

# Producing Consumers

Agencing and Concerning Consumers to Do Green  
in Everyday Food Practices

Ingrid Stigzelius



## Producing Consumers

In the on-going efforts to achieve a more sustainable society, consumers are expected to transform production and consumption through their daily choices. Yet, their capacity to act green is considered to be limited and they are typically seen as in need of various self-help tools and green guidance. This gives the impression that consumers are both active and passive at the same time, which makes it difficult to determine their capacity to act. However, instead of assuming that consumers are either active or passive by default, this thesis takes on a practice perspective to study the production of consumer agency and their capacity to do green.

Through a series of both historical and contemporary case studies of food consumption as production, exchange, and usage, this thesis delves deeper into the everyday life of consumers and the socio-material practices involved in producing green food consumption. The thesis asserts that green consumption is a collective achievement, rather than being determined by the consumer's inherent capability to do green. The multiple socio-material actors that together produce green consumption is highlighted, in which the consumer is also an integral part. Thus, the green consumer is both produced and part of producing green consumption. The processes involved in producing consumers are theorized as the agencing and concerning of consumers, whereby consumers become equipped and concerned to do green in everyday food practices.



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*To  
whom it may concern*





# Foreword

This volume is the result of a research project carried out at the Department of Marketing and Strategy at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE).

This volume is submitted as a doctor's thesis at SSE. In keeping with the policies of SSE, the author has been entirely free to conduct and present her research in the manner of her choosing as an expression of her own ideas.

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Director of Research  
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*Uppsala, February 21, 2017*

*Ingrid Stigzelius*





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Part I:  
Summary of the Thesis



# Prologue

## Cloud Formation

“I was sitting in the middle of the Austrian Alps on a summer’s day, half-way up to the famous glacier, Grossglockner, waiting for a car that could make it to the top since I could not. A spotless blue sky stretched over the barren mountain range. Every silhouette along the vast jagged horizon appeared clear and razor-sharp against the blue. It was a world without clouds. But, as I fixed my eyes on a single mountaintop, it started to look a little hazy and blurry around the edges. This mist, that I first thought was only happening in my own eyes, had within five minutes become a light veil, floating above the mountaintop. It got thicker and expanded before my very eyes. The same phenomenon occurred here and there along the horizon. These veils of mist, as thin as thoughts, came together into gigantic cloud formations, as if by magic. A mist, that seemed to have come out of nothing, would revive in time giving life to dry river beds and arid lands. I had experienced a cloud formation.

It was nothing exceptional, on the contrary, this happens all the time, but I had never before witnessed a cloud formation as clear as this.”

Quote from Elin Wägner’s *Alarm Clock* (first published in 1941, translated from the edition of 1990, p.323, by Lena and Jeff Bergcoutts).





# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The escalating concerns about climate change and environmental degradation has increased societal attention toward individual consumers and their unsustainable behaviour. In the political and academic debate on sustainable consumption, consumers are often put on centre stage: consumers are seen as both the source of the problem to environmental harms as well as the potential saviour to combat those problems (Barnett, Cloke, Clarke and Malpass, 2010; Terragni, Boström, Halkier and Mäkelä, 2009). To come to terms with the situation, the green consumer has emerged as a rhetorical figure. However, the consumers' capacity to do so is all but straightforward. Green consumers are often portrayed as passive receivers that are in need of various forms of guidance to change their behaviour for the better (see e.g. Thørgersen, Haugaard, and Olesen, 2010; Lai, Cheng and Tang, 2010). Yet, they are seen as overly active agents that hold the capacity to direct the market and production in more sustainable directions (see e.g. Micheletti, 2003; Micheletti and Isenhour, 2010). Given this dubious portrayal, it becomes difficult to know what capacity to act consumers have and whence these driving forces come. This becomes important to understand in the on-going effort to make consumption greener.

To better understand what constitutes and shapes the consumer as an actor in markets and other areas of consumption, I argue there is a need to unpack the boxes of the all-too-often stereotypical and deterministic images

of the green consumer (for a similar argument, see Pedersen and Neergaard, 2006; Moisander, Markkula and Eräranta, 2010; Reijonen, 2011). Instead of assuming that the consumer is passive or active by default, this thesis suggests one should take a look at the interspaces between the dual poles and direct attention to the practices that work to produce consumers. From this perspective, the green consumer can fruitfully be regarded as a result of collective efforts by several socio-material actors being joined together to solve societal problems. Consumers are an integral part of this collective achievement; they both get produced and are part of producing green consumption, whereby *agency* is acquired (i.e. a capacity to act). Consumers can thus be seen as a produced co-producer. Moreover, markets are often relied upon as a collective device to produce society (Geiger et al, 2014). Here, the social and economic become intertwined in an ever-changing equation in attempts to take into account emerging matters of concern (Callon, 2009). In line with Callon (2009), markets and the ongoing intent to take nature into account in production and consumption can, thereby, be seen as a collective experiment of trial and error: where the stakes are high and the outcome is uncertain. While this might sound deterring, it also provides the situation with endless opportunities to modify, steer, and set things straight.

The various papers that form the basis for this thesis delve into different change processes, whereby consumers' capacity to act becomes practically rearranged in the production, exchange, and usage of food. Similar to Wägner (1941), who stood on the mountaintop and watched the emergence of clouds, I am interested in following the processes of which green consumers come into being. This, however, is not as clear as a cloud formation might be. Therefore, it requires a more down-to-earth approach (Asdal, 2008): one that attends to consumers' on-going practices in everyday life. I particularly follow two types of processes in the building of consumers' capacity to act: the agencing and concerning of consumers. On the one hand, consumers, along with multiple socio-material entities, are part of rearranging food practices to enable them to do green. On the other hand, these agencing efforts are propelled by processes of concerning; consumers are rendered concerned and, in turn, work to concern others. Similar to a cloud formation, a number of previously scattered actors become allied in their

concerns. This is a prerequisite for change: clouds must first take shape in order to turn into rain and give water to arid lands. As with a massive murky cloud, climate change has become a matter of concern that, as a meta-narrative, worries and concerns us all, as it pertains to all human conduct on this planet (Jackelén, 2015). What are, then, some of the issues at stake in the production and consumption of food, and what role is ascribed to the consumer in the quest to tackle these?

## 1.1. Matters of Concern in Food Production and Consumption

The production and consumption of food has received growing attention in the societal and academic debate due to the many associated environmental problems on a global and local scale. Food has become an evident element in the debate on climate change, eutrophication, land erosion, as well as animal welfare and human health. According to Björklund, Holmgren and Johansson (2008), however, it is not primarily the food itself that is the problem; rather, it is how we produce and consume it. All the different steps have an environmental impact: from the production at the farm, to food processing, transportation, packaging and storing, to the consumers' purchase, travels, and usage. Our food habits have changed dramatically over just two generations. While we once choose food that was available over the counter in small local retail stores or market halls (Lee, 2009), we can now choose food from all over the world at our supermarket and have become used to always having fresh food around the corner.

