

# Eating out practices among Swedish youth

Gothenburg Area Foodscapes

Jakob Wenzer

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GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Centrum för konsumtionsvetenskap  
Handelshögskolan vid Göteborgs universitet  
Box 606  
405 30 Göteborg

e-post: [cfk@cfk.gu.se](mailto:cfk@cfk.gu.se)  
[www.cfk.gu.se](http://www.cfk.gu.se)

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## Foreword

Present paper is a report on the availability of quick and easy readymade food for young Swedes, particularly for school students, and how patterns of availability interlock with habitual patterns. It is conducted on a somehow limited, qualitatively treated fieldwork material and does *not* attempt to present a comprehensive account of the subject. What it *does* attempt to grasp are the forces – of habit, of markets, of material and social forces – that brings young people together with food in their daytime activities. This is a Swedish angle on a subject that also stretches across Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland, in the research project Nordic YoungHealth, of which this report is part. Thus, according to the presentation of Nordic YoungHealth on project's homepage:

It has been said that "today's junk food generation can't see beyond the burger box". It is, however, a paradox that despite the increasing consumption rates of unhealthy fast food, young people report trying to avoid eating unhealthy. This indicates a fast food market with untapped potential when it comes to offering healthier options. The YoungHealth network's point of departure is that people today, and youth in particular, would eat healthier if they had easier access to affordable healthy food options in the public sphere.<sup>1</sup>

In July 2006, the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) adopted a Nordic Plan of Action on better health and quality of life through diet and physical activity. Nordic YoungHealth is one of three projects funded by Nordic Innovation Centre and NMR as a response to this action plan. The overall aim of these projects is to bring the Nordic countries closer to solutions on what works and what does not, in preventing overweight and obesity and promoting physical activity for specific vulnerable groups, such as children and youth. Nordic YoungHealth is managed by Kjersti Lillebø at Statens institutt for forbruksforskning (SIFO), Norway with partners from Nofima Mat AS, also Norway, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden, National Consumer Research Centre (NCRC), Finland, National Food Institute, Denmark, and University of Iceland.

The YoungHealth network's point of departure is that people today, and youth in particular, would eat healthier if they had easier access to affordable healthy food options in the public sphere. Owing to a variety of societal changes influencing consumption, the Nordic fast food market has expanded over the last years and consumption rates of fast food are increasing (Bugge & Lavik 2007). The project's main hypothesis is that structural barriers are making it hard for consumers to make healthy choices in a fast food arena currently dominated by unhealthy foods

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sifo.no/page/Forskning//10060/74839.html>

offered at low prices, coupled with aggressive marketing and product placement. Young people constitute the main consumers of fast food, and are as such a significantly vulnerable group. Despite the increasing consumption rates, particularly among young men, youth as a group are health conscious, and report trying to avoid eating unhealthy food. This is particularly true of young women, who, although they eat more often than young men, frequent the out of home eating sector less often (op.cit.). This indicates a fast food market with untapped potential when it comes to offering healthier options.

The project's main objective is to monitor and get a better understanding of the fast food market structure's influence on food choices and consumption trends among youth. In order to do this the project focuses on the most arenas where youth eat during their leisure, work and school time: fast food restaurants, convenience stores, snack bars, kiosks, petrol stations, and food served at sports halls. This is done by the help of a quantitative web survey in all participating countries in combination with in-depth fieldwork in Norway and Sweden to uncover more of actual food practices.

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This is a report from the Swedish field work that was carried out in Gothenburg by me, Jakob Wenzler, Ph.D. in ethnology, at CFK late in the spring of 2009. It uses the concept of *foodscapes* to study how youth 15-20 engage with their local food environments.

A large contribution to this report was made by Professor Helene Brembeck, with whom I have discussed the content of the report and with which I have also co-written the text on which the section *Conclusion* is based. For some of the text appearing in this section, I am indebted to her. The original text appeared in an unofficial field report internal to the project Nordic YoungHealth. Thank you, Helene.

## Introduction

The aim of this field report is to show how different foodscapes map and intersect in a big city centre in order to get a grip of *how* youth interact with fast food in their local environment. The report is a part of the Nordic project Nordic YoungHealth, focusing “food on-the-go” – food eaten in the daytime in an environment away from home. The reason for this is to determine the access for children and young people to healthy eating during the school day. Is it possible for all school students to get to consume the nutrition necessary to optimize their learning and enjoyment during the school day? How does the market situation around the schools look? And in case these nourishment sources are available, what are those structural barriers that prevent access for young people?

Differing from other Nordic countries, however, in Sweden school children get lunch served in the school cafeteria every day. The food is financed by tax money and is estimated to provide the nutritious content necessary. By this reason, it is very rarely necessary to eat outside of the school area – when this is done, it is by other reasons. This report therefore concentrates not so much on barriers – the negative, prohibitive aspect – as it does on the flow paths making food available to the students. When choosing to leave the school area for a snack at lunch break, which are the factors constructing or constraining the flows of humans and foodstuffs whose encounter result in an eating events off the school area?

This report is disposed as follows. After these brief words of introduction, a section on method follows. Here, the different geographical areas examined are also presented. The section is simply called *Methods employed*. The section is closed with a stripped-down presentation of the three main concepts at work in the report: *population*, *practices* and *foodscapes*. These are accounted for in the most abstract manner possible. What follows is a deeper examination of the academic discussions surrounding the concepts. This section is called *Theoretical passus*.

After this follows the main part of the report, called *Fieldwork: Gothenburg City and outskirts*, where the main results are presented. After the field report, *Conclusions* are drawn from the material. In the final chapter, *Analysis*, theory is brought back and utilized in a materialist way; fieldwork and conclusions are used in terms of *logistics*, *informatics*, and *habituations*.

The purpose of this report is twofold; on one side, it intends to examine the foodscapes in the Gothenburg area in the light of three main concepts (population, practice, foodscape). On the other side, it also attempts to bring forth new theory in the encounter between the field examined and the main concepts, hence the more academic tone of the theoretical chapter and the analysis.

The ethnographic section and the conclusion are supposed to be an easy read also for the non-academic reader, with certain guidance from the concepts of population, practices and foodscapes. The sections Theoretical passus and Analysis, on the other hand, interferes with an academic discussion and might be more difficult for the reader less accustomed to theoretical literature. The main points, however, should be fully visible in the conclusion.

## Methods employed

The fieldwork was conducted for two weeks in Gothenburg city, focusing on cafés and fast food restaurants along Avenyn, Vasagatan, and in Nordstaden. The fieldwork was preceded by interviews with full school classes in order to determine where to go and what to look for; a kind of steering device. In order to broaden the analysis with respect to the specificity of place, fieldwork on three different locations in more distant parts of the region Greater Gothenburg was also conducted. These were chosen from public cartographic material on the Gothenburg area provided by the company Eniro at their public search engine web site<sup>2</sup>; the aim was to find populated areas with at least two recorded places of food serving, may it be cafés, restaurants, gas stations or whatever. Of course, this opens for a discussion on the performativity of commercial services and the scientific use of services like this one, but at this point, this is not a place to have it. I do, however, want to point to an interesting effect I discovered which is itself a subject of inquiry. Many fast food restaurant chains, like McDonald's, does not announce their presence in a given location at eniro.se, as almost every smaller, independent meal dealer does. This is probably due to just this performativity; you do not travel to McDonald's to eat, but McDonald's "happens to be there" when you need it. To analyse flows of consumers and establish restaurants at major crossroads is also an explicit ambition of the company (Brembeck 2007). This effect is hopefully to be further discussed in coming publications, but I will examine some implications in the analysis.

The fieldwork itself consisted of a somehow systematic browsing with camera and note book, and a number of more in-depth visits to venues, which could last for several hours. Needless to say, I also had lunch at a couple of places, taking the chance to have some fieldwork done then as well. All field visits will not be explicitly expressed and thoroughly accounted for in the text. What will be presented are my apprehensions of the flows of people and foods, sooner than detailed accounts of the venues visited. The localities visited – school classes, cafés, malls, etc. – are to be considered localisations of such flows.

When conducting ethnographic fieldwork on cafés and restaurants, my attention was directed by guidelines provided by an 'observation protocol' suggested by

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eniro.se>



SIFO (see Bugge, Lillebø & Lavik, 2009). This protocol was common to fieldwork in all different countries involved in the project in order to produce qualitatively commensurable results from all different countries. The protocol directs attention toward social factors (such as: Who goes there? What do they eat? What do they do when eating?) as well as topological factors (such as: How is the furniture placed? Are there candy or cakes placed close to the cashiers?) and to the sensual environment (such as: How is the light? What does it smell?).

The schools visited were chosen entirely from their socio-geographic positions in order to examine the geographical access their students respectively had to what foodscapes. Not unexpectedly, other differences surfaced as well when the schools were visited. The most obvious one was a socio-historical difference, expressed through the fact that the school in the city centre was a private school of some distinguished heritage, while the peripheral school outside the city centre was a more vocationally oriented one with a great number of education programs. The schools were contacted by e-mails, addressing the teachers on the schools. Around 25 teachers were contacted, and two answered affirmatively. The low number may be due to the fact that the school term was about to conclude, and for many classes, this means that the spurt toward the finish line consumes all available energy abundance.

At both schools, I was made felt welcome and my subject was received with interest from teachers and students. I was given a full lesson's time to present my errand and discuss it with the students, and the result from these discussions came to provide me with the guiding lines for my ethnographical examination of the foodscapes of the city centre.

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I have considered the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council on research with humans (Vetenskapsrådet 2002) and research ethical praxis (Gustafsson, Hermerén & Petersson 2005) available on their websites<sup>3</sup>, and decided on a “depersonalization” (my own term) of the research subjects: what is expressed in this article is not the personal opinions from the persons talked to, but rather personal quantitative estimations on the nature of these individuals' professional situations. These might have been questions like “Who eats here at lunch?” or “What do they eat?”. When more personal questions have been asked and answered, this have been in the context of collective situations, such as me talking to a school class. Although no direct citations appears in this report, statements of this character occurs and are assigned to the collective, which themselves are not traceable in this report.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://vr.se>, <http://www.codex.uu.se/forskninghumsam.shtml>

As the focus in the investigation has not been individual people or their personal habits or opinions, why I have decided to not to mention names or even pseudonyms on people spoken to in the report. However, since I have not talked to anyone about things that might have a close personal character, sometimes I will mention their position on their place of labour, possibly making their social position traceable. Likewise, I have refrained from mentioning the names of some small independent businesses mentioned in the report, instead giving them very simple pseudonyms. What have been of interest are not the venues in themselves, but what connections they make possible. What have been asked of professional persons has concerned estimations of things like the crowd visiting their venues, or of what seems to influence the behaviours of these crowds or individuals in coming there.

The two schools visited are treated in a similar way; they are referred to simply as School 1 and School 2. This is by the reason that the schools themselves are not that important; it is the flows they connect that is of interest for the report. Their own respective features as institutions are mentioned primarily in relation to how they attract certain populations and give them access to specific registers of the foodscapes. There are, however, some geographical areas that have been hard not to mention by name, as they are chosen from the specificity of how they connect flows; it would, for example, be quite difficult to anonymize a place like Kålleröd since it is this little municipality's peculiar relation to the highway roadscape, the big shopping centre of KÅLLERÖD, the upper secondary school and the Swedish Migration Board's institution that is the reason for my interest in the place. But, again: it is not the individuals that attracted my interest, but the specificity of how an actor connects flows, be it an actor on any given scale.

