Food in Contemporary Society
-Food Is Not Only Nutrition-

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Food is not only nutrition, an introduction

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What characterizes meals and eating in our contemporary society? What kind of cultural and social arena dinner table actually is (see Fjellström)? Who actually cooks and to whom (see Pipping Ekström and Jonsson)? How the youngsters get socialized to the local and national food culture (see Benn)? Can gender orders be identified already in home economics classrooms (see Petersson)? These are just some issues which we are dealing in this publication. These articles are based on the presentations given at the University of Helsinki, during a Nordplus founded symposium called 'Food in Contemporary Society - Food is not only nutrition' in November 2005. The dialogue between the Nordic colleagues is to be continued at the Göteborg University in March 2007. We hope that this material is found to be useful in preparing for the meeting in Göteborg, as well as, useful to anybody being interested in the issues related to food culture, meals and learning.

Households are regarded as "black boxes" (Murcott 1986, Ekström 1993) because each family has its own way of organizing food-related activities and their everyday traditions. We do not know what actually happens, but based on approximations, homemakers do not think about nutrients; they start from meals which are prepared to be eaten. In the household context, the dilemmatic nature of everyday food choices is emphasized. There is not always one correct solution, rather compromises have to be made based on different reasons. There are
Food is not only nutrition and some cultural and social conventions what is to be considered as 'proper meals'. The children have their hobbies, guests are coming and going, sometimes food-related activities are the only activities in which one can be flexible. Depending on the situation and aims created, the tasks may be the same, but the goals, the ways of doing things, or material resources are different. Food prepared for weekend guests may differ from food prepared for the family during weekdays. And it is not always 'so proper'.

The traditional educational approaches related to nutrition education bring about rather homogenous and middle-classed values and moral-related issues about "recommendable food behaviour." Food should be warm, it should be eaten together with family members, and preferably at home. However, the societal context is becoming more heterogeneous and diverse, and the issues relating to food, eating and food choice are of special importance for those people in a danger of becoming marginalized in the society (see, Sæland and Smehaugen).

What could we learn from these people?

Regarding everyday food choices, factors such as the desire to make enjoyable and tasteful food, or the taste preferences and habits of the household members can have stronger impacts on food choices than factual knowledge. The personal, context-dependent, way of making sense of the world around us makes people create different meanings for the same issues, thus increasing variety among households. Making food choices and using knowledge are intertwined in the everyday life of households. These activities should be better understood in order to develop food-related education and research.

In conclusion, we live in a more complex societal and cultural context than ever before, the nutrition-related problems have changed, the
Nordic welfare society has changed and the problems of scarcity have turned into problems of plenty. But despite these visions, food is still prepared in homes, the members of the household engage in food preparation, old traditions have survived, and new ones developed. The stereotypic pictures of the poor (or the rich) and the ignorant (or the knowledgeable) eating unhealthy foods (or eating healthy foods) may not represent the complexity of everyday food-related activities in the household context.
References


1. Rethinking the older consumer

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Summary

Although those who achieve longevity have always had to contend with the pace – and accumulated products - of change, the association of increased longevity and accelerated pace has never been stronger. We all will need to live with the realisation that our experience is quickly - and maybe repeatedly - outmoded. By this frame of reference, the old struggle for relevance amidst economic, cultural and domestic transitions.

This is, however, a gross oversimplification of the relationship between age and social context in the United Kingdom (UK). If we accept this analysis, we accept homogeneity of redundancy and that is as limiting as the belief that all old people are the same. In this paper, it is argued that we should be more critical of assumptions about the irrelevance of the old.

Introduction

A year ago, the breaking news was that Clint Eastwood – at 74 – had won an Oscar[^1] for ‘best director’ for his film ‘Million Dollar Baby’. Eastwood was, however, notable for something far more important than this. Over recent years his films have often been structured around a theme of the ‘old timer’ having the experience to get things done or who – as a variant - returns to sort out the mess occasioned or ignored by younger people.

- In the 1992 film *Unforgiven* (Warner Video, 1999a) he plays the character of Will Munny –a former gunslinger coming out of an 11 year retirement. He looks rusty as he takes a few practice

[^1]: Ironically, to be met with the charge that it was all a septuagenarians’ conspiracy (Ide 2005).
shots at a tin can in his back yard but soon he is showing a younger man how these things should be done.

- The 1993 film *In the Line of Fire* (Columbia Tristar Video, 1999) saw the Frank Horrigan character – a veteran secret service agent – brought begrudgingly back to deal with a Presidential death threat.

- In *True Crime* (Warner Video, 1999b) a veteran journalist – Steve Everett – is assigned a story about a man soon to die on death row and realises that the evidence against him does not add up. He successfully intervenes to prevent a miscarriage of justice.

The theme that unites these films is more than Eastwood's own advancing years and a masked claim for personal relevance. Face it; he does not need to prove anything. Neither is it simply playing to the audience characteristics of an ageing society for the films are not primarily aimed at older market segments. Rather, it is a resonating warning not to ignore hard-won experience. While contexts change, arguably change is seldom so profound that experience is comprehensively invalidated even if for organisational, or more general social reasons, allowing people to think that is quite convenient.

**Irrelevance**

For many, old age is inextricably linked to the realms of social and cultural redundancy. Older people are routinely disconnected from social production systems. Most obviously this is done by job retirement arrangements and - less obviously - by the concealed ageism manifest in recruitment, late working life unemployment, and
the continued reluctance to invest in training for older people still in employment. This disconnection is one of long standing, and even keenly awaited by many, but that is not the point. Danger resides in the completeness with which social identities are enmeshed with employment. To a large extent, what one does to earn a living determines status not only in a social class sense but in the minutiae of everyday interactions: in that dense web of interpersonal assumptions and expectations.

Hughes’ (1945) observations on the contradictions of status are important here. He used the example of a physician who was Black – problematic in American society at that time. The acceptability of race (if at all) was inversely proportional to the urgency of the medical problem. However, there are other status contradictions to consider. The age of a role incumbent is technically subordinate to the master trait of capacity or qualification – rational enough in achievement oriented societies - but is widely given great significance. Retirement presents a symbolic event where a subordinate trait transcends the master. Age is allowed to overshadow former occupational skills irrespective of capacity. Of course, the cross-over may occur earlier for some and later for others, depending on labour market circumstances, but whenever that disconnection happens there are profound status consequences. Disconnection removes a crucial component of social identity – that of producer – leaving that of consumer.

It is true that older people are increasingly taken notice of as consumers by manufacturers, service providers, politicians and retailers but we should be wary of the contribution that this makes to the social identities of older people. Arguably, any status built around age-related consumer behaviour reinforces separateness; dependency and even ‘the problem’ of old age. While it is often quite useful to be
noticed in this way, it is at best recognition of needs (Kinney and Lyon, 1999; Lyon, Kinney and Colquhoun 2002), and aggregate spending or voting power (Ayres 2004; Carruthers 2004; Bakewell 2005; Webster 2005; Bennett 2005; Sieghart 2005; Moug 2005; Malvern 2005), rather than an acknowledgement of relevance to the ongoing operation and organisation of UK society. I see little in this ‘consumption-based relevance’ to gainsay Gouldner’s observation that ….

‘…the [social] system rewards and fosters those skills deemed useful and suppresses the expression of talents and faculties deemed useless, and thereby structures and imprints itself upon the individual personality and self’ (Gouldner 1969, 348).

Through school and working life, we are moulded to the business of earning a living and primarily view ourselves and others in those terms. Real social relevance remains located in contribution to the production of those goods and services that other people value. Social ‘worth’ focuses on what individuals do by way of their occupation and, to an extent, how they do it. This, of course, is profoundly ironic because consumption is not only the corollary of production; it is widely regarded as a key indicator of material success. People aspire to do less, and consume more, whilst their perceived relevance is largely determined by their productive contribution – what they can do. We live in complicated times; and we live for longer.

Many here would believe that older people have relevance beyond their capacity to vote or consume; to confer power or financial reward on other - younger - people. Sadly, retirement often means that others see them only in these terms. Symbolically, they are removed from the fray. So, the important question for genuine inclusion in an ageing society is how can older people achieve recognition of relevance
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-Reclaiming relevance

First, it is important to recognise that little can be done in the short-to-medium term about the deeply-embedded UK cultural perspectives that make occupation a master trait and thereby deny relevance to older people. However, in the longer term big changes can happen. Many of the attitudes in relation to disability, race, gender and sexuality appeared ‘set in stone’ fifty years ago. Now, it would be uncharitable not to acknowledge that a revolution has taken place. Change may be patchy and incomplete, but it cannot be denied.

There is plenty that can, and should, be done to reclaim the relevance of older people’s experiences. If perceived relevance cannot be generally or readily divorced from production, then the task for older people is to start making their presence felt in terms of consumption issues. If they are to be treated like commodities - as a market segment or voter category – then they should aspire to be treated as expensive commodities 1 in the sense that they demand their full measure of acknowledged relevance; not lip service. In effect, play them at their own game. In practical terms, solitary letters of complaint to politicians, manufacturers or service providers will not be enough but they will be a start. Beyond that, older people need to recognise the extent of their common consumer interests – to benefit themselves and others. There are many substantial ‘issues’ on which their experience is relevant and could make a real difference for all.
In 2002, we revisited the issue of older people as consumers and drew attention to the importance of ‘universal’ design (Lyon, Kinney and Colquhoun, 2002) where the objective was to design products, environments and services with the needs of older people in mind but where advantages in functionality, ease of use and safety would be available to all consumers – not just the old.

