most successful sourdough bread selling bakery. At this point, I argue, that the way the bakery is organized is the secret ingredient that attracts the above described lifestyle bakery customers.

Everywhere (at all times I have been there) in the bakery there are little lamps and candles. There is tea and candles in the front window, and candles in the show case between the baking trays and also in the display window, creating a welcoming, cosy and private atmosphere. The decoration is chosen according to the season. It is late summer now, September, and a big box of apples stands in the display window decorating the store. There are apples spiked on a chain also used for decoration. It is warm in the bakery compared to the outside temperature; one could feel the heat from the oven. One can smell the fresh bread and the cinnamon buns already in front of the bakery in the street. Different kinds of bread are stacked on rustic, functional, wooden white painted shelves. It is a small shop in the city centre of about approximately 30m². The prices of the bread are written in blackboard with white chalk. There is wooden garden bench to sit on. Mostly (I saw only one man in his early twenties) young, female, shop assistants wearing a white shirt and white apron are serving the customers and answering patiently the questions of the customers (and mine as well).

I bought some bread, not only for scientific reasons, but also because the place convinced me, I knew before that the bread would taste wonderful and it did, but would it have tasted same in a different place?

Food for Thought - *Special needs* Atmosphere

In this paper I have argued that the place, in this context the bakery as a performative space, has a great impact on the image of the bread and therefore attracts a certain group of people. I described with the help of the lifestyle concept that people are not only buying bread, but perform their view of life with the choice of bread. Customers of St. Jakobs Stenugnsbageri look for tasty, healthy, high quality bread; for an authentic product. The fact that customers can directly talk to the producer of the bread, the baker, and check the quality of the bread without the help of any aloof food expert, but with their own senses, creates a high level of trust in the product.

One of the outcomes of the fieldwork is actually that people look for products they can trust, and that they are willing (if they can afford it) to pay a lot of money for this commodity. The question, whether seemingly trustful looking food products are really trustworthy remains unanswered in many cases. Are the private and the public sector willing to meet the customers growing demands for high quality food?

The knowledge about places and the atmosphere they inhere is already used in different marketing

strategies to increase profit. Some coffee shops for instance use coffee flavoured air spray to lure in more customers, and some bakeries use the same strategy with bread flavoured air spray.

However, knowledge about place and food can and should be acknowledged in different areas, too. The atmosphere of a place is the first thing that affects people and will influence further perception of the food. Hence, in every place the food should be represented according to the place and the special needs of people who visit or inhabit a place - in daycares, schools, libraries, hospitals, companies or municipal offices the presentation of food should be adapted to the people and the place and the other way around. This seems to be especially important for the well-being of people with special needs like homes for physically challenged, mentally disabled or elderly people. Although these places are called home, the food usually does not taste, smell or is served like in private homes, if they ever had one. However, for the eating experience and well-being of people it seems to be important to more thoroughly consider the meaning of place to people and in this case 'home', since the place creates the taste of the food and vice versa.

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Emmerys: Kneading an Identity

By: Greta Hadley

Bread - "A well-known article of food prepared by moistening, kneading and baking meal or flour, generally with the addition of yeast or leaven".

Oxford English Dictionary (1971)

This article aims at presenting some of the findings and insights that resulted from a cultural analysis of an Emmerys bakery carried out as part of the MACA programme in cooperation with the Danish National Museum. The research was carried out in the context of the Norsam project, the goal of which is to explore the deeper meanings, narratives and modes of consumption that surround bread in contemporary Nordic culture.

Emmerys' profile is that of a gourmet, high quality and luxury bakery and delicatessen: the products sold are carefully selected and are all either certified organic or local specialities produced in small scale. Their bread is made with organic ingredients and 'traditional' methods: kneaded by hand, left to rise for as much as 12 hours and finally slowly baked in stone ovens. Emmerys take care to inform their customers of the origin of the products they sell and the ingredients that go into their bread. And it pays off: people feel safe. As one customer explained, "When I come here, I know what I'm getting...I'm doing something that's good for the planet and good for myself."

Emmerys is interesting as it presents an example of a major trend shift in action: it was only fifty years

ago that in the urban environment industrial production was considered the safest and cleanest way to handle and manufacture food. Food bought directly from farmers and small family run businesses was not only considered less hygienic, but also less 'modern' and 'evolved'. Now we are witnessing an inversion of these standards to where what is 'natural' and simple represents safety and where 'local' translates directly to quality. Emmerys, with their 'traditional bread' and local products, are at the vanguard of this trend.

At a time in which the ingredient list on the back of supermarket breads seems never ending, the few and simple ingredients that are listed under the loaves at Emmerys, followed by the suffix *intet andet* (nothing else), represent a sort of purity and simplicity that increases the value of the bread two or threefold. The fewer the ingredients, the more people are willing to pay for it. Emmerys is, in fact, one of the most expensive bakeries in the Copenhagen area.

Customers interviewed at Emmerys were asked, among other things, why they choose to buy bread there. The expected answers were things along the lines of "Because it's organic" or "Because I agree with the values that Emmerys stands for". I had not expected as simple and straightforward an answer as the one most informants gave: "Because the bread here tastes better than in other bakeries".

If one were collecting data to fill a questionnaire this answer would probably be satisfactory. But a cultural analysis aims at digging deeper and uncovering meaning that lies behind the surface of this kind of statement - of prying open and exploring the space between what people say and what they actually do. The point here is not to argue whether or not Emmerys bread does indeed taste better than most supermarket bought bread, but rather to address the kinds of question that a cultural analyst would pose - is the difference in taste quality alone enough to account for the reason why people will spend twice as much to buy a loaf of bread? By problematizing the very nature of taste as a purely chemical reaction it becomes possible for a cultural analyst to get 'behind the scenes' and better see what is going on at an unconscious level, revealing what is hidden or taken for granted in a loaf of bread.

The performance of taste

How is taste formed then? This process has been traced by some to the availability of food in relation to practical and economic advantages . It is not difficult to see how in a context where what is important is to fill one's stomach with limited economic means; the food that is chosen is that which can satiate the most at the lowest cost. What is chosen for practical reasons, what is more readily accessible, becomes culturally accepted and familiar, and consequently translated into taste. However, in the Copenhagen of today issues of survival are clearly not the determining factor in the city inhabitants' choice of food - taste for the kind of bread sold at Emmerys is clearly not a consequence of economic constrictions.

When considering the formation of taste, Montanari (2006), a medieval historian and food culture expert, suggests 'rareness' as a pole that lies at the opposite end of the spectrum with respect to 'availability'. We can then trace two separate dynamics that determine the formation of taste based on economic means and the consequent degree of access to food. The 'utilitarian' logic behind the

formation of taste is actually reversed in a more wealthy social context where:

The object of desire is no longer the food available in abundance but the one that is rare (...) the anti-low-cost budgetary trend would thus seem to be an important motor in the process of formulation of taste in the upper classes (...) only the culinary anhedonia and boredom of rich urban residents could have transformed the poor folk's dark bread into an elite food.