The sections on Gothenburg city will be presented as three distinct areas. These areas are somehow geographically distinct, and in this report chosen and distinguished from their accessibility to young people moving in the central parts of Gothenburg.

*Gothenburg City 1*, containing fieldwork in the commercial and communicational centre of Nordstan, which is to be considered a central hub for the flows of people travelling to, through and from central Gothenburg. All trams and buses going through Gothenburg goes Through Nordstaden, as the Centralstationen (Central Station) lies right beside the mall Nordstan, why it is also a common destination in itself; much people go here to mingle.

*Gothenburg City 2*, containing fieldwork in the southern part of central Gothenburg; the neighbourhoods of the boulevard Kungsporsavenyn (hereafter referred to as Avenyn, its popular name) and Vasastan, the old living quarters of the upper classes and today the place for many restaurants, coffee shops and clothing stores.

There are also a number of schools here, and the area is in this report marked off by the possible walking distance from these schools.

*Gothenburg City 3*, containing fieldwork in the area just east of Avenyn, taking its departure from the so called Event Highway and its surroundings. This area also has a number of schools, but due to the big soccer field Heden, the possibilities of reaching Avenyn on a lunch break are limited. Despite closeness to the most central parts of town, this is a delimited area with other conditions.

As for the outskirt areas, they are dealt with under the headline *Greater Gothenburg Outskirts* with underheadings corresponding to their names:

*Källered* is a small population centre between Gothenburg and the neighbouring city of Kungsbacka.

*Mölnlycke* is a bigger population centre which is not localized on a passage route, which is possibly a reason for why it is evolving urban features of its own; a small town centre, surrounded by schools, other institutions and some commercial activity.

*Nödinge-Nol* is the central area of the sparsely populated municipality of Ale Kommun, containing six small population centres but no cities. These population centres have all, since their rise in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, been characterized by the railway and the canal Göta Kanal, hence have always been sites of passing through.

Every section is closed by a very brief and rough sum-up, especially considering four subjects:

1. *Geo/topological factors*, which here refers to questions of infrastructure; what transports something? What is channelling the flows of people, money and food respectively, to these specific localities?
2. *Socio/geographical factors*, here meaning: what or who is transported? What are the roles assigned to the people being transported by the abovementioned infrastructure?
3. *Place properties*, which means: what are the physical conditions of this locality? What structures orders the movement of the abovementioned people, transported by the first mentioned infrastructure?
4. *Sociological assignments*, by which I intend: who eats what, when and how?

In the school class interviews, there is just a brief recap of answers and statements.

## Important concepts

A number of concepts are used in order to understand the relations between the places visited, the people present there and the food eaten. The three most important ones are *population*, *practices*, and *foodscape*.

What constitutes a *population* is not determined by category, but by activity; *shoppers* is a population determined by *shopping*, *inhabitant* is a population determined by *being resident* in a given area, and so forth. Populations may be overlapping; you can be a part of both a shopper population and an inhabitant population at the same time and in the same place. Hence, the concept works through *inclusion* instead of a category, which works through *exclusion*.

A *practice* is in this report understood as a routinized behaviour, determined by a complex set of conditions that involves artefacts, habits, different kinds of knowledge and understanding; something that itself is movable between contexts and can be incorporated in other contexts. Such a practice relevant to the Swedish context is the practice of *fika*; this word refers to the activity of consuming something eatable or drinkable at a designated place *and* doing something “more”. This “more” might be reading or thinking, if you are alone, but preferably it consist of talking, conversing, discussing or just hanging out together. Thus, the thinking/talking/... is also a prerequisite for the consuming. But the consuming is also a prerequisite for the thinking/talking/... – none of these activities would have happened at all without the practice of *fika*, and a space in which to perform it.

A *foodscape* in this report designates a *population of eating practices*, hence the spatial flow of local sites where some actors become eaters and other actors become food. Seemingly a higher order of abstraction on top of the earlier two concepts, this concept is actually also very concrete; McDonald’s can be considered a foodscape making people hamburger-eaters and making hamburgers people-food. As such, it is also a part of several practices connected to McDonald’s; those can be such practices as eating-while-shopping, replacing-school-meal-with-other-food, or maybe family-excursion-to-McDonalds. It is the continued and repeated actualization of the event of simultaneously making hamburger-eaters and people-food that makes it a flow, ergo justifies the postfix *-scape*.

Yes, and it may also be good to know that a *population centre* is a Swedish official administrative term designating a populated area with more than 200 inhabitants and less than 200 meters between the houses.

### Theoretical passus: Scapes, populations, practices.

The concepts of foodscape, population and practice have some different areas of application, and do not usually occur together due to their differing backgrounds. In combining them, I have reached for the most abstract way of using each one of them. This makes them operational within a materialist ontology of connections, where the properties of the actors are what determine the outcome of an event, but the organization of the event orders the actions of the actors. The term *event* will be used in a way according to the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, for which the event is the threshold where the virtual bifurcates into the actual (Massumi 2002, Deleuze 1993, Frichot 2005). The event is not necessarily something that is limited in time or space, but the concrete outcome of immanent processes, whether this is something qualitatively new or something endlessly ongoing or repeating (Manning 2009).

In this report the prime event common to the scapes, practices and populations discussed are *alimentary events*; encounters between different objects where some objects become eaters (mainly people) and other objects become eaten (food).

#### *Foodscapes; the flow of food/eater-making events*

Central to this report is the conceptual postfix *scape*, derived from the way anthropologist Arjun Appadurai used the term in the essay collection *Modernity at Large* (1996); it designated global and spatial flows of interlinked but localized phenomena. Appadurai identified five especially important such scapes in globalized modernity; ethno-, media-, techno-, finance- and ideoscapes. However overlapping, the scapes are quite distinct, though meeting in different local practices and activities. A specific quality of the concept is that the scapes also lack a distinct macro level; the scapes are frankly the spatial distribution of a given phenomena, generated by processes of ethnical identification, media usage, technologic activity, financial movement and evolvement of ideas respectively. However Appadurai himself have expressed a suspicion against adding an infinite amount of scapes (Rantanen 2006), the usage of the concept is quite obvious; it opens up for analyzing cultural or social (or whatever...) flows on any given scale, without reducing the localizations to passive micro-instances of a massive macro-scale determinant.

The usage of the scape prefix specific to food studies have of course been *foodscape*, which have found some different usages since the beginning of the 2000's; at least four different usages have been utilized.

The anthropologist Anthony Winson lets the concept designate “the multiplicity of sites where food is displayed for purchase, and where it may also be consumed” (Winson 2004:301), hence a humanly manufactured landscape where food is displayed for commercial purposes. Winson’s own purpose is political and follows a nutritionist agenda; obesity, in this view, is not due to the stupidity of consumers, but to the commercially manufactured visual landscapes leading the consumer to unhealthy consumption.

The term could also designate the distribution and availability of different kinds of foodstuffs over an urban or rural area (Cummins & McIntyre 2002), or another more or less culturally defined area such as the roadside (Shanahan et.al. 2003). This use of the concept also propagates an implicitly politically charged political agenda, with some linkage to cultural geography; this foodscape, just as the previous one, is first and foremost a “food landscape”, with some political implications concerning human cognition or segregation in city planning. Other analysts associate foodscapes with issues of identity in a globalized society (Adema 2006); according to this view, food is constructive not only of bodies but also of ethnical (Ferrero 2002) or personal identity (Bugge & Almås 2006), and the foodscape has primarily social implications.

Sobal and Wansink propagate a more visually oriented usage. They argue, following Gold (2002) that the term should be reserved for “the view of a particular food object, as seen in the sum appearance of the food’s visual features” (Sobal & Wansink 2007:11), as the landscape metaphor employed by Winson and other previously mentioned scientists is “incongruent with geographical landscape terminology because in that use the root term food is not a spatial concept appropriate for combining with *-scape*”. Research following this view focuses on such things as the eater’s judgment of portion size (Harnack et.al. 2004), the influence on the eater by the shape of the food (Kridler et.al. 2001) or the connection between the chromatic properties of foodstuffs and the actual nutritional content (Kahn & Wansink, 2004).

With the Dutch philosopher Rick Dolphijn (2004), the concept takes on a somehow different character. For Dolphijn, the foodscape is neither reducible to effects of cognition, nor is it built on a landscape metaphor; the foodscape is continually created in concrete events where different substances meet, whereof some becomes eaters and others become food. The foodscape, thus, is constituted by alimentary events. This conception of the scape prefix is arguably also the one most compatible with the intentions of Appadurai; it is made up of concrete, localized instantiations of the events making up the scape itself. It is also, in line with Sobal and Wansink’s reservation against the first two usages of the foodscape concept, notable that this way of using the prefix is not incongruous with geographical terminology. Actually, it is even more in line with such a use, as it does not take the subjective visual view a human spectator as a starting point, but a

real concrete topology. It is a posthuman understanding of what makes up a scape. Dolphijn's way of using the concept is followed by, amongst others, Emma Roe (2006) in examining how embodied practices materially transform certain substances ('things') into what for other substances (organic food consumers in becoming) gets the character of edible ('food'), and by Brembeck et.al. in experimenting with children as co-researchers on their eating habits (Brembeck et.al. 2010).

However Appadurai is suspicious of adding an infinite amount of analytical scapes, I believe that there is reason to keep the sheer abstractness of the concept. Appadurai's focus is a macro-scale analysis of late modernity "at large", and adding more scapes to that specific context might be devaluating to the hegemonic aspect of the five important scapes he mentions. Still, the concept could be used for analyzing spatial distribution of any population yielded by a common generational assemblage, having common feats. For this reason, I have in this report not restricted the postfix to referring to any specific population of events or practices; the highways constituting the road net and the restaurants and gas stations could be considered as constituting a *roadscape*, the commercial centre of Nordstan a *shoppingscape* and so on.

#### *Populations; an ontological statement*

Following this, the concept of *population* is, in this report, understood in tandem with scape. Being a concept used in evolutionary biology, population refers not to an already given species or types, as these are considered idealized generalizations lacking a reality of their own. A population is instead the individuations resulting from the interacting of parts in emergent wholes. The prominent biologist Ernst Mayr puts the difference between *type* and *population* this way: "All organisms and organic phenomena are composed of unique features and can be described collectively only in statistical terms. Individuals, or any kind of organic entities, form populations of which we can determine the arithmetic mean value and the statistics of variation. Averages are merely statistical abstractions, only the individuals of which the populations are composed have reality" (Mayr cited in Sober 1987:156). The concept has been frequently used in the social sciences, mainly in a variety of more statistically oriented applications (Smith 1993). However, the heterogeneity of the concept makes it all the more useful also for a more qualitatively oriented approach, where the population all the more easily can be determined from the carrying out of a specific activity – may this be shopping, driving or eating – and the entities that carries the activities out – may this be car/driver/road, purchaser/money/commodity or food/eater. Such a use of the population concept ontologically brings together a model-based demographic statistical analysis from the social sciences (Burch 2003) with a biological understanding of the nature of life.

The population concept refers to the actors involved in an event. Thus, what is generated by the roadscape is roads and road-using actors, making the cars and their drivers the inhabitant population of the roadscape. In the same way, who inhabits the foodscape is populations of food and eaters. To be more specific, what is generated by the scapes are *events* making a heterogeneous assemblage of different orders and species into specific kinds of actors, following an analytically recognizable pattern. Following Dolphijn, a foodscape is in this report understood as the spatial extension of alimentary events, making different objects into food and eater respectively. Somehow modifying Dolphijn, though, is the linkage between the scape and those *practices* where this occurs.