‘To some extent, the problematic relationship between designer and end-user exists for consumers of all ages but it becomes more acute for anyone who does not fit the standard physiological and performance assumptions made in the design process. The number of older consumers in the United Kingdom – potential purchasers of products and users of services – now means that there is a solid basis for evaluating congruency with their range of circumstances and needs, rather than just those of the archetypal younger adult end-user’ (Kinney and Lyon 1999, 40).

‘In design generally, the remit must extend to the deconstruction of unnecessary barriers built into products and environments, and not be restricted to symbolic gestures’ (Kinney and Lyon 1999, 47).

Then, as now, we used examples to illustrate the point that older people’s past and present experiences are relevant to consumers of all ages.
Example 1: Older consumers and retail changes

Older consumers have had to contend with major changes over several decades and, while this can cause problems, they are certainly not unused to changed ways of doing things although this is sometimes overlooked. Nor are older people necessarily opposed to change. To explore the idea that older consumers might be nostalgically oriented to older forms of food retailing, and disinclined to acknowledge the benefits of supermarkets, a sample of 58 women aged between 60 and 79 years were questioned about their memories of 1950s grocery stores (Colquhoun, Lyon, Kinney and Cockburn 2000). Despite fond recollections – in the main – only 12 per cent believed that they had been much better. Most - 72 per cent - saw them as better in some respects with an acknowledgement that times had changed.
‘It depends what you want. I mean, if you wanted friendly service and chatting, and getting to know you, perhaps long ago was better but you didn’t get the variety you get today. Nothing like it. It was very limited. I am quite happy with today – if there was an occasional chair! It is hard lines that the small shops are being pushed out. It is hard but that’s progress. . . . The pace of life was different and that has all changed, and I think now people have got what they want because otherwise supermarket shopping wouldn’t exist’ (Colquhoun, Lyon, Kinney and Cockburn 2000, 112).

Although this was a small study, the data suggest a group of people who were neither out of touch with modern food retailing practices, nor too ready to uncritically accept them. Their views on the deficiencies of current service arrangements were clear and made on the basis of experiences denied younger shoppers. Shoppers were seldom known as individuals, there was little scope for personal service amidst the checkouts and, sometimes, extra help would have been appreciated to
reflect reduced mobility and physical strength. However, wide recognition of modern benefits suggested an active pragmatic stance rather than one driven by nostalgia and reluctant acceptance of change. Equally, recent trends in food retailing practices – service counters for delicatessen products, fish and bread, the rebirth of city centre stores, help with bag packing, Internet shopping and the reintroduction of home deliveries – were all congruent with older consumers’ service criticisms even if often, with lower incomes, they were not to be the primary beneficiaries of such changes. Appropriate change is not necessarily that complex.

‘...if a manufacturer produces a label or a pack constructed to help those with sensory impediments, the result will be better for all ... and if stores organise lay-outs, signposting, space to accommodate the less mobile, shopping will become a greater pleasure for everyone’ (De Angeli 1995, 4).

The challenge for retailers is to make technological and organisational innovations that actually aid the social inclusion of older consumers – to design systems that take them into account. In doing that, they will benefit all. Innovations that provide the possibility, but not the reality, of amelioration simply compound existing problems.

**Example 2: Food labelling**

The benefits of a healthy diet are widely promoted for all consumers. For many foods, clear information on the packaging is an important dimension of this because the ingredients and nutritional composition are unknowable at the point of purchase unless stated by the manufacturer. Equally, most consumers will lack the technical
expertise to fully understand the health implications of nutritional data or gauge the validity of any health claims made for the product. In a qualitative study of consumer attitudes, information on packaging was seen to be most important when people were buying ‘new’ products rather than buying things they were already familiar with (National Consumer Council 1997). For older people this might include not only those who were generally health conscious but those who had been advised to change their diet because of a medical condition in later life. Older consumers are not insulated from dietary change, so nutritional information issues are just as important as at earlier stages in their lives (Department of Health 1992).

UK Food Labelling Regulations of 1996 concentrated on requirements for stating the food name; listing ingredients; a durability indication; any special storage conditions or conditions of use; and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer or a seller. These Regulations also require nutritional data to be provided on food packaging and an indication of percentage composition for ingredients given special emphasis (eg low fat). However, while these legal requirements provide commendable information for the consumer, there is a surprising lack of direction for manufacturers, packers and sellers about the legibility of that information. They ... ‘contain no requirements as to the size and type of letters to be used in labelling’... [although] ... ‘labelling particulars must be easy to understand, clearly legible and indelible and, when the food is sold to the ultimate customer, they must be in a conspicuous place so as to be easily visible’ (Food Standards Agency 2001). Article 13, of European Union Directive 2000/13/EC (European Parliament 2000) requires nothing substantially different in terms of visual presentation.
The problem with these apparently simple and unambiguous requirements is that they do not sufficiently prescribe legibility to make the information easily readable. Packaging size is finite, and nutritional information competes for space with cooking instructions and illustrative material. The range and detail of information to be provided means that smaller packs of food usually resort to very small print. Equally, some combinations of print and background colours can make even larger font sizes difficult to read in all lighting conditions. The main guidance on these matters for the industry is contained in the Institute of Grocery Distribution recommendations for packaging legibility (Institute of Grocery Distribution 1994) but these are not mandatory on manufacturer, packers or sellers. The current situation affects all consumers (RNIB 2001) but, given the age-related eyesight changes experienced by most, older consumers have a particular problem. It is also a basic one. If the information is not clearly presented to consumers then other issues – for example, of understanding the information provided and its implications – become irrelevant. Arguably, the increasing proportion of older people in the UK means that the principles of universal design should be applied not just to operational matters, but to the question of which baseline is routinely
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Food is not only nutrition adopted for legibility decisions. Information that is clearly presented is more accessible for all – not just older people.

The Food Standards Agency established a task force to look at label clarity ... 'charged with reviewing the ease with which consumers are currently able to obtain information of concern to them from food labels, identifying particular sources of difficulty and making practical recommendations for improvement' (Food Standards Agency 2000). Changes may eventually emerge from this but the issue of presentation has been around for a long time, and serves to routinely make life difficult for consumers without perfect vision. It would be regrettable if the solution were to be only seen in terms of electronic 'referral', as this would reduce the value of change for older consumers.

‘Consumers increasingly want to know more about food products and want more labelling about how products were made and what they contain. In future companies will be able to provide consumers with greater amounts of product specific information via the Internet and by linking information to the bar code that can be scanned in store’(Dawson et al 2000, 281).
Discussion and conclusions

The theme uniting these two examples is the relevance of the older consumer’s current experiences more generally. Far from being the discrete problems of a marginal group, they reflect what happens to many UK consumers - poorly co-ordinated technological change; failure to communicate, and consumer information that is hard to come by. It is necessary to approach the design of everyday products, services and environments with profoundly different assumptions about archetypal users and this needs to encompass older consumers as a matter of course – and at an early stage. It is important not just because of the greater proportion of older people in the UK population, nor because it has a bearing on their social inclusion, though both are true. Arguably, it is most important because it has the potential to make design better for all consumers.

Their relevance to mainstream consumer issues needs not only to be demonstrated but to be acknowledged by wider society. How might older people – armed with past and current consumer experiences – be better assured an attentive audience for what they say? The answer is contained in one word – publicity. In a consumer society, that is the weapon of choice for those who would cajole, shame or force providers to better meet needs. This does not mean that it is easily achieved but equally there is no reason for despair. Older people need to find an effective voice to lobby politicians and confront manufacturers and service providers with the problems they cause or exacerbate. Solitary voices may seem insignificant - even futile - against the power of large organisation to deliver goods and services in ways that suit their needs but, amplified through local and national media, they are less likely to be ignored. As with martial arts, it is important to use your opponent’s
strength against them; bad publicity is feared by politicians and businesses alike. We are apt to overlook their sensitivity to public criticism but we have only to remember how quickly UK supermarkets distanced themselves from GM products to see the truth of that.

Education, by and for older people, serves many different needs but enhancement of consumer skills is something that should be given greater prominence nationally. Back in 1988, we drew the conclusion that … ‘older people may have learnt a lot through sometimes bitter experience but we see this as no reason to question the wisdom of targeted consumer education ….. We would see out call for effective consumer education for elderly people as being entirely consistent with [the]… demand for personal autonomy, empowering them to exploit better what possibilities they have, rather than being exploited’ (Bayliss and Lyon 1988, 53). Unfortunately, this is still valid. For older people to be taken seriously, they need to know how to get their problems noticed.

Clint Eastwood does not just present us with a nostalgic figure – a fictional, unrealistic view of old age – he demonstrates a persona more real than many imagine. The character shows reluctance, or struggles to be heard, but then becomes effective at solving a problem not of his making and not for his sole benefit. There is another lesson to learn from the media. Writing of Hunter S Thompson - who committed suicide in February 2005 – Marianne Macdonald recalled that his reluctant answer to the question ‘What frightened him?’…. had been….