Although Montanari focuses on medieval societies, it may be illuminating to apply the same basic principle to what we see happening at Emmerys: their customers are simply not attracted by the cheap, standardised bread on the supermarket shelves. Despite its very modern design and shiny cleanliness, Emmerys depends on the image of 'brown paper bag' rural genuineness it promotes. If we apply Montanari's theory of taste formation as a cultural process we could say that, along with the balance and quality of ingredients that go into an Emmerys loaf, it is also the idea of what the bread they are eating stands for that makes it taste so good; the idea of the return to the natural, the simple rural way of doing things, the rustic charm of a loaf of hand made, stone oven baked bread. The image that the urban consumers at Emmerys are creating is one of a past where food was more genuine and life was generally better, "a blissful and uncorrupted rural life that the peasants themselves had never known". Interestingly, and somewhat paradoxically, the 'traditional' Emmerys loaves are baked not in the boutiques that they are sold in, but rather in a large central complex just outside the city centre from which they are then distributed to the shops once or twice a day.

Buying into otherness

At Emmerys customers find a carefully measured concoction of sensually and emotionally soothing elements. There is the strong feeling of being pampered: the good customer service, the generous tasters that are on offer, the detail of the small piece of cake that is placed on the to go coffee cup. There is an aspect of rituality and magic in the way the bread is handled. An example of this can be found in Emmerys' specific normative language that sets them apart from other bakeries, and adds an aura of almost mystical reverence for the bread. Customers who ask for a standard loaf of white bread (in Danish, 'Franskbrød')



are politely informed by the staff that Emmerys do not carry 'Franskbrød', but would they like to try some of their 'Hvedebrød' instead? The 'Hvedebrød' proposed by Emmerys is in essence, despite the slow raising and stone oven baking, very similar to a regular 'Franskbrød'. However, by giving their loaves a different name, Emmerys creates for itself a differentiating status, an 'otherness' with respect to 'regular' bakeries and their bread. When people buy bread at Emmerys they are buying into this 'otherness', as well as the image of rural honesty, the quality of organic products and the exoticism ('taste the world' is actually Emmerys' tagline) of products linked to a specific geographic area. Along with flour, water and yeast, it is this is that goes into Emmerys bread.

Bread is a basic item in most homes: in its various shapes and sizes it has been an everyday staple in many cultures over the ages. Despite the simplicity of its literal definition, and because of its presence in widely differing cultural and economic milieus, bread can reflect the implications of a complex and layered reality. As a human artefact, it can be contextualised in systems of cultural meanings and values, and as a human artefact intended for consumption it can represent an important vehicle by which people incorporate those meanings and values. In this way it becomes possible to see that along with the flour and yeast, its cultural context is also kneaded into a loaf of bread. The brief cultural analysis carried out at Emmerys has revealed how people are doing more than just buying bread - they are taking part, and finding a way of expressing themselves, in a greater system of meaning and values.

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Kneading Modernity

By: Michael Humberacht

It's Just Bread

This was my first thought after being given the assignment to investigate bread in Sweden. I couldn't have imagined a more boring task. Bread is just a mundane piece of food that is hardly something to get excited about - Nowhere near the most interesting item on the table. During interviews in the investigation I saw other people's lack of interest when they asked me questions like "why are you interested in bread?" In the beginning of the project this was a very difficult question to answer. In the end, however, doing a cultural analysis of bread was like opening a window into contemporary Swedish culture: the scene filled with insights into different meanings across generations, perceptions of gender, and clues to how people form identities through consumption and how modernity in Sweden is being articulated through everyday actions. Throughout this article I'm going to discuss how bread is much more than "just bread," the goal is to reveal how something mundane like bread can actually be a map used to create some of the various routes that guide our lives.

Bread in the Supermarket

The project was carried out primarily in two locations: a commercial supermarket and a bakery that specializes in sourdough bread. The first examined locale was the super market. We spent several days talking to shoppers, observing shoppers make their bread selections and taking general notice of the supermarket and its bread section. Talking to shoppers continually revealed how some people had little interest in bread. My initial comment of "It's just bread," was repeated several times by shoppers. However, after continuing the conversation shoppers quickly demonstrated the opposite.

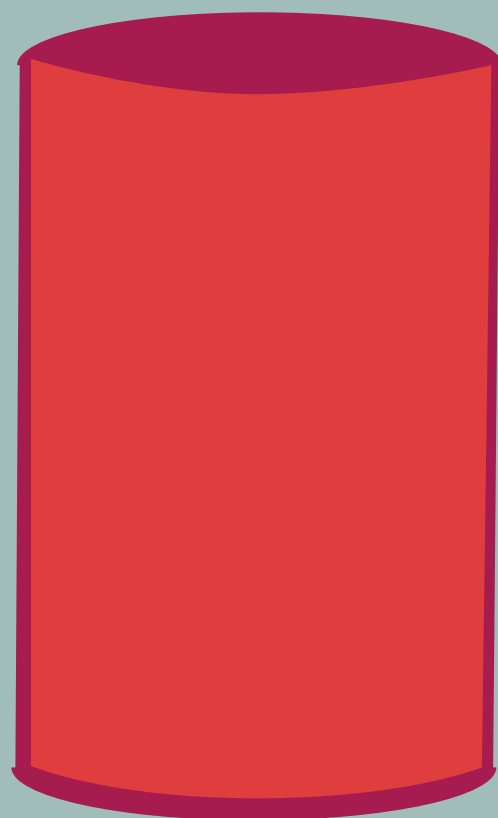
Almost everyone had very clear ideas about bread, like which are tasty, which are normal, which are natural, which are industrialized, which are healthy and which are not and lastly why they bought the bread they did. Everyone knew what different breads should cost and most, regardless of age and economic background, declared the importance of having healthy bread. Most shoppers did not worry too much about price, expressing ideas like, "I will spend a little more for good bread." Some people knew about ways in which bread companies tried to make bread look healthy, when in fact it wasn't, and knew strategies to avoid buying this fake healthy bread. These comments begged the question, If bread "is just bread" like they said, than how do people know so much about it and have so many ideas about how they should buy it? A quick look around the bread section of the supermarket and you will quickly notice the extent to which bread has become categorized. There are multiple shelves and sub-sections containing bread in all shapes, sizes, styles, qualities, and price ranges. Categorization and shopper's knowledge of bread showed that people are not buying bread out of need; they were choosing bread to express their identity. Consider another product people use to build identity, the car. Is a car simply a machine that takes you where you need to go? For decades, the car has been more than just a machine. As Tom O'Dell puts it: "General motors... realized in the early twentieth century that they were in the business of selling dreams, lifestyles, and identities" (O'Dell, 2010, p.14). Consumers are quite used to choosing their car based on how they live their lives, the color they like, the brand they know and trust, all the while wondering what new places their new car can take them. A few days in the supermarket demonstrated that bread is following a similar path. People from all walks of life have a common understanding of the complexity entailed in choosing something as simple as bread. People use that understanding to choose bread that will fit their vision of who they are and what kind of life they are trying to build for themselves.