### *Practices; the primacy of Praktik*

In the late 2000's, theories of *practice* have been gaining in momentum. Being theories refusing to reduce human action to neither an individual nor a collective level of origin, the concept escapes the dichotomy of structure/actor; the practice itself is a movable unit, including many actors and levels of dispositions, themselves being generative of human wants and desires. Both individuality and collectivity thus are to be considered results of practices.

According to the overview of practice theory made by the sociologist Andreas Reckwitz, a 'practice' (*Praktik*, to be distinguished from the more general *Praxis*) is "a routinized type of behavior which consist of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, form of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice [...] forms so to speak a 'block' whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any of these single elements" (Reckwitz 2002:249-50). Theodore Schatzki, one of Reckwitz' main references, claims in a co-authored anthology on practice theory that there is a "founding presence of nonhumans in human life" (Schatzki et.al. 2001:10), emphasizing that the practice is something that happens when many things comes together, itself being productive of the human desires or needs from which it sometimes seem to be a result.

In the more specific field of consumption studies, Alan Warde's article *Consumption and Theories of Practice* (2005) have been recognized to constitute the canonical text (Watson & Shove 2008). According to Warde, consumption is not a practice of its own; as consumption – in any form or another – permeates almost all human practices, consumption is instead to be considered as a moment in almost every practice. Consumption is a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and



appreciation, occurring within and for the sake of practices, and according to the conventions of these practices. The practices specific to this report are alimentary events in an away-from-home setting.

Practices, however generative, are not themselves causes, neither are they caused (Schatzki 1996). They are emergent (from specific sets of properties) and they themselves also have emergent properties (as the interplay between the components in a practice tends to have effects not reducible to the sum of the components, neither to the will of the human agents involved).

## Fieldwork: Gothenburg City and outskirts

### Gothenburg City 1

#### *Nordstan*

The most central section of the city, **Nordstaden**, is also the location of the big commercial arcade Nordstan, which is the biggest arcade in Scandinavia. Under one common roof, eight distinct blocks houses just about 180 stores and restaurants of differing kinds and sizes. Nordstan's homepage lists 33 restaurants, of which McDonald's constitutes three. During 2007, the mall had 34 million visitors, and it serves as the place of employment for 6 000 people (Nordstan.se, 2008).

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As a commercial centre, it is also a place where many young people spend a great part of their leisure time, shopping, eating or just hanging around with their friends and/or meet other young people. As there are no benches, fountains or other structures that could serve as seating places at all in the public spaces between the blocks, emplacement has to be solved in other ways. One strategy is establishing more or less informal meeting places such as the so-called "Emotrappan" ("The Emo Stairs") at the eastern entrance, where youth belonging to the Emo/Fashioncore subcultures go to meet. Another way is to keep moving around, browsing stores or just walking around with a couple of friends. A third way is to find a way to occupy one of those seats that you have to buy something to use, at one of the cafés or restaurants. More than a commercial centre, for some, it is also a social centre.

On my two days of fieldwork in Nordstan, these were the three strategies I could observe. On both days, I came at 10.00 (which is the opening time for the stores) and left around 17.30. At lunch time on both days, I sought out the highest locations on the main street to be able to get an overview of the fast food restaurant and their audiences. My own lunch both days was at McDonald's, as that apparently was the place that most young people went to.

McDonald's presence in Nordstan is quite obvious. There are three restaurants; one at the main entrance at the south, one smaller at the entrance facing the southern passageway leading to the city's central train station, and one at the smaller northern entrance. The restaurant at the southern entrance, called "McDonald's Lilla" ("McDonald's Small One"), is an open air café shared with Burger King and located in the middle of the walkway, and impossible to miss for

anyone moving between Centralstationen and Nordstan. Hence, McDonald's "guards" the three most important entrances to the big store area, tapping into the flows of people and money.

The queue to the counter at the big McDonald's store keeps around 2 meters at most times of the two days, except for at lunch time, when it is a whole lot longer. When I have my lunch here on the first day, I estimate the crowd to be about 25% youth. The rest are adults, most of them probably employees in the building and not yet so many shoppers. Most of the youths eat something, but I also observe small groups where just one eats or drinks, or the food or drink is shared – a possible economic strategy to earn the right to a table for a small amount of money.

Trying to notice what is eaten by the people on McDonald's at lunch time, and especially keeping my eyes open for what is marketed as the more healthy alternatives, the only salad I actually see is the one I ordered myself. The adults eat the bigger meal deals and the youths seem to be quite content with a soft drink and/or a burger.

An open air restaurant similar to McDonald's Lilla is also located at the main west entrance, right opposite to the south one. This is a franchise food store called Slimfood, serving mainly sushi and other Japanese foods, and suggesting by its name that this is fast food of a more low-fat variety. The age span of the public visiting this venue seems to start about where I stop searching; in the later twenties. Very few young people have their lunches here on my two days of fieldwork; McDonald's is absolutely dominant. However, Slimfood's café area is not at all organized like McDonald's, but is instead ordered with high bar stools around small tables or benches where the guests sit on a line, facing the same way, beside each other, in a manner that not so much encourages eating in groups as eating alone or in pairs.

Between 14.30 and 16.00, there are not many people in Nordstan at all, young or otherwise. The most frequented places seem to be McDonald's and the two HM clothing stores. Around 16.00, the place begins to fill up again, with shoppers that just quit their jobs or schools, or travellers taking the way through Nordstan on their way to their tram, bus or train home.

Summing up,

1. Nordstan is a commercial centre and central travel hub, allocating all different kinds of people by trains, trams, and buses.
2. People moving around here are mainly travellers, shoppers, or random hangarounds maintaining their social life here – most of the latter are youths.

3. Nordstan is shaped to freight persistent flows of people between different places of commerce – walking streets are channelling chaotic flows of individuals between shops, stores, cafés, and restaurants.
4. Young people, workers, families, travellers and shoppers use the area. The younger people inhabit the area by different strategies of *establishing uninformal meeting places, browsing stores, or occupying commercially designated space*. Fast food, soda drinks, or coffee drinks are consumed, mainly as a strategy of the third category.

## Gothenburg City 2

### *Vasastan: School 1, private gymnasium*

Vasastan, the core section of central Gothenburg, lies between the city's main boulevard Avenyn in the east and the old worker's quarters of Haga in the west. Around Vasagatan, the main street avenue, there are numerous business companies, schools, shops and arcades, with a wide variety of cafés, bars and restaurants. In the daytime, these provide lunching sites for shoppers, tourists, strollers, employees, students and workers of the area. In the night time, these same venues are central to the night life of Gothenburg city and the loci of clubs and music venues, and the fast-food restaurants providing the feeding place of night ramblers on their way home.

Except for being the place of Gothenburg University's schools of business, economics, law and social science, there are at least four *gymnasium* [upper secondary school] of different specialization. Central as it is, these students also have the establishments of Haga, Avenyn and the town centre at walking distance. The range of possible choices of feeding place should be quite wide, and as there are large numbers of young people circulating the area on a daily basis.

Initially I browsed the cafés of Vasastan for a couple of days until I finally managed to invite myself to a private upper secondary school, henceforth *School 1*, to come and present my ideas and talk to the students about their eating habits.

For a bit well over a hundred years, the well-established school resides on a parallel street of the central boulevard Vasagatan. The school holds many traditions and annually recurrent activities, and is a much coveted pace of study – many compete for the student chairs at the programs of Natural Science and Social Science, the two available programs. This school has its own kitchen, and the food served is prepared firsthand.

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My main question to the students was, simply, “Where should I go to observe the eating habits of the young people moving around in the centre of Gothenburg?”, but I was also interested in their thoughts on what they eat there, their opinion on which groups went to which place, and why it was so. The discussion lasted for about 45 minutes, and most of the students of the class talked during the session.

The first suggestions I get is, however, not restaurants but the franchise coffee shops of Condeco and Coffee House, both of which have shops in the nearby area. Eating there is somehow expensive, and when I wonder how this is solved economically, a student replies that you don’t actually *eat* there – eating is done at school, as long as there is something at least somehow eatable served there. The student gets support from several of her classmates. What *is* consumed on going there seems to vary over time, but the flavour of the moment seems to be *frappuccino*, a cold coffee drink loaded up with whipped milk and sugar; a “calorie bomb”, as it is defined by a student. Sometimes, when the weather allows, the drink is bought as a take-away item and brought to one of the nearby park for being consumed in the green grass.

So, what is eaten when the school meal presented really isn’t sufficient? The CSN card is mentioned, but seems – by some reason – not to be taken very seriously. The suggestions I get are pizza from a cheap vendor nearby, or sandwiches from Subway on Avenyn. The price is the most important factor, but being somehow nutritional isn’t that unimportant either; several students states that if there were quick, cheap and nutritious alternatives, they would really go for that, but there are no such alternatives – at least not at the places they go to. Here a discussion is also spawned on however fat is in itself malnutritious; a girl states that she actually doesn’t have to care about eating fat, since she works out a lot. This opinion seems to be widespread in the classroom, and I understand that working out is quite a common activity with these students. It is also stated (by a girl) that this line of reasoning itself is more common with boys, and that girls do not think that way to the same extent.

As we can see, time and money are important factors in choosing a site for eating; there actually is no time to wait for food being prepared when you’re on a lunch break, and the lunch restaurants nearby serving fast and accessible meals such as fresh salad buffet is way to expensive. This leads to that most eating venues are rejected. Still, students seem to be keen on leaving school on lunch breaks and free periods. So what is important in choosing an appropriate café, and what is done there?

Here, a girl mentions “flock behaviour” – that you go where your friends go, and where you hope to meet other people you know. The students agrees on which nearby café they usually go to for the moment, but says that it shifted some months ago; before that, it was a different place. The all-important property of the

chosen venue is that it provides much space, so that you can go a whole group together and possibly even meet other students from other schools.

When I try to sum up the whole thing with the class, however, they do not entirely agree on my suggestion that sociality is the conclusive matter in choosing venue. This is possibly because they haven't thought about it that way – they go there to *fika*, with all that it involves. No specific values are extracted from the unified practice of *fika* – the frappuccino itself is not the most important thing, neither is sociality solely the reason for why *fika* is done, but the sociality and the frappuccino, in this case together with the size of the venue, are necessary requisites for each other. Thus, eating out of school should probably be seen as quite a scarcely performed activity, quite separate from the very common activity of *fika*.

Here is also where *weather* becomes an important factor – the extent to which a fika can be satisfactorily executed is dependent on if the weather allows for walking the distance to venues of sufficient spatial means and coffee of satisfactory quality, or even for fika in the green grass in a park.

Summing up, it could be stated that:

- Cafés and coffee shops (and not restaurants) are predominant in out of school/home consumption
- Coffee and coffee drinks are chosen instead of food meals
- The important activity is not eating or drinking, but *fika* – an activity that may include eating or drinking, but also can involve sociality, chit-chatting, thinking, reading or other activities
- Cafés are chosen that lies close and/or provides much space
- The better the weather, the longer you go to fika.

### *Avenyn / Vasastaden*

Given the suggestions by the students of School 1, the days I spend during the coming two weeks I concentrate on the more spacious of the cafés of inner city Gothenburg, and also some of the named smaller fast food restaurants. Fieldwork was once again executed with notebook, camera, participation and observation. Ten cafés was particularly observed using an observation protocol focusing on the environment, product supply and audience of cafés and bars. Four of these gave their permission to use the material collected with their name publicly, but two rejected this and also forbid me taking pictures, why I did not bother to ask the remaining two for permission but chose to anonymize all of them instead in a later advancement, and work with names when I need to so far.