According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the carbon emissions stemming from the consumption of goods in Sweden are around 11 tons per person and year, regardless of where these are produced (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2017). Meanwhile, a sustainable level is deemed to be around 2 tons per person per year. Approximately two-thirds of the 11 tons of emissions stem from the household consumption in different areas, and one-third is due to public consumption and different investments in, for example, buildings and machines. In 2014, the consumption of food made up 30 per cent of the total emissions that stem

from households, which for example include the consumption of meat, fish, bread, and drinks (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2017). This can be compared to the 30 per cent emissions that are a result of transportation and the 20 per cent that come from housing. The amount of emissions from the Swedish food consumption is on the rise: they have increased with 13 per cent from 1993 to 2014 (*ibid*). Increased food imports can explain this, which is also the reason for the increased food consumption in Sweden.

With better welfare and lower food prices, the consumption of meat and dairy products have grown all over the world. This, however, is also the food category that has the most severe impact upon the environment: through carbon emissions, deforestation, and eutrophication (Steinfeld, Gerber, Wassenaar, Castel, Rosales, and De Haan, 2006; Säll, 2016). In Sweden, meat has the largest share of emissions in the food category: 0.7 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents of a total of 2 tons for the whole food category. From 1961 to 2001, meat and dairy production has increased globally by 245 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively (Steinfeld and Gerber, 2010). Meanwhile, meat consumption in industrial countries has increased from 61.6 kg per capita/year in 1966 to 88.2 kg per capita/year in the years 1997-1999 (WHO, 2011). This amounts to an increase of 43 per cent per capita over a thirty-year period. This trend is likely to continue. For example, the annual consumption of meat that comes from pigs, beef, and poultry has increased in Sweden by more than 50 per cent in the period 1990-2005 (The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2013a). Translated to the consumption per person and year of these types of meat, there is an increase of 24 kg. This rise equals to an increase of 2.3 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents during the given period.

While we eat even larger amounts of food, a lot of it goes to waste. According to a British study, over-two thirds (that is, 68.8 per cent) of all the food waste from households would be avoidable if things were better planned and managed (WRAP, 2009). According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, an estimated 1.211,000 tons of food went to waste in Sweden in 2012. This equals 127 kg per person per year (The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2013b, p. 6). Of this, household food waste constitutes the largest part: 81 kg per person (771, 000 tons in

total), which is approximately 64 per cent of the total food waste. To compare, the food industry stands for 18 kg of food waste per person (a total of 171,000 tons) and the grocery stores are responsible for 7 kg per person (or 70,000 tons). This is food that has caused an environmental impact having had no use at all. Facing the growing evidence that our food production and consumption has adverse impacts on the environment, it seems likely that we need to get used to more sustainable ways of producing and consuming food, which may involve new consumption patterns and ways of consuming food. What can the consumer then do about this?

## 1.2. The Role of Consumers in Addressing Matters of Concern

Current consumption patterns have been identified as a key contributor to several environmental and social problems. The so-called responsible green consumer has subsequently been promoted to solve societal problems by taking responsibility for the external effects of their purchase decisions (Boström and Klintman, 2009; Giesler and Veresiu, 2014). By taking responsibility, consumers are expected to direct the markets, thus, engendering a more sustainable production and consumption. Meanwhile, in order to become green, consumers are expected to need guidance from governmental agencies and interest organizations through information campaigns and eco-labelling, (Sadowski and Buckingham, 2007; The Swedish Government, 2016).

Critical voices, however, see this as an outcome of the neo-liberal agenda: where consumers must rely upon self-help tools that are provided by markets (Shankar et al., 2006; Giesler and Veresiu, 2014). Moreover, critics voice their concerns over the inability of individual consumers to change for the better, being trapped in unsustainable societal and market systems (e.g. Holt, 2012; Webb, 2012). Despite efforts to steer consumers in different ways, researchers have repeatedly noted that consumers are quite unwilling to follow suit (Nordström and Thunström, 2015; Solér, 2012). In a world of abundance that promotes products that primarily appeal to consumer tastes and identities (Dobers and Strannegård, 2005), consumers

have been found to strategically avoid information about environmental benefits (Nordström and Thunström, 2015). This raises questions about the capacity of consumers to act and make a difference. How, then, can consumers' capacity to do green in consumption and the market be understood?

### 1.3. Problematizing Green Consumption Research

In reviewing different research streams on green consumption, I have explored how we can understand consumers' capacity to act green and make a difference in consumption and the market. An overview of different perspectives is presented in more detail in chapter two. In this section, I will briefly highlight some of the identified problems with previous research, leading up to the identified research gap that this thesis addresses.

Previous research on the green consumer reveals two inter-related problems: first, the consumer will inevitably be ascribed with a certain set of capacities according to which research perspective is chosen. This is the case in both behavioural consumer research as well as socio-cultural consumer research. I have found examples in both streams of research that illustrate the existence of the active, creative, and powerful consumer who is presumed to act according to their stated values and lifestyles (e.g. Honkanen, Verplanken, and Olsen, 2006; Haanpää, 2007), and create meanings and shape markets (e.g. Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Meanwhile, I could also find research from both streams that demonstrates that consumers are rather passive choice makers (e.g. Pickett-Baker and Ozaki, 2008; Thøgersen, Jørgensen, and Sandager, 2012); they are duped into taking responsibility or they are simply controlled by other more powerful actors and market structures (e.g. Giesler and Veresiu, 2014; Sanne, 2002). Thus, it seems as though consumers are pre-defined with a specific role – that being active or passive - and act in accordance with the assumptions of the specific research perspective.

Secondly, earlier research on the green consumer in both behavioural consumer research and socio-cultural research tends to take the existence

of consumer agency for granted; this is seen as pre-existing situations where consumers get engaged with other market actors. Hence, it should be an open empirical question rather than a priori assuming the existence of specific forms of agency. In other words, perspectives on the socio-material construction of green consumer agency are lacking in these streams of research. Questions of how agency is awarded in empirical situations become important to address, such as: what it is that enables or hinders consumer agency to be enacted? What capacity to act does these processes bring about? This opens up opportunities for empirical studies of the production of green consumers and how they are attributed with agency.

