

Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education

FOOD STORIES

Globalization and social integration as an aspect of eating.

Customer-cases from Alanya Import in Tromsø.

Eline A Lågeide

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Globalization and social integration as an aspect of eating.

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By

Eline Arnevåg Lågeide

Master of Philosophy in Visual Cultural Studies

Department of Archeology and Social Anthropology

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

University of Tromsø, The Arctic University of Norway

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Supervised by associate Professor Lisbet Høltedahl

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss how the study of food relations can contribute to an insight in to the social dynamics of integration and globalisation processes. I argue for how the ethnographic method in the study of senses, non-human characters and non-verbal knowledge is essential in order to understand complex identity processes in a complex urban space. Further, I will explain how the camera is an excellent tool in doing research on the mentioned themes. The empirical data is primarily based on a three-month fieldwork at Alanya Import, an international grocery shop at Storgata in Tromsø, Norway. I followed different customers and food commodities from Alanya Import to various kitchens in Tromsø. My point of departure was to enlighten the anthropological insight that globalisation does not lead to cultural homogeneity, but new variation patterns. Further - how global processes are understood locally. I invite the reader home to five of the customers: Onni, Aida, Rosangela and Nasim and Maria with they families, who all are or have been newcomers in Tromsø. My research question as a starting point is how they relate to food from their homeland. The national, cosmopolitan and international are some of the belongings that are being expressed through grocery shopping, cooking and eating. However, they are all standing in an everyday scene of being influenced by the international, local and particular. Through the focus on the senses and non-verbal knowledge, I observed how memories and emotion are connected to particular food commodities. Moreover, how sensory experiences can be understood and interpreted as belonging, and how the senses often can be divided, which can contribute to sensory confusion in belonging. By following different food commodities in diverse contexts, I observed how they could have multiple meanings. In my opinion Alanya Import is a cosmopolitan place in Tromsø, where people can feel free to express their identities through grocery shopping. On the other hand I observed the paradox of globalisation how the expression of identities also was experienced as challenging and in some cases felt threatened among multiculturalism.

Key words: *Anthropology, visual anthropology, ethnographic film, food commodities, senses, taste, smell, memories, non-verbal knowledge, visual and invisible knowledge, integration, globalization, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, International shop, International city, Tromsø, north of Norway*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Economists, political scientists and mass communications experts were the first to explicitly address globalisation and attempt to formulate a theory of globalisation. Their approach was characterized by a strong emphasis on homogenizing effects: through the impact of new technologies of communication and transport, and the intensified circulation of goods and people on a global scale, cultural difference was supposed to disappear (Meyer & Geschiere 1999:1). One of the most important insights in anthropology research about globalisation, is that these processes do not lead to cultural homogeneous, but to a new variation of patterns (Eriksen 2010:282).

International grocery shops also called Asian, greengrocery or immigrant shops among many names, popped up on different street corners in Norway in the 80s. Most of them are situated in Oslo, the capital city, but they are present in other cities as well, such as in Tromsø in the northern part of the country. They were often referred to as a sign of globalisation. The shops lead the development of having access to food commodities from all over the world.

Immigrants got the opportunity and the choice to maintain their earlier food tradition, while Norwegians could expand their diet repertoire. One of the questions connected to globalisation processes is whether we are all moving towards a world where everyone is eating the same. McDonalds and Coca-Cola are the rather tired examples that are usually referred to in this context. The one-sided assumption that the world is moving rapidly towards uniformity became highly questionable when there was paid more with the attention paid to the explicitly cultural aspects of globalisation and the new horizons it opens up (Meyer & Geschiere 1991:2).

Anthropology has the whole individual and society as its field of interest, and its goal is both to understand in what way human lives are unique, and to which extent we all have things in common (Eriksen 2010:13). The fact that we have to eat is so primitive and deeply rooted in the development of life value, that there is no doubt that this is something all individuals have in common (Simmel 1993:8). However, in this thesis I want to enlighten in what way different relations to food are particular and unique. Globalisation and modern communication technology contributes to disengage cultural phenomena from places. It is of great importance to study the global phenomenon and process locally. Global phenomena like international shops and different food commodities are always local in the sense that they will always be understood locally (Eriksen 2010:289).

In the spring of 2015 I carried out a three month long field work at Alanya Import in Storgata in Tromsø. I ended up following 8 customers, while they were shopping, cooking and sharing a meal. The outcome was a 30 min film I called Food Stories and this following thesis. In this thesis I will focus on 5 of the customers: Onni, Aida, Rosangela and Nasim and Maria¹ with their families. All of the customers that I met had their home in Tromsø, but came from different countries and had once been a newcomer in Tromsø. My interest was: How do the customers at Alanya Import relate to food from their homelands?²

My hypothesis was that by following the agency to non-human characters, in this case different food commodities from Alanya Import to different private homes; I was able to gain an insight in to integration and globalisation processes. Firstly Alanya Import as one of the obvious heterogeneous places in the city where goods and people with different backgrounds meet and becomes one of many faces of globalisation in Tromsø. Secondly, food commodities as concrete visual, tasty and odour objects from a particular homeland, was a good starting point for studying aspects of integration. During fieldwork, while participant-observing, filming and interviewing my informant I noted several tendencies that I will present in this thesis. I experienced how my protagonist could use food as an expression of belonging to the global, local or the particular national. I also experienced a complexity in belonging and identity, through my increasing focus during fieldwork on how food is related to senses and memories. How taste and smell can bring about memories. Further I discovered how senses and memories can be connected to a sense of belonging. I will argue for the importance of not only studying the verbal but the non-verbal knowledge and how the camera can be an excellent research tool in doing so. Among my protagonists I experienced a disparity in the verbal and non-verbal expression of belonging. In my opinion this illustrates the complex identities and confusion of belonging as an immigrant of a complex urban society. I will suggest Alanya Import as a possible cosmopolitan place in Tromsø, where people freely can express their identities through grocery shopping. On the other hand, paradoxically how the expressions of identities also meet challenges in an international milieu. Evermore does the thesis discuss some of the new variations in patterns and counter-reactions of globalization processes, for instance the role and the future of international shops.

¹ All the names in the thesis have been changed, except in the acknowledgement.

² All of the customers I refer to in this thesis called the country they were born their "homeland." Nevertheless, did I meet people that had other preference of what a "homeland" is.

I will start out with the background for my motivation for the project; continue with an introduction to my field, followed by a presentation of my methodological and theoretical approach. Further I will present the 5 portraits of customers cases, describe some empirical examples, situations and quotes from my protagonist, followed by different discussions about food's relationship to senses, memories, emotions, cosmopolitanism, nationalism, lifeworlds and belongings. I will end with a short discussion about the relationship between film and text and some possibly further research directions.

It must be important to say something that everybody knows, but is ignored by the specialists. It will stop nutritionists, psychologists and philosophers of mind from systematically ignoring that eating is primarily social, and memory embedded in taste and smell (Mary Douglas 2001).

Chapter 2: Motivation and Background for the field

My goal in this section is to illustrate my motivation and background for my fieldwork. The purpose for this following section is to give the reader an awareness of my personal understanding and point of departure into the field. In the end, it is the participants, both the researched and the researcher, who determine what establishes the field (Møhl i Hatrup 2010:163)

2.1 The global is local (and the local is global)

International greengrocery shops is a phenomenon that exists in a lot of cities all over the world. The first international shops started up in Norway in the 80s. The shops often took the position of the independent Norwegian grocer's shops, when a lot of them gave up their "local grocery shop on the street corner" in the 80s. They have been seen as one of many signs of globalisation. Immigrants from all over the world could find ingredients from their home country and the Norwegians could challenge their taste buds. I read in an article about the excitement of buying fresh basil in a pot. Even aubergine found its way into the shopping basket. Virgin oil and flat-leaf parsley attracted people all the way from the "residential district" out of town³.

³ <http://www.osloby.no/nyheter/Han-krydrer-livet-vart-6547388.html>

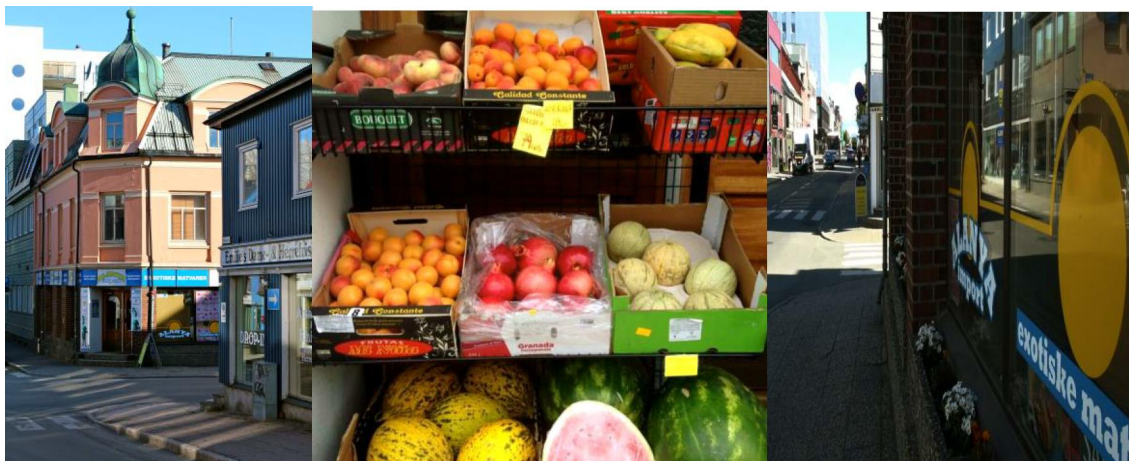
Olwig has studied Caribbean diasporas for many years and discussed the concept of “global places.” She argues the importance of discussing spatial identities in their actual concrete settings rather than in relation to the categories and concepts that have become dominant in the global discourse about places (Eriksen 2003:9).

Marianne Lien has done her fieldwork in a fishing community in Båtsfjord, in the northern part of Norway, and looked into questions concerning food and transnationalism. Lien shows how the impact of various globalising processes varies because of variations in local agency, thereby making a case for ethnography in globalisation studies (Ibid:10).

The visual shape and design of International shops today are often recognizable in the street view; you know what you can expect, even though you have never been to that specific one. Frequently I have used the international shops where I have lived before, both in Oslo and Copenhagen. Similar to Olwig and Lien’s argument, I am stressing the importance of studying how the global processes are understood locally, thereby how each international shop is interacting in their local community. I started questioning:

How do the international shops work in Tromsø today, and what is their role in the city?

I got in contact with Yassin, the manager of Alanya Import in Storgata in Tromsø and started out my fieldwork in april 2015, and that is what my material is based on.



Alanya Import, 2015. Photo: Eline A Lågeide

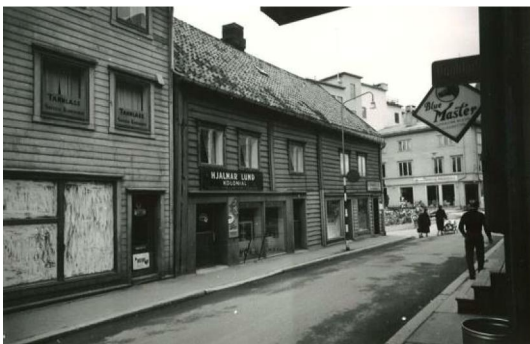
2.2 What is Norwegian and what is exotic?

It is a major history factor the development and globalisation process of export and import of food commodities. The first banana came to Norway in 1905. Below you can see a picture from the Norwegian paper Aftenposten⁴ with the title: “Once up on a time, the banana was an exotic fruit in Norway”



Photo: Oslo Bymuseum

The first one that was selling imported fruits in Tromsø was Olav Aakre. The building below was his first greengrocery shop opened in 1945 in Sjøgata 7⁵.



Some of the local elderly in Tromsø I have talked to laugh when they tell me that the almost only thing they eat for dinner was fish and potatoes. My parents shared how they remember when the pizza came for the first time. Taco is today referred to as the Norwegian Friday national dish, and I meet a lot of kids who tell me that sushi is their favourite meal. I could just go on mentioning food that is embedded into the Norwegian diet and tradition. I could have written a whole thesis about how we define the concept of exotic with the question:

⁴ <http://www.aftenposten.no/okonomi/En-gang-var-bananer-eksotiske-i-Norge-7410682.html>

⁵ [https://lokalhistoriewiki.no/index.php/Sj%C3%B8gata_7_\(Troms%C3%B8\)](https://lokalhistoriewiki.no/index.php/Sj%C3%B8gata_7_(Troms%C3%B8))

When have particular food commodities in Norway gone through the transformation from being referred to as exotic to not being exotic anymore? Nasim, one of my protagonists said: “We are also making Norwegian food, such as pizza, taco and lasagne.” My point is that I have had a hard time defining what is Norwegian food beyond brown cheese and waffles and I have been wondering if we are soon all sharing all the food in the world in a shared global ownership.