Bread in the Bakery

Insights from the supermarket, however, brought forth other questions: what kind of lives are people trying to build with bread? How are people using bread to build their lives in different ways? A few days in a bakery in southern Sweden that specializes in sourdough bread helped shed light on these questions. The bakery aesthetics and layout were much different than the supermarket. Entering the bakery was like stepping into an idyllic cottage described in a romantic era novel. Rustic looking bread with flour sprinkled over the top on shelves made of wood or placed in wooden baskets. Bottles of locally produced beverages carefully arranged in wooden barrels. The rather small but cozy shop is painted white with a large window where bread is displayed garnished with candles and straw. When you see the shop you immediately feel the presence of the past, but when exactly is this past? Could you put a specific date to the time the shop is trying to convey? More than anything this bakery was presenting an idea of the past more than a historical record. But how could this idea of the past help them sell products? The answer is in the bread. The bakery specialty, sourdough bread, is handmade and goes through a slow process that takes time to make. The bakery is a local formation of the global slow food movement. A movement that Anna Burstedt argues, in her article *the Place is on the Plate*, started in Italy in the mid eighties to counter fast food and the increasing industrialization of food products. The movement advocates ideas like enjoying food, quality of life, ecological cultivation and preservation of culinary traditions (Burstedt, 2002). The bakery is an example of how this very global movement is being articulated in Sweden while also giving us insight into how people consume in modern Sweden. Images of past sold at the bakery

are interwoven with images how people want to lead their lives in the present. According to Arjun Appadurai, this is the key formula for understanding how people consume in the modern world: through tension between nostalgia and fantasy (Appadurai, 1996). Indeed, the bakery is offering an image of the past, a past before fast food, which can be used to recreate a present more in line with customer ideas about what they want food to be. Throughout interviews at the bakery and at the supermarket people buying bread had very specific ideas about how bread fit into the kind of life they were trying to live. Younger people often spoke about how they had started to bake sourdough, and other bread, at home as a hobby. Something enjoyable to do that coincided with their belief in eating unprocessed food, food that doesn't harm the environment in its production and, overall, food that helps them create healthy eating habits. For many interviewees, baking bread was a new leisure activity that simultaneously provided relaxation and an activity to spur a healthy lifestyle. In addition, on several occasions people described that baking bread was a way to change gender roles. Several young men professed that they bake bread because they don't think baking should be a woman's job and that inside the house preparing food should have a more equal division between the sexes. All in all, throughout the project, what became clear was that bread has significant meaning for young people in Southern Sweden; sewn into buying and baking bread were images of a romantic pre-industrial past and images of creating a healthier more gender equal present. The bakery itself showed how local people combine the past, the present and the global world to make local bread that people use to create their lives and express their identity.

However, bread does not mean the same thing for everyone. There were some stark contrasts with people from older generations. While some did report that they baked bread on occasion for leisure, most admitted they had stopped baking bread and preferred to buy it. Especially with people at retirement age and beyond, interviewees declared how happy they were not to have to bake bread anymore. For them, they said, baking bread was a duty of family or social life that they had fulfilled for several years but that was no longer required. Furthermore, most were quite happy with the wide variety of choices and availability of healthy bread that didn't exist in the past. Several people described how bread in past years was very simple, often contained a lot of sugar and how it was generally not good for you. And even if bread costs more now than in the past most said they didn't mind paying more to have quality bread. In the end, buying bread for older generations seemed to carry meaning of drawing a line between an old life of former responsibilities and personal images of a new life with more modern ways of living.



Bread and Cultural Analysis

At this point in the project there was little doubt as to the importance of bread. Doing a cultural analysis of bread revealed several implications for the 'how' and 'why' of consumer bread culture.

Cultural analysis, however, can offer much more. How could project insights be useful for people who work in the food industry in southern Sweden? One example would be helping local businesses create strategies to endure changing consumer food trends. If sourdough is popular today, will it be popular tomorrow? What ebbs and flows of consumer lifestyle will change what people buy? Cultural analysis can offer assistance in several ways: one would be, as was shown above, to provide insights into underlying principles guiding people's decisions on how they consume; a second could be to help organizations better communicate to customers through building their identity in the market; and yet another could be to help people in the food industry recognize different meanings products have for different groups and how those meanings effect and are effected by different consumer habits. Thus, if you are a bakery that sells mostly sourdough bread, cultural analysis can help you develop your brand and communicate to your customers by understanding their lifestyles and consumption habits so that if or when customers lose interest in sourdough customers will still trust your name. Cultural analysis can help develop a bread menu that targets specific groups based on different ideas and uses of bread and answer questions like: how are people reacting to the menu? Does each group interpret products in the way I intended? How are customers incorporating my bread into their daily lives? Businesses and organizations can be better prepared to understand their role and reciprocal relationships with consumers. Cultural analysis can answer questions and provide bottom up solutions for organizations working with bread and in areas across the food industry.

Much More Than Just Bread

By the end of the project I no longer thought bread was "just bread." Doing a cultural analysis of bread provided many insights into modern consumption habits in southern Sweden. What appears to be a dull and boring object on the table is actually a culturally kneaded product that interconnects images of the past and dreams of the future all while being in the present. Studying bread showed how consuming products carries different meaning between generations. Also, how consumption is involved in the shifting perceptions of gender roles, what leisure is or can be and ideas of what food on the kitchen table should consist of. In addition, studying bread brought to light how the global and modern worlds are being articulated in southern Sweden. Proving bread can offer understandings into the complex interplay between the ways in which the modern and global worlds are defining people in the local and how people in the local are defining the modern and global worlds. What's more, the project showed that cultural analysis can help anyone working with food design strategies and build an organizational identity that will help sustain the development and production of food in Sweden.

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Supermarket bakery: schizophrenia of narratives

By: Giovanni Acerbis

Bread is an important part of our eating habits, but the production and consumption of it is not simply a mechanical act. Indeed, bread is heavily loaded with social as well as cultural values that shape the ways we relate to it. Society produces and uses determined rules on how we are supposed to consume bread - e.g. when, what kind, how, and the like. How Italians eat bread differ from the Danish way. Additionally, different types of bread are subjected to the construction of dissimilar narratives around them: bakeries brand and sell their products in ways that are different from how grocery stores or supermarkets display prefabricated bread. But, what happens when a supermarket decides to open a 'traditional' bakery inside the store, selling its products together with prefabricated bread? What are the store's policies behind it? How do the consumers react to the different kinds of bread?

In this article I will try to address the above questions, drawing on the empirical material collected during two weeks of fieldwork in the fall 2010. The study was conducted as part of a research project commissioned by the National Museum of Denmark and Norsam with the aim of analyzing and documenting four bakeries in Nørrebro. The final results of the study would be then posted on a internet blog about bread in Nordic countries called the Bank of Bread (Brødbank). The specific case assigned to me and my fellow group researchers was a bakery placed inside a Kvickly supermarket in Nørrebro Runddel. The bakery is store owned and located outside the cash registers right next to the liquor and tobacco counter. The bread is baked everyday, and sold at the bakery counter as well as inside the store, where it is placed in the same department as industrial premade bread.