“Growing old. And helpless” (Macdonald 2005, 4). Let’s use education to help detach age from helplessness. This is a wake-up call for awkward customers.
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Notes

1 Alvin Gouldner recalled….‘I remember one occasion after a long negotiating session with a publisher for whom [Erving] Goffman and I are both editors. I turned to Goffman and said with some disgust, “These fellows are treating us like commodities.” Goffman’s reply was, “That’s all right, Al, so long as they treat us as expensive commodities” (Gouldner 1971, 383).
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2. FOOD'S CULTURAL SYSTEM OF KNOWLEDGE – MEALS AS A CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ARENA

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Although food is important to the physiological aspect of human survival, it is more than just nutrition and fuel, as has been stressed by anthropologists and sociologists in numerous research papers published over the years (e.g., Douglas, 1972; Levi- Strauss, 1969; Mennell, Murcott & van Otterloo, 1992; Mäkelä, 2000). In people’s everyday lives, the meaning of food is illustrated by the way we talk about food, cook, eat and behave at table. The cultural and social significance of food and meals is, therefore, strongly connected to our identity as human beings and as members of society.

In Sweden, the term matkultur, i.e. food culture, is frequently used when discussing factors related to aspects of food other than the nutritional. When this term is used, it can comprise almost any aspect of food: emotions, notions, beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviours, gender, religion, politics, education and economy. Therefore, when speaking with scholars in the area of public health or medicine, it is difficult to discuss the importance of culture for people’s notions about food and health in everyday life.

Thus, due to its complexity, culture becomes an incomprehensible concept and, thereby, the risk is that it will be cast aside as a less important aspect of food. But food is not only nutrition! For this reason, it is imperative to discuss the concept and expression ‘Food Culture’ within the field of nutrition education and research.

Among anthropologists, folklorists and ethnologists, particularly in the US, the expression ‘Food and Foodways’ is used. The term foodways derives from the Great Depression of the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated a project aimed at gathering evidence concerning traditional folklore, folk life and culture among different subcultures in America. Foodways refers to the connection between
Food-related behaviour and patterns of membership in a cultural community, group and society (Camp, 2003). In addition, American anthropologist Carole Counihan defines foodways as behaviours and beliefs surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of food (Counihan, 1999).

There are some scholars, such as Yoder (196X), who have suggested that all daily activities that are food related in some way or another are connected to people's lives (Berg et al., 2003). Because food is a natural part of human life, it becomes part of the meaning of life. In other words, planning, procuring, preparing, presenting and consuming food become part of the expression of everyday human life. Consequently, food-related activities, as part of everyday life, are an expression of identity and the self through food. However, to understand how these expressions of identity and self develop through the meaning of food, we need to understand the system of knowledge hidden in food in everyday life.

Thus, understanding food's cultural system of knowledge will help explain what meaning people give food in their daily life and to how food gives life meaning. Returning to the Swedish terms, rather than talk about matkultur (food culture), in the future I would prefer the expression matens kulturella kunskapssystem (food's cultural system of knowledge), which is what I will use here. It is important to stress that food’s cultural system of knowledge is a matter of knowledge and understanding of meaning, not merely an interesting curiosity to be sacrificed on the altar of nutrition. We must highlight this knowledge and understanding them and put them into a context. Through understanding food's cultural system of knowledge, we can also see that food not only communicates meaning, but that food itself also entails communication between people.
The way Carol Counihan discusses the meaning of food is useful in this context (Counihan, 1999). She considers that we give meaning to food in terms of cuisine, etiquette and food rules, taboos and symbols. She defines cuisine as the food elements used and the rules for their combination and preparation. Etiquette and food rules involve customs governing what, with whom, when, and where one eats. However, how one eats food, the actual act of eating, is not highlighted by Counihan, though it should be. Taboos are the prohibitions and restrictions on the consumption of certain foods by certain people under certain conditions, and symbols are the specific meanings attributed to food in specific contexts. These four fields, thus, can be applicable to illustrating food’s cultural system of knowledge.

Why we choose to eat some foods, as part of a cuisine, but not other foods is based on the meaning we give food. In the past, many people would have chosen food based on hunger. Still, hungry as they were, they would not have eaten whatever foods they stumbled upon, but preferably the foods accepted in their culture. It is a well-known fact in Scandinavia that it took a long time for potatoes to be accepted and implemented in our food culture. In today’s consumer society, we can suppose that people do not eat primarily because they are physiologically hungry or because they need nourishment. Today, people eat because “it tastes good”! We pursue new taste experiences and events just as our forefathers chased the running buffalo on the savannah! Thus, the cultural taste immigration taking place in our society reflects the different meanings we give food, for example at meals and especially across generations. One interview with an older woman of 81 years, conducted in connection with the MENEW project (Sidenvall et al., 2000), illustrates this well.
"My son and his family visit me and I visit them. I like to cook and that they visit me. When they do, I cook Swedish homely fare (Husmanskost), because they don't eat that kind of food very often. They eat a totally different kind of food: The modern food, pizza, and spaghetti, whatever it’s called. I can’t keep track of all the new food. They eat fast food because they are both working and have demanding jobs and come home in a hurry and cooking must be done quickly. I believe that the boys, they are twelve and eight now, they have to learn to eat traditional Swedish meals and they need to learn to appreciate that kind of food. And they do!"

In the narratives from our interview studies, this type of discussion often engages older women and men, both in Sweden and in the rest of Europe. Older people are concerned about food’s cultural system of knowledge; they want to pass it on to the next generations. A specific problem – experienced by older people who have become dependent on others for their food and meals in everyday life – occurs when a given meal is not prepared and served according to their expectations or tradition. For example, Swedish pea soup is to be made with yellow peas and served with mustard and herbs, not made with green peas and served with cream and horseradish. When the culinary rules are not followed, the meaning of the meal can be altered altogether, resulting in loss of appetite and a missed meal (Mattsson Sydner & Fjellström, 2003). Thus, in care for the elderly, food’s cultural system of knowledge is of great importance.

For older people, internalized rules of behaviour, which are rules of etiquette, at table can cause considerable problems when eating and sharing meals with other people. Old age and illness may make it impossible to eat according to the norms of society, i.e. with a fork and knife and without spilling. Thus, people in such a situation would rather
eat alone than show their inability and feel shame (Sidenvall et al., 1996). For some older women, the meaning of life may be based on the ability to cook for others – to give the meal as a gift to their family and friends (Sidenvall et al., 2000). However, when they can no longer cook due to old age and illness, they are able to reason with themselves and start buying pre-prepared food (Gustafsson et al., 2003). Thus, the meaning of the meal can be reinvented with the help of food manufacturers. They can once again share meals with family or friends without having to cook this gift of food themselves and from raw ingredients.

Taboos concerning food were common in early Nordic folklore (Bringeus N-A, 2001). These taboos were often religious in nature. For example, it was forbidden to eat meat during the fast. Today, however, religious food taboos are rare in Western society. As I see it, the taboos of today are connected to the body and health and, as in previous periods, they are also culturally constructed and controlled. Certain foods and meals are regarded as unhealthy, while the opposite applies to others. This issue especially concerns women, young as well as old (Counihan, 1999; Sidenvall et al., 2000). Foods, dishes and meals consisting of fat are seen as taboo. When people in the 16th century had meat at meals during the fast, they were afraid of God’s punishment. When people today eat fat, they feel guilt and shame. This is particularly true if they eat such foods when they are alone. When old women share meals with family and friends, fat seems to be less taboo. The food taboos are more a question of discipline and being disciplined can be overlooked when the social aspects of the meal are important.

The last part of food’s cultural system of knowledge is the specific meanings attributed to food in specific contexts, in other words food’s
symbolism. A symbol is an object, a picture or an activity that can be interpreted as something else – that represents something else. A Happy Meal produced by McDonald’s can represent play and fun for children, but it can also have the connotation of not being a proper mother. A proper woman does not let her children eat at McDonald’s, she cooks her children’s food herself and from raw ingredients. I quote a woman standing in the queue to McDonald’s on a Friday afternoon, a queue in which she met a female friend who was doing the same thing, buying a Happy Meal for her child. She looked at the other woman with guilt in her eyes: “Well, what do you do? This isn’t the best, but today, well I don’t have the strength to cook. I’m so tired”. “Yes I know,” answered her friend. Then they started talking about their children’s sport activities and what time they were going to meet next week.

In the 17th century, many different foods represented sexuality and fertility, as illustrated in paintings from the period. Today, food symbolizes health, security and trust. After 9/11, the American apple pie with an American flag on top became a symbol for Americans to feel they had joined forces. On television talk shows and on the news, the apple pie became the symbol for American values. Food can also symbolize power. During the 1980s and 1990s, big companies in Sweden wanted to show how much financial power they had by serving gourmet foods and champagne at shareholder meetings. However, gourmet food can also symbolize an inability to economize. Perhaps that is why today big Swedish companies usually serve a simple cinnamon bun and a cup of coffee at such meetings.