On the other hand I have also recognised a growing attention to practise local food and redefine what is Scandinavian and Norwegian. Traditional Norwegian food is becoming trendy, with what we can call a “make over.” Examples of this type of food is different sorts of bread, porridge, use of root vegetables and handpicked berries. In some of the trendy cafes and restaurants in Tromsø, for example *Hildir* and *Helmersen* I have observed that they often advertise and highlight that they serve local food with international inspiration and products. In my experience there is a growing strength and proudness in serving local produced North-Norwegian products as a change from the proudness of having rare product shipped from other countries. Further, I have observed new kinds of shops that pop up in street corners. There is a new wave of independent local grocery shops that focus on local food and old Norwegian traditions. There is for example an ecological grocery shop at Skippergata in Tromsø called *Økohandel* and in Oslo it has just opened an independent shop called *Mølleren Sylvia*, which tries to mainly sell local grown food with a strong environmental friendly profile⁶ A lot of similar experiments are being tried out. I also read an article from Larvik about how the urban landscape can be saved in smaller cities with colonial shops. Colonial shops with: “Homemade bread, local grown potatoes, ecological herbaceous and bacon from happy pigs”⁷. Furthermore it is not only local food from Norway which has become trendy, but also food from the different regions of the country. Different books are being made with titles like: “Guide to the western part of Norway food” and “Foodguide for Inland”⁸ etc.. It gives young people the opportunity to rediscover local Norwegian food, and the elderly are given a chance to be filled with nostalgia of old traditions.

The other day I found myself deciding with my husband to start the tradition of making mutton and cabbage stew every fall, which is a Norwegian national dish. And when it comes

⁶ <http://www.mollerensylvia.no/>

⁷ <http://www.nrk.no/vestfold/xl/sentrum-kan-reddes-av-gardeierne-1.12577619>

⁸ <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/Les-deg-mett-pa-lokal-mat-6584963.html>

to what we should eat for Christmas, we have not even dared to start fighting about if we should eat spareribs or rack of lamb ribs on Christmas Eve. I have always laughed at my grandmother and grandfather's friends that are asking for shops in the Mediterranean countries to sell brown cheese and mackerel in tomato. That was until I found myself so happy when friends brought me the Norwegian brand Freia milk chocolate when I lived in Denmark and actually felt like I had a piece of home, and a piece of pride. A Norwegian friend, who lived many years in Japan, remembers very well when a local colonial called Kobe Growser, who imported goods from western countries, started to sell Wasa crispbread. The rumour spread fast to all the Norwegians in the neighbourhood.

2.3 Counter-reaction of globalisation

A constant growing number of groups discover and rediscover that they have a cultural character or a distinctive tradition. Why? In Hylland Eriksen's (2010) opinion, a normal explanation is that social identity becomes important the moment it gets threatened. Globalisation processes has the tendency to wipe out important cultural differences, and almost automatically it causes counter-reactions in form of ethical and national movement (Eriksen 2010:297). Are the new wave of local corner shops and the clarifying of what is Norwegian food a counter-reaction to the "exotic" foods that has crossed borders and invaded the Norwegian kitchen? I am not sure. However, I suggest that this wave is an example of how globalisation also creates new reactions, patterns and various ways of living.

2.4 Navigation and integration in globalisation

This section was a quick scanning of my astonishment, navigation and observing of the food context I move within. I suppose another person from the same context or another context would look at it differently and have other examples. This is not a statistic overview, but the reality I experience, and of course there many examples that could be added. I am describing all this firstly because I think it reflects the context the newcomers in a Norwegian city are moving into. Secondly, because it illustrates how many research directions my fieldwork invites to explore. Moreover, this context and wondering is the background for how a key situations in my fieldwork lead to my main focus. I will now present a summary of situations from my fieldnotes; which led to my main research question:

How are the customers at Alanya import relating to food from their home countries?

I was hanging around at Alanya Import, and two women with about 7 kids were arriving to the shop. They were wearing colourful clothes and walked between the shelves, looking at the groceries with an incredibly open and curious look. There was a guy with them and he told me that they were from Afghanistan and that it was their very first day in Tromsø and Norway. They did not know a word in Norwegian or English. I do not have any more facts about their situation. They said they did not want to be filmed, but I met them frequently in the shop, and we were just smiling to each other. I watched their development from being totally new and lost in the shop to knowing where to find what they wanted. They truly got my attention. I started wondering how their food habits and tradition developed in the navigation of the complex context of local food, particular national food and international food.

Chapter 3: Presentation of the field

“Concrete events in a local community’s life are at the same time events within macro-systems of social relations by which the more extensive circulation of persons, goods, and symbols occur” (Grønhaug 1975:1). Grønhaug proposes that to analyse social life in “complex” societies must involve an ethnographic account of life on community scenes that show in which ways specific local patterns are determined by different macro-factors” in society (ibid:2). Likewise Eriksen (2010) argues that we must study *glocal*, which means how the local affects the global and the other way around. Another relevant concern connected to my project is the criticism of phenomenological anthropology of cutting out the non-local in the study of the body and senses (Grimshaw Ravetz 2009:133). In this section I will give a brief presentation and discussion of my field context and subjects.

3.1 Tromsø

During the year I have lived in Tromsø I have noticed that Tromsø is often being referred to as an International city. It is often included in different introductions at different events in town, and used a lot in both the local newspaper and the radio. Tromsø is the largest city and urban area in the north of Norway, with about 72 000 citizens and 144 nationalities.

What defines an international city? I have attended several seminars at the main library in Tromsø with topics concerning Tromsø as an international city. One way to look at the seminars, is seeing them as one of many attempts to get a hold of and a control of the globalisation. However, in one of the seminars⁹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen was one of the speakers, and he introduced his speech by saying: “Tromsø is not a big city, but a compact

⁹ Tromsø Library 14.04.2015 Event: Internasjonale Tromsø – et inkluderende samfunn ?

city and I will even call it a complex urban space. Tromsø is also a city with diversity, in the terms of ethnic and cultural diversity.” Eriksen continues saying that it has even been a diversification of the concept diversity in social science and introduce the concept of “super-diversity”. Super-diversity is first time introduced by Steven Vertovec (2007) based on researches in London. Vertovec argue that it is not enough to see diversity only in terms of ethnicity, as is regularly the case in social science and the wider public sphere. An important note in my thesis when international, multicultural and cosmopolitan arenas are discussed is it not only in terms of ethnicity.

In another seminar ¹⁰ there were several factors pointed out as a reason for calling Tromsø International. The city became an episcopal residence in 1803, and has since the first half of the 1700s been a centre for trade, administration, shipping, arctic travellers and polar expeditions. Today the university of Tromsø attracts people from all over the world, especially the polar explorers.¹¹ Tromsø international film festival TIFF is also an often-used reason. The international advisor at the city councillor office in Tromsø highlights how they are working to develop Tromsø to be a welcoming and inclusive city for immigrants and other newcomers and visitors in the city. My point in writing this is to give the reader a glimpse of the location for my fieldwork and protagonist, but also to inform the reader about that it is a lot of discussion, discourse and debate about: How is Tromsø as an international city and where is the city heading? I am not sure if I understand what International means or should involve in this context, and this thesis will not give any final answer. What I do believe is that the meaning of international not only rest on the fact of the towns history or the amount of the number of nationalities, but how it is communicated and understood in social interaction. Is it possible to find an international city without an international shop? I do not know, but my preconception was that it was a place in the city I could find some factors, stories and faces from some of the people that contribute to make Tromsø an International city and an urban complex space.

3.2 Alanya Import

Alanya Import is one of about four International shops in Tromsø. Yassin is the manager and entrepreneur of Alanya. He came to Norway in 1996. During his first years in Tromsø he

¹⁰ Tromsø Library 19.11.2015, Event: Folkemøte - Tromsø som en internasjonal by?

¹¹ <http://www.perspektivet.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Museet-der-citerer-Hannah-Arendt.pdf>

worked at Hurtigruten¹², different restaurants and hotels before he started his own business in 2000. First he made a coffee shop for three years, before he started Alanya. He started with a small shop that has just grown bigger during the years. Yassin says he is proud of what he has accomplished, and that it has not been easy to get all these products especially because it is northern Norway, and this implies a long travel for the food commodities and it is thereby a challenge to still keep the food fresh. His dream is to continue in expanding and developing the shop. It is not easy, but he wants to work for it. When I asked Yassin for what are the most popular products and who are the customers in general he answered that it varies, changes and depends a lot:

There are Thai people that want their particular products and Turkish people that want their particular products and that is the case of several nationalities. Additionally there are also people that discover and want to try new ingredients and products in all directions, independent of nationality. We also have a lot of Norwegians that for example have tried something new when they travelled abroad or found a recipe on google they want to try out. They come to us and look for the ingredients. I am glad that the Norwegians also are contributing in expanding and developing Alanya Import.

When I started to talk to people about my project I met a lot of different conceptions of what kind of shop Alanya Import was. Starting in my classroom presenting my project, there were a lot of different descriptions. People from other and often larger cities have experiences with more defined shops, like Russian shop, Arab shop, Asian shop etc. Often similar shops are family driven and everyone who is working there are from the same country. Yassin is from Turkey, and I have met some people that call it a Turkish shop. While I was at Alanya there were employees from Egypt, Afghanistan and Kurdistan, still I met a lot of people calling it an Asian or African shop. Chamile from Cameroon called Alanya an African shop. When I asked her why she answered:

Yes I think it is, because you can find a lot of African stuff in here, compared to Rema 1000 for example. Many African call this an African shop. When I talk to my African friend we say lets go to the African shop – we speak like that.

Another description a lot of people use is an immigrant shop. The latter one has and is still a common definition among Norwegians. Yassin the manager of Alanya changed between the

¹² Norwegian Coastal Express, along Norway's western and northern coast between Bergen and Kirkenes.

name immigrant, alternative and international grocery shop. I started out with using the word greengrocery shop because that's what I was used to from Denmark¹³, but a lot of people seemed confused when I used it here. I have chosen to use the word International grocery shop in this thesis, shortened to International shops. This is because I experienced that most people responded to that. The point is that already in defining the shop I found a lot of cross-cultural differences and complexities in what the shop is for the people living in Tromsø.

Still, I find the concept international shop not satisfying. What is an international shop? Are not all grocery stores international today? I guess it is hard to find a shop in Norway today without any food commodities that have crossed borders, and that have been found on the global market. The chain-grocery shops have frequently broadened their international market.

One example that I wrote in my project description was that I could only find the new healthy trend Chia seed and Quinoa at Alanya, not in any chain-grocery store in town. A half year after later, I could find both products at Spar, a Norwegian chain-grocery store. The example with Quinoa has an interesting dimension. Quinoa is originally from the Andes, and has been an extremely important protein source for the local population. Lately, the western countries have discovered this healthy seed, and this has affected the local population's accessibility. At the Quinoa packet at Spar, it was written on the front that this was from a sustainable production. Following the development of new pop-up stores on the corners, as I described in the last section, there is also an increasing focus on environmental friendly products. Can the new independent Norwegian colonials be a competition to the shops like Alanya, in the growing of self-confidence in local products?

Another example is the huge debate in the media about palm oil. It has been claimed that palm oil is not good for the environment or the body. A lot of products today have added a note on their design saying: without palm oil. International shops are known for having a lot of products with palm oil. I have observed that Alanya is still a place with customers who are interested in healthy, trendy products at the global market. Will this group of costumers be lost in the future; if the international shops will continue to be mainly about exported food? On the other hand, I am observing a lot of people and media publicity supporting the international shops as an important and authentic part of the urban landscape. In Oslo spring 2016 there have been a lot of writings in social media, when the well-know international shop

¹³ *Grønthandleren* in Danish

Sultan at Grunerløkka in Oslo, had to close down¹⁴. A lot of people protested against it because it has become such a central part of the milieu. There have not been any similar cases in Tromsø as I know of yet, but I have met people who share this perhaps contradiction direction of city development? On one side, they want more local product and less imported goods. On the other side, they also want international shops with imported food to survive as a genuine part of the city cosmopolitan landscape.

At the front facade at Alanya Import there is still a sign saying: *Exotic food*, but Yassin told me that he is very interested in getting both more local and ecological friendly products, as well as Norwegian products. On a facebook update just before Christmas, they wrote:

It is soon Christmas. Among other Christmas delicacies we have Italian Christmas cookies and candied lemon peel (sukat) for the original Norwegian baker.

I think the name of the shop, Yassin's` comments and the facebook update enlightens that the Alanya Shop is somehow moving in different directions, by going both in a global and local direction at the same time.