Being this our research context we decide to focus on the multisided reality of the supermarket bakery. In order to understand and study this reality we relied on qualitative research methods such as extended observation of the bread counter as well as the bread section inside the store, brief and semi-structured conversations with consumers and Kvickly staff members, interviews with the bakers and, last but not least, we participated in the baking process. The variety and randomness of the fieldwork results brought us to understand that there were many different narratives around the supermarket bakery and its products. Starting from the store's point of view, I will show how the contradictions between the bakery being branded as a traditional one and the industrial chain-like baking process create two rather distinct narratives that are somehow at odds. The next move will be to analyze how the consumers relate to these different narratives.

The importance of tradition...

During an interview with the head baker it became clear that there were several contrasting differences about how the bakery branded its products and how they actually worked on them. Their branding was focused on the 'traditional' way of baking bread. With traditional I am referring here to the commonly accepted idea that real bread has to be made out of natural ingredients, and the baking carried out following a 'home production-like' process. But a specific 'traditional food culture' never existed (Jönsson, 2010): in earlier times food was prepared in a multitude of varying contexts and what today we call 'traditional food culture' is a recently built trend that adds more value to a product. This is clearly visible in Kvickly's bakery branding strategy: by creating the narrative of 'traditional' bread freshly baked every day, what they are trying to do is give more value (and justify the higher prices) to their products compared to the prefabricated bread. That means advertising their bread with pictures showing an old wooden baking table white with flour, and a used old rolling pin. Furthermore all Kvickly's bakeries have the De Fem Gårde (The Five Farms) bread. What happens is that those ecological farms sell their raw ingredients to Kvickly, and only the store can produce that kind of bread, which is named after the farms. That adds more 'traditional' value to their product.

All this somehow contrasts with the production process. When we went to see the baking process, we found out that instead of being artisanal, as the head baker let us intend during the interview, it looked more like an industrial chain-production line. The three men working there had to do the same thing over and over again, without any possibility of independent change. Additionally, all pastries were made out of frozen bases: the only thing that had to be done was to take them out of their boxes, decorate them and put them in the oven.

... And the presence of practicality

Everything said so far is integrated by the fact that, even though the bakery counter is placed outside the store cash registers, it works in fact just as another store counter: here shoppers can pay for the supermarket's products placed outside - bikes, helmets, kitchen utensils, bbq equipment, and so on. I personally saw 5 people simply collecting 'bottle money' (the empty bottle collector is just outside the main store, therefore the bakery is the closest register) at the bakery without buying any of its product. The point to be made here is that a new narrative is constructed, which differs from the 'traditional' one I described above. Now the bakery has become just another cash register, where

consumers can pay for any product without having to buy bread. In the 'supermarket' narrative what is important is multi-functionality in serving the shoppers the best way, even if they are not buying bread.

The 'traditional' and 'supermarket' narrative coexist on the same level, and from the store's perspective that is just fine.

Confusing consumers?

However, if we start to consider how the consumers react to these narratives, the story changes. Let's now have a look at the following quotes:

“This [Kvickly bakery] does not feel like a real bakery. You know, in some store you can find a butcher section, but that’s not a butchery. The same here: this is not a bakery, it is a supermarket.”

Man, mid 30s

And then,

“I always buy [bread] at the bakery... because they have this certain kind -the De Fem Gårde. I think it is better to pay 5 crowns more for something that tastes good.”

Woman, 60s

These two quotes show how the shoppers can either perceive the bakery according to the 'traditional' or to the 'supermarket' narrative. Indeed, the woman quoted above might have some kind of attachment to the De Fem Gårde brand that makes her consider the bakery not just one between others, but the bakery. On the other hand, the young father can't get over the feeling of simply being in a supermarket, which strongly contrasts with his preconceived ideas about what a bakery is. This is so because other narratives come at play here. Every consumer comes with his/her own particular values and meaning related to bread, which are of course heavily influenced by the society s/he leaves in, but nonetheless are uniquely shaped by his/her life background and experiences. Someone who has grown up with his/her mother baking fresh bread everyday reacts differently at constructed narratives than someone who has always eaten prefabricated bread.

Let's now consider what a young woman in her early 30s told me when we had a quick chat about bread. She was choosing different kinds of premade bread, without considering even once the bakery products. She told me that, since she lives on her own, it's much better to buy prefabricated bread because it lasts much longer, it's cheaper and highly practical - to make sandwiches on the go. She added that she prefers fresh bread, but buys it only on special occasion, as when she has

guests. But for those occasions she doesn't come here at Kvickly: instead she goes to "an expensive bakery in Jagtvej, where you can find real bread". To her, the Kvickly baked bread fails to stand up to the 'real' bread standards because of the context where it is produced and sold: a supermarket. Therefore she felt the 'supermarket' narrative much stronger than the 'traditional' one, leaving the latter surrounded by a rather dismissing feeling - "all those photos [the ones depicting traditional baking] look so fake...".

A schizophrenia of narratives

As we have seen, the store's policies around bread and the bakery are somehow at odds: they brand the products as traditional but the baking process is more industrial than artisanal, and the bakery counter works also as another store's cash register. As a result the consumers' perception of that reality varies very much: buyers can either feel the 'traditional' narrative stronger, and therefore perceive the bakery products as the 'real' bread or vice versa, it is the 'supermarket' narrative that dominates, taking away the traditional aura from the fresh bread.

Regarding the store's policies, though, the confusion resulting from this schizophrenia of narratives surrounding bread shouldn't be seen as a failure, but rather as the obvious reality of a supermarket. Big stores such as Kvickly have to display different and many times contrasting narratives around their products (cheap, expensive, natural, ecological, industrial, traditional, modern...) in order to give consumers the widest choice possible. And regarding bread - that is just what the store managers have done: by baking it on the spot and advertising it in the 'traditional' way, they managed to attract some consumers who perceive the 'traditional' narrative, driving them away from other bakeries to buy fresh bread here. At the same time, though, the bakery counter preserved the multi-functionality and versatility of any other cash register, hence offering to all the shoppers (also those who relate themselves to the 'supermarket' narrative) the typical and expected services of a supermarket.

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Ali Bakery and the flying carpet

By: Marie Bredager Nielsen

If you have ever eaten a kebab in Copenhagen, you have probably unknowingly come across bread from Ali Bakery. The bakery specializes in making flatbread, and supplies kebab restaurants and greengrocers all over Copenhagen. The successful, family-driven bakery is located at Heimdalsgade in the multicultural Nørrebro, Copenhagen. In the same building, Ali Bakery has opened a restaurant which, in addition to the flatbread, serves popular Lebanese dishes. The bakery's clientele is mainly made up by Arabs who live in Denmark - and the Danish luxury supermarket Irma.

This article investigates what happens to the bread, when it is transferred from the mainly Arab consumers, to a context of culturally Danish consumption at Irma. My analysis is based on interviews with the owners and staff at Ali Bakery and observation studies here and in Irma. The focus point of my analysis will be the way the bread is presented when sold respectively from Irma, and from any other place. The fact is, there happens to be a noticeable difference between the designs of the bags in these two different contexts.