These weeks are right at the end of the school semester, concerning most of my target group, which in this case meant that there were considerably less young

people in the streets. Possibly, the weather was also a factor – these first summer weeks were warm and sunny, why bathing in the ocean or some of the lakes might have been a more attractive excursion goal than the inner city's streets, cafés and stores. And there are probably other weather-related factors at play here as well – some personnel I talked to meant that more sandwiches and cookies/cakes are sold in the winter and that more take-away beverage are sold in the summer.

Even if it is the main parade street of Gothenburg, Avenyn does not hold that many commercial attractions for young people. Most of the more attractive stores are instead in the area within Vallgraven ("The Moat"), an artificial small river surrounding the quarters of Nordstaden, or in the blocks near Vasagatan. There are a McDonald's restaurant, a Burger King restaurant and some smaller venues, of which young people seem to favour Subway. This chain has opened a number of restaurants in Gothenburg the later years, and has a predominantly young audience, even so at Avenyn.

What makes Subway stand out in relation to other chain restaurants at Avenyn are a number of things; foremost the supply, as there are no other places serving subs. But also the possibility of composing your own sandwich in a number of steps; from in front of a transparent display desk the customer are lead by informative signs in choosing bread, filling, and dressing are chosen in that order, before finally paying and getting her sandwich. A number of employees are working at different stations of this process in a sequential circuit. Here you actually have the possibility of, even within the confines of a meal menu, steer the result in a more nutritious direction, as there are darker bread, low fat filling and light dressing to choose from. There is no possibility of having orange juice instead of soda, though – there are fruit juices at some menus, but at another quota, on a different and more expensive menu.

Sequential handling of customer orders is a main trend, visible in different forms at many venues, both franchise and independent. At Espresso House, a coffee shop chain with a young target group but a somehow more expensive profile, money orders are taken in one instance, and then delivered to a barista making the coffee in the next instance, finally presented to the customer at another end of the counter on a desk only intended for serving. The impression is created that possibilities of personal choice for the customer are bigger, and that the handicraft features of a barista that does not have to concentrate on handling money makes the best possible coffee. The allocation of personnel labour seem to maximize the customer's interests, presenting a logic that actually does not correspond to the "conveyor belt principle" of older chain stores like McDonalds or Burger King.

The group of youth frequenting the more fancily profiled coffee shop stores, like Condeco or said Espresso House, are often properly dressed, fashion conscious groups of two, three or four people. Most of the seats are not arranged so that

groups of ten can use it, and many of the seats are just high stools without a backboard, and at a high bar table. Both chains have a very modern design profile, with high ceilings and empty visual areas. As Condeco has a more pastel coloured aesthetics, Espresso House favors rough edges, dark colours contrasting metallic and natural colours.

Other youth groups go to different cafés. A common stereotype, which according to my fieldwork is actually quite adequate, is that people with subcultural interests – goths, emo kids, indie pop kids and so on – prefer cafés like Java and Vasa. These are cafés that have been around at Vasagatan for some decades, both are independent and both have a ‘one stairway down’-feel to them. Both collaborate with independent booking agencies and concert venues and allow/encourage these to advertise with posters and flyers. Both are also actually half a storey below Vasagatan outside, with windows positioned way up toward the low ceilings on the dark painted stone walls.

These cafés and subcultural groupings are often associated to the Schillerska gymnasiet, which for a long time was the only upper secondary school where students could specialize in aesthetic subjects. There is still an aesthetic profile to the school today, and the reputation is possibly performative in attracting specific youth groups to the school.

Both Condeco, Espresso house, Vasa and Java have coffee in different varieties as their main commodity, and the food supply is mainly food intended to be consumed in coffee’s company; cakes, cookies, biscuits, cupcakes, and pastries. Condeco also have some lunches and are careful to show that their materials are Fair Trade marked.

Summing up,

1. Vasastaden are central town quarters with several cultural and educational institutions, commercial businesses, cafés and restaurants, and a number of parks.
2. The populations frequenting the area are mainly students, strollers, shoppers and employees working in the area.
3. The venues frequented by youth are, beside McDonalds and possibly Subway, those focusing on serving coffee drinks. The coffee shops focusing their visual profile on modern design appear to have their youth audience from private schools, while the traditional cafés with less light and bigger tables appears to attract subcultures.
4. What are consumed are mostly coffee drinks or tea.



## Gothenburg City 3

### *East centre: School 2, public gymnasium*

Across the field of Heden, the commercial and social situation differs a lot from the city centre. Bordering to the old worker's quarters of Gårda (today harbouring mainly light industry and older buildings waiting to be demolished) and around Evenemangsstråket (a prospected central "event highway" for enjoyments of the somehow more costly, family-oriented kind, located around the street Skånegatan), a number of schools are situated. These are mainly more vocationally oriented upper secondary schools, educating future military servicemen, hairdressers, athletes, florists, and childcare personnel, amongst other professions.

However geographically quite close to the town centre, it is too far to walk there and back on a lunch break. Further, the mental distance is increased by the wide, empty plane of Heden. At the western edge of Skånegatan there indeed lies a variety of cafés and restaurants, but their price range and opening hours they suggest corresponds rather to the assumed desires of Evenemangsstråket's audience than those of young students. An exception is the big McDonald's restaurant resident in the same building as the indoor arena Scandinavium, which also has an outdoor café.

Furthermore, Evenemangsstråket is not an area very suitable for strolling, as Skånegatan is not as much a street as it is a road; primarily, it's meant for motor traffic. Hence, there is not much of a street life: no shoppers or random streetwalkers are present here. Evenemangsstråket opens up to the public after working hours, with its sports events, stadium concerts, cinemas, trade fairs, and amusement parks. In the daytime, it is mainly a place of thoroughfare.

Most of the schools in the area resides in detached school buildings, built for the purpose of being schools. The school I visited, henceforth School 2, is the oldest and biggest one and comprehends three structures (from 1938, 1945 and 1995 respectively), all built for being school houses.

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When I get the opportunity to talk to a class at School 2, one of the schools around Evenemangsstråket, it becomes quite apparent that eating possibilities differs even within the inner city of Gothenburg. According to the students, the overall predominant alternative to the school cafeteria is McDonald's – there are really no alternatives, if you want to eat or drink sitting down at a table. However, there is also the possibility of buying a sandwich at one of the competing places near Korsvägen at the beginning of Nöjesstråket. A common impression is that

there really is no healthy alternative who is also cheap – if there were, the students would really like to use it. Just like in the first class I visited, the franchised coffee bar Espresso House is mentioned as a venue keeping real good coffee, but it is impossible to go there without cutting at least one class.

McDonald's, however, is used both for providing alternative to school meal and for fika. The students go there to buy a cheeseburger (one of McDonald's permanently cheap treats), to buy an at least descent coffee latte, or just to spend time. They also claim that students from the other nearby schools do the same thing; they see people from the other schools there all the time. When I ask if those other people are friends of theirs, or if they meet and talk there, a student replies, somehow surprised: "No, we don't go to McDonald's to meet people. We go there to eat". The sociality executed at McDonald's seem to be one among classmates, whether they eat or not; sometimes, another student asserts, you go there on a long break just to get some sunshine on yourself and also having a place to sit while you talk. Then, you can be five or six persons and together pitch money just enough for a coffee or two, which allows you to the restaurant's tables and seats.

Summing up:

- Nearby coffee shops are too expensive to go to, as they target an older and wealthier audience.
- Visiting McDonald's is a group activity or an eating activity – often not at the same time.
- Going there to eat, you take the cheapest possible, and can might as well go alone or bring the burger back to school. Going there just to hang out, it's enough if one person actually purchases something.
- As McDonald's is not preferred out of choice, but out of temporal and economic necessity, you don't even go there to meet people or just to hang out – you go there to pass time.
- Given the opportunity, the students claim that they would eat nutritious food, but as it is not available, cheap food will do.

### *McDonald's Gårda*

After visiting the class in Gårda, I conduct a day of field work at the nearby McDonald's restaurant. I stayed there from about 10.00 until 15.00 on a sunny, early summer's day. Talking to a substitute store manager on my arrival, he estimates the amount of school students among daytime guests to be very high, 70% or so. Mostly during lunchtime, but also in the mornings and afternoons, students from the nearby schools are in majority among the customers. In sunny days the restaurant sells a little less, and then mostly McFlurry, ice creams and soft

drinks. In the evenings of big hockey games or concerts, the restaurant gets a lot of people from the audience.

The store is actually located in the very house of the ice hockey/event arena Scandinavium. As one of the chain's market strategies are to use cultural feats of the local environment and integrate it in the well-known McDonald's aesthetic, there is a special offer menu; "Frölunda-målet", presented on a poster in the colours of Frölunda Indians, the hockey team for which Scandinavium is the home arena. (Frölunda-Målet is a play on words; it means "The Frölunda Meal", but it also means "The Frölunda Goal". Except for relating McDonalds to Frölunda Indians, here the pun also taps into a common stereotype on Gothenburgers as being very witty.) But McDonald's also connects to Evenemangsstråket, being located right by the main bridge over the small river Mölndalsån between Evenemangsstråket and the nearby quarters of Gårda. Gårda in itself does not hold any bigger attractions, but there is a big car park right by the bridge, further parking space and two parking houses within Gårda, making the bridge a bottleneck passage for the streams of people travelling between Nöjesspråket and the parking lots.

As I sit on the stair on the outside café, I have a good survey of the ten little group tables constituting the café itself. Four of the tables are occupied by people seeming to be in the age of 17-18 years. As one of the groups rises and starts walking toward the big school building across the street, I notice the leftovers on their table; one single soda paper mug is left on the table.

There is a thin but constant stream of students crossing the road back and forth to the school during this whole day. Mostly, they arrive in groups of two to eight persons, occupying a table for some thirty minutes to return back to the school area. A couple of times, I see a lonely boy or girl coming from the school area to disappear into the restaurant to return with a soda cup, crossing the street right back to school.

A number of times, small groups of 2-5 boys of 12-15 years with skateboards and skateboarding gear appear. They buy a soda each, then disappear to somewhere behind the nearby gymnasium Valhalla, McDonald's closest neighbour. Probably, there is a skateboarding ramp close nearby. Not all of the crowd eating at McDonald's this particular day are youths; actually, most of them are not. At lunch time, there are approximately 70 persons in the queue, mostly adults, smaller children, and policemen that just covered a political demonstration on the frontside of Scandinavium.

The meals are what seem to be selling mostly to the adults. Despite the meal offer "McSalad Shaker", which is heavily marketed on the tray tablets and counter menus, I do not see a single salad apart from the one I'm having for lunch myself.

I notice an acoustic feature of the room: the acoustics seem to be ‘flat’ in character, meaning that something said in one corner of the room is audible in the whole of the room. Meanwhile, there is music constantly being played, still it’s hardly noticed. This is probably because it does not contain any bass register; the low tones are filtered away, leaving a sound that interferes with human talking. The result of all this is a constant murmuring, rendering most vocal sounds audible but also quite indistinguishable – even the voices of people close by.

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The field visit reinforces the statement that for this youth, McDonald’s (and maybe similar venues) is primarily used as for *time-passing*, secondary as a place for *sociality* and tertiary as a place of *consumption* – the consuming is present, but entangled in other practices, without which it hardly would have existed. However, the interplay of these practices are limited by such thresholds as time (you do not make many new acquaintances on a lunch break) and money (there is not much opportunity for mingling with others if just one person in a crowd of eight is standing in line for a coke, and the rest is keeping the table). And however some food is cheap, that food tends to be cheeseburgers or French fries – hardly the most nutritious eating.