3.3 Customers and food commodities

I took this picture one of the first day at Alanya and it illustrates my preconception regarding who was shopping at Alanya:”



Photo: Eline A Lågeide

¹⁴ <http://www.osloby.no/nyheter/Sterke-reaksjoner-pa-at-Grnerlokkas-meste-kjente-matbutikk-stenger-8375652.html>

The two girls with shawl symbolise the customers who are looking for products from their home country. On the other hand, the women with the trendy *fjellreven* (arctic fox figure) backpack symbolise the Norwegian who is updated on new or fashionable products on the global market. My assumption was some days right, and other days it was totally wrong. The picture is of course much more complex. My main focus in this thesis is not the Norwegian customers. The 8 customers I ended up following from Alanya to their homes in Tromsø, was Aida from Poland, Maria with her husband Henrique and their son Jousha and daughter Lucia from Venezuela, Nasim with her husband Rebwar and their daughter Parisa from Kurdistan Iran, Rosangela from Chile, Onni from Thailand, Maysa from Mexico with her Norwegian husband Bjørn and their daughter Lisa Caroline. The last one was the girlfriends Cecilia and Linda from Spain and Colombia. I will in this thesis only invite the reader home to Onni, Aida, Rosangela, Nasim and Maria. The reason is lack of space and I rather wanted to go deeper in to the discussion with some of them. These are the same protagonists as I have chosen as main characters in the film *Food Stories*, except Onni. However, I will refer to all of them occasionally. Moreover I met a lot of customers in shorter meetings, and the employees at Alanya that I already have and will regularly refer to.

In addition to following Tromsø, Alanya Import and the customers I looked in to the food commodities. When doing anthropology in cities and modern society it is practically impossible for a researcher to find out everything about everyone and to gain an overview of the whole social universe (Eriksen 2010:242). My point of departure was to study the non-human agency of food commodities and its relation to the customers. Additionally, the thesis is hopefully contributing to the development and argument for the importance of including the modality of senses into the study of social identities and relations in an urban complex space. I will elaborate these points in my methodological and theoretical approach.

Chapter 4: Methodological perspective and the fieldwork process

This section provides an overview of the fieldwork processes, my position in the field and the ethnography method I have used while participating, observing, interviewing and filming. The aim is to give an insight in what that has dominated my choices in the process of encircling the field.

4.1 Camera as a tool

I started out my fieldwork by following the daily routine at Alanya; food delivery, organising the goods, lunch break and the opening and closing of the shop. A dominating method in my fieldwork was the use of camera recording. The camera turned out to be an excellent tool when I started hanging out at Alanya. Since the shop was small I felt very uncomfortable just standing there day in and day out looking at the customers, and observing Yassin and his employees working. Having the camera gave me a given role in the environment. Trond Waage describes the introduction of the camera in his fieldwork among streets kids: “This new situation gave me the opportunity to approach him in situations where I had earlier felt it would be impolite; where I did not have a role” (Waage 2013:164). On the other hand, the camera practice required two hands, which left me unable to help out in the shop and in the cooking later on. During my fieldwork there were many examples, like the ones already mentioned, of how the camera as a tool in the field both opened up and closed opportunities. However, I will regularly argue that the camera foremost was a beneficial tool in my fieldwork, especially in the study of senses and non-verbal knowledge that turned out to become an important part of my fieldwork.

4.2 Participant - Observing with the camera

John Collier Jr. and Malcolm Collier (1986) write about some aspects regarding the use of camera an observation in their book *Visual Anthropology, Photography as a Research Method*. Collier and Collier argue that we go through our days with blinders and observe only a fraction of our surroundings (Collier & Collier 1986:7). They claim that this blindness is explained by the detachment in our urban, mechanized society: “We learn to see only what we pragmatically need to see” (ibid:6). Even during fieldwork when I tried to observe and participate as much as possible, I realised how the camera is an excellent tool to strengthen and extend our senses of hearing and seeing. I always get surprised when I watch the footage afterwards, both in what I have forgotten and what the footage remembers for me. As Collier and Collier write, the camera, by its optical character, has a whole vision. “No matter how we select a unit we might wish to photograph, the camera faithfully records this specialized subject and also all other associated elements within focus and scope of its lens” (ibid:7). Furthermore I noted that it was hard to keep an eye on the surroundings during the interviews. With the camera as the recorder, I could have it both; the visual settings and the spoken words. In one of the first weeks at Alanya I was filming Hassan during the morning routine. I will in the following section share this experience from my fieldnotes:

During one of the morning routines of organising goods, Hassan and one of the employees showed me a bag of frozen lamb feet. While he was telling me a story about how they had a tradition in Kurdistan to get up early, shower and then eat lamb feet, the movement of his arms increased dramatically and his face was shining and smiling. I had never seen his body move anything like it before. It made me curious about what it is about food memories that makes the body look like it is trembling with excitement.

The dominance of participant observation as a methodological credo in anthropology has been founded on the idea that we can understand another culture through sharing the experience of the practitioners themselves as far as possible. More specifically, this implies that it is important to get close to what people do because there is much cultural practice that is never verbalized (Rudie 1994:28). Collier and Collier argue how photograph of social actions leads us into a rich area of non-verbal research, and they suggest that we must also record the details of the postures and gestures, the nonverbal character of individuals and groups (Collier, Collier 1986:77). One of my observations that aroused my interest for this topic was how people's gestures and postures, similar to the example above with Hassan, became evident when they talked about their own food traditions and habits. The body language became more expressive and excited. My interpretation was that this was something that moved them, verbally and bodily.

4.3 Anthropology at home

Ingrid Rudie (1994) has an important point concerning participation which is important to have in mind. It is not possible for the researcher to participate unnoticed and without influence in the shared experience of another culture. Researcher and practitioner create knowledge together, and ultimately the researcher invents the culture of the informant (Rudie 1994:31). A major factor in my fieldwork was that I performed a long-term fieldwork in Norway, the country I am born and raised in. In other words: *Anthropology at home*.

He needs to learn the language of the natives, an anthropologist that is his salt worth, will make this his first task (Evans-Pritchard in Hastrup 2010:207).

Although I was doing fieldwork in a context primary speaking my mother tongue Norwegian, it also included communication with people speaking Thai, Spanish, Kurdish, Persian, polish

and Turkish and I felt lost (in translation) facing all these different languages that I can not speak. Wikan (2012) is in her book *Resonance* also arguing for the importance and valuable knowledge of studying beyond the words, the non-verbal knowledge. Nevertheless, in doing so she highlights how language is essential to understanding (Wikan 2012:9). Likewise Wikan claims that the verbal language is predominately important to understand the three aspects that I was primarily interested in; mainly the non-verbal language of the visual, symbolic and sensory. I could only imagine the treasure box of interesting, significant and various insights in understanding the mother tongue of my subjects. The communicational language in my fieldwork was Norwegian, English and body language, and I explicitly want to highlight that my lack of understanding of the different languages doubtlessly affected and limited my empirical material.

During my fieldwork I lived at home and slept in my own bed. In one way I lived close to my protagonists in the sense that I was in Tromsø for more than the period of my three-month fieldwork. On the other hand, I lived far away in the sense that I did not move out of my everyday base. How did this affect my empirical data? It is hard to say, since I did not experience the opposite. However, I think it is something that is important to be explicit about, and absolutely forced me to see the exotic aspects of my own everyday life and home. Nevertheless, I had only lived in Tromsø for eight months when I started my fieldwork. I remember that in one of the first classes of the master program Visual Cultural Studies I shared the experience of feeling foreign in the city. Moreover, did my fieldwork include a lot of interaction with immigrants and their variation of cultures. Therefore have my challenge not only been to see the exotic in my own everyday life, but also try my best to not romanticize the exotic aspects of my renewed experience with immigrants and north Norwegian culture.

Marilyn Strathern (1987) has some good early points in the discussion of anthropology at home. At first she is asking: How does one know when one is at home (Strathern 1987:16)? I have struggled with describing where my home is in Tromsø, and in the same way as my protagonists I am navigating through and towards different belongings in a complex city. This lead me to the second good point Strathern proposes: In offering “another view”, as I am trying with my attempt of anthropology at home, I am adding complexity to the understanding of what I am constantly describing as a “complex society”(ibid:27). Marianne Gullestad was one of the pioneers in doing anthropology at home, in Norway. In an interview with her in the

Norwegian anthropology publication she is saying that anthropologists who work “at home” are in this way seldom just insiders. We are usually both insiders and outsiders to the people we work with, and this highlights the importance of making my own positioning explicit¹⁵.

The fact that I am from Oslo in South of Norway, called a *southerner* her in Tromsø and not a local person called *tromsøværing* or *northerner*, affected the conversation with different informants in the field. First of all I have a different dialect from the natives in Tromsø. I felt there was a strong verbal sign of a local belonging in my field, and among the locals *tromsøværingene* I sometimes felt more like an outsider than the immigrants that spoke a fluent Tromsø dialect. Moreover, compared to a small earlier fieldwork I had in Tromsø, with the elderly *tromsøværing*; I went from being a person who did not have a clue about Tromsø or Northern Norwegian culture to suddenly in some occasions to experience to be a person who had some valuable Norwegian knowledge. Among my protagonists I felt that I was less exotic for the people that have lived here longer, than the people who have lived here for a shorter period. Furthermore there were some people who became extra interested when they heard that I was from Oslo, because they did not know many people from there. This was a different and a less unprejudiced reaction compared to the one I got from a lot of *tromsøværing*, since I am from the capital. Some people pointed out without any explanation, that I was a very typical Norwegian, while others claimed that I was not a “typical Norwegian.” I met people who had lived in Tromsø for approximately the same amount of time as me, and we could share the experience of the transition to the dark time and a smaller city. On the other hand I met immigrants who had lived in Tromsø for longer than me, and they could teach me new things about the city and had more local knowledge. My point is that in getting an insight in to how the researched looked at me as a researcher, enlightened how I likewise my protagonist express differently belongings and identities comparing on the context inside the city.

4.4 Interview

The interviews I had during my fieldwork were somehow semi-structured in the way that I had some questions that I always asked connected to food and homeland, but a lot of the questions occurred in different social situations. Charlotte Davis (1998, 2008) describes the ethnographer’s research strategy in participant observation as often being virtually

¹⁵ Norsk antropologisk tidsskrift 2011 utgave 2

unstructured, that is, very close to a “naturally occurring” conversation. However, the ethnographer still tends to direct the conversation, with questions they want to pose (Davis 1998, 2008:105). Davis argues that some social situations are ideally suited for this, and records of speech can be followed up with informal questions without placing the informant in a formal interview situation (ibid:46). I experienced that the shop was not a good place for the latter recommendation, which I will explain in the next section. This affected how my fieldwork developed. Later, when I started to shop, cook and eat with my subjects, I found this shared experience to be a situation more ideally suited for conversation.

4.5 Fieldwork progress

After some weeks at Alanya, I realised that Yassin did not want to be a big part of the film, and besides it was hard to get deeper in contact with the people working there. I think the reason was that they were very busy at work, and I was not invited to meetings outside the work. During the fieldwork my attention and interest for the customers grew. I decided to have my main focus on the customers and further into the fieldwork - the international customers. However, we established a good relationship at Alanya, so it was in principal a good spot to hang out and meet customers. But when I wanted to get deeper with the customers, I met some challenges. It turned out to be more problematic than I had pictured it, to just film the customers on such a short notice. In this situation I experienced that the camera became an obstacle in talking to people. The camera scared a lot of customers away and it was hard to create a longer conversation or a more “natural occurring” situation with the customers. I experienced a crisis in my fieldwork, and I was frustrated and uncertain about how to continue. Then I started to look for customers outside the shop. I searched in different international arenas in town, explained people about my project and asked if someone who was shopping at Alanya wanted to join. I had a hard time getting in touch with them and gaining their trust. Finally, I ended up in meeting eight people who said they would love to join. We met at Alanya and I filmed them while they were shopping, cooking and sharing a meal while we talked a lot during and in-between. The 8 customers became my main informants. One factor worth mentioning is that all the customers that volunteered were only women. Three of them had husbands and kids that joined in. However, I do not have enough research to make a point out of why I only met women. One factor can be that I am a woman, and that it was easier to ask them if I could go home with them. However, my main point is that this of course affected my material in regard to a gender imbalance.