The image on Irma's bag is dark blue and white, and reflects a mysterious (and traditional European) take on the Orient: Aladdin on a flying carpet complete with turban, saber and a parrot on the shoulder. The bag the bakery uses has the producer's name in red and yellow, the name of their webpage and a short description of the 'Hvedebrød/wheat bread' that is in the bag.

Irma's bag represents myths of the Orient. This made me wonder what significance the two types of illustrations held, and why Irma chose a radically different image than the one on the original packaging. Why is it important for Irma to present this image?

Irma and the rest

One way to illuminate the link between Irma's bag and the rest, is to use the Foucault inspired discourse analyst Edward Said's discussion of 'the West and the rest', in which he unfolds his thesis that the West is dependent on its representations of 'the Orient' to create and maintain its own identity and self image (Said: 1978). One of the main premises in Said's book Orientalism, is that there is an assumption in the West that the Orient cannot represent itself and so the West must do it. Edward Said says:

The things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation or its fidelity to some great original. The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would, since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West, and faute de mieux, for the poor Orient.

Said 1978: 21

This could be a way of explaining the Irma bread bag. But also this explanation produces further questions. It is clear that Ali Bakery can in fact represent itself - and they presented this representation when they first started collaborating with Irma. They already had a set packaging used by all other collaborators. However, Irma wanted to change it, and the result is an image that stresses 'the setting' and the 'narrative devices' in a very different way than the original bag does. The original bag is not 'non-Oriental'; the words on it is in Arabic as well as Danish. But this was clearly not the kind of Oriental representation Irma was looking for. According to Edward Said, the discourse used in the Western orientalism is a Western style of domination over the Orient (Said 1978:6):

...There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness ... In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends on its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westener in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.

Said 1978: 7

The thesis of Western representation of the Orient as constantly repeating a pattern or a discourse

which puts the Westener - in this case the Danish consumer who shops at Irma - hierarchically higher than the Oriental is easily deducted from the drawing on the bag. While the production of the bread (which does not take place in the Orient at all, but a 30 minute walk from the Irma Supermarket) is highly mechanized and technically modern, the image on the Irma bag connotes magic and mystery - to some the saber might even connote barbarity or uncivilized behavior; certainly an image far from a business that can produce and distribute 6000 breads in 14 hours.

While bread from Ali Bakery is certainly not the only product to have extra value in the form of a narrative of its origin added these days, the reaction of the staff at Ali Bakery when we asked them about the Irma image says a lot.

Something different

Said (not the scholar, but an engross distributor of the bread) gave a loud, long laugh, shook his shoulders, and said "Well..." when asked why the bags sold to Irma had a different picture. Then he smiled and shook his head in a way that seemed to express both wonder and slight embarrassment. And the Aladdin-like picture did indeed seem difficult to comprehend in the context of Said's job; well-dressed grown men doing business. Naji - one of the co-owners - also laughed a little when he explained the different bags:

We gave them the bag we already use, but they wanted something different. Then we took the logo from our partner's old company and they were happy.

Naji is referring to a company that existed when Ali Bakery started doing business, and as they became successful was incorporated in Ali Bakery. Ali Bakery had never used the particular image themselves, and had no intentions to do so until Irma "wanted something different". This is a very central statement. When observing the bread in the context of Irma, it is evident that the supermarket emphasizes promoting the bread as "something different".

In Irma's bread section Danish bread as well as French muffins and Swedish flatbread are sold, but the only product that is denoted by its 'origin' is the bread from Ali Bakery - that has the description "Oriental bread" on the price tag. Irma's representation of Ali's bread with the turban, the flying carpet, and the great emphasis on 'the Oriental' confirms Edward Said's argument that the Western idea of the Orient manifests the will to control, manipulate or incorporate what is different from the West - by creating a distance that makes the hierarchy between the two visible, in a way which the West never loses its "upper hand" (Said 1978: 7,12). The image on the bags appears 'silly' and our Arab informants know this, and find the idea somewhat amusing.

The Oriental Bakery or a local bakery?

The constant denotation of the Oriental in Irma's representation of Ali's bread is not less interesting, considering the bread is actually produced very close to Irma. To the Irma branch near Nørrebro train station, Ali Bakery might actually be the geographically nearest placed bakery of all the

bakeries delivering bread to Irma. From a strictly geographical point of view, Ali's bread is as local as you get it. This makes it very clear that the word "Oriental" does not refer to a geographic place but to a cultural one. And that this reference includes imagery and connotations different from any other product on the shelf.

Considerations on 'geographical' and 'cultural' are supported by yet another aspect exposed on the wrapping: The back of Irma's bag has a description of the manufacturing site, which we know is Ali Bakery, Heimdalsgade 39, 2200 Nørrebro, Copenhagen. However, the text says: "Produced for Irma A/S, Rødovre by The Oriental Bakery, Copenhagen", not once mentioning the name Ali or Nørrebro. Viewed through the lens of Edward Said, this is an example of Irma exercising power over 'the Oriental', firmly controlling what particular parts of the Orient are represented and how. This practice also evokes new questions.

Given that Irma wanted 'something different and Oriental', it should have been the easiest thing simply to state that the bread is from Ali Bakery - a name that does not sound like a typical Danish place. However, the text on Irma's bags suggests that it would be unsuitable for the supermarket to write the name 'Ali Bakery' on their products - and that the name 'The Oriental Bakery in Copenhagen' has very different meanings to the consumers in Irma than a more precise description: An immigrant owned bakery at Nørrebro. Thus it is clear that the portrayal of the 'Oriental bread' holds more meaning than a mere description of what the bag contains - it represents power, politics, and culture.

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Outside the eating community: Being intolerant to the No. 1 staple food

By: Meghan Cridland

Bread is so basic and everyday that its impact on our lives, as both physical and cultural beings, is often taken for granted. Bread, however, is more than the sum of its nutrients, it is consumed as a cultural symbol; as much as it is subject to the norms and cultural practices surrounding eating behaviors, it is also an everyday component of daily life communicating shared values, experiences, and memories that serve to shape our identities.

But what happens when one suddenly finds himself outside the mainstream food culture, isolated from the eating community by food allergies and intolerances?

In this article I focus on the social aspects of food intolerances, specifically celiac/gluten intolerance, in relation to the cultural intersections of food, identity, and health.

This article describes how cultural analysis was used in a recent master's project to analyze the significance of bread as a symbol in the ritual of identity confirmation. I also reflect on my personal experience on the project as a researcher with celiac disease and where I see the potential for cultural analysis in the area of food, culture, and lifestyle.

Bread Stories

As part of Lund University's Masters of Applied Cultural Analysis and in collaboration with the National Museum of Denmark, department of Modern Danish History, I worked on a group fieldwork project focusing on aspects of bread consumption in public places. Additionally, I focused specifically on

the significance of bread as a symbol in the ritual of identity confirmation, in which the act of going to a specific bakery and of being in its space is just as important, if not more so, than the actual bread as a tool for identity confirmation.

I argued that although the bread was an important symbol and individual identity marker, feelings of affiliation and belonging were expressed at places of consumption (Burstedt, 2000) and customer identity was confirmed and conveyed in the physical place of the bakery.