Summing up,

1. McDonalds often seems to occupy bottlenecks of passage, where many kinds of people flow by. So even here; a number of different populations use this passage.
2. Leaving hockey match visitors and event visitors aside, the amount of school students are a defendable part of the customer group.
3. The interior provides room for groups of people, but other qualities of the room interferes with conversation.
4. The school youth present mainly consume coffee drinks, soft drinks, or nothing at all.

### *Korsvägen Area*

Korsvägen, which translates Crossroads, lies at the beginning of Evenemangsstråket in direct connection to the entrances of the amusement park Liseberg, the big museums Universeum and the Museum of World Culture. It functions as a node for buses and trams in all directions, but has no station house; however, there is a building housing a Pressbyrå kiosk in the centre, that also provide room for travellers to sit down in case of rain. Korsvägen lies on walking distance from most of the schools in that area, and just beside Gothenburg University’s Faculty of Humanities. This makes the site interesting from a food marketing perspective; however both the schools and the Faculty of Humanities

have their own cafeterias, Korsvägen could also function as a node for hungry youngsters not content with the offerings of said cafeterias.

Even if there are lots of restaurants in the area, most of them aims for a public eating a somehow more expensive business lunch, or, in the evening time, either goes out for a beer or is looking for someplace to eat before or after visiting some event at Evenemangsstråket. However there are some pizza or Chinese restaurants, they tend to be of the more expensive variety, and do not seem attract many young people looking for lunch alternatives. Fast food franchise undertakings is actually mainly absent around Korsvägen, apart from the small hot dog counter on Pressbyrån. In this environment, competition for this group have emerged in form of two independent sandwich parlours, dealing lunch baguette/soft drink meals for very low prices (30 Skr). These are probably the main providers of quick food to young people around Korsvägen.

The two parlours are very different in appearance; Baguette Parlor 1 is a small, “hole in the wall”-kind of place with a minimum of seats and very little space. Sometimes, the (very compact) que at lunch time almost stretches out on the sidewalk outside. Inside, a glass counter showcasing a wide variety of baguette sandwiches almost covers the door to the kitchen behind. Signs are mostly hand-written. At Baguette Parlor 2, on the other hand, the windows are big and let light in from two directions. It *looks* like a franchise joint, as there are big commercial posters with uniform font print, informing of the different deals – however, Baguette Parlor 2 is not a chain store, though it seems to strive for that impression. Differing from its neighbour, Baguette Parlor 2 also sells salads, which are composed by the buyer from a showcase of vegetables, fruits and salad dressings, all on display in the transparent counter. Both places, however, offer the buyer the possibility of composing a sandwich of preference from a wide variety of filling and three different kinds of bread: light, dark and semi-dark.

Both stores have by far had the most visitors at lunch time during my three fieldwork visits to Korsvägen. The publics of both places constitutes mainly of students, c:a 15-25 years, and outdoor workers in working clothes; the employees of the area visits the little more expensive restaurants offering lunch deals with prices ranging from 65 Skr up to 100 Skr. Pressbyrån, on the other hand seems not to be the place anyone goes to buy food at all, despite the somehow persistent and well visible commercial posters in the windows, informing about deals on coffee/cinnamon swirl or hot dog/French fries.

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The quick food situation around Korsvägen is quite interesting, as it shows how a “hidden population” of the area – young people in their daytime activities – is not

targeted by business companies providing eating possibilities, leaving room for two small independent companies to compete exploiting this niche.

It is also noticeable that this particular situation actually provides the possibility for young people to eat something slightly more nutritious than hot dogs and fries – that there is also fresh salad and dark bread to choose from (whether this is actually chosen or not).

Summing up:

1. Korsvägen is a travel hub located between densely trafficked passages, concerning both vehicles and people.
2. The main populations of the place are event visitors, workers, employees, school and university students, and travellers.
3. Despite the high degree of youth in the populations frequenting the area on a daily basis, only two small independent actors target them specifically.
4. These independent actors both sell takeaway baguette sandwiches, providing the customer the possibility of composing her own sandwich.

## Greater Gothenburg: The Outskirts

### *Källered*

Källered is a population centre<sup>4</sup> located between Gothenburg and Kungsbacka with a population of 7 784 (Statistiska Centralbyrån 2005b). There are three junior level compulsory schools and one upper level compulsory school with 350 students. The Swedish Migration Board has an institution in Källered, functioning as a floodway into Swedish society for refugees. Through Källered runs a railroad with a station and the motorway E6/E20, dividing the community in an eastern and a western part. The area would probably define as countryside, if not a big shopping centre was built on the west side of the highway, consisting entirely of big chain stores like IKEA, Sportex, BR Leksaker and El-Giganten, drawing traffic from the whole region. On the east side of the centre, in connection to the train station and around the old Gothenburg road, lies a small town centre, with four restaurants, some stores and a small number of municipal institutions.

On my day spent field working in Källered, I arrived with a train, taking me directly into the centre of Källered. The shopping centres are located across the rails and the highway, with what is seemingly some walking distance from the train station. The centre itself is an open space surrounded by some older wooden houses and three one-storey buildings, two of the containing all the four

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<sup>4</sup> Population centre = *tätort*, a populated area with more than 200 inhabitants and less than 200 meters between the houses. (Statistiska Centralbyrån: 2005)

restaurants in the area. Two of the restaurants are pizzerias, one is them is an Asian restaurant concentrating on Thai food, and one is a café situated inside a video store. The third big house contains a Netto, a low-price food chain store.

Walking around the food venues and talking to their personnel, I realise that no one of them makes any specific effort on healthy or locally produced foods, but two of them offers different varieties of salads. My visit to Källered is on a weekday, and at lunch time there are small groups of people at all of the three outdoor cafés. The restaurants are open until 21.00, and two of them have serving of wine, spirits and beer on their premises, but the café does not. The Asian restaurant has just been open for two months, and is at my day of visit the least frequented one.

The video store café really doesn't serve any cooked food; the main activity is renting DVDs and selling candy, and the café is secondary. The café also isn't open in the summer as it doesn't pay enough then. However, it is quite spacey and there is a counter with an espresso machine and a display counter for the cupcakes, pastries and baguette or ciabatta sandwiches normally sold there. The public is, according to the young woman working the counter, quite wide, and with differing preferences; however, she think there is some patterns worthy of notice. The school kids and youngsters mostly buy cold drinks, and people from roughly 18 years of age buy coffee for taking away or for in-place consumption. Young adults around 25-30 years buy coffee drinks such as cafe latte, and preferably stay at the café and drink it. Families with small children buy lunch; drinks, sandwiches, coffee. She also means that the *weather* is the conclusive component for her business; the more rain, the better her business. Probably, this is because people prefer watching DVD on rainy days to sunny days.

The pizza store has been in business for over 20 years and is well established in Källered. The owner has worked with the local football and hockey teams on numerous arrangements, cooperates with several social institutions in Källered, and even collaborations with politicians. He states that almost the whole of his guests are residents of Källered (which is a statement that I, at this point, do not yet understand), and that the age span is really wide; "Pizza is just as easy for everyone". He sells mostly take-away pizzas and mostly on weekends, but he tells me that it tends to even out during the summer months; then, he gets more customers on the weekdays and slightly less on the weekends.

Under the railway and motorway, an underground passageway connects the eastern part of Källered with the western part, where the shopping centre is located just by the road. Ascending from the passageway, I look for a sidewalk accompanying the narrow driving lane leading the few hundred yards to the shopping area. There is none; instead, there is a natural walking trail, a pathway in the grass on the refuge

beside the road. Apparently, you are not supposed to come here walking from the community, but by car from the highway.

Big flags greet you to the shopping area; there is a designed logo on them, reading KÅLLERED. The area itself is a huge flat clearing used as a parking lot and with four big block buildings containing the shopping malls; IKEA has a building of its own, the other buildings houses the store chains.

Inside the giant store buildings, it becomes quite obvious that it is not the same crowd visiting Willys at Eken-huset as does their household shopping at Netto down in the town centre. In Kållerred, there were many people of different skin colours and I heard at least three different accents talking to the store personnel, implying that there is a high degree of ethnical diversity in Kållerred. Such a diversity is harder to find in the shopping malls, where north European white is the overall dominant skin colour for both store personnel and customers.

Noteworthy, I also discover that there are restaurants and cafés in these buildings that I did not find using Eniro.se while researching the Kållerred area. For example, IKEA has a restaurant of its own, there is a McDonald's restaurant at Eken-huset, a franchised bake shop in K-center-Huset and a kebab parlour between the houses. All of these places are located in the shopping area, but none of them are announced at Eniro or easily accessible from the very nearby located Kållerred centre.

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Despite announcing “K-Center är en del av KÅLLERED” (K-Center is a part of KÅLLERED”), both K-Center and the rest of the shopping area seems really disconnected from the geographical location of Kållerred, instead belonging to the roadscape of E6/E20. KÅLLERED and Kållerred are distinct places, however really close on a map, and their commercial enterprises and services respectively are directed at different target groups altogether.

Summing up,

1. Kållerred is a small population centre, by the big motorway of E4 and the railway divided in 2 partitions: *west*, which is mainly constituted by a big shopping centre connected to the roadscape of E4, and *east*, which is constituted by living quarters and a small town centre.
2. *West* is dominated by shoppers from outside the community, brought there by the road. *East* is inhabited by local residents; preferentially families, workers, a possibly unusually high amount of immigrants; individuals of all age groups, there among also youth going to the local upper secondary school.



3. *West* is available only from the road. *East* is a small town centre with four competing lunch cafés, concentrating on the local inhabitants.
4. In the *west*, individuals, families et al coming from the whole region gets to eat at different franchise joints. In the *east*, residents in the community eat from locally established, mostly independent quick food restaurants.

### **Mölnlycke**

About 12 km from Gothenburg lies the locality of Mölnlycke, central area of the municipality Härryda kommun and with a population of 15 289 persons. Since 1995, Hulebäcksgymnasiet in Mölnlycke centrum provides the upper secondary school for between 1 500 and 2 000 of Härryda kommun's youth. Mölnlycke could be considered a suburb to Gothenburg, as many people commutes, but thanks to great investments in the early 00's, today the small centre has quite urban features giving Mölnlycke an air of relative independence. In Mölnlycke centrum, there is also KomVux (educational centre for adults) and an SFI school (Swedish For Immigrants, a service provided by the Swedish state and municipal local authorities to immigrants and refugees).

Although there is a number of mansions and other buildings from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most of what today is Mölnlycke grew up in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as housing accommodations for the worker population of the industrialisation then growing in momentum. Today, most of the buildings are residential districts with terrace houses or detached houses, but few blocks of flats. Between the districts there are a lot of green areas with pre-eminently deciduous forestation.

According to Eniro, Mölnlycke centrum is the place in the area where the density of restaurants is highest – six restaurants are present here, which is every one except two (a pizzeria and a more luxurious venue on an old mansion, having harboured such prominent persons as Mary Wollstonecraft and George W. Bush).

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When I arrive to Mölnlycke by bus to the central bus station, and having passed the hole-in-the-wall Thai fast food restaurant in the station building, I am greeted by a very visually pleasant map over the town centre. On top of the map, there's a slogan: "*Mölnlycke. Ditt nya smultronställe*" ("*Mölnlycke. Your new favourite spot*"), suggesting that there are some ambitions directed toward the tourist industry. The station's exit leads almost directly into the centre, which certainly is idyllic enough since its rebuilding. After crossing a little bridge across a small river, the outdoor café of Mölnlyckes Konditori is on the immediate right; here, baby boomers sit in the sunshine and eat various kinds of salads. Looking at the menu, however, I get

the feeling that this is not the price range accessible for the students of Hulebäcksgymnasiet or any other nearby school.