Serving a dish, a meal, or specific foods at specific meals can symbolize security and contribute to feelings of well-being. This is important to our health. Recognizable foods and meals are, therefore, very important when we are growing up and growing old. This is
something we must consider in relation to ethnicity and culture. What is recognizable for an old woman in the Nordic countries might not be recognisable for an old woman from Turkey. Today, we live in a society where food is on the agenda every day, and not only in our private lives. Food has also become a societal issue, a problem and an everyday phenomenon. People use food not only as nourishment, but also as cultural and social expressions in everyday life. Therefore, it is important to discuss food's cultural system of knowledge.
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3. FAMILY MEALS: COMPETENCE, COOKING AND COMPANY

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FAMILY MEALS: COMPETENCE, COOKING AND COMPANY

Abstract
The aim of this article is to find out what is needed to produce a Family Meal. The article starts with an effort to summarise and discuss different descriptions of a meal. It then goes on to define what a meal is and discuss the concept cooking. The need of competence to produce a meal is also pointed out. With the aid of results from a Nordic study it is argued that family meals still exist, though not on an everyday basis. The importance of company is discussed, viewing the meal as a central family activity and also even now a context for cultural learning. Our conclusion, as far as the future is concerned, is that it is necessary to shift responsibility and enhance men's competence in everyday cooking, also a matter of importance at various educational levels as well as for adults.
FAMILY MEALS: COMPETENCE, COOKING AND COMPANY

Introduction
When thinking of a ‘family meal’ the picture of a nuclear family, ‘mom, pa and two kids’, comes to mind. The family is sitting round a table in the kitchen or in a dining room, having a meal together. The table is properly laid. It is the ideal of a family meal. But this image is threatened, a picture of a romantic past, a lost paradise. Or is it so that family meals still exist? And if so, in what form?

The aim of this paper is to find out what is needed to produce a Family Meal. Firstly there is a short overview of the definitions of ‘a meal’, secondly the question, ‘What is a family meal?’ And finally: what components are needed to produce a family meal?

Some cornerstones of the definition of a meal

The British anthropologist Mary Douglas (Douglas, 1997) was one of the first to raise the question, “What is a meal?” She made a classification schedule and used binary oppositions such as ‘savoury/sweet’, hot/cold, and liquid/dry. She also looked at the structure of daily meals and saw them as repeated analogies. She distinguished between four different levels: a food event as an occasion when food is eaten, and a structured food event as a social occasion organised by rules concerning time, place and sequences of action. A meal, then, constitutes an occasion when food is eaten as part of a structured event connected with the rules of combinations and sequence. A snack, on the other hand, is an unstructured food event without any rules of combinations and sequences. A meal system,
Douglas says, consists of three types of meals, namely: A major meal/the main meal, a minor meal/the second meal, and a still smaller meal/the third meal, (biscuits and hot drinks). Both on Sundays and weekdays the major meal components are a staple, and a centre with trimmings.

The British sociologist Anne Murcott (Murcott, 1982) further developed the analysis in her studies. She not only discussed the components but also saw the relation between family members, as expressed in the preparation and production of a meal. The ‘proper meal’, Murcott says, is a cooked dinner, made and combined in the ‘right’ way. A proper meal consists of one course only, a plateful, a combination of meat and two vegetables. A proper meal not only represents a proper meal, but also a proper family and a proper housewife. Both the Douglas and the Murcott models represent the ideology of meals. Nowadays a ‘proper meal’ can also be a salad or a pasta, chilli or curry, as a result of the world having become a melting pot of different food cultures. In a Finnish study, working class mothers’ ideas of a proper meal were: “a hot dish, a salad and company” (Mäkelä, 2000, p 11).

According to a Nordic study on food habits (Kjærnes, 2001) there are six essential components in a meal:— A Centre (C) consisting of either meat, fish or vegetables, Staples (S) consisting of potatoes, rice, pasta, beans or lentils, Vegetables of different kinds (V), Trimmins (T) i.e. sauces, pickles etc., Bread (B) and Beverages. Variables for ‘proper meals’ were to contain a centre, a staple and/or bread and vegetables, with trimmings as an additional option. The most common combinations in the Scandinavian menu were CSV (centre, staple, vegetables) in approximately 14 percent of all hot meals, and CSVT (centre, staple, vegetables, trimmings) in approximately 13 percent of hot meals. In the Nordic study ‘the family meal’ was operationalised as
a meal eaten by a person living in a multi-person household. The meal was to take place in the home and was eaten in the company of other family members and by all the family/household members together. The food that was eaten was hot food (i.e. a cooked meal), but not necessarily a ‘proper meal’ as described above. According to this definition family meals gather the entire household together. As noticed here, the concepts ‘family’ and ‘household’ are used synonymously. According to this particular study, family meals still exist in the Nordic countries, some 60 percent of all hot meals being family meals. These were more frequent among older people and also more frequent in households with children. Furthermore, couples with children were more likely to have family meals than single people with children (Kjæernes, 2001).

**Cooking – food preparation**

When reflecting on food habits it is easy to place the focus on the food itself, what is on the plate and what, hopefully, is eaten. But food – as we all know – does not appear on the table as if by magic. There is no Magica de Spell (www http://duckman.phetto.com 2004) who prepares the meal with her magic wand and says: “Dinner is served!” On the contrary, there is a perpetual and time-consuming process behind every meal. In discussing meals, therefore, one also has to discuss the process of cooking.

To achieve a meal one needs ingredients, but these are not the only necessary components. A lot of other factors are involved in the process. Meals need to be prepared in one of various ways (boiled, fried, minced etc.). Someone has to decide what to eat, what to buy and how it should be cooked. One also has to decide when to eat and
with whom, and to whom the food should be served. Food preparation is a complex activity. In order to make it possible to study ‘cooking’ in terms of work, one has to consider the different concepts and what they stand for. An English definition of the process mentions the concept ‘food preparation’ and points out where it takes place, thereby showing that there is more to it than just the use of heat.

Food preparation is... “The treatment of food in the kitchen, at home, in a catering establishment or take away shop. It is a wider term than ‘cooking’ which implies the use of heat”(Thruswell, 1986, p 64).

But the term ‘food preparation’ has to be even more extended: it is a very complex activity, consisting of a series of decisions and actions, resulting in different dishes or different types of meals as well as various nutrients. Food preparation also implies social activity, providing a social structure and organising the people who are eating together. Furthermore, food preparation has an economic dimension, household resource management. And if, like Thruswell above, one also takes into account where the activities take place, one can consider both the private and the public sphere. i.e.: at home and in restaurants, canteens, etc. Here one also finds the boundary between paid and unpaid work: paid work in the public sphere and unpaid in the private. Since there is no comprehensive concept to express it all one might call it ‘the process of food preparation’, thereby including planning, shopping, food preparation, and washing the dishes as well as the social and economic activities or arrangements. The word ‘process’ also describes a kind of continuity, for example ‘planning’ – where does it begin and where does it end?

What kind of competence is needed to produce a family meal?
As Magica de Spell is not in charge, someone has to take care of the process of food preparation. This person has to take responsibility for the everyday planning, preparation and production of a meal, implying having time available for cooking, and knowledge of how and what to prepare. In the Nordic study earlier mentioned (Kjærmes, 2001) people who had eaten a hot meal were asked about their interest in cooking. The results showed that there was a gendered relation between cooking and interest. Roughly speaking, the men prepared the meals if they were interested in cooking. If not, they did not do so. For women, on the other hand, it was obvious that they prepared meals whether they were interested or not. Cooking today means having the competence to choose what is most adequate at that moment according to time, taste, money, nutritional quality, and in recent years also environmentally friendly quality. The fact that the food may be pre-prepared in different degrees does not lessen the cooking activity involved in shaping a family meal.

How important is the company when choosing the preparation and cooking of a meal?

Traditionally the family meal has been seen as a core activity in family life, and in particular a meeting point in everyday life (Lupton 1996). During mealtimes children are “acculturated into rules and norms of civilized behavior” (Ibid. 38). Among others DeVault and Sjögren de Beauchaine (DeVault, 1991; Sjögren de Beauchaine, 1988) have also discussed the cultural importance of family meals. The question is where and when one learns how to cook. Is it a matter of information campaigns or health care information? Is it something picked up through school curriculum activities or in the form of gourmet recipes picked up from TV chefs? Or is it still a mundane activity learnt by being in the kitchen at home with people close to one? Is cultural
context still, in fact, of importance, in an age when individuality and choices of one’s own are so much discussed, and food used as an instrument to show the uniqueness of self? We perceive reality from being involved in social actions i.e. everyday living as a context for learning. Immigrant women living in Sweden have discussed their vision of how to give children their original cultural identity with the help of food. They also told, however, how they prepared “easy food” consisting of macaroni and chicken sausage when they were alone with their children, and changed over to “cultural taste” and dishes requiring long cooking when their husbands were present (Jonsson, Hallberg, & Gustafsson, 2002).

**Do family meals exist today?**

The discussion of the decline of the family meal seems to be an ongoing theme and a widespread myth. What is the truth? Murcott associates it with a longing for the ever more golden days of the past and gives examples of the same discussion from the time of the First World War (Murcott, 1997). In the Nordic study of eating patterns (Kjærnes, 2001) one of the starting points for analysis was the existence of ‘meals’ as opposed to ‘grazing’. In relation to family meals the analysis showed that in the four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) which at first appear to be alike, the eating patterns of hot and cold meals and the numbers of meals differ. Nevertheless, family meals in all these countries are part of ordinary everyday eating (Holm, 2001), as symbols of shared family life, and may occur on an every-other-day-basis. In today’s multicultural societies there are people of various cultural origins whose family meals are an everyday or every-other-day means of identification of their own group and self. This is also discussed by Harbottle on the
basis of evidence from immigrant women in Great Britain (Harbottle, 2000).