Thus, instead of assuming a certain set of qualities of the green consumer, I set out to study how these capacities come into being. In this quest, socio-material consumer studies based upon a constructivist and anti-essential approach (e.g. Moisander et al., 2010; Reijonen, 2011) provide the means to examine empirical situations under which consumers may successfully engage in green and political consumption (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2010). From a practice perspective related to consumption, the building of consumer competences, meanings, and involved materiality when engaging in particular practices become important (Shove and Pantzar, 2005). In particular; practices pertaining to consumption as *usage* (Burr, 2013; Warde, 2005), *production* (Finch and Acha, 2008; Hartmann, 2015), and as *exchange* (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007). In relation to exchange practices, for example, a socio-material consumer perspective could contribute with a more balanced perspective on how various market actors come together in the shaping of green consumption in market practices. Thus, it is possible to obtain a deeper understanding of consumer agency by assembling consumption (cf. Canniford and Bajde, 2016) in this way and, thereby, identifying important dimensions on the enabling of consumers to engage in green consumption.

## 1.4. Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of how individuals' capacity to act and do green in different moments of consumption is constituted through socio-material arrangements rather than determined by



the individual consumer's inherent capability. To explore this aim, I will attend to on-going food practices in consumption as usage, production, and exchange, placing a particular focus upon situations and socio-material actors that work to modify and change food practices into becoming green.

The following questions guide my research:

- What do consumers do when engaging in green consumption?
- How do other socio-material actors try to engage consumers to become concerned and to do green?
- How are consumers enabled to produce and consume green food?

The road ahead then is to understand how and what or who enacts green consumption in the context of where food is produced, exchanged, and put to use.

## 1.5. Outline of the Argument

The main argument of this thesis is that green consumption is a collective achievement. This means that consumers' capacity to act and make a difference in the way they consume is dependent upon the performance of multiple socio-material actors that together produce consumption. By attending to on-going practices that work to produce green consumers, I illustrate how consumers are an integral part of this collective achievement: as someone who is both produced and is part of producing green consumption. I further theorize the on-going processes of producing consumers as the agencing and concerning of consumers, whereby consumers get equipped and engaged to do green. I illustrate these practices based upon historical and contemporary cases of what consumers do in everyday life when they engage in green forms of consumption. Green consumers are constituted by a range of socio-material actors that make up the capacity to act and do green in different situations. The capacity of the consumer to do green can, thereby, be seen as constructed by the collective capacities of the involved actors in a practice; this includes both human and non-human actors, where all entities contribute to form its agency.

## 1.6. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is composed as follow. After this introduction to the research field, aim and argument of the thesis, a more detailed perspective of previous research on green consumption is provided. A theoretical framework is then developed by elaborating and outlining the central concepts being employed in this thesis. Next, the methodology and research design are outlined and discussed in conjunction to an introduction of the studied empirical cases. A summary of the different papers that constitute the basis for this thesis then follows. The papers are then discussed in relation to the overall aim of the thesis and its central themes and findings. Lastly, I make some concluding remarks and outline the contributions to theory and practice, in addition to offering suggestions for further research.



# Chapter 2

## Previous Research on the Agency of Green Consumers

I will next direct attention to how the agency of green consumers has previously been portrayed in three major streams of research: consumer behavioural research, socio-cultural consumer research, and socio-material practice research. Consumer agency is portrayed in rather different and sometimes contradictory ways depending upon the chosen research perspective. As I will demonstrate, the role of the consumer becomes reproduced in various disguises: as being either subordinate to market structures or, conversely, as an all-powerful force.

### 2.1 The Agency of Green Consumers in Consumer Behavioural Research

Consumer behavioural research stems from psychological and behavioural economics research. According to Jackson (2005) and Fuentes (2011), the green consumers are herein not seen as constructed; rather, they can be found “out there.” These type of studies primarily take a managerial perspective: where the seller has been assigned the role of a driver for market change by bringing more sustainable and green product offers to the consumer (see e.g. Bezawada and Pauwels, 2013; Lehner, 2015; Sadowski and Buckingham, 2007). From a managerial perspective, researchers have been mainly concerned with trying to identify the so-called green consumer

based either upon demographic characteristics, personal traits or life styles (see, for example, Aslihan and Karakaya, 2014; Berger, 1997; Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Diamantopoulou et al., 2003; Haanpää, 2007; Honkanen et al., 2006; Moser, 2015; Straughan and Roberts, 1999). For example, ethical values and concerns about environmental issues have been identified as a driver for positive attitudes toward buying organic food (Honkanen et al., 2006). Moreover, researchers argue that green commitment is connected to the lifestyle of consumers, rather than based on demographic characteristics (e.g. Haanpää, 2007). In either way, the focus is on detecting consumers' values and attitudes to green products, in addition to calculating consumers' willingness to pay for them. In order to lever a behavioural shift of individual consumers, researchers have tried to model green consumer behaviour on the market by using psychological methods that seek to predict consumers' cognitive capacities in relation to their choices (see, for example, Diamantopoulou et al., 2003; Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008; Grankvist and Biel, 2001; Grunert and Juhl, 1995).

An underlying assumption in this type of research is that consumers will change their values - and, thus, their behaviour - by receiving enough relevant information. The consumer is further assumed to be guided by self-fulfilling goals and can make rational purchase decisions through a conscious processing of information and by the different stimuli the seller provides. However, since the consumer often buys on a routine basis and is not as reflective as he or she might have been the very first time, the consumer is also limited in the reflective and cognitive capacities during the decision-making process. According to Nordfält (2005), the conscious cognitive capacities are also limited since they are subject to non-conscious influences. Researchers have subsequently described the consumer as being inconsistent and irrational, since there is a gap between consumers' attitudes and behaviour toward buying environmental products (e.g. Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Magnusson et al., 2001). Thus, this type of research portrays two sides of the consumer: the first is said to act rationally being conscious of one's needs; and the second does not necessarily use one's cognitive capacities to reflect upon what one buys. This double-sided picture makes the consumer unreliable to predict in accordance to her stated attitudes. This is

in line with what researchers have framed as the attitude-behavioural gap among green consumers.

### 2.1.1 Critique of Consumer Behavioural Research

As a critique against this research perspective, Pedersen and Neergard (2006) argue that the attitude-behavioural gap can be explained by consumers' limited knowledge of the environmental information behind green consumer labels. Meanwhile, consumers also place a subjective meaning to labels related to feelings and emotions rather than its objective content. Some studies point out the difficulty in actually modelling green consumer behaviour (Belz and Peattie, 2009; Pedersen and Neergard, 2006; Padel and Foster, 2005; Frostling-Henningsson, 2010). Moreover, a number of researchers (Nordfält, 2005; Pedersen and Neergard, 2006; Padel and Foster, 2005) have also criticized this traditional type of consumer research for promoting a stereotypical image of the green consumer that does not reveal the full complexity of consumers' buying behaviour and everyday life. Moreover, this perspective does not reveal the full potential of consumers capacity to influence markets, since the green consumer is mainly regarded as the receiver of different stimuli that the seller provides. This provide the consumer with limited possibilities to influence markets other than through one's buying behavior.