Actually, the range of eating venues seems to correspond rather well to my expectations. My Eniro printouts lead me to one restaurant after another; even the small fast food restaurant Sibylla has announced its presence at Eniro. Sibylla is conveniently positioned just off the central square, on the parking lot between KomVux and Hulebäcksgymnasiet. This makes it the schools' closest venue, together with the competing fast-food counter of the gas station Statoil right across the parking lot. Statoil is one of the few places I find who is actually not registered with Eniro, probably because it is a side line to the main enterprise of selling gas. Both Sibylla and Statoil have menus composed of hot dogs, burgers and pizza slice, all available as menu meals in different combinations with fries or mashed potato.

On the square, I talk to a young man of 24; he lives with his parents in Mölnlycke and works at a restaurant some miles from here. He asserts that pizza is the main take-away food eaten by him and his friends; however, they sometimes meet at each others' places and cook together. He means that eating at restaurants is something that young people does not do in Mölnlycke, but when they go to Gothenburg.

All restaurants are in direct connection or within short walking distance from the square. The library has a lunch café of its own, and there are a number of restaurants with their own outdoor cafés bordering the square. Most of these present lunching alternatives in the range of 60-100 Skr, mostly in the upper region of the register. The man at the counter of the library café tells me that the competition about the public is quite hard; there are about ten places around, Sibylla included, that serve lunch. He claims that they get all sorts of people eating there; school children and young people, lunching employees, families, elders. Today, however, most of the people are between 30 and 50 years and eating or doing *fika* in groups of two or having lunch on their own.

A pizzeria is somehow inaccessibly positioned in a yard behind one of the square's main building. This pizzeria serves pizza at low prices, and also Husmanskost (Homely fair) including salad and coffee for 60 Skr. This restaurant deviates from the others around the square not only by its low price; it also seems more like a very local place, where people living at the block can spend a number of hours of the day. I get the impression that the aim of this restaurant is not the tourists or shoppers targeted by the more expensive places immediately by the square, but the locals and municipal workers of the area.

Among the restaurants visited on this field day, it seems that no of the restaurants really have had neither the external impulses nor the interests of serving any kind

of specifically nutritious readymade food. In closest connection to the schools lie actually the venues providing the cheapest, but least nutritious alternatives; hot dogs and pizza slices.

Summing up,

1. Mölnlycke is a population centre/suburb with its own urban features, such as a town square with institutions, schools, cafés, food stores and shops. Commercial activities in Mölnlycke are directed toward the inhabitants of the community, possibly because no important motorway passages cross the area.
2. Most people moving around in Mölnlycke centrum lives here; resident families, working individuals, school students.
3. The cheapest and fastest restaurants are also those closest to the schools. The more costly lunch restaurants are some 100 meters away, around the town square.
4. [Few youths were actually observed]

### *Nödinge-Nol*

The municipality of Ale kommun, north of Gothenburg, is an area distinguished by its sparse settling and absence of cities. Covering 318, 27 km<sup>2</sup>, there are only six localities, all distributed by the bank of Göta Älv, and by the roads E45 and Norge/Vänernbanan. The localities are either old mill or factory communities, or have been built up around the stations for Bergslagsbanan, opened in 1879. However, as the two localities Nödinge and Nol were administrationally united, the new population centre of Nödinge-Nol became the pre-eminent locality of Ale kommun. Nödinge-Nol lays c: a 25 kilometres northeast of Gothenburg. The two communities Nol and Nödinge are geographically still quite distinct, however grown together.

Municipalities of this order are common in a country as vast and as sparsely populated as Sweden. A general trend during the whole 1900: s has been that the countryside is depopulated, and people instead move into the cities.

In Nol, there is still today some industry, but the greater part of its building structures are housing accommodations. In the valley between two low hills lies a residential area with blocks of flats and two-storey terrace houses, constituting the community's most densely populated area. Closest to E45 lies the town centre, right next to the bus stop. The residential area is spreading out to the east behind the centre.

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Nol offers, according to Eniro, two restaurants; Nols pizzeria and Meys Thaikök, both with a concentration on take-away dishes, but with their own cafés as well. The two restaurants lie in adjacent quarters on the little town square, visible from the road and from the bus stop. On arriving to Nol on my field day, these are among the first things I see – the other first things are the industries, some still in use and some not, that line the small square with their irregular structures, which were clearly not designed for their aesthetic qualities. In addition to the two restaurants, there is also a low-price food store near the square. The living quarters also bordering the square are wooden houses of two floors, approximately built in the forties of fifties. The paint on some of them is peeling off, and many of the buildings look rather worn.

A walk around Nol really does not reveal anything unexpected. Despite a rather extensive promenade on this warm early summer's day, I do not meet many people, save some other walkers, a few cars, children and single parents playing in the playground in a large open space between the terrace houses. This is probably due to the time; Nol today is not a place for working but for living, and my visit is on a weekday morning. However the schools have closed for the season, and I hope to meet at least some younger people being here. The only younger persons I see are, however, actually at the bus stop, standing at the side of the southbound lane, the one for the bus going to Gothenburg.

At lunch time, some workers drop in at the tables of Meys Thaikök. They seem to come from the construction site just across E45, building what seems to be a big concrete building. Hereby, I decide to take the bus to Nödinge, the somehow more central community two bus stops and some four kilometres south.

Right at the central square of Nödinge, in connection to the bus stop, lies Ale Centrum – a commercial centre comprising a long, two-storey building containing some chain stores, such as Hemtex, the ladies wear store Lindex and the menswear store Dressmann. Around the square, there are also some additional smaller houses with independent retailers. Arriving with the bus, I notice that there are groups of younger people at this bus stop too, entering the bus that I leave. I also see that there are construction sites around this square as well, building commercial buildings to expand the centre further.

There is some commotion surrounding the stores and the drive-in McDonald's (who is not announced on the printed Eniro maps I've brought). Most of the people I see are small children's families or single persons of older age. Suddenly, a small group of dark-skinned people – two women, four children – is rounding a corner to the big ICA Kvantum food store. Their clothes are colourful, thin, sweeping cloth covering their whole bodies; quite different from the shorts-and-T-shirt outfit more common to the people I have seen so far. I realize that they are

the first persons I see who does not by eyesight appear to be Scandinavian, save the personnel on the pizzeria and the Thai kitchen in Nol.

To my surprise, I realise that Svenheimers konditori and Balance Bar & Kök is not at all the only restaurants around Ale Torg, as my Eniro prints tell me. There is also the drive-in McDonald's, a newly opened food restaurant called Svenssons, a Thai takeaway, and a pizza parlour. In addition, the Q8 gas station by the bus stop serves hot dog menus, ranging between 29 and 64 Skr in price. After I briefly examined these venues, it still seems that the possibilities of having a somehow nutritious meal in Nödinge-Nol for a small sum of money are quite limited – and that maybe the youth also have a likewise limited interest of eating out on a holiday weekday. Given that they would be interested, however, the range of choices would have been very small.

A hypothetical possibility for the absence in Eniro from these restaurants is that these restaurants primarily are a part of Ale Centrum, and not of the local community of Nödinge. Much in the same way as the restaurants at KÅLLERED is not so much a part of the local community Kållerød as it is a part of a commercial centre of gravity, whose target group is bigger than and different from the inhabitants of the nearest village. People do not travel to Ale Centrum to eat but to shop in stores, and maybe they get hungry in doing so, and that's where a quick fast-food parlour or decently priced lunch restaurant comes in handy. Ale Centrum belongs to a slightly different order of circulation than does Nödinge, illustrated by a big sign above the square with the slogan: "*Ale Torg. Lätt att nå.*" ("*Ale Square. Easy to reach.*"). That order of circulation does not really correspond to the needs, desires and preferences of the youth, as the target group in this case is more likely to be house owners and families.

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This brief visit to Nödinge-Nol may best serve as an illustration to broader social tendencies; the depopulation of the countryside by the youth, along with a centralization of commercial activities where the needs of people from many small adjacent communities are collected to be served in one and the same spot. However some restaurants may exist – the pizza and Thai restaurant in Nol might be quite typical examples – the population basis might not be big enough for what could be considered 'special interest groups', such as those interested in buying not only cheap but also wholesome food in other places than your home. If "healthy eating" itself could be considered a practice in this matter, maybe there is not the kind of networked practices present where 'eating healthy food away from your home' could take hold.

Summing up,

1. Ale Torg in Nödinge is a small central area of a quite sparsely populated municipality without cities. The centre is a square with a parking lot and a shopping centre, surrounded by buildings with independent businesses. Nol, on the other hand, is predominantly living quarters.
2. The people found here comes from the whole municipality, and seem to consist predominantly of families with children.
3. The store cluster is an accumulation of necessity stores, such as clothes and food commodities. The restaurants are mainly of the 'fast food' order; there to be an instant possibility when the need arises. In Nol, there are two restaurants; pizza and Thai, both providing takeaway and lunch for workers.
4. Although few youths were actually observed (apart from on the bus, away from Nödinge-Nol), the restaurants at hand were predominantly fast-food, pizza, or Thai.

## Conclusions

Would school children eat healthier if they had access to affordable, healthy food options? The main assumption of the project was that they would, and the Swedish fieldwork supports this supposition. However school meals are free for the Swedish students, the school area are sometimes abandoned favouring lunch consumption elsewhere. The results highlight the importance of price, but also of localisation, the characteristics of the premises and the strong element of sociality in young people's eating out habits. Location is also important; consumption must happen in a nice location that permits socialising with friends close to schools and other places where young people spend their time during the daytime.

The event of consumption is in the report characterised as a *practice*, which is defined as a routinized behaviour, determined by a complex set of conditions that involves artefacts, habits, different kinds of knowledge and understanding. What young people do when they leave school areas is thus analyzed in terms of practices, of which three appears as especially important:

- *Fika*: consuming something eatable or drinkable at a designated place while talking, discussing, hanging out with friends (or reading, thinking if alone).
- *Replacing-school-meal-with-other food*. Actually leaving school in purpose of eating elsewhere.
- *Hanging out*; buying something small to earn the right to a table.

Firstly, these practices are hereunder discussed in relation to healthier options. Secondly, the importance of place is pointed out: the great differences between inner city and outskirt premises and options. Thirdly, some conclusions are drawn regarding possibilities and barriers. Some information is also added in order for the reader to rightfully estimate the practice of fika.

## Practices

### *Fika*

Since Swedish youth are served hot lunch in school every day a large part of the consumption of readymade food during daytime is fika at lunch breaks or after school. Swedes have a long history of coffee drinking and today Sweden is in fact the European nation with the second highest rate of coffee drinking, only preceded by the Finns. Also, the formerly black coffee has turned beige, and now

2,37 out of 4 cups the average Swede consume a day contain milk<sup>5</sup>. One fourth of all milk consumed is poured into coffee<sup>6</sup>. Following this, there has been a huge expansion of cafés and coffee shops, both traditional cafeterias with a modernised range of coffee and food options, and the establishment of coffee chains like Espresso House and Condeco. There are in fact eight Espresso Houses and four Condecos in innercity Göteborg, along with other international chains, like Frank's coffee or Wayne's. Despite the recent economic downturn, this branch of trade is flourishing with a four percent turnover the second quarter of 2009<sup>7</sup>.