Spradley, J & McCurdy argues following: “By far the best way to discover the cultural categories people use is to record their speech in a variety of natural contexts” (Spradley, J & McCurdy 1972:45). Likewise Goffmann is (1959) highlighting the importance of following one social person in different social arenas. For example we do not show ourselves to our children as to our club companion, to our customers as to the labourers we employ, to our own masters and employers as to our intimate friends (Goffman 1959:48,49). Because of how my fieldwork developed I was not able to follow my main informants in a variety of natural contexts, or in other words – different social arenas and relationships. This would of course have been very interesting if I had more time to see how the customers related to their food commodities, not only in the shop and in their own home, but on other arenas as for instance at work, in school, in international meeting points or restaurants. This is definitive a lack and a weakness in my fieldwork and my thesis that I wanted to be explicit about. On the other was my the food commodities also my protagonists and I was able to follow different food commodities in several different kitchens and dinner tables in the city. Additionally I was studying their relations to Alanya Import, and I became able to not only be inside the shop, but also to follow customers and food commodities home, from a public to a private context. I will elaborate these points in the theoretical approach section.

Chapter 5: Theoretical approach

Give the reader a sense of what it is like to live in the land of others.

(Malinowski in Stoller 1989:8)

I will in the following section share two dinner table situations from my fieldnotes:

I sat by the dinner table with a Kurdish Iran family in their home in Tromsø. We were all eating a traditional dish called *Khoreshte Bamie*. It was my first time to taste Kurdish food, at least as I can remember or know of. The mum Nasim looked at me with a curious look, wondering if I liked it. The food tasted delicious and I could gladly share it with them. Moreover, I did have an impression that the food did not quite taste the same to me as it did to them. I felt they were sharing something based on the food, which I could not spontaneously be a part of. An other day, I invited Chamile from Cameroon for dinner. We had the Norwegian national dish mutton-and-cabbage stew for dinner. I could explain everything with words, and we were all eating the same. Still I honestly felt that the

Norwegians around the table were sensing something that the family from Cameroon did not understand or recognise.

5.1 Senses as a method

Over the last decade, there has been a renewed concern in anthropology with questions about the body, the senses, experience and emotion, skilled practice, and form of knowledge, which Stoller refers to as “sensuous scholarship.” (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2009:131). Herb Di Gioia encouraged filmmakers to rely on their embodied knowledge and their senses in moving of the camera. Di Gioia was trying to cultivate an observational sensibility among his students in which the body and senses served as the existential ground of engagement. For Di Gioia the observational attempt was not about reifying vision as a separate sense. Instead, the insistence on a close relationship of image and sound was understood as the means by which to stimulate an awareness of sensing bodies – bodies depicted in the film, including the filmmaker`s and, as importantly, the bodies of audience (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2009:117, 119). I find Di Gioia`s practise as incredibly important points in my fieldwork. In paying a central attention to the senses of my subjects, I must not forget that my fieldwork is at the same time built on my understanding through my sensory and bodily movement in the field. Likewise Stoller argues that if anthropologists are to produce knowledge, they must not ignore how their own sensual biases affect the information they produce (Stoller 1989:6). Further it is important to have in mind how the audience of Food Stories will sense the film and how that affects their understanding. I will further in this section introduce my theoretical approach, which my argument and thesis is built on.

5.2 Phenomenology, senses and memories

My point of departure is a phenomenological approach. Merleau-Ponty, one of the leaders in the phenomenological breakthrough in anthropology introduced the concept “Being in the world.” It was a part of the development of a school in anthropology that was not satisfied with only listening to what was spoken in the field. They argued that life also becomes evident between the words. In Merleau-Ponty`s words: My body understand the world, without my symbolic and objective function (Hastrup 2010:213). Moreover Merleau-Ponty is arguing that we must take the projection of memories into account: “It is shown that in the reading of a book the speed of the eye leaves gaps in the retinal impressions, *therefore* the sense-data must be filled out by the projection of memories” (Merleau-Ponty 2002 (1945)). I

found the emphasis on the body, senses and memories highly relevant in my study on the relation between food and people.

5.3 Food commodities social life

Igor Kopytoff's text (1986) *The Cultural Biography of Things – Commoditization as Process* has been an inspiration to me, both as a methodological perspective in the field and as a starting point for my analysis. Kopytoff is arguing that by following the biography of things, we can examine the details of the social life connected to the things and unfold ethnographically how these specific things are becoming certain kinds of things (Kopytoff 1986:64,66). When we follow the biography of things, we follow the commodities in different spheres and explore how different contexts add different meaning to the specific commodities. Transformed to my project, I followed a part of the biography of some particular food commodities connected to Alanya Import. The sphere, which I followed them in, was from the delivery to the shop, the organising of the shop, the shopping, and from a public sphere at the shop to a private sphere in homes, where it was cooked and eaten.

“Next time you walk through a forest, look down. A city lies under your feet.”

This is the opening sentence in Anna Tsing's (2010) article about using Kopytoff's theory; *a cultural biography of mushrooms*. Tsing follows the mushroom from the woods in North-America to Japanese culinary enjoyment. Ingold, for example, approaches the human subject as a complex organism tangled in an impenetrable web of relationships that not only includes other humans, but sentient beings, non-human animals and the material environment itself (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2009:132) I will argue in the same tone as Tsing, that focusing on the agency of things is not primarily a critic of science, although it can be critical. Instead, the purpose is to encourage to a new, passionate immersion in the lives of the nonhuman subjects being studied (Tsing 2010:201). In other words, it is not only the social person that has an agency in my fieldwork, but the food commodities. In the following I will elaborate this by using Runar Døving approach.

In the book *Merkevarer, 45 korreksjoner* (2007)¹⁶ Runar Døving is referring to the work of Pierre Bourdieu's (1995) book *La distinction* (1995) and Daniel Miller's (1998) *A theory of shopping*. They are both arguing for the significance of studying the social context outside the

¹⁶ My English translation: *Branded goods, 45 corrections*

shop. In my case this was the private kitchens and dinner tables of the different customers. Døving describes the life of the goods in interest of export marketing and consumers. Døving is arguing for the lack of written material on the social life of objects (2007:15). My project is not directly concerned about marketing, but I hope my thesis can be a contribution to the argument for the importance and relevance of ethnographic description of objects, things, goods and in this case the social life of food commodities. Døving is giving an example of how the coffee from the store transforms to social glue when the hostess opens the package. Full of the hostess soul and hostess duties creates a fellowship when it consumes. In other words, Døving is arguing that the thing is living a social life. You can even say that it is social in it self (Døving 2007:23). For instance when Nasim and her family is sharing a meal of Khoreshte Bamie, I feel that there is an additional aspect concerning the food that everyone knows except me.

Finally I will mention a highly important point when it comes to studying the social life of things that was mentioned in a seminar with the visual anthropologist Jouko Aaltonen. He claimed that every anthropological film or research is about people. Maybe we do not directly see people in the film, but only non-human subjects as animals, nature or things. Still, there is always a person that has described the story by how it is edited or written. In other words, we humanize things from our human understanding of the social life of things; in my case the stories, biography and agency of food¹⁷.

Chapter 6: Everyday life at Alanya Import

I will in this section elaborate on some tendencies that I observed and experienced in the field. I will start out with a very compressed description my days at Alanya. The purpose is to give the reader a picture of how I experienced the atmosphere at Alanya and repeat some of the regular comments and relations I met daily from the customers. Likewise Yassin said it is hard to get an overview of the people that were using the shop, because it changes constantly. However, my observation does confirm that it is definitely one of the social arenas in Tromsø where there is a lot of international and transcultural interaction among people and goods.

¹⁷ Aaltonen, Jouko 02.02.2016 University of Tromsø

6.1 Boxes, Shelves and Grocery shopping

It is Wednesday and I am standing in the backroom at Alanya Import together with Osman and Hassan. Osman is listening to some Kurdish music from his phone while they are waiting. The time is 07.30 in the morning and it is time for grocery delivery. Every Wednesday it is normally the vegetables that are delivered at Alanya. The delivering truck, with the name *Miniexpress* is reversing into the backdoor of the backroom and the back door of the *Miniexpress* opens. Fredrik the driver of the mini truck says that some of the boxes were left in Oslo. Osman and Hassan start to pull out stacks with vegetable cases. The cases have about the same size, and a lot of them come in cardboards, but the outside of the cardboard has different languages and symbols. It is easy to understand where some of them are imported from, for example when it is written Thailand import, but on some of them it is not possible to tell. The plastic is taken off the boxes, and banana, okra, lemon grass, beetroot, quince, pomegranate, chilli, tomatoes, Bok Choy are among many food commodities that are being taken out of the boxes and organised into the shelves. When the commodities arrive to the store, they become co-ordinated; although they are coming from and will enter into different cultural categorizations (Døving 2007:20)

Alanya opens at 10.00 am, and people are starting to come in to the shop and look through the shelves. The shelves are loaded with different products from all over the world. I observe it all happening and I feel like I am watching a treasure hunt. Frequently people are asking about specific goods, after searching among overloaded shelves, and they show a sense of gratefulness when they find what they have been looking for.

Onni, one of my protagonists is pointing at canned goods with fish and proudly telling me, “This one is from my home country, from south Thailand” and puts it in the shopping trolley. An elderly Norwegian woman enters and starts filling her bag with vegetables. She comes every Wednesday, because she knows it is the day the vegetables get delivered and when they are fresh. A group of young teenager boys enter the shop and one of them says out loud: “There is a strange smell in here”. They all start sniffing, and then they run out the door. A young Norwegian woman tells me that she likes this shop, because you can buy big packages of food. Another Norwegian woman likes it because they do not have that much plastic around the vegetables and you have the opportunity to only buy one, which she thinks is environmentally friendly. A third one tells me that you can still find some products here that you can not find in the chain-grocery stores. A group of young students, both girls and boys

are shopping for a sushi dinner together, while a man is looking a bit confused among the shelves of about 50 different kinds of noodles. The man tells me that he has an adopted daughter from Korea, and that she likes a special kind of noodle. Another elderly Norwegian woman told me that her daughter is a nutritionist and had recommended her to replace rice with Quinoa. She usually has it with Mango, but she had recently been to Nice where she got it with apple. That tasted very delicious and she was going to try that next time. A lady speaking Arabic, is asking several times if this meat is Hallal just to make sure, while a younger Tromsøvinger guy told me that he had decided to get out of a bad habit and try a new diet. He did not want to eat so much red meat anymore, and put some Chia seeds and lenses in the shopping carts. Some young guys told me they were from Pakistan and liked this shop very much. They bought some oil, large packages of rice and some hair gel. Later that day I saw them on a ferry that goes to one of the smaller places around Tromsø. On Saturdays there are often visitors from other places around Tromsø that did a bulk buying, since they do not have similar shops where they live. They often come in big groups, and one Saturday some ladies had brought their tea and had a picnic on the floor while doing their grocery shopping. Yassin knows several of the people visiting the shop, and he often took some time off for a chat. Frequently there were also customers who knew each other and added some conversation time into their shopping. Some people got into the shop and found what they wanted right away, whereas some looked more lost among the shelves. I met some people who only used the shop for one or two things, while others did their bulk purchase there. The bulk purchases were rarely done by Norwegians.

6.2 Shared worldviews

Visual ethnography is an effort to understand culture by making it visible (Harper 2012:11). I was filming all the food commodities being putted into the shelves, then into the shopping trolley and then brought in Alanya Import plastic bags out of the front door of the room. For me personally, the room changed from being a bit chaotic with totally overloaded shelves to become totally logic in how it was organized. Anne Hege Simonsen is writing about how visual perception of course is a biological process, but it does not mean it is either neutral or with one meaning. The senses are connected with our brain that have saved similar phenomena, situations or patterns and try to adapt to what we have experienced earlier (Simonsen 2012:387). Several Norwegian people told me that they feel like they are in another country at Alanya Import, mostly somewhere they have visited before. On the other hand, some people (often tourists or people with an immigration background) shared with me

that they felt a piece of home in that shop. Togashi has studied immigrant room and assumes that by studying the rooms and the objects within them she is studying the motivations, traditions or habits that lie behind organizing the space (Harper 2012:11).

The rooms are the result of human action, which is a part of a shared worldview (Harper 2012:11).

Some people feel at home at Alanya, and others feel like they are in a different country when it comes to how it is organised, visualised and sensed. One lady said to me that she liked how the vegetables were stacked in an unorganised way; it made it look more authentic and gave her the feeling of being in a market. Another lady from Cameroon told me that this is one of the places in the city where she experiences a small sense of connection with home, because they have some of the truly familiar products that come from Cameroon and the shops look like this. I constantly met many concepts, relations and views connected to Alanya that made me ask myself; is there a shared worldview at Alanya?