**Gender and family meals**

Family meals are seen as a global matter and considered to be vital to the sense of coherence of a family unit (Holm, 2001). They are seen to be important, but also regarded as a problem if they disappear. Someone has to take the responsibility of preparing family meals. It is a tacit but important kind of job to stage family meals for 365 days of the year. Preparing and serving meals to the family/household may also be seen in terms of presenting a gift (Fürst, 1995). One gives something to the people living around one and in some way or another expects to get something back in return as a devoted family member: love or appreciation or respect. Everyday cooking has been, and still seems to be, a woman’s responsibility. Men also cook, and when they do so they mostly get credit for it and are praised for their efforts. When the family meal begins to be a burden to women not interested but even so responsible for food making, it is time to introduce men and young boys to the duties of everyday cooking. This means shifting the focus and responsibility from men’s barbecue and party cooking to everyday family meals. It may also imply diminishing the gap between luxury and everyday food.

Possibly, then, the learning of how to prepare easy, economic and tasty family meals ought to be a matter for both boys and girls, and men and women of all ages – home economics in an up to date version for the future in a society where the tempo is even faster. It may then be a pleasure for both men and women to cook for the cohesiveness of different kinds of families and households, including
the joy of cooking which relies on competence, in the company of people who are close.
References


4. FOOD HABITS AND MEAL PATTERNS ON THE EDGE OF AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY

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Introduction
It is an aim of this paper to present some results from a cross-scientific/cross-disciplinary research project among heavy drug addicts in Oslo. Main question to be discussed is:

*How may food habits and meal patterns convey social and cultural information that stigmatizes heavy drug addicts?* Some concepts from theoretical framework on socialization and social stigma are applied in the discussion of the empirical data.

Sampling, methods and data collection
Heavy drug addicts were in this study defined as persons administrating illegal drugs by injections regularly. The sample consisted of 117 adult male- and 71 female heavy addicts. The subjects were sought out in their ordinary daily life situations on meetings places for addicts, hospices and on the street. The sample consisted of persons from the age of 18 to 67 years. Mean age for the female respondents was 33.5 ± 7.2, and, mean age for men was 35.6 ± 7.7. The applied methods were pre-coded questionnaire and 24 hours recall. Data were collected from November 2001 to September 2002 (Sæland et al. 2002).

The Norwegian Welfare State as Context
The Norwegian society is strongly influenced by the common Nordic development of social democratic welfare states after World War 2. Essential in this model of institutionalized state interventionism is broad and universal coverage of social services in the fields of health, education and care. An ideology of equal opportunities for *all* and public responsibility has been basic and significant in the shaping of politics within these fields. Moreover, the idea of equality is manifested in the principle that individual rights to health-care and pensions shall not derive from social status of work or family. There is no formal link
between an individual’s contribution and his/her rights. Every citizen shall be economically and socially protected against stigmatizing situations in cases of income loss, sickness and involuntary interruption of paid work (Esping-Andersen 1996; Stephens 1996).
Socialization towards participation in society
Socialization is here taken to embody processes and activities that aim at building competences to master challenges, and capabilities to participate and take advantages of opportunities in a given society. These aims may not be explicitly expressed, or even conscious, but may be implicit in upbringing, education and care. It involves psychological attachment, social and cultural sense of belonging, identity and self-understanding. In late modern and complex societies, like the Norwegian, socialization takes place as continuous and dialectical processes between individuals and groups, and between groups and society. Socialization practices bear deep tensions between adaptation and power dominance on one hand, and liberating possibilities to break with traditional cultural and social bonds on the other (Smehaugen 2001).

It is common to divide between informal and formal socialization – and between primary socialization arena (family/home) and secondary ones (education, work, medias etc.). However, both forms, and both arenas where socialization takes place, involve more or less formalized communication of values, codes, beliefs, attitudes etc. Self-understanding and identity formation are intimately related to these communicative actions (Ibid.).

Identity and stigma
According to Goffman (1958, 1963), identity has three main dimensions:

- **Social identity.** This dimension contains possibilities for prestige and valorized social positions and vulnerability, negative identity; eventually combined with social stigma.
- **Personal identity.** This dimension is linked to life history, body, appearance, personality etc.
• **Self (Ego identity).** This dimension involves self-understanding of what is felt, experienced, thought etc. concerning own situation, history, social position etc.

Social stigma was used by Goffman (1963) to denote disqualification from full social acceptance and inclusion in society. The origin of stigma was a blemished person who was to be avoided; especially in public places. Preliminary conceptions were linked to some sort of failing or shortcoming of an outsider who was physically and socially excluded from community. Stigma and stigmatization was highly related to feelings of shame and inferiority. It is essential in Goffman’s theory that social information about a given stigma – the very symbol or sign, through which it was conveyed, is a matter of reflection and embodiment. In line with this, a stigma is conveyed through bodily expressions and is communicated to those who perceive this social information (Goffman 1963: 43).

**Empirical Findings**

**Socialization during childhood and adolescence**

The respondents were asked about their family situation from the age of ten to sixteen years. The findings show that their primary socialization during these formative years was marked by abruptions and discontinuity in family structure and affiliation. One of five had not at any time lived together with their biological parents. Nine respondents had experienced total lack of primary adult caregivers for periods during childhood. Sixty percent of them had completed basic school (primary and lower secondary), and thirty percent had completed upper secondary education. It is interesting to note than more than ninety percent of the Norwegian population of the same average age have completed upper secondary school (OECD 2002).
**Breakfast and lunch packet**

Approximately fifty percent of the respondents reported that they did not use to eat breakfast before they went to school. Almost thirty percent did not use to bring a lunch packet to school. This implies that – on a regular basis – three of ten did not eat breakfast, nor did they eat lunch packet at school.

**Food intake**

The drug addicts ate in general less than the normal population, and their intake of food that is generally considered to be non-healthy was frequent. Intake of added sugar contributed with approximately thirty per cent of the total energy intake – somewhat more for the females (thirty-eight percent) – and less for the male addicts (twenty-six percent). Soft drinks were consumed twice as much as the amount of milk. Neither potatoes, vegetables, and edible fats, nor milk, cereals, bread and fruits, were eaten in sufficient amount compared to the reference group (See Table 1).
Table 1: *Energy and food intake, mean±SD (kcal/gram)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Drug addicts</th>
<th>Norkost (smokers) 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females N=71</td>
<td>Males N=117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td>1522 ± 1271</td>
<td>2121 ± 1414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potato</strong></td>
<td>13± 39</td>
<td>23± 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td>43± 100</td>
<td>45± 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edible fat</strong></td>
<td>8± 16</td>
<td>16± 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk</strong></td>
<td>241± 387</td>
<td>196± 319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cereals/bread</strong></td>
<td>71± 102</td>
<td>178± 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruit</strong></td>
<td>104±241</td>
<td>147± 347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sugar added</strong></td>
<td>26±70</td>
<td>40± 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft drinks</strong></td>
<td>519± 599</td>
<td>462± 693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meal patterns**

The ways in which food consumption takes place reflect how people live and are taken care of. The drug addicts were served food from various charity organizations at places that are normally not connected with eating. Their eating took for instance place directly on the pavements and in door rooms and public outdoor stains. As part of the harm reducing treatments among drug addicts, these organisations also drifted some meeting places with cafés, however with limited opening time. Our respondents reported that one third of the meals were eaten during night, with hardly any available places to eat. The drug addicts had no fixed meal patterns. Sixty per cent reported to eat alone, while thirty per cent eat with friends, and nobody eats with their...
family. Ten per cent did not know or did not answer questions concerning eating habits.

Fifty-five per cent of the sample reported hunger as a motivation for eating, while delight was mentioned by forty-six percent. Social company was the major force for thirty per cent, while twenty-five percent had prevention of illness in their minds as motivation to eat. Sixty-seven per cent reported insufficient access to food, while ninety-four percent of the addicts disliked the taste of the food that was available.

Fifty percent reported that they bought food themselves. Steeling food and receiving from family was the case in approximately ten per cent. More than twenty per cent came from charity organisations, and only four per cent obtained food from garbage.

Access to kitchen facilities was reported by almost ninety per cent, while less than twenty per cent used the facilities regularly.

**Conclusion**

This study shows that the great majority of the respondents did not use cooking facilities, even if they had access to them. From their answers it becomes evident that food and meals provide little cultural and social spirit of community in their lives. It is assumed that their unsatisfactory food intake and lack of social organization of meals may partly be understood as a consequence of insufficient socialization, practical skills and social competence related to food and meals. Their instable family relations and abrupt educational careers may support this assumption.
The great insecurity connected to the quality and provision of food is taken as symbol (or sign) that carry social information about a stigmatized and excluded group. This humiliating social information should be regarded against the backdrop of a societal context of an affluent society and a welfare state that is generally considered as generous.
Reference


5. “YOUNGSTERS’ CONCEPTION OF FOOD” - EDUCATIONAL AND CURRICULAR PERSPECTIVES.