During fieldwork we visited several “lifestyle” and “non-Swedish profile” bakeries in Lund and Malmö, Sweden. As part of our cultural analysis, we used a number of qualitative methods including direct and participant observation, semi-structured interviews, photography, and document analysis to analyze public bread consumption and the meanings constructed around it. In the following section I discuss observations specifically and their related findings.

Observations allowed us to see first hand the place, customers, bread, and actual activities associated with public bread consumption to produce a real understanding of consumption (SyLOW, 2008) while also giving us a sense of the place, how customers approached it and moved through it, and ultimately how they experienced it.

The store’s window display, for example, was an important part in understanding the customers’ experiences. It was a site where meaning was produced through the artifacts presented (the mounds of sourdough bread and gourmet condiments) and how meaning for the customer was produced by not only positioning themselves among them, but by being seen by others in the environment. Through the window, they effectively become part of the display; by positioning themselves in the place, they become associated by themselves and through the gaze of others as a part of the space—its values, images, and experiences. The bread as a prop within the bakery and the experience of the staged lifestyle it provided then became a place where customers could actively perform their identities through their affiliations with the place.

At other bakeries, bread was a way for customers to act out their identities, not necessarily build them; the presentation did not create memories, it activated preexisting ones, inviting them to retreat into their own memories, not to a staged fantasy.

I have focused specifically on the participant observation aspect of the project because it was at this point in the project where my ‘otherness’ as a researcher with celiac became unavoidable, especially in reflecting on food allergies and identity within the context of the project, and considering Klingmann’s (2007) argument that identity today is localized in lifestyle attitudes, experiences, and social belonging.

The Celiac Researcher

During fieldwork, I was at times physically unable to perform the same kind of participant observation (entering a bakery as a customer, selecting, purchasing, and consuming bread) due to having Celiac disease, which is an autoimmune digestive disease triggered as an allergic reaction to gluten, a protein in wheat, barley, and rye.

Thus, participant observation was a strange experience for me personally, because while I saw the benefit in understanding and experiencing bread from the point of view of a customer, I was unable to participate due to my Celiac. Though I could understand the mechanics of the bakery through its presentation, I could not get a full grasp of its space, where its values and images are consumed alongside bread; customers ate sourdough bread alongside ideas of health, luxury, and fantasies of the 'good old days' and others ate tradition, familiarity, and nostalgia with their Barbari bread, but I was 'outside' the eating community; while I observed it as a site of identity building for others, I could not separate my isolation from how I experienced the place. The bread in the window was an invitation for the customers but was personally a symbol of a place not for me.

Although frustrating, this was a good lesson that as a researcher, my perspectives are also culturally constituted, and that actions are framed and filtered by the cultural notions of both the actors and the interpreters (Sunderland & Denny, 2007); I was physically unable to have the same consumption experience because I could not consume, which in turn informed my understanding of the place. This also allowed me to reflect upon the notion that there was more being sold and consumed than just bread, but a whole host of values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Cultural Analysis and the Outsider Looking In

From my position outside, it became readily apparent that food is companionship and identity, it is power, and ultimately, that it communicates; as much as Celiac and food intolerances are medical conditions, they are also social conditions. Eating is social and food is an important tool for socialization, but there are also power relations communicated within these social interactions and relationships.

For instance, an invitation to eat is a gesture of trust, a way to extend friendship, so to turn down an offer to "break bread" is often seen as a deliberate choice of rejection, but it was personally not until the choice was removed that the way we use food to communicate became clearly shown.

During fieldwork, I had to deny offers to eat from my group mates as well from generous bakery owners and it was at these times when food and communication were so powerfully emphasized; to be culturally identified as polite, I should accept the invitation, but to stay healthy I had to decline, and at the same time I had to decide how much of my personal identity I wanted to portray by explaining my disease and identifying or marking myself as 'ill.' Once that was established, power dynamics came to play in negotiating trust, i.e., I do/not trust you to not make me sick, as most medicines can be taken in private, but for Celiacs, their medicine is food.

The position outside gave interesting insights into what happens when suddenly, you must go against the accepted, shared patterns and habits that have become so ingrained and instead negotiate the terms of your eating publicly. It also allowed me to understand the 'shared' aspect of food, culture, and 'food-and-culture,' in that it is the shared knowledge of food culture norms and the sharing aspect of food that different social and cultural meanings are made clear.

Being Celiac on this project gave me a unique vantage point as a cultural analyst, allowing me to

view the eating community as an outsider and to objectively view the routines and rituals surrounding food choices without the same dietary 'home-blindness' of my colleagues.

Conclusion

Because of the nature of my allergy, I am often 'outside' the mainstream food culture, but this experience allowed me to use this position to study that culture. It was from this perspective that I applied cultural analysis to understand how important food is to personal and cultural identity and what we communicate through food choices.

Because food and eating are culturally bound and experienced socially, I believe that there is not only potential, but a need to consider the exclusion of people from eating communities when working within the field of food. For example, considered within the context of the experience economy, 'exclusion' poses an interesting opportunity for marketing and product development.

This is also an important concept within the public sector and medical fields, for instance, in considering meal plans at schools and hospitals, or in helping physicians to better understand the daily experiences of living with Celiac and other dietary diseases. This could lead to improved doctor-patient communication and development of realistic treatments (and increased compliance) based on an understanding of how patients related to their disease within everyday life.

Although research has been done on food allergies from a medical perspective, I believe cultural analysis may serve as another way to understand this meeting of food, lifestyle, and culture. By viewing the mainstream eating community from the 'outside' perspective of people living with food allergies, cultural analysis can contribute to a new understanding of the wider context of food cultures and add another voice to the discourse of cultural values, norms, and behaviors.

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Authenticity in the Experience Economy: A Cultural Study of Artisan Bakeries

By: Aaron Frey

In today's highly commoditized marketplace, businesses are increasingly packaging goods and services as "experiences" in order to add value and increase competitiveness. Pine and Gilmore popularized this idea, suggesting that production and consumption is becoming much more performative and culturally focused. Now, more than ever, symbols and signs used to communicate identity, self-image, and group affiliation, are as important, if not more so, than the actual goods or services with which they are associated.

The notion of 'authenticity' is one key to understanding how individuals choose products within this complex marketplace. As Pine and Gilmore write, "in industry after industry, authenticity of experiences has overtaken quality as the prevailing purchasing criterion, just as quality previously overtook cost, and as cost once overtook availability," (2010:53). Consumers judge authenticity based on how "real" something seems, which often means whether it's natural (e.g. organic), original, inspired by tradition, seeking positive behavior change (e.g. fair trade), or offering customized boutique services (Pine and Gilmore 2010:53-54). However, definitions of "realness" are fluid and may differ between groups, reflecting the fact that authenticity is culturally constructed. To understand consumers in this new economy, we need to look at what it means to be authentic by exploring how consumption is communicative, how material culture enacts ideas of authenticity, and how purchases are made to reflect who we think we are, and what we want to be.