Instead of an individual consumer perspective, researchers call for a broader understanding of sustainable consumption as a collective achievement (Shove, 2010; Barnett et al., 2010; Webb, 2012). According to Barnett et al. (2010), a single focus on consumer attitudes and behaviour tends to neglect the collective efforts of consumer campaigns that work to mobilize consumers in order to influence markets and regulators. Some other researchers also argue that green marketing that builds upon an individual consumer perspective only becomes an extension of traditional marketing techniques, which can be counter-productive to the overall goals of sustainability that should better be addressed by collective means (Belz and Peattie, 2009; Moisander, 2001). A more holistic and collective perspective of consumer behaviour is advocated instead: where consumer behaviour is

viewed beyond merely the purchase situation to also acknowledge the social and cultural context and the complexity of real life situations.

Reijonen (2011) has also underlined that this type of research is deterministic in the sense that it is assumed consumers have certain stable essential traits that only need to be found or provoked. Holt (2012) also criticizes the persisting focus upon values and ideologies as losing sight of the structural problems that are making the markets unsustainable, thus, creating unsustainable consumption. Instead, Holt (2012) proposes a market constructivist perspective that could focus upon how specific markets become constructed into ideological lock-ins that hinder sustainability.

In summary, the consumer behavioural perspective reveals a double-sided picture of the consumer: one that is said to act rationally, thus, being conscious of one's needs; and another that does not necessarily use one's cognitive capacities to reflect upon what one buys. The consumers' double nature makes them unreliable to predict according to their stated attitudes. While the capacity to buy green products is constructed based upon individual sentiments and values, this individual perspective does not account for the complexity of consumption in daily life and the possible connections to other consumers, which is seen to potentially restrict consumers' capacity to act. Thus, a too-narrow focus upon the individual consumer's attitudes as determining consumer behaviour tends to lose sight of the market structures and complexity of one's everyday life. This, in turn, seems to shape consumers' agency with regard to buying green products and services. What are the alternatives to the managerial consumer behaviour research? How can social complexity be brought into the picture?

## 2.2 The Agency of Green Consumers in Socio-Cultural Consumer Research

Research on the green consumer from a socio-cultural perspective looks outside the purchasing situation in order to understand consumers' broader socio-cultural context and to reveal consumers' thoughts and daily experiences of engaging in green consumption (e.g. Connolly and Prothero, 2003;

2008; Boström and Klintman, 2009). Green socio-cultural consumer research examines both how and why consumers engage with green and alternative forms of consumption. The identity formation and meaning creation is central to this perspective: in relation to different green activities, products, and services that are maintained through alternative lifestyles and consumer communities.

According to Connolly and Prothero (2008), the consumer engages with environmental issues since this creates meaning for the individual and her identity. For example, green identities could be related to the use of less environmental harmful products, such as non-plastic bags (e.g. Cherrier, 2006). To construct a green identity as a consumer it is critical to contradict the identity to the mainstream consumer cultures, while instead linking it to an alternative form of consumption. As Fuentes (2011) states, the possibility of green products and services to be introduced into consumer cultures, rests upon the ability to respond to critique on the mainstream, and then function as alternative identity makers. Meanwhile, identity is maintained through social relations, which may also challenge an individual's moral beliefs (e.g. Szmigin, Carrigan, and McEachern, 2009). Dilemmas and compromises that arise from being involved in different social relations affect the ability to act according to personal beliefs. Therefore, the green consumer should be studied through the multitude of identities, which the consumer holds in relation to others (Moisander, 2001; 2007). The need to consume commodities that are central to the social relations may lead the consumer to act in apparently inconsistent ways. Thus, this brings in a perspective where consumers' green identity formation may become delimited by the social context.

Meanwhile, the collective and cultural dimension has also been stressed as something that strengthens the consumers' position in relation to the market; this gives consumers a larger dose of agency. In studies related to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), various consumer cultures are formed to creatively renegotiate and co-create the meaning of green products and services. This is related to the experiential dimension of consumption (cf. Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Holt, 1995): consumers are driven to live and consume differently to increase their quality of life, while also saving the planet. Sustainable lifestyles could be related to voluntary simplicity (e.g.



Shaw and Moraes, 2009), community building around food production (Seyfang, 2006 and 2007; Seyfang and Smith, 2007) or engagement in Community Supported Agriculture as a counter-veiling market activity (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Studies on community action for grassroots innovation, however, show that engagement in collective production activities can be the foundation for positive entrepreneurial experiences, rather than an act against consumer cultures or markets (Moraes, Szmigin, and Carrigan, 2010).

Although not directly connected to the green consumer, another emerging stream of research within CCT has started to take an interest in the role of consumers in market formation (e.g. Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007; Giesler, 2008; Martin and Schouten, 2014; Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013). These types of studies have recognized that consumers play a central role in transforming or even creating new markets. In the aforementioned study of community supported agriculture, consumers are shown to resist dominant market mechanisms by re-engaging with producers that do not feed the commercial system in the same way as do, for example, fair-trade or organic labelling (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Still, CSA relies upon the supply of a broader range of products that surrounds the other domains of consumption; this demonstrates that it is difficult or not even necessary to escape markets in order to engage in alternative forms of green consumption (Kozinets, 2002; Arnould, 2007).

A more critical sociological and cultural perspective regards consumers as being governed by other market actors, which become part of an increased responsabilization of consumers and a moralization of markets (see e.g. Giesler and Veresiu, 2014; Halkier et al., 2007; Lockie, 2009; Moisander et al., 2010). This is described as a consequence of the increased individualization and globalization in society: where individuals feel responsible for handling environmental risks in the globalized modern society (Connolly and Prothero, 2008; Giddens, 1991). People become more reflective through individualization, where they also think more critically of how they act (Boström and Klintman, 2009). They have a feeling of being empowered; however, they also experience ambivalence and uncertainty of knowing how to act in the right way (Connolly and Prothero, 2008). This can be interpreted as an outcome of feeling individually responsible for the prob-

lems as well as the solutions. However, as Barnett et al., (2010) underlined, the responsabilization should not be seen primarily as part of the general trend toward individualization; rather, it is the result of strategic campaigning by various action groups and policy makers that strive to bring ordinary consumption to the political table. Giesler and Veresiu (2014) have a similar perspective on the responsabilization of consumers, but highlight the neo-liberal logic as a discourse being held up primarily by the economic elite that promote markets as a solution where market actors develop self-help tools for consumers (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014). This stream of research determines consumer agency to be rather limited and subordinate to the overarching structures and discourses.