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Food in Contemporary Society 55
- Food is not only nutrition
Abstract

Based on interviews and literature studies this article deals with formal and informal nutrition education. Interviews have been carried out in grade 6th grade, 9th and 12th in 3 periods. The themes for the interviews have been pupils’ experiences, choices and concepts concerning food and meals on different occasions and their views on nutrition education within home economics. The pupils’ views and choices in different settings were researched and questioned in relation to formal nutrition education. In order to discriminate between different aspects of nutrition and food concepts a model of food reflections was developed. It turned out that foods are the starting point for reflections, as these are very concrete and recognizable and next to that comes dishes and meals. Nutrients and nutrition are abstract and difficult to cope with, and nutrition education is seen as meaningless in relation to themselves. This forces teachers to rethink formal food or nutrition education.
Introduction
Food consumption is part of our living conditions and our lifestyles. Food has both a symbolic as well as a functional, fundamental meaning for human beings; but food is also a risk, as we live, as Beck puts it, in a risk society. This implies, that we have to take risks or reflect on how to deal with risks when being a food consumer, although a lot of experts are engaged to take care of the problems (Beck, 1992, Giddens, 1991). As educators within the field we must also face them. Among the problems related to food consumption is the growing global obesity epidemic. In particular, obesity among children and young people concerns as it can in the long run become costly for the individual and society. Therefore, a number of policies have been made and initiatives have been taken, but not many do consider the problems within nutrition education. Food can rise to a wide range of personal, economic, practical, theoretical, emotional, aesthetic and ethical dilemmas. Many of the dilemmas may be hidden or tacit, but nevertheless they must be discussed, when it comes to education (Benn 2002, 2004). Formal competencies are those targeted in education, and these must be related to the informal competencies acquired in different settings or “communities of practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1995, Wenger, 1998).

The qualitative studies - learning to be consumers in formal and informal settings.
Both formal and informal competencies were in focus in three qualitative research studies, classroom observations, interviews and mind maps (see Table 1). The qualitative interview is “a research method which gives privileged admittance to our basic experience of the life-world.” (Kvale 1997, p.63). The pupils were asked questions concerning food experiences and competencies, what was necessary to learn and why, and how they would choose foods to make a meal in
four different situations, for themselves alone (a), together with friends (b), for themselves and their family (c), and for a younger child (d). In case a) the key words were: “Something easy, fast, ready-made, fast food, with a good taste and flavour,” as can be seen in Table 2. When alone, the child choose fast food, although especially some of the girls mentioned that it was important not to get too fat, and therefore fast food too often would be an unwise choice. It was interesting to note that when questioned about their viewpoints on the subject of home economics, many pupils said that they liked the classes very much because of the practical cooking; but when it came to the question concerning a meal for themselves, they chose the easy solution. Together with friends in case b) it was nearly the same picture, thus depending on the place and time; it might to a greater extent involve sweets and soft drinks for this age group. In case c) why and how they would choose foods to make a meal for their family, the answer might be to make something belonging to their family food culture, to consider the number of people, the food budget, taste, likes and dislikes, nutrition and their own practical skills (see Table 3). In case d) when the children had to consider how to take care of a younger child, a lot of considerations were mentioned, especially more concern for nutrition and health. This was also related to the risks of getting too fat and also to concerns about avoiding microbiologically contaminated food – for example, salmonella, in the case of chicken. More moral views like how to combine different food groups, for example, bread and salami, and potatoes and vegetables together with meat, were also shown in this case.

To summarise, it was clearly demonstrated that consumer choices in the case of food differed according to the context and setting. The consumer/child moves from one level or setting to another while learning to navigate. Combining the pupil’s understanding and experiences with the model of food reflections (see Figure 1), it
appeared that their talk was about dishes and meals - the food culture level, with an inclusion of the level for foods when they talked about 'food for me'. According to the psychologist, Kurt Lewin, this expression is the end result of different choices as a gatekeeper (1951). The gatekeeper is the person, who chooses the food at different gates. That is, she chooses according to her possibilities and capacities, to buy ready-made food or raw products, to buy cheap or expensive foods, to prepare more or less, to eat here or there. ‘Food for me’ is “food good to think”, to use Claude Levi-Strauss' concept (Levi-Strauss 1972). “Food good to think and for me” meant for the pupils dishes and food items they knew from their everyday lives: The sort of food they as "gatekeepers" were able to put on the table or eat from the box. The reasons for the pupils choosing the specific food can be found in taste, cooking abilities, and significance to satiety and health, see Table 2. Pierre Bourdieu understands taste as socially and culturally dependent, just as body and society are closely related, but also of individual character (Bourdieu 1971). An older study of the food preferences of Swedish pupils for a school meal showed that pupils’ choices resulted in a great number of individually composed meals with small but important divergences, when they were allowed to select between different foods (). The same variety cannot be realised in the case of fast food products designed with a uniform and neutral smell, taste and texture to appeal to youngsters. These items are convenient to eat now and wherever or to put into the microwave oven. The reason for using fast foods was to avoid ‘fuss’, this is seen as contradictory to pupils’ claims of enjoying cooking and the processes involved. As expressed by this girl:

“I would choose fast food or anything to put in the microwave oven!”

Interviewer: “But you just told me you enjoyed cooking.”

“Yes, but that is in the school!”
The response shows that the enjoyment of cooking was dependent on the actual context. It was great when cooking was done together with others. The results were similar to those found in a Danish socio-economic family study that showed that one parent families more often chose fast food and did not bother to cook as much as two parents families.18

Both rational and economic reasons for choices occurred together with more social and emotional reasons dependent on whom the participants in the study were with. The health dimension was also taken into account with regard to how often pupils would choose fast food, but the family budget also played a part here. Another point expressed was that fast food was not proper food - not a proper meal as expressed by the anthropologists (Douglas 1972). The word ‘proper’ could be directed towards nutritional value but it might just as well be a more moral and/or cultural value of the food. Burgers, pizzas, spring rolls and sausages were fast foods, not proper meals, whereas a proper meal was a meal with a definite format consisting of more elements with definite relations between them e.g. meatballs with potatoes and gravy. The format was dependent on how it was experienced in the different families. The talk still revolved around “food for me”, but “my family” might be added to this. The habits of the family together with the family food budget, health and cooking skills determined the menu. But there was a movement towards the more social level of food (expressed in the Danish word ‘kost’, which can not be translated to an adequate English word). It becomes, in Marvin Harris’ expression, “food good to eat” (Harris 1984). The more material side of the food was included in this theoretical expression and also in practice (see Table 3). Finally, more parameters were included when the pupils were asked about food choices and cooking in situations where they were responsible for looking after someone else. In this case, caring, health and moral aspects were taken into consideration
and some aspects of the formal nutrition education lessons were also revealed. Prohibitions and restrictions were brought into the discussion like the ones the pupils themselves experienced (see Table 4).

Concepts such as *clean food*, *healthy food* and *good food* appeared in some of the responses. Clean referred to Salmonella problems. Excluding some foods and including others defined healthy foods.

Health was defined as: “…vitamins, iron and what you have to eat... or you get fat and unhealthy.” And: “You need to get some protein in your life” (Boy, grade 6)

Health was encircled by means of nutrients and thereafter defined by risks: ‘You get fat, you die from a stroke.’ It is, when compared to the WHO concept of health, a negative or narrow concept of health, where absence of illness is the primary content (WHO, ). The WHO definition includes physical, psychological and social well-being and not only absence of illnesses. The responses indicated thinking on the level of nutrition, i.e. the most abstract level in the model of food reflections. As can be seen in Figure 1, when pupils talked about ‘food for me’, they talked about foods – the middle layer - or dishes and meals, the bottom of the model, whereas when the speech was about ‘food for others’ they moved toward the top of the model. They moved from foods to the perceived healthy food items, and finally towards nutrients at the more abstract natural scientific level. This natural scientific level is very complicated for most pupils this age (and also many grown-ups) to understand.

The characteristics of the concepts ‘food for me’ and ‘nutrition for others’ are elucidated in Table 5. Whereas the subjective part is individual and reflects preferences for special or single food items or dishes with flavours the person likes, the concern for others is viewed collectively and is more concerned with nutrients and health. Food budgets become more important when more people are involved and
there is a greater motivation for cooking. Lastly, the moral dimension of food and diet becomes more significant at the collective level, too. Two different roles come forward: ‘the ego-centric consumer’ versus ‘the eco-centred producer’. This is a transfer of Eleanore Vaines’ description and models of the philosophical value orientations of home economics teachers (Vaines 1990). The ego-centric person sees solutions from a more egoistic, subjective point of view, whereas the eco-centred person makes choices that reflect concern for the welfare and care of the ecos. Ecos comes from the Greek: Oikos, which means household.

**Food consumer competencies and food education.**

Food consumer food competencies are learnt in different settings, as shown in the examples from the research studies. In Western culture we have seen a McDonaldization of society, which means that the American way of living has had a great impact on children’s consumer habits, especially regarding food and drink, and on their informal education through media and products. But the values in society as a whole and in different subgroups have also an impact of the consumer breeding or education. The liberalisation from old traditions and norms means that today’s food choices and intakes can be anything and everything at any given time. At the same time as we are being freed from old norms and are almost able to choose what we want when we want it, we live in the risk society. Food has become a risk, therefore Giddens says, we need to be reflective and this has implications for education. Hence, it is through the development of the gatekeeper role - the action competence – that more action possibilities can be imparted to pupils through formal nutrition education. The question now is how this should be done. The starting point must be to meet the learner where he/she stands, to get the ‘food for me’ concept out into the open, to discuss, develop and expand pupils’ understandings from
their starting point; but also to strive to achieve an eco-centred understanding. The theory-practice relationship must be held in a dialectic relation and more research about both parts must be carried out. Pupils' experiences must be extended to a deeper comprehension, as expressed by Kolb in his study of Experimental Learning (Kolb, ). This is only possible when educational considerations match the pupil's needs and level or zone of development. Lastly, policy makers must be made aware of the importance and need for research within nutrition education as well as the need for allocation of resources concerning the school subject; time and teacher training are the most important elements.