Researching Consumer Experiences

With these trends in mind, a small group of students from Lund University set out to take a fresh look at consumers' relationships to artisan boutique and immigrant bakeries. We did this using ethnographic methods, first surveying Swedish food bloggers to see what people were saying about bread. Next, we observed the life within five bakeries in Lund and Malmö, including two immigrant bakeries and three up-market boutique bakeries, making notes about demographics, interactions with other patrons and staff, as well as purchases made. We then returned to the bakeries to interview employees and customers. We also photographically documented the material culture within the bakeries in order to more easily study and compare them.

Authenticity: It's Baked In

In our research, we immediately found that people were talking about bread in ways that resonated with notions of experience and authenticity. Sourdough, for example, is somewhat fetishized in Sweden and exhibits an array of meanings and associations that go beyond its qualities as food. Baking sourdough bread at home is perceived by some as an identity marker and status symbol, and even a trendy thing to do. We also detected hints of a gender difference, with women calling it good tasting but over-hyped, whereas men were likely to be highly engaged in attempts at mastering the techniques of production. These observations just scratch the surface, showing how food is entangled in webs of cultural meaning that go far beyond taste.

The Authentic Sourdough

The popularity of sourdough offers support to the idea that consumers increasingly desire things they feel are more authentic and "real." Sourdough bread is made by growing a live bacterial culture in a batch of "starter dough" that can be preserved and re-used to start new batches later. In fact, a baker's starter dough can have years of history, and the local environmental conditions combine with the baker's technique to make each batch unique. This makes sourdough an exemplary "authentic experience," as each loaf evokes its embedded pedigree and narrative history. Some bakeries make use of this narrative in their promotional material, e.g. Patisserie David, who traces some of his starter dough back to his mother who started it when he was a child.

Boutique Bakeries and the Aesthetics of Gourmet Authenticity

To further explore sourdough's appealing authenticity, we visited three boutique bakeries known for offering high quality sourdough bread. At these bakeries, the layout and presentation is clearly designed to create an experience. The first thing a visitor notices are the carefully arranged window displays, overflowing with bread, paired with accessories like expensive bottled spring water or organic olive oil in fancy glass and metal bottles. All this is laid out on vintage looking tables warmly lit by antique lights or candles, placed for maximum visual impact. The appeal of bread elevated to this level of spectacle is undeniable, and it was very common to see passersby stop to stare into the windows for several minutes.

Even the peripheral products on display tell a story. The very expensive Japanese bread knives

for sale at one boutique create an image of how one should prepare these breads; that the entire process should be an experience, from the knife to the tactile sensations. Whether or not the knives are ever purchased, the idea is linked to the bread by their presence in the store, and the message is clear: bread can and should be something extraordinary and luxurious, deserving of special implements for heightened rituals. The shelves full of gourmet, organic foods at some boutiques also suggest acceptable pairings for their gourmet bread. These secondary products give the customer a range of choices that are open to “mass customization,” and the possibility to experience something new at each visit.

The boutiques' décor includes artwork highlighting a rustic baking process, and makes use of worn furniture, unpainted wood, and old-fashioned baking implements, with very little plastic or other overt signals of modernity in sight. In short, the boutique bakeries carefully convey and appeal to a particular material language of “authenticity” that is old-fashioned, labor intensive, and unadulterated by synthetic or industrial production processes. This aura is consumed along with the bread, elevating the mundane daily act of eating to the level of an ‘experience.’ Memorabilia, like exquisitely packaged and branded olive oil, or branded canvas tote bags, serve as mementos of the experience as well as markers of taste that signal, or aspire to, membership in the circles that identify with a gourmet sensibility or lifestyle.

Immigrant Bakeries and the Authenticity of Origin

The immigrant bakeries we visited were interesting in their differences. They also lie outside the mainstream of bread consumption in Sweden, but they do not so explicitly package themselves as experiences, although they do strive to assert their authenticity. In contrast to the lavish presentation at the boutiques, the bread at an Iranian bakery is nearly invisible to the customer. Likewise, a Polish bakery has windows that are almost tinted, with the majority of the bread placed on a wall not directly visible from the entrance. Both stores emphasize their authenticity through origin of ideas and staff, one with a sign posted on the door in Swedish and Polish exclaiming that their breads are all authentic Polish recipes (though interestingly they also highlight that their breads naturally use sourdough), and if you talk to the owner of the Iranian bakery, he's quick to say that the recipe comes from Iran, and the bread is authentic because it's made by hand.

Rather than artwork and decorative objects dedicated to artisanship and bread in and of itself, there are numerous items referring to the home culture. In both stores, the display of imported goods almost completely overshadows the bread. The Iranian bakery, where the bread isn't on display, is dominated by walls of shelving full of Persian snacks, teas, canned foods, and other items that would be familiar to Persian immigrants and which are reportedly not available anywhere else. Similarly, the Polish bakery showcases a wall of imported Polish snacks and candies, and an additional wall of Polish language DVDs and frozen imported foods.

The de-emphasis of the bread itself suggests that the “experience” and “authenticity” of the immigrant bakery is oriented differently. Rather than engaging customers explicitly in terms of esthetics, taste, and lifestyle aspiration, as boutiques do, the immigrant bakeries are primarily an escape for immigrants

(or a return to familiarity) and a space that creates a sense of transnational community. For instance, the Polish bakery even advertises on the front door that they offer international money transfer services. For native Swedes, these bakeries are perhaps primarily entertaining and educational treats, depending on how far they diverge from mainstream bread types. Our interviews with immigrant customers, on the other hand, suggest that the bread and the experience of visiting the bakery, full of familiar sights, sounds, and tastes, brings back memories, or feelings of nostalgia, that are consumed with the bread, and often shared with others when the bread is eaten with friends or family. The aural cues are also especially important in the experience of these immigrant bakeries. As customers and staff begin to speak in their native languages, one is immediately either “back at home” or, alternatively, excluded from the conversation and made to feel like a foreign guest - both of which can be desirable experiences.

Producers and Consumers Construct Authenticities Together

Although quite different in design, boutique and immigrant bakeries can benefit from many of the same emergent business principles, building on the increasing salience of identity and lifestyle in consumer decision making. Our observations suggest that an authentic experience is actually the skillful performance and co-production of an act between producer and consumer. The boutiques are designed to enact an experience of accessible gourmet luxury, which can only be successful if it conforms to and innovates around the culturally defined meaning of authenticity co-created by consumers, whether it be the meaning of luxury, gourmet, organic, healthy, good taste, or any other marketable attribute of the product. The immigrant bakeries engage customers on different terms, with different outcomes, bringing together objects and people that are “authentic” in terms of origin and tradition. That creates a sense of familiarity, connection or nostalgia in those familiar with the original cultural contexts. At the same time, this authenticity of experience can be valued and consumed by outsiders as a sense of foreignness or adventurous curiosity, just as an expensive loaf of sourdough bread could be consumed as an occasional “taste of the good life.” These examples show that bread and bakeries are much more than simply things and places to acquire food and sustenance. Bread, like all food, is a social medium that engages consumers and producers in the mutual act of commerce and creative cultural performance.