Taken together, it is possible to detect two somewhat contradictory types of the green consumer from a socio-cultural perspective: green products and services are regarded as being useful and meaningful for the creation of a consumer's identity in that they position consumers as being active users and drivers of market products and services. Meanwhile, the very same green market offers can be seen as a way to control consumers through the creation of socio-cultural discourses, which govern and participate in constructing responsible green consumer subjects. This, in the end, makes consumers subordinate and passive in relation to overarching discourses and market structures.

### 2.2.1 Critique of Socio-Cultural Consumer Research

While socio-cultural consumer research brings complexity into the picture by acknowledging the collective and socio-cultural nature of green consumption, it also tends to reproduce a rather essentialist and, thus, deterministic view of consumer agency. Depending upon the chosen perspective, the consumer is either portrayed as being active or passive in relation to the market and larger discourses that shape their space of action. As Cochoy et al. argue (2016, p. 5), the two opposing camps of behavioural consumer research based upon experimental cognitive psychology, and on the anthropologically driven inquiries into consumer cultures, appear very similar in how they tend to reproduce "two distinct versions of the same narrative." They both assume that consumers exist as stable predefined actors: "whose behaviour is either hardwired in their brains, or is (to be) ex-

plained by their position in communities, networks, and cultures“ (Cochoy et al., 2016, p. 5).

According to Reijonen (2011), the inherent problem in these perspectives is that active green consumers are already assumed to exist with different capacities at the outset of the study. Thus, as a researcher one should not a priori assume certain characteristics of actors; instead, these are results of on-going market practices (Cochoy, 2014). Alternatively, as expressed by Bajde (2013) by referring to Kjellberg (2008): “An a priori splitting of the world into active subjects and passive objects closes off the possibility of alternative enactments of consumption in theory and practice” (Bajde, 2013, p. 235). Similarly, Harrison and Kjellberg (2016) argue that earlier research on users in market shaping does not account for all the possible user-market relationships, which diminishes the potential user roles in market dynamics since these studies relies upon a rather limited understanding of what market shaping can imply in practice (see e.g. Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007). Meanwhile, Harrison and Kjellberg (2016) claim that previous research on consumer/user capacities to concurrently shape markets is greatly exaggerated since there is often an assumption made that users are the same as buyers/customers, which would render users as stabilized market agents already equipped with a capacity to act.

There is a call for studies that seriously consider the materiality involved in consumption and market making (Moisander, 2007; Reijonen, 2011; Bajde, 2013; Fuentes, 2014). Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, and Malpass (2010) suggest that, in order to ground the over-arching discourses, there is a need to raise an understanding for how consumption is embedded in practices that work to reconfigure and change courses of actions. Material objects and devices can here be seen as a means to provoke reflections upon discourses, since this is when our routines are rendered “in some way problematic or in doubt” (Tully, 1989, p. 196 in Barnett et al., 2010). This is precisely when renegotiations of meanings come into being. In this way, the problematization through practices and materiality become important to acknowledge. Moreover, a socio-material perspective could shed light on how values related to sustainability are materially constructed into situated market practices: in conjunction to consumption (Shove and Araujo, 2010; Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2010).

In conclusion, studies within socio-cultural consumer research are found to often depart from a more or less essential stance that consumers are either active or passive actors in the market. Moreover, studies on green consumption in socio-cultural research include important dimensions in the understanding of what green products and services mean for consumers. However, there is a lack of studies from a socio-material perspective, which could highlight what material objects also do with consumption. Hence, there is a need for research that looks into how consumers take part in establishing markets and green consumption through practices that integrate both material and social dimensions in order to reach ontological symmetry (Bajde, 2013).

I have identified constructivist market studies based on a practice approach as means to study how specific versions of green become constructed in markets and consumption (see e.g. Reijonen and Tryggstad, 2012). This could also lead to a better understanding of the situated and distributed agency of consumers. To complement earlier perspectives on the socio-cultural dimension of green consumption, I also bring in a socio-material practice approach on consumption. How, then, has such practice perspectives been used to study the green consumer's ability to act?

### 2.3 The Agency of Green Consumers in Socio-Material Practice Research

The application of practice theory to sustainability issues was initially used as a counter-reaction to the dominant field of attitude, behaviour, and consumer choice (Shove, 2010). A practice theoretical thinking has increasingly informed studies of consumer behavioural change toward more environmentally friendly practices: where a focus on practices facilitates an understanding of how food or energy demand is created in daily practice (e.g. Halkier, 2010; Hargreaves, 2011; Butler et al., 2014; Paddock, 2015).

Consumption is studied herein from a socio-material practice approach, which pays particular attention to ordinary everyday consumption and the materiality involved in performing particular practices (e.g. Gronow and Warde, 2001; Shove and Pantzar, 2005). Even though studies in this prac-

tice approach acknowledge the necessary material dimension in performing green practices (e.g. Marres, 2011; Ozaki and Shaw, 2014; Holttinen, 2014), not all studies attribute material objects with agency to steer practices. Instead, humans are regarded as the primal performers and carriers of various practices (Reckwitz, 2002). One strand of practice research that is inspired by theoretical ideas of Science and Technology Studies (STS) has however seriously considered the role of materiality in consumption by considering the co-constitution of practices involving objects, competence, and meanings (Shove and Pantzar, 2005; Ingram et al., 2007; Araujo and Shove, 2010).

By investigating how new technology and material dimensions do or do not transform existing practices (Ropke and Christensen, 2013; Yli-Kauhaluoma, Pantzar and Toyoki, 2013), the materiality of practices has been applied to issues of sustainability (Shove and Spurling, 2013). As Shove (2010) argued, societal transformations toward sustainability would not only require an introduction of new technologies; it would also involve a mixture of “new markets, user practices, regulations, infrastructures, and cultural meanings” in a co-evolving provisioning system (Elzen et al., 2004, p. 1 in Shove, 2010, p. 1278). With such an approach, consumer behaviour is located within the system and is part of changing it, rather than something that is located outside, which needs to be changed through the system. The agency of the consumer is, therefore, seen as constituted by the internal providing system, which decentres the consumers’ capacity as the primal source of change (Barnett et al. 2010; Halkier, 2010). Moreover, a practice perspective acknowledges the inter-relationships between different forms of practices in consumers’ everyday lives where consumption is seen as a moment in almost every single practice and, thus, not seen as a practice in itself (Warde, 2005). To change consumption would, therefore, require a focus on other practices that bring about different forms of consumption: for example food practices, travelling practices, and/or marketing practices.