**Conclusion and perspectives**

The research findings raise a demand for discussion of nutrition education and further investigations of both the content of and methods used in education. In particular, there is a need for research concerning the natural scientific aspect of nutrition education. How much theory is necessary? How should it be taught? Paivi Pajoloki has in her thesis: The Complexity of Food-related Activities in a Household Context, proposed ‘a novel way of teaching, food and nutrition issues’. This proposal involves “the development of the students’ critical thinking”, which “is fostered not only by discussing what-questions, but also why- and how-questions, thus relating the subject matter to the students’ life-situations and environment,” (Pajoloki 1997, p.230) This puts a greater pressure on all people but especially on teachers and researchers within the field.
References


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- Food is not only nutrition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No./males/females</th>
<th>Grade/age</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994-1995</td>
<td>14/6/8</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>Copenhagen, Northwest, mixed housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16/8/8</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>North Zealand, affluent area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26/14/12</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>Copenhagen, inner city, many immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>12/12 /0</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>Area Northwest of Copenhagen, mixed housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16/6/6</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>Area Southwest of Copenhagen, many new inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/5/7</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>Copenhagen SW, mostly flats, deprived area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/1/1 (16 mind maps)</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>North Zealand, middle class, own villas and flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/1/1 (20 mind maps)</td>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}/12-13</td>
<td>Suburb, west of Copenhagen, mixed area, villas and flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/1/1 (11 mind maps)</td>
<td>9\textsuperscript{th}/15-16</td>
<td>North Zealand, middle class, own villas and flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/1/1 (8 mind maps)</td>
<td>9\textsuperscript{th}/15-16</td>
<td>Suburb north of Copenhagen, villas and flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/1/1 (20 mind maps)</td>
<td>11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th}/18-19</td>
<td>Suburb north of Copenhagen, villas and flats, wealthy area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Survey carried out in 2000: Only 2 pupils were interviewed per class, but the whole class made mind maps on consumption.
Figure 1: Model of food reflections, Benn 1996/2004

- Food is not only nutrition
Table 2: Food and Meals for Oneself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. – buy a burger</td>
<td>1. It tastes good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. – something ready made</td>
<td>2...to put in the microwave oven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. - buy something convenient,..</td>
<td>3  ... then you do not have all the fuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It depends on how hungry I am.</td>
<td>4. Because sometimes I also think about it, and then fast food doesn’t help. Then I would rather have some decent food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are very hungry? interviewer</td>
<td>If you are very hungry? interviewer Then I buy some proper food. I only go to the burger shop once in a while.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. – buy something ready made – a bag of &quot;biksemad&quot; (hash)</td>
<td>5. because if it is going to be that every day I will get fat and bloated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But if it were for you only? interviewer</td>
<td>But if it were for you only? interviewer Then I think I would go to the burger shop once in a while</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3:** Food and meals for myself and my family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHOICE</th>
<th>REASONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would buy nearly the same as my mum. Meatballs, pizza and rice.</td>
<td>1. Tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. .. try if I could make meat balls.</td>
<td>2. And 3. Handicraft skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. .. try to make something we have learnt here at school..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. now, I would think about my mum and dad and they like Danish beef. so I would buy some minced meat, and so I would make some white sauce, not brown, white sauce is not as fattening as as gravy, it tastes good, also because it is healthy. And salad. We make the dressing ourselves. Garlic dressing or something.</td>
<td>4. Taste, tradition, health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I would buy something ready made, a portion of hash (Danish ‘biksemad’)</td>
<td>5. Easy, fast and inexpensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why would you not go to the fast food store?**
It is too expensive to buy for 5 persons.)
Table 4: Food and meals to others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices– Considerations</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would make sure that they got clean food, not chicken or something.</td>
<td>1. Hygiene, health – avoidance of certain foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They should not eat rye bread only. I would tell them not only to eat the spread on the bread and then give them some potatoes. I would give them good stuff so they could be healthy. Vegetables and a little of everything.</td>
<td>2. Moral, health, diversity of foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Give the children healthy things to eat. And they should drink milk with vitamins. I just do not want to get married, because I will live together with my mum and dad.</td>
<td>3. Health, nutrients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would also make sure that they did not get too fat. And that they did not have candies every day, but healthy food and not chips every day.</td>
<td>4. Health and fatness – avoidance of certain food items (candies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. They were allowed to decide themselves when they got a little older.</td>
<td>5. Own decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It is not very smart if they (your children) only get to be 80 years old because they die from a stroke or they are too fat or something.</td>
<td>6. Health, fatness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: "Food for Me" - "Nutrition for Others".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Food for me&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Nutrition for others&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td>Collective level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterized by preferences for:</td>
<td>Characterized by considerations on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special/single foods and dishes</td>
<td>foods, nutrients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taste</td>
<td>health and illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time, place/environment</td>
<td>economy/ecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleasure, feelings</td>
<td>moral, prohibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;ego-centric&quot; consumer</td>
<td>&quot;eco-centred&quot; producer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. COOKERY DUEL – A WAY TO IDENTIFY GENDER FORMATIONS IN HOME AND CONSUMER STUDIES

Monica Petterson
Department of Food, Health and Environment, Göteborg University
Purpose of the study
The overall aim of the study is to investigate how gender formations are created in a context where there is a strong traditional feminine “genderization”\(^3\) at the same time, and thorough striving toward gender equality. Can one or more gender formations be identified in some specific contexts in Home and Consumer studies (HCs)? How do boys and girls appear in this particular environment? Focus is mainly from the perspective of gender. One of the reasons is that today the school has a rather strong role to play regarding gender equality\(^4\). In the present curriculum, Lpo 94, gender equality is part of fundamental values and tasks of the school (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2006).

Background
Home and Consumer studies concentrates on the various activities of the household, which cover a sense of community, food and meals, housing and consumer economics, which must be integrated into a meaningful whole. Resource management, health, gender equality and culture are four issues that should permeate the teaching in HCs. The goals to aim for are written as “to do” in the syllabus, and “knowledge in action”\(^5\) is an important basis for this kind of education (Skolverket, 2000 p. 18-19). Regarding gender equality, this document states in the goals to aim for that in its teaching of Home and Consumer studies, the school should aim to ensure that pupils: “put into practice the principles of democracy and gender equality, and also experience and

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\(^3\) Genderization is the ascribed and structured in what we call “female” or “male” for example characteristics, occupations and beliefs (Thurén, 2002).

\(^4\) The goal of gender equality in Sweden involves equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men regarding all areas in life which includes economy, the labour market, education, influence and family (SCB, 2006).

\(^5\) Molander, (1996)
understand their importance for activities in the household and relations between individuals” (Skolverket, 2000 p. 18).

The school, in which the observations were carried out, is located outside a big city in the west of Sweden. It was chosen because of its heterogeneous catchment area to fund a varying data. This paper is based on two classroom observations of 120 minutes each, in two different classes from the ninth grade. The total group examined consisted of 11 girls and 17 boys. One advantage of observation is that behaviour and the course of events are studied in a natural setting (Patel & Davidson, 1994). The observing has been done on two levels, partly one which is comprehensive and partly one which involves deliberately turning the spotlight to a specific event. Focus has been on how the pupils perform, speak and what is happening around the specific incident. In the study, gender is understood as a social construction, affected by the social, cultural and historical context (Butler, 1990; Pendergast, 2001). When it comes to the interaction between the pupils, inspiration is drawn from the dramaturgic perspective of Goffman (2000) and his theatrical metaphor is used to describe the subjects of the survey. The ideal types of Weber (1977) have also played an influential role and have been used as an instrument to elucidate a fixed part of the different characters that was identified with the pupils in different social situations.

Cookery Duel

The interactions and teamwork between the pupils is a big part of what happens in the classroom. The metaphor is that the pupils and their teamwork are actors on the stage and I have had the benefit of seeing this scene from the first parquet. The play performed is the Cookery

\[6\] Cookery Duel was the name of a popular TV-show in Sweden in 1990, where two famous persons competed in cooking.
Duel and it contains three acts: Introduction, Accomplishment and Prize-giving. Actions will be reported from each act to form a broad basis for the analysis. The Cookery Duel implies a competition in cooking where the pupils challenge each other in groups. The rules of the competition are that it is based upon the knowledge of the pupils and the structure is less rigid than ordinary lessons. Every group has the same starting point and each group is assigned a bag with some staples. On this specific occasion, the bag contains “Falun sausage”\(^7\), rice, a carrot, one leek and an apple. The aim is to cook a meal in a creative way from the resources available. Spices, dairy products etc. can also be used but the base is the same for all groups. Grading is done on a scale of 1 to 5 and it is the group with the highest total that becomes the winner of the Cookery Duel. On the blackboard there is also a schedule which states suggested time for planning, accomplishment, point of time to eat and time for cleaning, washing dishes etc. A random grouping is made by lottery, and today there are both unisex groups and mixed groups. The drama can begin…

**Act 1 - Introduction**

At eight sharp, the teacher Maria goes out to open the door for the pupils. Small talk, some noise can be heard first from the boys. They sit down at their usual places and now a girl takes note that *Cookery Duel* is written on the blackboard. She calls out: We will win! The teacher starts by telling them the aim of today’s lesson. A large number of questions are called out from the boys mostly, and the teacher stops them. She says: Let me first go through the rules and then we’ll see if you have further questions. The pupils calm down and get to know the criteria for marking. The competition is not only about creating a good meal, hygiene, co-operation, orderliness, methods, the laying of the

\(^7\) A typical Swedish everyday food, which is a lightly smoked and boiled sausage.
table, creativity, appearance and service are also of great importance. They also learn that each group should do a small plate so that the teacher can taste the different dishes. This causes some kind of winner instinct in the boys. Diverse comments can be heard: If we put some money under the plate, how much will it cost to win?