One reason why cafés are so popular might be that the traditional assortment of cakes and biscuits, at many places has been broadened by the inclusion of salads and pies. But as this study shows, the price range of these foods make them out of the question for youth aged 15-20 still attending school. High school youth do not go there to eat, but to have coffee. Most of the coffees with milk are "calorie bombs", like the frappucino, favoured by the youth of School 1, although some of them argue that they work out the calories by sports and fitness activities. According to Svensk servicehandel there has been an increase in the demand of low fat alternatives, like light milk (lättmjölk, 0.5 % fat) or Barista milk (2,6 % fat), following an alert in 2008 on the dangerously high calorie content in cafe latte. There seems, thus, to be scope for healthier fika options in terms of the coffees served.

What also comes out as important from this, and other, studies, is that fika is much more than coffee. Sometimes it is not about coffee at all. It is more about the premises and the possibility to hang around at a nice place with your friends, or alone with a book or just your thoughts. Sometimes you do your school work there. Research at Lund University has shown that the most important part of the latte culture is the social values generated by going to the right place and drinking the right kind of coffee (Östberg 2008). This interpretation is confirmed also in this fieldwork, with the mentioning of "flock behaviour"; groups of students regularly drifting from one place to another that might be more fashionable or cool or provide the right kind of space or coffee.

### *Replacing school-meal-with-other food*

When the school lunch is not considered sufficient or tasty enough, or maybe just for a change, the students of this fieldwork replace the school meal with fast food from some cheap vendor nearby. Time and money are the most important factors in choosing a site to eat: there is no time to wait for food being prepared when on

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.svenskservicehandel.se>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.svenskmjolk.se>.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.svenskservicehandel.se>.



a lunch break. Nutrition is, however, not unimportant, and several students stated that if there were quick, cheap and nutritious alternatives, they would really go for that. The fresh salad buffets of the cafés are, however, way too expensive and out of question. For the inner city youth of this fieldwork two options remain: pizza or baguette.

Baguettes emerge as particularly interesting as being a cheap enough and potentially healthy replacements for meals. In this study they are bought at Subway or some independent sandwich parlour, selling a baguette with filling and a drink for 30 Skr. There are several of these parlours in inner city Göteborg, and two appear in this study. What makes the baguettes served at Subway of particular interest is the possibility of composing your own sandwich in a number of steps: in front of a transparent display desk the customer are lead by informative signs in choosing bread, filling and dressing, in that order. Here you actually have the possibility of, even within the confines of a meal menu, steer the result in a more nutritious direction, as there are darker bread, low fat filling and light dressing to choose from. There is no possibility of having orange juice instead of soda, though – there are fruit juices at some menus, but at another quota, on a different and more expensive menu.

Also the independent sandwich parlours in this study, offer the possibility of composing a baguette of preference from a wide variety of filling and three different kinds of bread: light, dark and semi-dark. One of these parlours also sell salads, which are composed by the buyer from a showcase of vegetables, fruits and salad dressings, all on display in the transparent counter. The possibility of cheap and healthy baguette meals seems promising, if the sodas are replaced by a healthier drink option at the same price. What also comes to mind is of course the combination of the café serving various low fat coffees and the sandwich parlour with cheap and nutritious baguettes that can be composed by the customer.

### *Hanging out*

The third practice is not primarily centered on food. It concerns finding a place to be, often at a commercial place like a shopping mall, by buying something cheap, preferably a ration of coffee, soda or fries that are often shared among friends. Here the stress is on the affordable and the sharable, but primarily on the place/table itself. Since this practice involves at least some intake of energy/calories, although this might not be the prime target, the actual food or beverage consumed or shared is not unimportant. Maybe cheap and tasty and health snacks with lots of energy would be an option?

## Fast food outlets

Also hamburger chains are important for the eating out habits of youth. In this study McDonald's, the largest fast food chain in Sweden with 230 restaurants, holds a special position, but Burger King is also mentioned. McDonald's restaurants (and other similar fast food outlets one might guess) hold a special importance as nexuses for all of the eating out practices of this study, when there are no other alternatives available. A few hundred metres off the city centre there are no alternative to McDonald's if you want to eat or drink sitting at a table close to school. For the youth at School 2, the nearby McDonald's restaurant is used both for providing alternative to school meals and for fika. The students go there to buy a cheeseburger, French fries or some other cheap treats, or to have a cafe latte. Sometimes groups of five or six persons pitch money just enough for a coffee or two, which allows them to use the restaurant's tables and seats.

At the large central shopping arcade Nordstaden, McDonald's "guards" the three most important entrances to the store area, tapping into the flows of people. The restaurants are crowded all day long. Also here, cheap alternatives like a cheeseburger or a soft drink is chosen, and groups of youths share a drink or some food, or just one of them eats or drinks – a possible economic strategy to earn the right to a table for a small amount of money. There is obviously a large potential for cheap and healthy alternatives to the cheeseburger and Coca Cola. The students of School 2 agreed that if there were healthy and cheap alternatives, they would really like to use them.

## Inner city and outskirts

In this study there is a huge difference in food options in the small municipalities outside Gothenburg and the city centre. In the inner city there are options, although often too expensive, but in the smaller surrounding population centres there are really no healthy alternatives at all. An example is Mölnlycke and Hulebäcksgymnasiet. The fast food kiosks of Sibylla and Statoil are the closest venues. Both have menus composed of hot dogs, hamburgers and pizza slices, all available as menu meals in different combinations with fries or mashed potatoes.

In several of these municipalities places there are cafés; restaurants serving salads etc, but not in the price range available for youth, and not close to the schools. No effort was observed at healthy or locally produced food. The market for cheap and wholesome food might not be considered big enough. Maybe premises other than the fast food kiosks, such as youth centres, sports halls, or school cafeterias are the best places to introduce healthier fast foods, and tap into the fast food practices of the youth at small places outside the big cities.

## Barriers

*The food* - at some places, like in the outskirts, there are simply no healthy options.

*The price* – where there is healthy food, like in the city centre, it is too expensive for teenagers, or put in another way, there are not enough cheap and healthy alternatives.

*The premises*– there are not enough nice places for youth, where “healthy eating” as a practice can emerge.

*The location* – because of the huge differences in healthy food options, location outside of city centres also come out as a barrier in this study.

## Analysis

For the purpose of this report, the concepts of foodscapes, practices and populations have been brought together in analyzing the subject of habits of eating out. There might still be some reason to elaborate on the relations of the concepts. To continue the example of roads and their populations, the *practice* is what makes them happen; the practice of driving yields the combination of road, car and driver necessary for the roadscape to function as such, but the properties of the actors involved are what shapes the way that the practice of driving is carried out. Hence, the scape is a somehow formative environment, the populations are the differing orders of actors performing the scapes, and the practices are the way scapes are made to happen and populations are brought into being. Scapes and populations, it could be stated, are ontologically linked, while practices are often mobile between many different scapes, generating change and mobility even among the scapes.

The discussion have three different sections, relating to three relay levels; *logistics*, *informatics*, and *habituations*. These sections have these names primarily to place the travelling, the informing and the habits of people and food on the same analytical level; the terms are not that important in themselves. All of them are however being used in a posthumanist and materialist manner, and they will be dealt with in their sections respectively.

A line of new concepts will also accompany the analysis; logistics will be understood in terms of a mutual deterritorialization of conscious intentions of consumers and producers respectively, which will lead to the concept of *affect*. The direct affect of immediate experience is then contrasted with the *teleo-affective* pull operational in informatics, whereafter the concepts are brought together again; teleo-affectivity is understood as an affective event as well. Finally, affect and practices are brought together in the habituations present in the overlapping scapes. All these concepts follow the Deleuzian logic of the *event*; the ontological site of encounter where the world ceaselessly are brought in existence by the rendering actual of immanent processes (Deleuze 1988).

### Logistics: how affectual territories move people and things

The term *logistics* here refers to the moving around of objects and actors. That means the distribution of human biomass as well as the patterns and stratifications of the landscape; it refers to the effects and uses of the channels bringing the populations involved in alimentary events together. The question dealt with here is: how can we understand the forces drawing together the acting objects involved in those alimentary events where they finally end up? What are those forces that

bring the material together that, in the alimentary event, become eater and eaten? People, the mobile unit of the alimentary event, circulate according to the specific properties of every site visited. Sets of possibilities are provided by these properties; In Nordstan, for example, one can find circulation according to practices such as cruising the indoor streets between stores, lunchbreaking at street-level fast-food parlors, and browsing the shops. These practices are what the sites are designed for; they are built into the structures to channel the flows of people in certain ways, facilitating both people's access to commodities and the stores' provision of customers. The indoor walking streets are there channeling flows of customers, commodities, travelers, money, workers and other entities; they all, in some way or another, circulate according to the constraints of the physical place. And of course, this goes for every place; patterns of circulation are place-specific.

How this circulating is done is however not determined by the intentions of those who designed the sites themselves. People tend to be a lot more unpredictable in their behaviors than what is assumed by city planners or architects, and what is what is contained within the intentions that structured the sites respectively. There are always ways of making spaces function in manners not intended by their designers and keepers. The strategies of socially hanging around and of passing time found in Nordstan are one example of this, the possibility of walking on the grass-clad refuge to KÅLLERED is another. These possibilities of using spaces in ways not intended can be considered a deterritorialization (Deleuze & Guattari 1988) of intentions; the intended "program" of a site, the territory of intentions, are ignored and replaced by another program, another physical territory in where to move according to other patterns. A shoppingscape is temporarily mapped over by a strollingscape, a fast-foodscape is overmapped by a hanging-aroundscape, a roadscape is temporarily overmapped by a walkingscape.

This means that people moving around in a given area are not confined to doing what they in these areas, by some absent or present patron such as a politician or a shop keeper, are assumed to do. You can go to the commercial centre of Nordstan without buying stuff even if Nordstan happen to be designed for the buying and selling of products. You can even browse the stores without being interested in buying anything. You can also, as in the case of McDonald's in Gårda or any other fast food restaurant or coffee shop, occupy a table at lunch time without eating or having the intention of doing so. There are multiple observed strategies that make one kind of territory into another kind of by bringing in practices using features of the primer territory or the physical space shared.

So far, we have seen how centrally determined territories are deterritorialized by intentions and strategies with the populations of people sharing the physical space

mapped by this territory. But the deterritorialization of intentions works the other way around as well. Whatever the articulated intentions of a group or an individual in a given population might be, there are ways of tapping into their attention span as they move around in a territorial area. McDonald's restaurants, for example, are cleverly localized at bottleneck passages where many people flow through, so as to capture their subliminal and unintended desires for eating. Many market actors are phenomenal in their work on capturing and creating *affect*, here understood in a materialist Deleuzian sense: a gravitational pull between two (or more) actors or objects, in their encounter creating a quality that would have been impossible without them both (or all) (Deleuze, 1988). Or, in the words of philosopher Brian Massumi: "*virtual synesthetic perspectives anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them*" (Massumi 2002:35). Grasped this materialist way, affect is not synonymous with emotion or feeling, as it is not confined to being the property of individual humans alone, but to all entities, it may arise between any two objects. However, affect might give rise to emotions or feelings within the human person in the encounter with another object or person. In this case, affect works through making people do unintended decisions on what to consume and when and where. All the sites visited can easily be considered *maelstroms of affect* (Thrift, 2004); affects being captured and affects escaping capture. The capture of an affect is actualized, for example, when you are at a shopping centre for obtaining something for your household and your attention suddenly and unintendedly, by the smell of pizza or by your eye happening to catch a glimpse of the specific combination of red and white used by Pizza Hut, is turned to a lunch café, and you feel a sudden surge in your stomach. The escape of affect, in this case, could simply be ignoring the impulse to eat and walk by the restaurant. Affects awakens and turns our desires toward specific targets, and is also constituent of choices we make choosing a venue to eat, be you a stressed out civil servant on a quick lunch break or a group of school students on a free period.