6.3 Cosmopolitan miniature on the corner

Neither the people working or shopping at Alanya had a shared worldview when it came to food, but all the customers' preferences can change the organising of the shop when it comes to what goods that will be imported. This is because Yassin orders goods every week and the requests of the customers are highly prioritised. Of course there is also a huge economic dimension that affects the result of how Alanya is organized that I will not go further into in this thesis. However, I started questioning myself if Alanya is an example of a cosmopolitan environment. Cosmopolitan according to my understanding is when a social fellowship or a place is built on the agreement that we all have different worldviews. Based on my material and understanding I will define Alanya as a cosmopolitan miniature on the corner of Storgata in Tromsø. Further the shop is in my opinion contributing to make Tromsø an international city. I will even go as far as to suggest that Alanya are in the leading group of moving Tromsø in the direction of being an international and cosmopolitan city.

6.4 Boundaries in Foodways

What about the people who feel like clowns in that environment? Yes, I have talked to some people who have used this description. My supervisor, who has lived in Tromsø since the 70s,

shared that she feels like people are showing their knowledge and status in knowing what to get in that shop, while she does not have a clue what they all are buying. Although I look at Alanya as a cosmopolitan place, is still everyday inside the 250m² room boundaries being made, redefined, expanded, vanished and maintained through grocery shopping.

Mary Douglas argues that the system of foodways may operate symbolically or analogously to communicate or reflect the “boundaries between categories of people”. Brown and Mussel argue that these symbolic foodways may strengthen the group’s internal ties or indicate out-group status. Furthermore, they say that foodways are contributing to mark existing social boundaries and, depending on one’s view point and focus, inclusion to or exclusion from a group (Brown and Mussel 1984:47,48). I agree that I operated with some symbolic communication in foodways at Alanya, in eating healthy, vegetarian, knowing about the latest trend, exchanging different traditions or sharing the same products with the people from the same home country. One of the different preferences I observed was between the people who cared about if the products contained palm oil or other non-environment friendly ingredients, and the people who did not care what the products contained. However, it was too widespread to make any clear pattern of out-groups and in-groups inside the shop, except for the people who felt like a stranger in the shop. I think it is important to remember the excluding aspects in the discussion of international and cosmopolitan social arenas. During fieldwork I also met people who not necessarily enjoyed communicating in an international environment. They felt that they were not skilled in it, and therefore they tried to avoid such places. While hanging out at Alanya Import I noted that the international environment gave people possibilities to express their various identities through food. At the same time did it force them to be clearer and sharper in defining whom they were among all the different expressions.

This mentioned field is a field where much more study is needed to go deeper in to it. My main question for now is what kind of relation can be experienced between food and homeland? In the next section I will invite the reader home to five different customers who shopped at Alanya. The purpose is to in more detail enlighten how boundaries in foodways and food expressions continue and change after grocery shopping, through cooking and eating.

Chapter 7: Portrays. Five Customer-Cases

When the groceries got out the shop, they got a new contextual cultural meaning. (Døving 2007:26). In this section I will discuss how my protagonists dealt with national, local, international and cosmopolitan food. The order will be Onni, Aida, Rosangela, Nasim and in the end Maria. The aim for the following part of my thesis is to present that immigrant's relation to food is a relation of study, and a window to some understanding of integration and globalisation processes. My observation is that they are in the same way as Alanya standing in the daily scene of choosing international, local and/or particular cultural and national food. I will continuously argue how senses and memories are an essential part of my protagonists worldview. Further I will discuss how this aspect can be connected to belongings. The customer-cases are concrete empirical examples of the complex international milieu at Alanya, and further building stones in illustrating the complex urban space Tromsø.

7.1.1 Onni

One canned good of fish made at a factory in South Thailand is located on the bottom of one of the many shelves at Alanya Import. Onni, a lady in her 50's is taking it down from the shelf and putting it into her shopping trolley, saying "This one is from my home country, from south Thailand". The food commodities shrimps, spring onion, Nam pla prik sauce, fish sauce, soya sauce, yellow, red and green pepper are being put in to the shopping carts together with the canned goods, payed for and put in plastic bags with the logo Alanya Import. We take the bus to her home on the north side of Tromsø island. Onni is married to a Norwegian man, and has lived in Tromsø for seven years. The shopping bags are being emptied out on the kitchen bench and Onni starts cooking. "I buy almost everything from Alanya, they are so good at Thai food" she says, and starts cutting the vegetables into different pieces. Together with different sauces, shrimps and chicken she is frying all of it in a roasting pan. The kitchen starts to be filled with recognizable odours I personally combine with Thai food.

7.1.2 Food and Memory

While Onni is stirs in the colourful and odoriferous pan she starts telling me stories from the past:

I grew up very poor, next to a rich neighbourhood. You know poor and rich lived together. I remember I was sitting outside the house eating only bamboo and dried fish everyday. My two brothers and me were sharing an egg. I later had my own restaurant in Thailand. In Thai restaurants we do not follow

recipes. I do not read what it says on the packages, I do not think it turns out good. I just follow my taste.

She dips her finger in the pan and adds different herbs and spices. I got the same feeling I had at the Kurdistan Iran family dinner table. Onni and I were looking at the exact same food and although I am familiar with Thai food, I sensed that she tasted and smelled something that I could not grasp. Paul Stoller (1989) stresses the position of sense in ethnographic fieldwork. Among the Songhay people in Niger he experienced that one can taste kinship, smell witches and hear ancestors. He learned that this fundamental rule in epistemological humility taught him that taste, smell and hearing is more important for the Songhay than the sight, the privileged sense of the west (Stoller 1989:5). In my meeting with Onni I found Stoller's focus on the senses taste and smell interesting, as well as David E. Sutton's (2001) study of the relationship between food and memory. Sutton did a fieldwork on the island of Kalymnos, Greece. While Sutton was listening to their stories, he began to realise the extent to which ordinary food permeated their memories. Sutton argued for the relevance of studying food relations, by saying that food can hide powerful meanings and structures under the cloak of the mundane and the quotidian (Sutton 2001:3) The food brought back Onni's memories from a world which was unknown to me. When Onni tasted and smelled Thai food, she tasted a piece of her homeland. At the same time, as she shared in the quote below, it tasted different from home. Therefore, tasting Thai food in Norway is for Onni also a taste of absence from home. This was something I observed with several of my protagonists, a sensory confusion in the meeting between taste, smell, memories and food from their homeland.

7.1.3 To recreate food memories

If you have one ingredient in Thailand and the exact same is sent to Norway, I still think the Thai food tastes different here than in Thailand. My husband says that maybe it can be the different weather. Here in Norway, when I am not eating Thai food, I need to bring some chilli with me and just add it to make it good.

Onni is laughing after she has shared the quote above while we were eating the delicious food from her dinner table. Reni Jasinski Wright (2014) is also a woman that has done fieldwork

with food as an entrance to social meaning and everyday life knowledge. She has written a book called *Syv sorter, historier fra kjøkkenbenken*¹⁸ Following is two quotes from her book:

I could have a large bowl of cookie pastry before. There were a lot of people here. But since the TV came, they do not have time to visit my farm anymore (Magna Helene Anderson b. 1930).

Similar to my project Wright is inviting the reader to visit seven women in their kitchen in Kåfjorden, a rural area in North-Norway. The women from Kåfjorden are telling stories from the old days connected to traditional food from Kåfjorden. They share their recipes, mainly local and traditional, such as bread, coffee cheese¹⁹, blood sausage and cakes.

There are not so many who bother making coffee cheese anymore. It is gone. But I still make it (Elise Helene Solberg, 1927).

Onni told me that her husband had said that she does not make any good Norwegian and European food, but her Thai food is very good. She tries to sell her traditional Thai food in Tromsø. She tells me that it is not very easy, but the good thing is that Thai food becomes more and more popular among Norwegians. Thai food is also known for being healthy with all its herbs, and that is good for reaching the increasing amount of health conscious people. In other words, Onni`s traditional Thai food gets a new meaning in the Norwegian context. It becomes a skill compared to her other cooking in her house and it becomes *something different from others*, which she can make a business out of in Tromsø. I have personally been to Mandalen in Kåfjorden and bought coffee cheese as a souvenir from the North-Norwegian food tradition. In both cases, Onni from Thailand and Elise from Kåfjorden have food commodities that has been an ordinary part of their everyday life, before gaining a new meaning and becoming something particular. Firstly the food has got a symbolic status for Thailand and Kåfjord. Secondly, the particular food is creating a new sensory significance for them personally when they are cooking, as their senses are filled with memories and nostalgia.

¹⁸ My English translation: *Seven sort. Stories from the kitchen bench*

¹⁹ Cheese that you dip in coffee.

Onni together with some of the other protagonists that will be described in the following sections, are in the same way as Elise from Kåfjorden telling stories and memories connected to their traditional food. Unlike Wright's (2014) protagonists mine are telling stories and memories from kitchens from other contexts and places in the world. Still I am getting the impression that in both cases the food can make them remember and feel something that might not be present anymore. In my opinion, both Wright's project and mine gives an insight in to everyday life stories affected by the globalisation processes and moving of people and goods. On the other hand, Onni and Elise are examples of how the people who are affected by globalisation are also affecting the globalisation processes. Onni is continuing to make Thai food in her kitchen, and buying her products from Alanya Import. Further she is trying to introduce and sell it to the local people in Tromsø. Elise is continuing to make coffee cheese in Kåfjorden, and she makes a business out of it. She uses use it to create memories in the elderly, and to introduce for example me as southern to traditional food culture from a rural area in North of Norway.

7.2.1 Aida

A beetroot is piled together with other beetroots, untouched and unexplored. A women picks it up and puts it in her shopping trolley, together with parsley and vegetable bullion. The lady's name is Aida and I met her shopping on a rainy day at Alanya. Aida put everything from the shopping trolley on the shopping carts. She pays for the groceries and puts it in the shopping bag. While putting the groceries in the shopping bag, she holds up the beetroot and tells me that it is the most important ingredient today. We are going to make a beetroot soup. She also shows me the parsley and says: "We use a lot of parsley in Poland." We take the bus to her home and walk up the stairs to her apartment on the second floor. The first room we enter is the kitchen and Aida empties the shopping bag on the kitchen bench. Aida tells me that she likes to present herself as a woman who is from Poland, but lives in Norway. She has lived in Norway for 28 years. "Half of my life", Aida says.

7.2.2 A World Citizen

Aida puts on some plastic gloves and starts to cut the beetroot. She tells me that she is going to the cultural school were she works afterwards, and she does not want to scare the children with purple hands. Next she cuts the other vegetables and puts them all into a pot in the process of making a Beetroot soup. The soup was not just a random beetroot soup. It was a soup Aida had been taught to make from her mum in Poland. She added some water and

bullion into the casserole and put it on the oven. After a while the water started to boil and a scent of vegetable soup filled the whole kitchen. I asked her if it was important for her to make Polish food, and her answer was as follows:

I am not a person who only makes polish food or must have Polish food. I am very open to Thai, Chinese food and etc. But if there is something I think tastes good from Poland I make it. It is important for me to make healthy food. I use to say that I am a cosmopolite; a person who mixes different cultures. People from other countries are maybe more engaged than I am, in keeping up their food culture.

I asked Aida: “Why do think you are not that occupied with keeping your food culture?”

Because of who I am maybe. It is a hard question There is nothing I can say as a fact about others; it would just be an assumption. Maybe I feel more like a world citizen, and not a member of a country. I do not think that since I now live in Norway I need to eat and act like a Norwegian. I believe in maybe hundred years, we do not have any borders.

Eriksen’s (2010) explanation of the world citizens is as following: Political happenings, like the climate crises engages people all over the world even if they are not directly affected by the crisis. The latter example indicates that a large number of people in the world has the identity as world citizens, because they are occupied with problems that concern all the citizens in the world. Still, if a phenomenon is “global” it does not mean it is known for everybody, but that it is disconnected from a certain geographic place (Eriksen 2010:289). Aida gets annoyed when people say, “It is typical Norwegian to be good,” or “I am proud because I am English” She thinks it is important to not put too much focus on where people are from, but what they have achieved for them self. Further, she explains that she does not care whether the values she follows are from Poland, Norway or Africa, but whether they are in line with human rights. In the same way she does not make that beetroot soup because it is Polish, but because it is healthy.

7.2.3 Food association

Aida sets the table. We sit down and Aida starts to serve me soup. I ask her if there is some particular food that reminds her about something? First she answers in a funny voice, that maybe if she has eaten something and becomes sick. Then she can get nauseous when she eats that same kind of food. That is also a hard question, she says. During dinner, while eating the

delicious beetroot soup with fresh bread, Aida starts to describe different food memories she has.

It is not food. But something you eat. It was a tradition we had before we had our Christmas meal. We shared an oblate, made of water and flour. We did not eat meat for our Christmas meal, only different dishes with fish. It was Ide in jelly and fish in tomatoes, in oil and fried fish and ect. Decorated in small dishes on a long table. And then we had the tradition that the children were standing in the window and waiting for the first star. And then before we sat down by the table we shared the oblates. It was symbolic, that we forgive each other and then moved on. That is a tradition that I miss. It has nothing to do with religion. I just thought it was a nice thing.