Constructivist market studies that focus upon the socio-material organization of markets (Callon, 1998) is yet another practice approach that could be applied to the study of green consumers. Traditionally, green consumption has not been a central theme in market studies; however, there is an emerging strand of research that hinges upon what can be called politi-

cal, green consumption and marketing. For example, studies have been conducted on the problem of over-consumption (Kjellberg, 2008), political marketing (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2010), and different modes of exchange for fair trade (Neyland and Simakova, 2010). There is also a greener vein of research with a focus upon the greening of markets (Reijonen, 2008 and 2011; Reijonen and Tryggestad, 2012): green retailing, marketing, and seeing products as meaningful artefacts to consumers (Fuentes, 2011; 2014; 2015ab), in addition to devices for sustainable waste management (Finch and Reid, 2014). Moreover, an edited volume on the theme of “Concerned Markets” brings different matters of concerns to the forefront (Geiger, Harrison, Kjellberg, and Mallard, 2014).

The notion of agency is a central theme in market studies (for example, see Callon, 2007; Cochoy et al., 2015). This research suggests that a focus on individual agents, such as the consumer, poses problems of distinguishing sources of action: stemming from individuals or from its surrounding structure. To get around this problem, the notion of individual agencies or rather ‘agencements’ is introduced; this can be seen as a form of actor-network (Callon, 2008). From this perspective, consumers’ agency is regarded as being distributed between a heterogeneous set of social and material actors on the market (Callon, 2008). For example, seemingly simple consumer in-store choices could be seen as being made up of a set of heterogeneous actors - such as store layout, quality labels, price, advertisements, and recommendations from friends: all of which participate in calculating the different choice alternatives (ibid). Thus, the agency of the consumer can be seen as created through a network of actors, rather than being an inherent capacity of the individual consumer.

### 2.3.1 Critique of Socio-Material Practice Research

In practice studies of consumption, Barnett et al. (2010) have noted the difficulty in striking a balance between the expert-led efforts to change practices and the means to include those affected by the change as participants in the process. The authors argue that despite Shove’s assertion that her system-based practice approach implies a collective restructuring of habits, they come to question whether that simply means “changing collectively held expectations and habits, or whether and how it might extend to find-

ing ways of doing so collectively” (Barnett et al., 2010: p. 76). The authors further claim that this is reflected even more broadly in practice-based understandings that tend to “reproduce and reverse the dichotomy between habitually reproduced mute practices and consciously deliberate action” (ibid). They subsequently identify a need for more research on how to extend the opportunities for participation in the changing of practices.

While the constructivist market studies approach evidently has a rich tradition in market studies articulating the mutual configuration of actors and market practices (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010), there is a general lack of research that acknowledges the different roles and practices of users and consumers in the creation and shaping of markets (Harrison and Kjellberg, 2016). The lack of a consumer perspective gives the impression that consumers compared to the other actors - such as marketers and material objects (e.g. Cochoy, 2007; 2008; 2010) - are relatively absent in the shaping of markets. Moreover, there is a dismissal of how consumers are deliberately rendered capable and collectively made part of constructing markets and configuring actors (Barnett et al., 2010). As a consequence, we run the risk of depreciating the role of consumers in shaping the situations that constitute green consumption. In this vein, Reijonen (2011) also stresses the need for more process-oriented studies that do not a priori assume certain agencies; rather, processes could uncover the situated consumer actions in socio-material settings that work to constitute the green consumer.

In summary, a socio-material practice perspective provides a promising avenue to better understand the agency of consumers to do green. For example, previous studies on practices related to consumption have discerned how the demand for energy and other resources are created in everyday life, which can inform sustainability policies on behavioural change. A socio-materialistic perspective also improves the understanding for the integration of materiality in the collective performance of daily practices and provisioning systems, which work to decentre human agency to see consumption more as a collective achievement. As consumption is considered to be a result of other practices rather than a practice in itself, it becomes important to direct attention to the practices in which consumption is formed. Therefore, market practices become relevant to study in relation to consumption: where the notion of agencement provides a means to bet-

ter understand how consumer agency is distributed between socio-material market actors. The potential roles of consumers in shaping market practices, however, have not yet been fully understood. Questions remain regarding how consumers become capable to collectively take part in configuring actors and shaping the situations that constitute more green forms of consumption. How are consumers rendered capable to actively take part in producing greener consumption? To explore this question I will next develop a theoretical framework based on a socio-material practice perspective.





# Chapter 3

## Agencing and Concerning Consumers: a Socio-Material Practice Perspective

The theoretical framework of the thesis centre around the concepts of agencing and concerning consumers. Agencing and concerning are proposed as two reciprocal processes where concerning works as a driver for agencing efforts, while agencing processes also drive the formation of new matters of concern. These processes are in turn conceptualized from a socio-material practice perspective with a special attentiveness to consumption and market studies. How practices related to consumption may change is theorized through the notion of agencing, where also junctions and different forms of mediations are used to explain practice change toward greener consumption.

### 3.1 Agencing Consumers: Producing Consumers Equipped for New Situations

The consumers' capacity to act – that is to say, agency - is understood in light of the research in constructivist market studies (e.g. Araujo 2007;

Azimont and Araujo, 2007; Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006; 2007), thus, stemming from Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (e.g. Callon and Latour, 1981; Callon and Law, 1997; Callon, 1998; Latour, 2005). In this tradition, the notion of agency is broadened through the introduction of agencement (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998), which is a concept used to capture specific arrangements endowed with a capacity to act that consists not only of human, but also of material entities (Çalışkan and Callon, 2010; Callon, 2007; 2008; Latour, 2005).

The STS take on the notion of agency, thus, marks a shift away from primarily human's capacity to act, as previously described in practice theories related to consumption (Barnett et al., 2010; Halkier, 2010; Warde, 2005). Instead, it views the agency of actors as being distributed between materially heterogeneous entities in a network that collectively produces specific agencements (Bowker and Star, 1999; Latour, 2005). The principle of actor-networks and their distributed agency, as is conceptualized in ANT, should not be confused with the conceptualization of social networks in economic sociology, for example. Such social networks conceive of pre-existing individuals and organizations as embedded in relational systems mapped as networks with different strength of ties (cf. Granovetter 1985). In contrast, actor-network theory conceives of each actor as a network constituted by a number of heterogeneous entities that collectively makes up its capacity to act (Latour, 2005). How can this principle of distributed agency be understood and conceptualized in the area of consumption?

### 3.1.1 Consumer Agency as Distributed Action in Networks

Cooking of spaghetti carbonara is a simple and practical example that illustrates how distributed agency can be understood in relation to consumption. Preparing this particular dish can be seen as distributed among several actors; it not only depends upon access to the required ingredients (spaghetti, ham, egg, cream, pepper, and so on); it also requires a number of different kitchen utensils (a stove, pot, sieve to rinse the spaghetti, and so on). Knowledge and skills of how to cook it are also needed, which might be derived from cookbooks, friends, or family members. As Cochoy, Trompette and Araujo (2016, p. 5) state: "All these artifacts are not static

backdrops to action; they partake in action". Thus, everything act together where the individual chef is as much a part of performing the dish, as are the other actors.