**Act 2 – Accomplishment**

The pupils are full of expectations and eager to get started. The starting signal goes and the group that is most anxious consists of three boys: Simon, John and Tom. They rush to the bench and empty out the bag with the provisions. Before them they see the sausage, some rice, a carrot, a leek and an apple. After a very quick discussion with the guidance of Simon they have decided to make a stew. They start to get things moving. Simon fetches the spices, John goes to find a saucepan from the cupboard and Tom takes care of the vegetables. Another group with only girls, Sarah, Jane and Liza, calmly rises and goes to the laundry room to get an apron and to wash their hands. Afterwards they gather around the bag and pick up one ingredient after another. They start to discuss what to do and how to do it. Are they going to chop or cut in slices? What about the apple? After a short while the discussion is complete and they start to work. The two other groups, which are mixed, do things the same way as the group with only boys, i.e. they hurry to the bag and empty out the contents on the bench.

One mixed group is working together Andy, Michael and Joanne. Those pupils are the only ones in their class who do not rush to the bag. They have the same strategy as the girls in the other class, i.e. they put on aprons, and they wash their hands and then turn their attention to the contents of the bag. Joanne is in the leading position...
and has an idea what to do and explains it to the boys. They go along with the proposal and different kitchen activities begin.

**Joanne:** We must be hygienic. And please, keep a good manner!

Andy takes the apple and is about to cut it.

**Joanne:** Wait, don’t do anything with the apple yet.

**Joanne:** Michael, you take care of the sausage.

Andy, instead of cutting the apple, intends to cook the rice (but seems to be a bit unsure of how to do this). Joanne notices this.

**Joanne:** Wait, I’ll show you how to do it.

**Michael:** Is this the right way to cut?

**Joanne:** Maybe a bit thinner.

The work goes on and later on the pot is seasoned and stands ready.

Andy is now inactive, and watches the other two working. Joanne starts to lay the table and then concentrates on the apple, which she cuts in a star shape. Andy and Michael are now both idle and sit by the dining table.

**Joanne:** (turning to them) Can one of you arrange the water?

The groups have now finished cooking and sit in peace and quiet in groups and eat the food. The teacher goes around and tastes the different dishes and the pupils proudly tell how they improvised with spices and other flavourings. Suddenly John stands up, clears his throat, raises his glass and says solemnly: Enjoy your meal! Simon and Tom recline over the table laughing. From the group across the classroom, Sandra says: Stop being silly!

**Act 3 – Prize-giving**

We have reached an exciting moment in the competition – the distribution of prizes. The cleaning and tidying up is done and the pupils sit expectantly at their desks waiting to hear the results. Sandra
who had earlier killed John’s formal speech states that the group of boys had flirted and made a fuss. John answers: well, it was a competition. Finally, Maria states the winner: The three boys come first by a narrow margin. A boy in another group loudly expresses his disappointment while Simon, John and Tom are radiantly happy. At the prize-giving John pretends to be a bit embarrassed and says that it is mostly for the honour.

The same procedure is about to happen in the other class. A similar hopeful atmosphere pervades the classroom, and all the pupils seem tense to find out who has won the Cookery Duel. The pupils stress that the second best must be announced first. Andy, Michael and Joanne came in second place. They look rather disappointed, not having reached the first place. The winning team is the yellow kitchen – three girls and a boy who (under joyous shouts of approval) each receive an apron as first prize.

Three different ideal types were identified

In an attempt to point out gender formations in the interaction between the pupils which rose during the Cookery Duel, I have categorised different forms of behaviour and arranged them under different ideal types. The three types I could recognize are the **Hero**, **Wallpaper Flower** and **Clown**.\(^8\) Successfulness and capability are the qualities of the Hero, while Wallpaper Flower disappears among the patterns of the wallpaper and doesn’t make much noise. Clown is a character who craves attention by making jokes and being humorous.

By putting sex in front of the ideal types, they take on qualities which are manifested more or less in the different characters. For example, a big difference comes into view when the Hero also appears as the

\(^8\) The name of the categories is inspired by Gestalt therapy (Pirls, 1974).
Heroine. Both types are skilful, creative and have strong self-confidence. They know the subject and their high self-esteem leads to a positive attitude, which shows in the form of leadership. The management, however, shows in different ways. The Hero seems to have looser bridles when it comes to the organization and responsibility, compared to the Heroine. The Heroine, who can be personified in Joanne, working together with Michael and Andy, is the one who from the beginning has taken on the main responsibility. She organizes the work by telling the boys what to do. Simon, in the group with the boys, is the one who is most capable and is represented here by the Hero. Unlike the Heroine, he doesn’t have the total liability. Instead, the work progresses from the boys’ basis of knowledge. Simon gets the honour of cooking the sausage pot and flavours the rice, while the other boys take care of the vegetables and the apple. It seems as if there is an unwritten rule that the most “skilled” of the pupils is assigned the most advanced task, in this case the pot as Joanne and Simon.

Research has shown that boys identify themselves as being humorous (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). Boys gain a higher standing by showing off in front of other boys. Girls have an ambivalent feeling in appearing before the public, and are not as dependent on publicity as boys. They get their status from interaction with their girlfriends, often two by two (Bjerrum Nielsen & Rudberg, 1991). The character of the Clown was mostly identified in boys. A question that can be posed is what the jokes and amusing behaviour actually stands for. The full-of-fun banter can be interpreted in different ways: a way of searching for attention, the right of not following the norm, an absence of knowledge or resistance. Wernersson (1988) suggests that predominance in the classroom is perhaps more interesting in maintenance of male dominance than obstruction of teaching. To joke can also be
understood as challenging the dominant definition. Another interesting point is that predominant boys get attention not to predominate, while girls meet indulgence because of expectations (Granström & Einarsson, 1995). The boys explicitly brought to the teacher’s attention how prudently and correctly they had behaved in the Cookery Duel. These kinds of comments were not heard from the girls. This may be interpreting, as girls are always expected to keep in order, to cooperate and be reliable. For the boys, on the other hand, it was a competition in earnest, and the aim was to win. Because of this, they looked for the teacher’s approval and tried hard to be “well-managed” pupils.

"Diligence, and to exert oneself“ is a female gender-marked attitude in learning situations (Jakobsson, 2000). The character of the Wallpaper Flower was noticed mostly in girls. They were competent, but not quite in the same position as the Hero/Heroine. Something remarkable with Wallpaper Flowers was their endeavour to do things the “right” way. There was a difference between the boys whose disposition could be distinguished to be Wallpaper Flower, and the girls. Wallpaper Flowers in masculine form are not as capable as the girls, and to manage they search for attention either by speaking out loudly what is being done or posing questions which don’t demand an answer. When it comes to drawing a conclusion about the ideal types, I am playing a waiting game since my empirical material is too small. In a subsequent study, it would be interesting to find out more about different group constellations with different ideal types. Another aspect would also be to distinguish distribution of power in the different categories.
Concluding comments

The dramaturgical perspective of Goffman has been a useful model when it comes to investigating how boys and girls interact in Home and Consumer studies. By associating the location as a scene where actors interrelate, gender-specific behaviour has been distinguished. One purpose in analysing the material from categories in ideal types was to discern structures which might be reproduced. A note should also be made that the categories are specific for the field and constructed from the empirical material. One dilemma in using established types is that there are both boys and girls who don’t fit in under the ideal types, for example girls who stand up against boys who are noisy. Another intention has been to demonstrate girls and boys acting in different conditions in the same structure. Different types of social competence and positions are something remarkable. One example is boys who want to impress boys (Fundberg, 2003). If there is no scene, there is no rank. In this game, the behaviour of the girls is quite uninteresting. This is about homo-sociality where boys win status in their own group. One example of this is when a boy stands up and proposes a toast. The expression from the girl that it’s just rubbish is ignored, and so is her comment at the prize-giving when she points out the boys cringing. As the boy himself answers: It’s a contest. That is, anything is allowed and the most important is to keep one’s position in front of the boys. Consequently, a position of power in gender can be expressed in many ways. In the future, maybe it will not be so interesting to know what kind of police is used, but instead to see how they are utilized.
References


### Figure 1. Outline of the appearances of the ideal types in the Cookery Duel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Hero</th>
<th>The Wallpaper Flower</th>
<th>The Clown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act 1 - Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Asks questions about the rules, is</td>
<td>Sits quietly and</td>
<td>Makes comments freely, cracks jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>concerned about showing enterprise</td>
<td>listens.</td>
<td>in different ways about how to win,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and is competent.</td>
<td></td>
<td>and how much one could bribe the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Person who likes competing, and strives to</td>
<td>Works diligently</td>
<td>teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>win.</td>
<td>and makes an effort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organized in work,</td>
<td>Doesn’t make much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effective, skilful,</td>
<td>noise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and has prestige,</td>
<td>Capable in the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leadership. Goes</td>
<td>work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>outside the guidelines.</td>
<td>Do things “right”,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>as they have been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>specified, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>keep within</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>guidelines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act 2 - Accomplishment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Starting up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cooking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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