Aida continues sharing memories she associates with food:

When I buy pickled cabbage at the shop, it happens that I think about when I made it as a child. We had a large barrel at home, and we made cabbage for the whole winter. It was a social happening to make it, and it was a hard job. My dad chopped the cabbage and we added garlic and the other spices. Then we needed to wash our feet very thoroughly and tramp on the cabbage with our feet. We were standing inside the barrel and pressed with our feet. That was a long time ago. It probably does not happen anymore. Yes, I get associations. Also when I buy mushroom in vinegar glasses, then I think about my dad. My dad used to go into the forest to pick mushrooms. And when I buy polish assorted chocolate from the brand Wawel. Wawel is pretty well recognised brand worldwide. It makes me a bit proud that something positive and good comes from Poland. Something that can be sold in other countries.

7.2.4 Food expressions

Aida is verbalising some of her experiences connected to food and memories. “(...) A more complex picture is provided when one looks at how people actually *use* the images and products produced by these multinationals” (Sutton 2001:66). Aida never articulates that the memories make her emotional, but her face is expressing to me that this moves her beyond words. ”How can the invisible be made visible in a visual medium?” Jouko Aaltonen is asking connected to his documentary films about spirits and ceremonies (Aaltonen 2015:1). Aaltonen proposes that although religious or spiritual experience is often non-verbal and difficult to express in words, one way to describe it is to let the person explain the experience for themselves (ibid:8). Similarly I asked my protagonists to describe their own memories connected to food. Additionally Aaltonen points out that faces are always expressive. Part of

the experience can be seen on the faces of the characters (ibid:8). The example of Aida above is an example of the interesting relationship between the spoken words and the visual outcome.

My impression, from watching Aidas changing body language and face expression, was that her memories moved her. For example, when she talked about the Christmas memory she tried to clear her throat for a squeezed and sensitive voice. When she shared the memory about pickled cabbage she used a lot of gestures, and from looking at her body language and her face I can tell she looked excited. After the memory sharing Aida tells me that she experiences our conversation as verbalising some silent knowledge for the first time. “Things that I have never thought about, or at least verbalised – that I for example think about my father when I buy mushroom in vinegar.” I find Aidas comment about silent knowledge interesting related to Elisabeth Furst’s comment about silent language in her book *Food – another language* (1995). Furst wanted to collect this silence into analysis, to put into words what aspect that is active without being identified (Furst 1995:14).

Aida frames the beetroot soup as something that she learned from her mum and that can bring memories from Poland. She remembers how her mum made it and that they had fresh vegetables in their garden. Additionally, is she presenting the soup as typical polish, because she has not seen it other places. At the same time she is saying that she does not eat the soup because it is polish, but because it is healthy. Therefore is she also somehow presenting the beetroots as world citizens and placeless in the sense that is accessible at the global market for anyone who wants to use it as a source of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre that the vegetable contains. Slogans such as “There are no borders” characterize the rhetoric’s of multinationals who seek to advertise their products all over the world. In Geschiere’s (1999) opinion, the slogans appear to entice the construction of new boundaries as much as the reaffirmation of old ones (Meyer & Geschiere 1999:5).

First I thought that Aida expressed her relationship to food in highly contradictory way. She starts out saying to me that it does not matter which country the food is from. But when she started associating food with memories, different food commodities from Poland made her emotional and she ended up saying that food commodities with the brand Wawel make her proud because it is something positive from Poland. That is one way to look at it and it is definitely an example of how one part of fieldwork is to listen to what people have to say, and

another one is to observe how they act, sense and visualise things. I also started thinking about whether this is also just an essential part of being a complex person in a complex society. Therefore my point is not that Aida is as a person who contradicts herself, but rather that she is a person with several sides. Evermore, is this possibly an inescapable experience as a participant of integration and globalisation processes: To have a divided and perhaps contradicting relationship to a particular thing, in this case food commodities.

7.2.5 Cosmopolitan food commodities

In a study of the flow of food and food-related products across national borders, Norman Long and Magdalena Villarreal explored something interesting: While sphere of production in Mexico maize husks are associated with “modern industry” among the Mexican in contrary to the United States they have become associated with “traditional”, “authentic” Mexicanhood and are regarded as indispensable makers of “ethnic” identity (Meyer & Geshiere 1999:12). I found the latter example interesting connected to the question of whether food commodities can be fully border free? Similarly, can people be free from national borders?

The first time I met Aida was at an Iranian concert in Tromsø. She later told me that she prefers to be in the international arenas in the city. In some occasions she has received remarks because she is an immigrant, and sometimes more specifically because she is Polish. She did not want to go further into that. My point is that ever how well a food commodity is advertised as global or multinational, it is understood locally. Transferred to the question of being a cosmopolitan person, I think it emphasises the challenge of express a cosmopolitan identity and being interpreted as world citizens in all social arenas in Tromsø today.

When Aida puts the beetroot and Wawel assorted chocolates in her shopping trolley at Alanya; is she outwards symbolising that she is Polish, a cosmopolite or a fully integrated Norwegian? In not only study the customers in the shop after what they are putting at the shopping cart or asking Yassin for, but also following Aida home, sensitive narratives connected to food became visible and accessible in new ways and with new meanings. It shows how the relationship to food commodities is more complex and can have different aspects. It can have a cosmopolitan, national, global and local belonging simultaneously.

7.3.1 Rosangela

A Quince was lying together with other quince, yet to be smelled, explored and tasted. A woman named Rosangela was looking among the shelves at Alanya for something from Chile. Rosangela asked Osman and Yassin if they had a product from Chile. They could not come up with anything. She continued to look among the other vegetable cardboard boxes, and she could see that it said "From Chile" on one of them. Rosangela picked up the quince, smiled and showed it to me proudly: "This is from Chile". Then she walked to the employees and showed them the quince: "This is from Chile." "That's right" Yassin answered and Osman started to practise how to say quince in Norwegian: "Kvede." The quince needed to wait to be cooked and eaten, because we were going to make empanadas today which is the national dish of Chile, Rosangela told me.

We drove to her home at Tomasjordet. Rosangela told me how it was such a nice place to see the midnight sun. She can hear from my dialect that I am not from here and adds that she is a Northerner. Rosangela has lived in north of Norway for 30 years. Both Aida and Rosangela have been married to a Norwegian man; and are now divorced. They also both have two grown up children who live in Norway. Rosangela told me that she likes the dark time and that she is an outgoing person who easily gets to know people, which is two of the reasons why she enjoys living in Tromsø. She works at the cantina at University of Tromsø where she regularly gets the opportunity to make empanadas or something from Chile. People are sometimes ordering empanadas from her and pay her for it too, like they do with Onni's food.

7.3.2 Food traditions

We enter the kitchen, and Rosangela puts on an apron with the Chilean flag and starts to cook. On the kitchen bench there are tomatoes, onions, meat, spices and a dough. "I try my best not to forget where I am from" she says while she is tasting stuffing. I am allowed to see her make the empanadas, but not the dough, which she has already prepared. The dough is a family tradition that has been in the family for generations. She tells me they are only allowed to teach it to their own daughter, not even their own sister-in law is allowed to know the recipes. Rosangela has learned it from her mum in Chile and has passed it forward to her daughter in Norway, who has promised to only tell it to her own daughter if she gets one. Rosangela proudly tells me about her Chilean food tradition, and afterwards she tells me about how she

has learned to make Norwegian fish balls and rissole in gravy²⁰. “My ex-husband and my children told me that I even make better rissole in gravy than my mother in law. I was so proud you know.”

We are sharing a delicious meal, empanadas with some Chilean red wine to drink. Rosangela is happy with the result and show me with her body language how she enjoy the food. I experienced Rosangela as a person who expressively and actively express emotions and symbolising the importance of her particular Chilean roots with Chilean food tradition and food commodities, flag and music.

7.3.3 National food commodities

Benedict Anderson (1992) argues in his article *Imagined communities* that nationalism is imagined. He believes it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the images of their communion” (Anderson 1992:6).

Anderson’s point of departure is that nationality, national-ness and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. He discusses why these particular cultural artefacts have aroused deep attachments and commands of such a profound emotional legitimacy (Anderson 1992:4). In the conclusion Anderson discusses how different ideas about language, society, cosmology and history have been rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things (Anderson 1992:36).

I find Anderson’s perceptive interesting in my wondering about national food and emotions, which I experienced in my relation to Rosangela. I suppose that national dishes can be a study of artefacts as a symbol of a country: How different food commodities have through history and are today associated with a country and can create deep emotions. They can even be a connection to maintain national belonging, such as in the situation with Rosangela. I think Rosangela is an example of the importance of including taste and smell in to the study of national belonging and identity. For instance how dough should taste exactly how it tasted in my meal with Rosangela to be connected to the roots of her Chilean generation. It was a taste that only Rosangela could confirm was the correct one, in order to call it a tradition. And how

²⁰ In Norwegian: Kjøttkaker i brun saus.

Kvede for someone is a fruit with no feelings attached to it, but in Rosangela's case it gives her a feeling of proudness of her country in the context at Alanya.

I found the word *imagined* hard to use, when it is the senses that are in in play. My guess in line with Anderson's opinion is that what is imagined, is not the sensory experience, but it's the connection to a community of a lot of people that you have never met. In the case of Aida from Poland, I suppose it will be the same, when she eats food that she defines as a world citizen's diet, she imagined being part of a cosmopolitan community with people she has never had any face-to-face interaction with (Anderson 1992:6)?

7.3.4 Emotions

In the end of the evening Rosangela wanted to show me some Chilean dance videos on youtube, called *cueca*. While we are watching she starts crying and shares with me the following:

I get so touched. Imagine I have lived for 30 years in Norway. I have a good life. I have a good life here. I have nothing to complain about. I have two amazing children and I have been married for almost 25 years – unfortunately it did not work out. Still, even how long I have live in Norway, my roots are from Chile - my culture, my food, my tradition. I have also acclimatised to Norwegian traditions. I have a lot of great Norwegian friends, I have a best friend who is from Norway. I have nothing to complain about, I have a good life. But Chile will always be a little bit above Norway – with all respect to you as a Norwegian. That is how I feel. My grown up children can decide, they are born in Norway, but they support me.

Sirkka Seljevold had a seminar at the university of Tromsø²¹ where she shared from her fieldwork among Kven people in Norway. She did her research on the Kven people's relation to Kven language, their mother tongue. One of her main findings was how emotion was a huge part of her material. Her main protagonist started to cry when she spoke about her relation to her mother tongue. Seljevold shared that she got some reactions on the crying scene in her film. People suggested that she must have experienced something traumatic in her past, because of her strong emotions and sensitivity. Seljevold argued that these feelings and emotions that she showed were connected to her experience and understanding of her language roots. I had the same experience with Rosangela. When Rosangela came to me in

²¹ Sirkka Seljevold. University of Tromsø. 24,25.09.16

the editing room and watched her self on the screen, she started crying again and invited me to dinner. Her emotions and crying was connected to the objects that linked to her Chilean roots.

There are moments when the social world seems more evident in an object or a gesture than in the whole concatenation of our beliefs and institutions.

(MacDougall 2006:94)

“What can be lost is not the senses but the memory of the senses” (Seremetakis 1994:9). Rosangela is explicit sharing that “ I do my best to not forget were I come from.” Rosangela is actively trying to remain her particular sensory national belonging through taste, smell and sound, with food and music. Likewise Onni is trying to do with regularly cooking and eating Thai food and Nasim in the following customer-case with food from Kurdistan Iran.

What I experienced most of the time in the relation between the camera, the researched and me the researcher was a room that rarely appeared anywhere else. A room primarily dedicated for sharing any feelings, expressions or thoughts that may occur. I experienced Rosangela in front of the camera, sharing food stories to express proudness of both her local Norwegian belonging, but also a strong belonging to her homeland Chile. Comparably is she constantly shares pictures of Chilean food on Facebook. I found Rosangelas emotional expressions in front of the camera also an expression of lacking opportunities of social arenas in Tromsø were she truly could express her feelings and identity connected to Chile.

7.4.1 Nasim, Parisa and Rebwar

A bag of green okra lies in the freezer at Alanya Import. It was a cloudy day when I met married couple Nasim and Rebwar. Rebwar said he was going out for fishing, so Nasim and I stayed for grocery shopping. We were going to make a traditional Kurdish dish named *Khoreshte Bamie*, and an important ingredient in that dish is okra. Nasim knows Osman who is working at Alanya. They are both from Kurdistan Iran, and Osman helped Nasim to find the okra. Nasim invited Osman to join us for dinner later that day. We were also going to buy some chicken, but Nasim wanted to do that at the Norwegian chain-grocery store Rema 1000. Nasim told me that: “Some foreigners must by chicken at Alanya because they only eat halal meat, and that is more expensive.” That was not the case for them, so she could make use of Rema 1000 instead.