Meanwhile, the individual is also a representative for the actor-network; this is similar to how a trade union leader speaks for the workers (Callon and Law, 1997). For example, when the chef that has prepared the spaghetti carbonara, declares: "dinner is ready!" then he or she becomes a spokesperson for the assembled network of actors. Therefore, the agential arrangement is both collective and individual (*ibid*). According to Callon and Law (1997), relatively stable arrangements represent the network as an entity. The various elements then converge into one actor-network of cooking spaghetti carbonara. Similarly, the consumer who performs a seemingly simple decision in the store is one who is often seen as responsible for the choice he/she makes: for example, choosing between different packages of ham. Meanwhile, there are also many other entities (price tags, shelves, similar products, advertisements, recommendations from friends, and so on) that also participate in the decision (Callon, 2008; Latour, 2005).

The realization of particular goals – in this case, eating spaghetti carbonara - necessarily produces effects other than getting food on the table that, in turn, can nurture matters of concern (Latour, 2004): for example, food waste, obesity, or an awareness of the cruel treatment of the animals that may have been necessary in order to prepare the dish. In addition, actors may sometimes fail to deliver what is required of them (due to a lack of memory or competence, for example), or specific elements can become replaced due to changed meanings of the dish. This does not necessarily disturb the overall performance of the dish: for example, exchanging ham for a vegetarian alternative. Taken together, the continuous performance of an act opens up for multiple actor constellations. The specific performance of the dish depends upon a number of interconnected actors that constantly work to either become arranged and kept together, or re-arranged into a new network assemblage being adapted to some other specific goal. This might seem like a subtle change of perspective; however, it has at least three important implications for understanding the consumers' capacity to act.

First, consumer agency is an effect of the collective efforts of various socio-material actors that work to produce specific outcomes: for example, the ability to travel in a climate friendly way, or eat organic food. Therefore, green consumption should not primarily be regarded as a question of choices for individuals who are confronting various faceless options. Rather, it should also encompass the history of all the different decisions of multiple actors that went into making the various choice options. Secondly, consumer agency is performed in action, which renders individual incentives or attitudes less important. This brings about an anti-essential view of agency, which means that the capacity to act is configured and performed in specific situations, rather than being an inherent and stabilized quality of the consumer. This positions consumer agency as connected to a broader network of entities that mediate and equip the consumer to act in specific situations. The outcome is however always uncertain (Reijonen and Tryggestad, 2012), which requires actors to continuously work to realize specific outcomes. Thirdly, consumers as individuals constitute an important point in the network that can be seen to act upon the network by coordinating and translating it into a single unit (Callon and Law, 1997). In this way, the actor-network flows through the individual, whereby it becomes unified into a specific version subsumed under the umbrella of the individual consumer (Andersson et al., 2008).

An important implication of this last point is that the individual does not need to act upon the network in a predictable and pre-determined way. As Cochoy et al. (2016) state, human and non-human entities complement each other in the actor-network. These entities can participate in different actor configurations, which produces different outcomes, sometimes leading to unintended consequences. The notion of agencement here maintains symmetry between human and non-human agencies by not *à priori* giving preferential treatment to a certain class of entities; rather, it focuses “on action wherever it comes from” (McFall, 2014 in Cochoy et al., 2016, p. 5). Thus, the individual and the network act together as a collective and, therefore, must be studied in relation to each other. By being attentive to the processes and links that work to connect consumer action to the wider network of entities, different dualities - such as individual-collective and consumer-market - also become bridged, thus, bringing about a flattened

perspective on consumer agency (Latour, 2005; Bajde, 2013). To obtain a flattened understanding of consumer agency, it then becomes necessary to direct attention to the multiple actors and processes that work to produce consumers' capacity to act in any given situation. How, then, can one conceptualize these processes through which consumer agency is being acquired?

### 3.1.2 Gaining a Capacity to Act: Going From Agencement to Agencing

One way of studying the building of consumer capacities to act is to focus upon the construction of agencement in consumption. According to Callon (2007), agencements can be defined as “arrangements endowed with the capacity of acting in different ways depending on their configuration” (Callon, 2007, p. 320). Agencement originally denotes both processes of assembling configurations and the resulting outcome. There is, however, a recent move within market studies to use the verb agencing to better capture the processes involved in arranging agencements and how agency becomes constructed in practical situations (Cochoy and Trompette, 2013; Cochoy et al., 2016; Hagberg, 2015). From a market studies perspective, Cochoy et al. (2016, 6) define agencing as:

The agencing neologism, coming from the French verb ‘agencer,’ means both arranging market entities (agencing as producing specific agencements) and putting them in motion (agencing as ‘giving agency,’ that is, converting people, non-human entities or ‘hybrid collectives’) into active agents, or rather actors (Callon and Law 1995, 1997).

Hence, agencing goes beyond the notion of agencement by stressing the processes of arranging agencies, rather than focusing upon stable configurations of agencement (Cochoy et al., 2016). This perspective paves the way for studying the processes in which consumers become equipped with agency being adapted to new situations. However, Cochoy et al. (2016) also stresses, it becomes important to acknowledge that such agencing efforts necessarily lead to asymmetries and differences that come to the fore in other places, which may create overflows (Czarniawska and Löfgren 2013). For example, an apparel factory do not only produce clothes in different

colours and shapes, but may also produce toxic emissions that colour and contaminate the nearby rivers. This, in turn, spurs the emergence of different matters of concern (Latour, 2004), which is rendered visible through different concerned actors in many areas of society, not the least in relation to markets and consumption (Geiger et al., 2014). The production of unintended consequences as part of agencing efforts and the related emergence of matters of concern begs the question how such effects can be incorporated into a conceptualization of agencing.

## 3.2 Concerning Consumers: Matters of Concern as Driving Agencing Efforts

As agencing efforts to equip actors also may lead to asymmetries elsewhere, these efforts may spur other matters of concerns to come to the fore (Cochoy et al., 2016). Meanwhile, arising matters of concern that are rendered visible through processes of concerning (Mallard, 2016) may provoke actors to engage in new agencing activities. This could, for example, involve efforts to come to terms with factory emissions leaking into rivers. These iterative processes are, thus, interlinked and can together explain how processes of change from one stabilized assemblage of entities may lead to the formation of new ones. In this section, the notion of concerning is presented and conceptualized in relation to agencing processes.