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Eating Habits and Sport Activities: The Case of Organic Food Consumption in a Danish Sport-Center

By: Matteo Marasco



The City of Copenhagen has an ambitious goal: turning the food served in public institutions into 75% organic by 2011, aiming at 90% by 2015. Among different facilities, sports centers have turned out to be one of the most difficult targets. The products to be found there for sale have a low level of nutrition and high quantities of fat and sugar, including a wide range of sweets and sweet beverages, not to mention savoury food. As a consequence, the cafeterias located inside sport centers captured the attention of our client, the Copenhagen Foodhouse which is funded by the municipality and has the task of implementing such goal. We, as cultural analysts, were asked to help them in identifying the reasons of the resistance to this transformation and elaborate some solutions.

The observation site of our fieldwork was one of the largest sport centers in Scandinavia, hosting thousands of visitors per day. When research was conducted, the food served in this facility was assessed to be between 25 and 30 % organic.

A Matter of Environment?

How could a sport cafeteria become more 'organic'? In order to gain such insight, the qualitative analytical tools adopted focused on this specific environment as potentially affecting patrons' wishes and habits. By listing the differences between a sport center and another public institution's canteen, someone might claim that food in the former case is specifically sold for profit (compared for example with a kindergarten's canteen), and consequentially infer that in order to get the best from their wishes, cafeterias' managers generally want people to be free to choose among a large variety of products. However, a sport center's cafeteria - with its predetermined user profile - should not

be considered as a simple café. How might this specific environment affect patrons' choices when ordering food?

The setting of the investigation was defined as made of three elements: Places (in our case a Sport Center and its cafeteria), actors (staff's managers and patrons), and activities (such as eating and practicing sport). Therefore, a potential understanding of whichever activity or event (i.e. the consumption of organic food in sport cafeterias by sport centers' users) cannot be grasped by focusing the research only on one single aspect.

The 'Sport Café'

The café, 100% privately based with no external funding, is located in a green, fresh, forest-like area; high and bushy plants surround its perimeter, and a soft smell of plant food covers the area; plenty of advertisements call the attention on beverages, pictured in a green and refreshing style as well. The overall absence of lounge areas, benches or tables to gather around, forces users, in case they want to sit, to recur to the café. In addition, around the relatively isolated area where the sport center is located, no shops, corner shops, local stores, bars or cafes are to be spotted. Moreover, when stepping in through one of the main entrances, a notice informs you that patrons should not bring their own snacks inside the facility owing to hygienic reasons, and therefore suggest that an internal food service might be the only option available. Even though sport tools of any kind, and people dressed in their tracksuit or carrying sport bags are to be seen everywhere, patrons could sometimes be as heterogeneous as you might expect in an ordinary café. Inside, you can notice that after few minutes of hesitation (the time it takes to make a collective decision) groups of young men or families, generally end up spending some extra time in the café before saying goodbye to teammates and friends. Interestingly enough, what is to be noticed as a recurring element on patrons' tables are beverages (mostly beers, but also juices and slush ice). Instead, the menu of food is mixed. Surprisingly, together with snacks (chocolate bars to be purchased in an automatic machine, but also bananas, apples, not to be necessarily eaten inside), patrons consume hot food (pasta, burgers, french fries, french hotdogs, hamburgers, toasted sandwiches), using the café as an ordinary dining option.

Being Sit at the Table: Fieldwork in the Café

After a phase of framing, no n-participant observation was conducted by turning a table of the cafeteria into a station. This is the spot from which informants were recruited to conduct interviews, which included questions on why they chose the product they ordered in that very moment, what their priorities are when ordering products at the café, to which meaning they associate the notion of 'organic' with, and if their concern on healthy lifestyle is still present when they decide to eat in the sport center. An interview with the café's managers instead, allowed us to know more about the process of 'becoming organic'. In fact, the fieldwork was an attempt to investigate the possibilities for change hidden in the gap between patrons' behaviour and the café's available resources and policies. In other words, stationary observations were a means to see in which way the goal is implemented by the café's managers that also presented an opportunity to take the actual response of patrons' behaviour to available choices in the café into account.

As a result of this double angle of analysis, an alternative and 'secret' menu was discovered to be available in the café for those who wanted hamburgers, hotdogs, toasts and french fries; even if not advertised, it was served 'under the table', as representing the meeting point of the staff's necessity of selling out products by satisfying every patrons' wishes, and patrons' unhealthy culinary tendencies.

As the research was proceeding, four key barriers were identified to represent the major obstructions for the goal of 75 % organic food to be served in the sport center: First of all, there was a lack of consistency on the part of the products; in fact, staff members claimed that only few products branded as organic were of acknowledged origin. As one of the staff member stated, "Most of our menu is organic, but I'm not sure about these particular potatoes, sometimes they are...sometimes they aren't." One could infer that the phase of selecting and assessing food quality also requires extra time, something staff members might not be used to. Secondly, the café failed to fulfill the expectations of customers regarding their choices of healthier food. As some patrons stated, of course they would have bought muesli bars, if only they were available. It follows that, despite the good intentions, the goal is mostly translated by offering a menu, instead of putting attention on snacks and beverages, which are very much requested by patrons. Thirdly, there was a lack of consequences for failure to comply. In other words, since failure in selling organic food will not necessarily affect the business, the premises for a considerable change cannot be set. At last, the failure to align organic food with the traditional strategies to advertise its brands turned out to be a major barrier. As an instance, the symbol that characterizes organic food in Denmark (the 'Ø', standing for økologisk, i.e. organic), was barely noticed on product packaging, being sometimes absent even on real organic products. This last factor seemed to foster a low level of trust among customers already prone to buy organic. Besides, the patrons' awareness concerning the goal that the Municipality is trying to achieve is low as well: few respondents knew about such new policy to be implemented in public institutions.

Even though these barriers are combined to the set of issues each business moving its first steps toward the acquisition of an 'organic' attitude will encounter; what is the unique story behind a sport center? Why do sport cafés present some additional and peculiar challenges?

“We do it Just for Fun!”

The majority of patrons who attended the cafeteria were groups of young men having a beer. When approached and informed about the topic of our research, some users felt it was necessary to justify the presence of beers on their table by saying, "We do it just for fun!"

They were referring to sport activities in general, as being aware that according to a healthy lifestyle, then, they should drink something else. In fact, what we know after many interviews and observations is that after doing sport, they also love to have a chat and to make comments on their recent performance, to talk about their daily life, and these aspects sometimes constitute a valuable reason to be encouraged to practice some sport. Therefore, one could say that it will take some time before an organic drink will embody such values and replace the beer's role when some fellow players are socializing in the café.

It is important to note that people generally associate 'organic' only with food, ignoring that drinks,

especially after a sport performance, are the most requested and consumed products. In this case, to link the demand of patrons with the new policy the café's staff is trying to implement, a good point of departure could be the knowledge of the specific practices that generate out of and take place in such environment.

Fieldwork carried out in the café offered the chance to underpin the difference between what people say and what people actually do. Among the factors to start working with, more attention should be paid on patrons' associations of 'organic' with something that does not naturally go along with 'having fun', together with the fact that, after doing sport, people generally want a break from making efforts, including those required by healthy culinary habits.