We walked from Alanya with the grocery bags and went into a turquoise building, up a lot of stairs to the top flat. Nasim and Rebwar with their ten year old daughter Parisa have been living in Tromsø for two years as asylum seekers, and they are still waiting for an answer about whether they can stay in Norway. All their neighbours were in the same situation. Nasim started to cut the okra in half, put on some Kurdish music and said to me: “When I make old-fashioned traditional Kurdish food and listen to traditional music, I think about my home country and my mum.”

7.4.2 Re-imagine Symbolic lifeworlds

The cooking took several hours with a lot of breaks in-between, and the breaks were used for drinking tea and talking. Parisa came home from school and joined us. Nasim shared with me the moment she got the message that she had to move to Tromsø. She was in Oslo at an asylum centre there, and a guy pointed on a map far north. Nasim had started to cry and Parisa added that she believed there were ice bears here, and they laughed. But when she had arrived with the airplane and looked out the window, she had thought that it was a very beautiful city, and she still thinks so. They experience the condition they are in now very hard, with not being able to work and just sit and wait for the residence permit. Still, they think it is much better than the life they had in Kurdistan Iran, where they felt unfree in a lot of ways. I ask them if they are missing some types of food from their home country. Nasim shares a grocery story with me:

We eat lamb`s head. At first in Tromsø we looked for it, but we could not find it anywhere. I looked in all the stores in Tromsø. One day when I was at Eurospar²² I saw that they had lamb`s head. I got so happy and called my husband right away and told him: “I found lambs head”. I bought it and we made a really nice dinner.

What I observe when Nasim is sharing the story about the lamb`s head, is how it separates from the other stories about objects from Iran Kurdistan. In the situation with Nasim I noticed how her stories about food are disconnected from the bad feelings that is connected to other stories from their home country. David Sutton (2001) writes about how food narratives can reflect meta-narratives about different topics. (Sutton 2001:99). Nasim`s food story can also be regarded as a meta-story about their relation to food tradition from their home country,

²² A chain-grocery store in Norway.

experiences and emotions connected to being foreign, marriage and their scale of what is looked upon as happiness for them. Parisa continued to tell me about some food commodities that she misses:

We miss a vegetable that only grows in the Kurdistan part of Iran. It is a vegetable that is almost like waffles here in Norway.

Parisa describes to me with her words and body language how they use the vegetable in cooking. How they put it into dough and warm it a specific oven they have there and that it tastes delicious. She continues to tell me about another particular Kurdish food commodity:

And then we have a thing that it is like coca cola in our home country. It is made of yogurt and water. It tastes very good. You can have different flavours, but I like the natural one. And when it comes to that vegetable, you cannot send it because if you dry it you cannot make the dish we normally make with it.

Grønhaug's conceptual tool of metonymization and metaphorization is helpful to give an insight in to the meaning of the situation – by which he emphasizes the actor's production and use of signs and symbols (Grønhaug 1976:1). Parisa has been going to a Norwegian school for two years, while her parents have not been allowed to work. That is how the law works in Norway during the waiting for a resident permit. Parisa has therefore been giving a much broader opportunity to get to know the Norwegian society and language in her everyday life. She speaks Norwegian fluently and has translated the communication between me and her parents. Moreover, Parisa is able to move metaphorically between two metonymic positions, as the empirical example above demonstrates. She compares waffles with the special Kurdistan vegetable. She is well-known with a larger series of acts in the food traditions in Norway and Kurdistan Iran. Therefore, Parisa can move an idiomatic practise from a well-know context to a new one. She explains to me about the Kurdistan vegetable's symbolic position in a larger sequence of food acts of Kurdish food system with compare it with a waffle. On the other hand, is she explaining to her mum, the role waffles have in a larger series of meaning in the Norwegian food context. By letting one act (waffles) stand for larger sequences of acts (history of Norwegian food tradition and habits), she is doing a metonymic operation. Parisa does the metonymic operation metaphorically, by moving the idiom from a metonymic position to a new one (Grønhaug 1976:5).

Grønhaug uses empirical examples from Eidheim's analysis of Sami-Norwegian relations, to argue for the importance of integration processes. Eidheim (1971) describes a re-codification; by mentioning how the Sami's have fought for a new status for the Sami language. They encourage the interest for Sami cultural history, through folk music, folklore, art and so forth (Grønhaug 1976:15). In the re-codification of Sami culture, metaphorization is clearly present. The revitalization itself consists grossly in moving idioms from one context to another. Sami costumes, language use, songs, and so forth, are brought from the enclaves of small isolated Sami milieus into arenas that are dominated by Norwegians, and applied there as metonymic signs of Sami identity (Grønhaug 1976).

Firstly, the illustration of Parisa and the Kurdish vegetable is an example of how globalisation, when it comes to mobility of goods, has not attained its full potential. Still there are goods from the home country of my protagonist that are inaccessible in Tromsø. It is interesting to see the role these inaccessible food commodities get when they are missed and invisible, and that they still become metonymic signs in the Kurdish Family identity, through narratives.

7.4.3 Re-imagined Sensory lifeworlds

In order to gain an insight into the different dynamics of integration, my opinion is that it is necessary to not only take a look at the symbolic meaning of food, but also take a look at how the food commodities are embedded in sensory and memorized experiences.

The dinner started to get ready and the husband Rebwar came home with fresh fish. Nasim had called her friend Lana from Iran, and she arrived together with her Norwegian husband Odd. "I could smell the food from outside", Lana said and leads her husband to the pot and asks him to feel how good it smells. Osman from Alanya also arrives, and they all help to set the table and start sharing a meal. Earlier in the thesis I reflected on being outside a collective sharing during dinner. Forrest has an interesting reflection about this matter:

Each mouthful a person eats is the same as the next mouthful, the same as each mouthful for other people at the table, the same as mouthfuls eaten in previous years, and so on. A sensual, subjective link is created between all those present at the meal

and between all those who took part in similar meal in earlier years (Forrest in Sutton 2001:109).

During the dinner they all share individual memories connected to food, which I will quote in the following:

Rebwar:

My family has a fruit garden. Everytime we went there, someone made a dish called Dolme and we were drinking Doogh. My mum was very good at making it. Dolme comes from a specific leaf on a specific tree we have on the fruit farm. It does not matter where I am in the world; if I see dolme I start thinking about that farm and mum.

Nasim:

When I smell rice, I think about my mum and my dad. I start remembering from when I was a child.

Lana:

When I smell food from my home country, I always think about my home country. But it is nothing special. But noddle with tomatoes always remind me of my best friend in Iran. Because the first time we met we were living together. We were roommates when I was a student. And on the first day I was hungry and she made me noodles and tomatoes and this was something we always laughed about later on, noodles and tomatoes. It is nothing traditional or special, but every time I eat it I think about it.

Odd:

Fresh fried trout on a pan and a glass of milk - then I am a little boy again (...) Yes that is a childhood memory. It is autumn and thunder weather, and my dad goes out into the woods and fishes along the riverside. A good memory.

Osman ends up by saying that: "I do not remember anything, I only eat" and they start laughing. When I watched the clips over again I could see how they all tell about their memories with lots of empathy and engagement. Elizabeth Furst (1995) writes about how many indicate that food, included smell and taste, has the ability to merge body and consciousness to an immediate intimate contact that makes one forget the feeling of distance – for a moment. And this experience has also been characterised as happiness (Furst.1995:65). Suttan writes about how food experiences can be re-imagining of "worlds" displaced in spaced and in time. To eat food from home becomes a particularly marked cultural site of the

re-imagining of “worlds”(Sutton 2001:102). Sutton stresses how food can be a synesthetic experience. A synesthetic experience is an experience of a union of different senses, even when only one sense is triggered. “The memories of ones senses are stored in an intertwined way: that of tactility in sound, of hearing in taste, of sight in sound” (ibid:99). Suttten argues that the union of senses is not only a metaphor for social wholeness; it is an embodied aspect of creating the experience of the whole. Its synesthetic qualities are essential ingredients in rituals and everyday experiences. Food does not simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and re-creation (ibid:102). I will argue for the same with the empirical example of when Parisa explains the “waffle” and “coca-cola” from her past lived country. Grønhaug’s perspective is in this context quite interesting and important. Furthermore, in my opinion the perspective on the embodied sensory experience adds something important; Parisa shares about her memories of the Kurdish vegetable and typical drink, which also gives an insight in to her re-imagining, creation and re-creation of her sensory understanding of her lifeworld.

I found the empirical example of Nasim and her family interesting in the connection to Runar Døving’s (2007) challenging of the classic understanding of branded goods. Døving’s main critic is an excessive belief in that the consumer identifies him- or herself with the product. A classic branded goods thinking is that the exact moment of picking the food commodities from the shelves is the most crucial for the relationship between the individual and the product. Døving is engaged in showing examples of how different food commodities have a life outside the shop. For instance when you buy cheese, it is not the identification with the brand which is the most dominating, but for example that the cheese belongs to different contextual systems and stories, and that one can be reminded of for example the lunch packet in Norway (Døving 2007:5). The point is that what you eat is not only about matter of taste and identity, but part of a larger scale of history. I agree with Døving in that the question “You are what you eat?” is much more complex and contextual than just to make an interpretation of identity from what you are putting in the shopping trolley at for instance Alanya Import.

7.5.1 Maria, Henrique, Joshua and Lucia

A packet of cornmeal is standing in line with other packets of cornmeal on a shelf at Alanya Import in Storgata in Tromsø. A lady named Maria enters the shop with her husband Henrique and her two children Joshua and Lucia. Their shopping trolley gets filled with

bananas, tomatoes, jam, candy and a pack of cornmeal. Joshua tells me that cornmeal is to make a typical Venezuelan dish. He continues by telling me: “Here we always eat bread, but there” pointing at his mum “we always eat ...” and his mum helps him out in naming it: “Arepas.” Maria says that she normally shops at Alanya when she is making something typical from their home country Venezuela, as today.

7.5.2 Mixing between food traditions

We walked home together. They talked Spanish to each other and Norwegian to me. When we arrived to their home, the children started to watch television. Maria started cooking, and Henrique joined in after a while. They have lived in Tromsø for five years. They moved here because Maria got the opportunity to take a doctor’s degree in linguistics in Tromsø, and now they think they are going to stay for a while. I asked them if they think it is important to make food from Venezuela. They looked at each other, thought for a second, and they both answered: “No”.

We do not eat Venezuelan food that much and we do not have any especially occasion where we eat it. It is more sudden, like: “Today lets make Arepas”.

Maria tells me that they eat much more food from other places now. She has learned to make Thai food, sushi and Norwegian fish au gratin in Tromsø. In Tromsø Maria discovered at Alanya that the people from Thailand use the same ingredients as they do in Venezuela, and she thinks it is because the two countries have the same tropical climate. However, the dishes are not exactly alike, and Maria adds: “For instance we make tea with lemongrass, where as Thai people make soup out of it.”

Henrique shows me how to make typical Venezuelan scrambled eggs, while the Arepas are roasted in a pan next to an other pan with fried bananas. Maria is mixing juice. They tell me that cheap fresh fruit is something they both miss. Later on Maria shows me different Venezuelan food traditions on the computer. For instance she shows me how to make sugar cane, something she does not have access to here in Tromsø. Therefore they need to be creative in finding replacements. While they are both watching pictures of Venezuelan food on the internet, they show me with their body that they remember, enjoy and sense the food commodities. “Oh delicious coconut water” Henrique suddenly says out loud. And Maria is starting to ask Henrique if they could possibly experiment by making the white cheese here in

Norway, the same as the one his mum makes in Venezuela. The cheese is an other food commodity that they do not have access to in Tromsø. Then she says: “We eat a lot more bread now than we did before - here it is like a national dish”, Maria laughs. She tells me that they know a lot of people who miss Arepas a lot, and who say it all the time. Then Maria describes a Christmas situation from last year:

I wanted to make a typical Venezuelan Christmas dish last Christmas. It is called *Ajacas*, a dish made out of platoon leaves. But Joshua, my son said: “No, I want to eat pork ribs and rack of lamb ribs,”²³ And I was like: “Ohh no!” “Ok, then we eat that”, and luckily we all like it very much.