In the smaller municipalities on the outskirts, choice is of course more limited as the range is smaller. The affects arising is accordingly of a different order than those who arises in a city centre – if there is no pizza smell or red and white flashing past your eye, this particular desire is maybe not actualized. Other things catch our attention instead. However, there is still an inclination with the cities for many young people; in most of the outskirt communities observed, the only young people visible were the ones at the bus stops in the direction of Gothenburg. There seem to be an *urban pull*, a motion analogous to the depopulation of the countryside, acting on many scales. As youngsters leaves for the bigger cities, small thoroughfare municipalities like Nödinge attempts to keep its population by creating a centre with urban features. Satellite municipalities such as Mölnlycke can do quite well in keeping its population constant by the same method. However some people move back toward the outskirts when they establish families, many youths gravitate toward the cities in or after their years in upper secondary school;

by reason of higher education or by desire for different lifestyles, neither of which a small community like Nol could ever provide. Talking in terms of affect, the urban pull could be considered what geographer Nigel Thrift (2004) calls *teleo-affectivity*; the working of affect over a distance. Streams of young people are drawn from the outskirts toward the cities by hopes or desires of a fulfillment at a distant location.

### Informatics: how the present is in-formed

The term *informatics* refers to those events when objects and actors encounters each other in such a way that new programmes of action are incorporated with one or more of these actors, i.e. people are informed with the presence of places to eat and how to get there. This is done in order to analyze information as an event; more on this in a moment.

Keeping with the mentioned concept of teleo-affectivity for a minute, there is an obvious parallel to the information format I used determining the localities for my fieldwork visit; the public Internet GIS databases of Eniro. A question arises concerning this performative kind of teleo-affectivity: how is such a thing possible? How can information be considered in respect to affect, which is a concept of tactility and directness?

First and foremost, I would argue that there is actually no such thing as a literal teleo-affectivity. That is nothing but a meta concept, a transcendent illusion appearing at first when looked at from an analytical distance. Messages do not travel by themselves, they “transcend” nothing – they are localized and embodied. I would further argue that information is not something that primarily concerns the message in itself, but it is something first and foremost about *form* – the information of an object or actor, something that infers with the behaviour of the object or actor concerned. What happens when a researcher or consumer surfs Eniro for eating places and finds an advertisement of a localization that seems suitable, it is not that localization itself that sends a disembodied message across space and time; it is, instead, an encounter when a person is intermingling with a computer in a specific way, and the very physical specificities of them both result in a new belief on behalf of the person. This new belief – “Ok, according to Eniro there are two restaurants in Nol, then Nol seems like the place for me to go” – in some way or another interferes with and affects the researcher/consumer does, either it results in him going to Nol or not. Something is changed after the encounter between the person and the computer, something new is there that was not there before, as a result from their physical coincidence.

Hence, information is also an event – an in-formation event, where objects and actors encounters each other in such a way that new programmes of action is incorporated with one or more of these actors. In this context, that means: people are informed with the presence of places to eat and how to get there. In a wider context, it might also mean that teleo-affectivity concerns all kinds of processes that result in the movement of actors and objects toward something seemingly absent, which is not only mediated by the sole and direct impression on the senses. But these processes are *mediated* – that is important to remember. They are selective of information and they are dependent of the properties of the technology used, the people involved, who has and has not access to this technology or to social communities where to get informed. Hence, the concept of teleo-affectivity not only concern the gravitatas of specific eating venues, but it also concerns the processes and mechanism of selection when different populations of eaters are selected for different populations of venues.

More pricey venues, like those found around Evenemangsstråket or around Vasastan like to announce their prescence teleo-affectively, through information technologies like newspaper ads or Eniro.se or other ICT channels, so as to exert a gravitation on eater populations from afar. They contend to be targets for excursions in their own right, being places that specialise in supplying not only the food, but also an ideal environment for the eating and concentration on the food. Smaller venues orienting themselves toward the fast-food order preferably tap into the already existing flows of people moving between other practices; shopping practices, leisure practices and so on. The accomodations of these restaurants seldom affect the eaters by providing a calm and quiet place environment where the affects of the alimentary practices, those provided by the gastronomic affectivity of the food itself, could stay in focus. Instead, they work through spontaneously extracting fast-eating populations from the street-cruising, hockeygame-visiting or household-shopping populations flowing by, providing premises that foster quick eating for eating's own sake.

McDonald's Gårda have been the prime example of this in this paper: there are group tables (providing a gravitational pull for the composition of group fika), but the acoustic features of the venue makes conversation difficult; there are bright lights suggesting reading could be done here, but the numerous but small lamps providing sharp light cast shadows that makes reading difficult. By affecting through arousing sudden hunger, people are drawn in there; by by the absence of features fostering other pleasant affects than eating, people are propelled out on the streets again, to once again merge with the streams of people moving between other practices. The affectivity of these fast-food venues functions primarily by a direct activating of conscious or subliminal triggering of hunger with individuals in a bypassing mass.



## Habituations – how doings are spawned and moved

The term *habituation* refers to the repetition of behavioural patterns with individuals, but it also contains the properties of the environment where these patterns emerge. Biologically, the term is tied to the unconscious adaption of the behavior of the individuals to new environments, or habitats; the environment is in itself active in the shaping of habits. Henceforth, habituations could be read as the patterns resulting from how the environment has structured the habits of its inhabitants. With Pierre Bourdieu, one of the sociologists that has performed the most rigid work with theorizing social practices (Bourdieu 1977), the concept *habitus* is connected to such practices and their carrying out (Bourdieu 1990). In this closing section of the discussion, I will discuss such patterns in relation to affectivity, teleo-affectivity and scapes.

When in the city, teleo-affectivity actually seems to be a way that the desires with smaller city venues, with a regular customer supply, work. This is, however, a teleo-affectivity of another order than the technological one discussed above: a social one, sooner than a technological one. When an individual or a group of youths in the morning decides to fika or have lunch at a specific parlor, that is also a matter of teleo-affectivity working through a social context; preferences of place for fika is negotiated socially, and the qualities of the venue itself is what is evaluated with friends, and what becomes the attractors constituting the pull. Big windows letting in plenty of light, modern design and the apparent free choice of the sequential handling of customer order seems to be nested features that constitutes the attractor that pulls students from the private schools. Smaller, independent businesses with darker premises, with a “one stair down”-feel to them seems to pull subcultures and students from aesthetic study programs. Gravitational pull is largely determined by affect; the urban pull of the city gravitates youth to the cities, aesthetic features gravitates young individuals being in the cities toward lunch cafés and fast-food parlors.

Bringing the concept of practices back in, there is reason to establish that the material properties of the restaurants selected shapes the practices conducted there. Those venue properties that pull private school students to designer coffee shop chains and subcultures to cellar cafés are not merely there on a social, discursive level; were they not also factual affective properties of the venues, combined with other features making the place attractive for fika, people would eventually stop going there. Both mentioned groups of coffee shops and cafés further combine the features that the school classes asked in the fieldwork made inquiries about; spacious premises with lots of room for both fika alone or group fika, with carefully furnished aesthetics. Given the choice (and the economical freedom), the young people would inhabit venues that combines good and nutritious food with an affective environment privileging the possibility of long

group sittings as well as aesthetic features of preference. Most fast-food parlors hardly fulfill these humble wishes. However, except for being in the right price range (i.e. one that makes food reasonably affordable also for youth), it also seems that they are the ones most tolerant of the strategic practices observed (buying a single drink to receive the right to a whole table for ten) – at least, that is what my conversations with restaurant staff, and also the fieldwork conducted, suggests.

However cities are flooded by sites especially designed for the performance of practices, the practices themselves do not confine themselves to these sites – not in the countryside, and not in the cities. An example of how this happens in the countryside is the eating practices in Mölnlycke, a small municipality with a fairly independent suburban cityscape outside of the road net. When the youth are cooking together and eating at each other's homes, it means the emergence of a practice that does not presume the presence of an institutionalised foodscape such as the caféscape of the city, but that instead reterritorializes on the villagescape of villas, chain houses and grocery stores. An example of the emergence of a similar process in the cityscape are the widespread practice of buying take-away coffee at a coffee shop for consumption alone, as a pair or in a group elsewhere.

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I have let this discussion lead back to the concept of practice, arguably the most important one, since it relates to all other concepts used. They are central to **logistics** – the moving around of objects and entities – since practices are what move them around. In that section, I stated that the supposed programs of roadscares, shoppingscares, walkingscares, etc. could be sidestepped in the introduction of other practices on the sites respectively. I understood this in terms of a mutual *detrterritorialization of conscious intentions of consumers and producers*, in which *affect* is operational.

Practices are also central to **informatics** – the way in which the event of information takes place is forming onto the actors informed. By way of the concept *teleo-affectivity*, the seemingly transcendental affect of information events was tied to direct experience; it's all affect, really, emerging in concrete and very real practices. The concept of teleo-affectivity is however useful when it relates to the levels of selecting done by mediators when different eating venues extract specific eater populations from the flow of humans.

Concerning **habituations**, the affectivity of the geographical sites as well as that of sociality and socialization are also formative of the practices there performed. Much like affect is not transcendental, neither are practices, even if it may sometimes seem that way – chains of event-specific practical translation and affectual transformation, all purely local, are the means by which they travel.

## Final words and suggested further research

The aim of this field report is to show how different foodscapes map and intersect in a big city centre in order to get a grip of how youth interact with fast food in their local environment. Or, to somehow formulate the question in a more mundane fashion: my intention with this report have been to qualitatively examine and to theoretically analyze how young people gets access to differing varieties of lunch food depending on the localization of the schools that they go to. Or, to put it in the academic way: my purpose have been to make visible how certain populations of objects and actors are brought together in concrete encounters, these encounters being events whose appearance and constitution differ in quality depending largely on the composition or flow schemas bringing them there, and to comprehend the outcome of these events. Or, just shortly: I have tried to place eating out-habits among young people in a wider societal context in order to see what influences it. Hopefully, there has been meaningful reading for the academic as well as for the layman.

The material have been limited to fieldwork on a few concrete sites, each taken in consideration in its uniqueness considering how it connects flows of people with foodstuffs in a sociogeographical topology. Perhaps depending on the non-necessity for school students of eating outside of the school area, other practices than eating have been found most important in the social practices conducted by the students when the school area is abandoned at lunch break. In order to facilitate the inclusion of a more nutritious diet than what is often the case within these practices, some factors are to be taken in consideration: the food itself (often, there simply are no healthy alternatives), the price of the food (where there is healthy food, it is most often too expensive), the qualities of the premises (for example, the possibilities of long social sittings in a nice environment) and the geographic locations (i.e. closeness between schools and sites that combine these properties).

In order to determine a more thorough approximation of the overlapping of these scapes, the theoretical view presented here could provide a fine potential for the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in a bigger project. Especially interesting points of examination would be, for example, a more detailed account of how the practice of fika translates between different sites, and how teleo-affectivity – be it post-digital, such as the influence of Eniro or weblogs and web fora, or social, as the information transference between persons – interacts with geo-topological environments.

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Adress: Centrum för konsumtionsvetenskap, Box 606, 405 30 Göteborg

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