Like with Aida, the main goal is not to demonstrate Maria and Henrique’s contradicting expressions in their relation to food from their home country. Nevertheless, this enlightens again how the spoken words are not always in accordance with how people act, nor with their sensory expression. By saying that it is not important for them to eat food from Venezuela, but still get a bit upset when their son did not want Venezuelan food for Christmas. In my opinion, this is one of the reasons why identity is not one sided, but complex. From the observations and self-reflected experiences with my protagonists, it is reasonable to believe that our sensory food experiences often go in different directions and can be interpreted as different belongings. In Rosangela case for instance is she experience confusion between different belongings. However, in Marias case is she expressing an international belonging in actively trying new flavours at Alanya Import and mixing between food traditions more spontaneously. An example of this at the global market is the trend called *fusion cuisine* that combines elements of different culinary traditions²⁴.

7.5.3 Children and food

Children in every society are taught to “see” the world in a particular way. They learn to recognize and identify some objects and to ignore others” (Spardley, J & McCurdy 1972:8). Another interesting perspective in my field notes is the perspective of kids growing up in several sensory traditions and their parent’s possibility to influence them. Both Maria and Nasim are trying in different ways to introduce their children to traditions from their homeland. Maysa from Mexico, one at the customer from Alanya Import had not yet decided if she was going to teach her new-born daughter to eat spicy food as they do in Mexico from

²³ A typical Norwegian Christmas speciality

²⁴ An example of fusion food: <http://www.worldfusioncuisine.com/>

the beginning. I was at a seminar held by the organisation *The future in our hands* at the main library in Tromsø²⁵ The topic for the seminar was how we can expand local growing and urban farming in spite of the challenge of the cold weather in North. The host at the seminar talked about how they could work on introducing the children in Tromsø to local food, and especially Tromsø's great proudness about local fish. I found this very interesting in the sense that they want to create sensory memories and belonging for the children, as part of a strategy in how they want to develop the society. Additionally there are several kindergartens that have started to make rules about what the children can bring with them as packed lunch, by for example telling the parents not to let their children bring cakes for birthdays. This is mostly influenced by the national and global attention on eating healthier.

Chapter 8: A search for home in the cultural supermarket

I have guided the reader through five different sensory meetings in kitchens around in Tromsø. Various relations between food and homeland have been presented. Among my protagonists there are different patterns of navigation from eating to maintain cultural roots, to eating like a cosmopolitan, eating like a Norwegian, and everything in-between. Onni continues to make Thai food, and her husband makes the Norwegian food in the house. Their family gets together around the table, and they taste and make memories of both of their cooking. Rosangela is sharing proudly how her husband and her children thinks she makes better rissole in gravy than her Norwegian mother-in-law, and with the same proudness she shares that she has a secret family recipe that goes way back through generations in Chile. Maria is saying that it is not important for them to make Venezuelan food, and that she has learned both to cook Norwegian and Thai food in Tromsø, but for Christmas she proposed to make traditional Venezuelan food. Maria and her husband got so excited and nostalgic when they showed me food commodities on the Internet from Venezuela, and discussed how they could make Henrique's mother's white cheese here in Norway. Nasim thinks it is important to maintain their food tradition, and that her daughter Parisa should learn it. Simultaneously they have started to eat Norwegian food, and taco has become Parisa's favourite dinner. Aida shares that she does not need to make food from Poland, but the food commodities from Poland bring back memories and feelings from her childhood in Poland. In the end she shares that she is proud of the Polish brand Wawel, and that this is something positive from Poland that can be sold in another countries. Gordon Matthew (2000) asks the question of whether

²⁵ Tromsø Library 20.04.2016 Event: Breakfast seminar food (frokostseminar mat).

roots and home can be just another consumer choice? Has culture become only a matter of personal taste? You might eat rasin bran for breakfast, curry for lunch and sashimi for dinner.

We feel we are belonging to our particular national culture, and believe that we must cherish our culture. But we also consume from the global cultural supermarket, and believe that we can buy, do, be anything in the world we want – but we can't have it both ways. We can't have all the world's culture to choose from and our own cultural particularity. If you believe that you can choose aspects of your life and culture from all the world, then where is your home (Mathew 2007:preface)

Matthew asks how we can live with both the particular culture and the global culture, and I am asking the opposite: How can we possibly not be living with the two of them at once, after what I have observed with my protagonist in Tromsø today? Even if you are moving from one place to another, or staying in one place your whole life, it is inevitable to not be exposed for different sensory food experiences, associated with the local, particular national and the global. I propose that the customer-cases show how the question of home becomes more entangled when we include our senses in the process of belonging.

8.1 Globalisations paradox

Alanya is a meeting place in Tromsø for my protagonists to meet people with different backgrounds and identities, and it contributes to facilitate communication about their identity freely. Earlier I proposed that Alanya is experienced as a cosmopolitan place among my informants. On the other hand, I also experienced the tendency among my protagonists that Eriksen (2010) describes about globalisation; that social identity becomes important in the moment it gets threatened. Which can occur in the meeting with multiculturalism. Rosangela and Nasim for instance expressed passionately the important role of maintaining the national dish *empanadas* and *khoresthe bamie* in Norway and how suddenly the vegetable *okra* and *quince* was standing out in a new way among the other vegetables at Alanya.

Paradoxically, the culturally homogenizing tendencies of globalization implies continued or even reinforced cultural heterogeneity. Closely related to this paradox is the precarious balance between global *flows* and cultural *closure*. Meyer and Geschiere use the concept flux (flow) and fix (closure) to describe the challenge of identity in globalisation processes. In other words, to be involved in open-ended global flows seems to trigger a search for fixed

orientation points and action frames, as well as determined efforts to affirm old and construct new boundaries. Therefore it is important to develop an understanding of globalization that only takes into account the rapid increase in mobility of people, goods and images, and also the fact that in many places, flow goes hand in hand with closure of identities, which often used to be much more fuzzy and permeable (1999:2).

John Nagle (2009) is discussing the Batson (1973) double bind in multiculturalism. He argues that multiculturalism is characterized by a paradox. On the one hand, “ethnic minority” groups are encouraged, within the multicultural paradigm, to make their culture inclusive and accessible in order to contribute towards a celebration of “cosmopolitan” diversity and cross-cultural citizenship. On the other hand, is it forbidden to threaten their ethnic particularism, as to do so would contradict their claim to resources as a distinctive group (Nagle 2009:5). Nagle focuses more on the political challenges. Still I found his argument interesting in connection with the paradox I observed with the international milieus among my protagonists. International milieus as Alanya, opens up for a more diversity in identity expression. At the same time does it force an increasing clearness in identity expression if you want to maintain your uniqueness among the multiculturalism.

Chapter 9: Film and Text

My thesis and my film can be perceived separately, yet I do believe that they complement each other. In my project the film concentrates on the sensory meetings, because that is what has the greatest relevance for my research focus. Facts about how long my protagonists have been in Norway and why they are here is a secondary focus in my film. I think if I had given the latter points the foremost focus in the film I wouldn't be able to convey the same insight into how senses, food and memories is part of their worldview. It is when we embrace the medium of film that we can become fully capable of conveying the invisible that is important to anthropology, but which mistakenly has been argued to only be communicated in words (Shur and Willerslev 2012:3). In the thesis the main attention is given to senses, the body, memories and emotion, but the text as a tool gives the reader the possibility of getting the necessary facts about Tromsø, Alanya Import and the protagonists. Additionally, is the text connecting the material to anthropological discussion and analysis. Moreover, do the film and the text gives different opportunities to be reflexive about my position in the field. I agree with Perle Møhl when she argues that film is not a replacement of the written, and not only a

new way of conveying, but it has other qualifications draws our attention to new aspects of the world and gives us new research possibilities (Møhl i Hastrup 2010:164). David MacDougall (1998) remarks that words are superior in their capacity of showing us the rules of the social and cultural institutions where people live, but that images are far more superior in addressing subtle issues of social agency, bodily practice, and the role of the senses and emotions in social life (Shur and Willerslev 2012:2).

In the last dialogue in my film *Food Stories*, Odd is sitting with his new Iranian family and friends, sharing a food memory from his childhood in north of Norway. One impulsive reaction I had from a viewer of this scene was the following: “This is a memory I guess many in north Norway can share, and it makes it easier for me to understand what the protagonist in the film is sharing” Perle Møhl (2010) argues for how film can talk to people about similarity and differences in different ways than text does, and David MacDougall (1998) that film has a transcultural potential (Møhl in Hastrup 2010:163)

Chapter 10: Further assumptions and future research

There is more to be said and more to be studied when it comes to the things I have discussed in this paper. Firstly, I think it would be interesting to do a similar fieldwork with the Norwegian customers. Secondly, I would like to go deeper in to several questions; the question I addressed connected to the role of Alanya, the question about including the environmental friendly customers in the future such as as Aida for example, and the wave of local farming versus exported goods. Will Alanya and the other international shops in the city get the same role as an authentic and central part of the city landscape in Tromsø as there are examples of in Oslo? Thirdly, I would love to do some more research on how the social arenas in the city for sensory experience work. I joined a group called purple dinner, which works to get people across nations and food traditions together around dinner tables. Further it would be interesting to continue asking; what makes a city international and a shop international? What kind of in and out groups are there in this so called cosmopolitan environment? And what is the locally created culture in Tromsø in similar environments? Are there any cultural or social capital as Bourdieu (1976) talks about at work in communication? And what about the people who feel excluded? It would be interesting to continue following the food commodities in others arenas in Tromsø, outwards private kitchens. For instance in the situation of Aida, where can she use food to express a cosmopolitan identity and were is it

being linked with Polish traditions? And where in Tromsø does Rosangela find it difficult to express her Chilean roots?

Chapter 11: Conclusion

My fieldwork does not have an end or a final chapter. I experienced this especially because I continued living in my fieldwork milieu, did my grocery shopping at Alanya and met my protagonists in several occasions, and when I am writing this I am still a member of Tromsø city. Moreover, the city and my protagonists will continue to change and develop when I move. However, I have been trying in this thesis to present, describe, discuss and analyze some of the material that I have gathered until this date. Mainly, the material is from my fieldwork in April, May and June in spring 2016. What I have been trying to do is to give an insight in to integration and globalisation process in Tromsø, by using the ethnographic approach in following non-human characters (food commodities) from Alanya to different homes and kitchens around in Tromsø. My point of departure was to enlighten, through empirical examples the anthropological insights, that globalisation does not lead to culturally homogeneous, but new variation patterns, and further that global processes are understood locally. I was asking; which role does Alanya Import have in Tromsø today? My analysis based on my material is that Alanya has one of the leading positions to recreate and continue to develop Tromsø as an urban, cosmopolitan and international city; as a place in the city where people with different backgrounds and identities can come and express their identity freely through grocery shopping. Moreover, the shop highlights the paradox about cosmopolitan environments: Its aim is to let everyone be the way they are, and my informants could therefore freely express their identity. Still it's contributing to an increasing need among people to explicitly express their particular identity, which I also experienced among my protagonists. Additionally, I met people who felt excluded from so-called international environments. I have proposed that one of the counter-reaction on the globalisation is the growing attention to local farming and local products in Tromsø. I have asked the question if it will be a competition to the shop that originally are build on exporting food from all the worlds corner. The future will show. However, in Tromsø Alanya still has the same status as it had in the 80s, as a place a lot of immigrants are using to maintain their food traditions, and where Norwegians can expand their food habits from the global supermarket. However, the picture is much more complex.

My starting point for my research has been connected to the curiosity on how immigrants relate to their food from what they define as their home country.

I have not only based my analysis on what the customer is putting in the shopping trolley inside Alanya. I have also followed eight of the customers out of the shop and into different

private homes, and experienced how their identity and relationship to their homeland is not one-sided. I have presented five portraits, which each have been building blocks in the insight into agency and food relations in globalisation processes in the urban complex space Tromsø.

All of the self-presentations through their description of their relation to food were in my impression expressing a belonging to different categorizations. Rosangela, Nasim and Onni highlight a wish to maintain a national belonging through their foodways, whereas Aida wanted to use food to express a more cosmopolitan belonging. Maria expressed that she has a relaxed and international attitude by freely mixing local Norwegian and Venezuelan traditional food, and choosing from the cultural supermarket. However, one thing is what they say with words and another is what they expressed through non-verbal expressions, such as their visual bodily expression and sensory expression such as taste and smell. I found the camera very useful as a tool in its possibility to see the clip over again and notice new expressions. It was remarkable how the sensory approach to the food was connected to senses, emotions and memories. My analysis based on my interviews, observations, filming and participation is that the complex personalities shopping at Alanya, even how much they reinforces one particular culture or refuse another, they are examples of what Hall describes in the following: “As the global and local are the two faces of the same movement” (Meyer & Geschiere 1999:2). Furthermore I experienced with the protagonists how sensory experiences and memories could be understood, connected and interpreted as sensory belonging. Moreover, I experienced that my protagonists expressed, consciously or unconsciously, a sensory confusion and division in different directions of belonging. My argument is that the senses are a highly important aspect of the understanding of people in integration and globalisation processes.

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