### 3.2.1 Agencing and Concerning as Linked to Framing and Overflowing

To begin, the reciprocal relationship of agencing and concerning is closely associated to the notions of framing and overflowing (Callon, 1998; Czarniawska and Löfgren, 2013). Framing, originally coined by Goffman (1974) and interpreted by Callon (1998), implies “a multidimensional boundary inside of which interactions can take place independently of their surrounding context” (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009, 202). However, framings are susceptible to break due to their fragile construction, which require on-going efforts and investments to keep the boundaries intact. Meanwhile, the elements included in the frame all constitute channels to the outside world,

which threaten to disturb the activities within the frame. These disturbances incite overflows that counteract the frame. In this way, the notion of agencing is linked to framing activities that try to stabilize new forms of agencements, while concerning processes work to capture and visualize overflows that may arise from such framings. Agencing efforts may then reoccur by trying to internalize overflows into the frame of established agencements.

An example of these reoccurring processes can be drawn from the fairly recent situation in post-war contemporary western society, which went from relative scarcity to an abundance of resources. Until now, this transition caused different types of overflows and problems of coping with excess (Czarniawska and Löfgren, 2012; 2013). Not long ago - that is to say, during the Second World War - scarcity of resources was the problem, and wants and demands needed to be managed and kept in check. During these times, people dreamed of a more affluent future with an overflow of resources (Czarniawska and Löfgren, 2013). This is entirely understandable; anyone would in similar circumstances. As Czarniawska and Löfgren (2013, p. 4) write: "Who could perceive such a blissful state of overflow to be a problem? And why would they? Or, rather, when do such perceptions change?" Thus, a historical perspective on consumer society reveals a continuous redefinition of scarcity and abundance as the causes for different concerns. This can be regarded as a process that, in turn, spurs new agencing efforts to frame the situation in order to be able to cope. The question, then, is how these redefinitions and changed concerns come about?

### 3.2.2 Becoming Concerned: Going From Matter of Facts, to Matter of Concern, to Concerning

Geiger et al., (2014) highlight the processes that one becomes concerned about particular matters as being especially important in political science. These are constitutive in order for the emerging public issues to be addressed in politics; thus, they are also necessary in order to maintain a democratic order (cf. Dewey's, 1927). Compared to politics, as the set of tools, institutions and practices set out to govern the democratic order; the processes of concerning would be confined to the political work as in the 'spaces for disagreement and negotiation' (Barry, 2002; Geiger et al., 2014,



p. 2). Moreover, as Asdal (2008) notes, these negotiations do not necessarily need to take place where we expect them to: that is to say, within the frames of politics; however, they are more often part of the ordinary places and spaces that are directly related to us – such as within markets and consumption.

Latour (2004) compares these places of negotiation to the ancient Nordic use of the word *thing*: a place of district court sessions where people gathered to dispute matters of concern, before these issues became matters of fact. Therefore, it is with a twist of irony that the very same word for the places of those heated debates - the thing - now represents something already cooled down: as things “out there” that are already taken for granted. Latour argues that, in order not to lose connection with those things that now flourish as facts, we need to return to the processes and matters of concerns that produced those said facts. This is not to critically punctuate facts as being mere social constructions; rather, it is to regain a critical steam to the issues that concern us in order to visualize, treasure and, thus, strengthen their construction. In the current context of consumer agencing, this line of reasoning raises questions about how concerned actors come into being.

To better understand the work of making concerned actors, it becomes important to acknowledge the collective nature of creating concerns (de la Bellacasa, 2011). Matters of concern can be distinguished from individual interests, as they deal with issues of public concern. According to Callon (2007), the development of concerns emerges through the work of multiple entities, which involve the appearance of new identities as emergent concerned groups. Matters of concern then provide the means to connect and bind members of such groups together, to develop common actions. That which may be troublesome to someone is spread through the effort of relating this issue to others and influence them to also become troubled who, in turn, may spread this to others (Geiger et al., 2014). This process of concerning simultaneously work to configure those other entities and actors that yet have nothing about which to be concerned. As actors become allied in their concerns and recognized by each other, they appear as one actor with an amplified voice (cf. Andersson et al., 2008).

Concerns can be defined as “those things and situations that – for better or for worse – are related to us, can affect us and worry us” Geiger et al. (2014, p. 2). Thereby, three dimensions of the notion of concern become emphasized: worrying, relating, and influencing. To better capture the processes of creating concerns, I employ the verb concerning. In a market context, this refers to:

...the collective process through which a variety of stakeholders (public authorities, suppliers, consumers, NGOs, and so on) contribute to shape the resources that make market transactions compatible with these matters of concern (Mallard, 2016, p. 56-57).

Mallard also draws on Geiger et al (2014) in conceptualizing these processes as including acts of the following: 1) worrying - including the creation of public debates to make visible social and political problems associated with economic activity; 2) relating - including the linking of the economic to the non-economic; 3) and influencing – including transformations of markets in order to handle non-economic issues. However, this last point can also be seen as belonging to the processes of agencing, which involves the re-framing of boundaries that enable the concerns to be taken into account. Thus, concerning processes enable a tracing of the multiple actors who are subject to common influences through a matter of concern (Geiger et al. 2014): the work done to circulate, share, and enrol others in actions that respond to these concerns. How, then, do matters of concern come to the fore in markets and consumption?

### 3.2.3 The Emergence of Concerns at the Boundary Between the Economic and the Social

The social and economic are entangled in markets (Callon, 2007). This entanglement initiates a plurality of new kinds of social relations in which the political and economic concerns continuously become articulated and revised (Callon 2009; Cochoy et al., 2016). In this respect, markets can be regarded as on-going collective experiments, since concerns are part of the very mechanisms of which markets are continually constituted (Callon, 2007, 2009). As Callon (2009) states:

Mechanisms are set up to identify the effects produced, the bugs encountered, and the reactions triggered, so that they can be taken into account and the architecture of the markets under experimentation altered. (Callon, 2009, p. 537).

These market experiments may take place both in laboratory settings - for example, in economic theories - as well as in scale-one “real” markets, such as stock-market exchanges (Callon, 2009). Since markets can be seen as emergent economic orders based upon on-going efforts to internalize matters of concern, there are no “natural forces” that can pre-determine the outcome of market exchanges. The result of the experiment is always uncertain. Experimenting is, thereby, performed in processes of trial and error, whereby emerging matters of concern are continuously taken into account.

The social and economic are related through markets: where framing activities creating certain boundaries between the social and economic stipulate the relationship between them (Geiger et al., 2014). After all, the boundary between what is taken into consideration and what is not, is that which makes markets function in the first place. However, it is also in relation to the very same boundaries that matters of concern arise (Callon et al., 2009; Latour, 2004). These market boundaries represent an assembling point for concerned groups who seek to trouble the market space by rendering matters of concern visible to other actors (Geiger et al., 2014). At the same time, the matter of concern works to visualize the concerned actors as a network, which become allied around the matter of concern. In this way, the process of concerning - where overflows are rendered visible - is also a process of “boundary work”, which involves efforts to draw and redraw the frames for the different agencements in the market (Mallard, 2016).

The boundary work that frames market politics into particular agencements is not restricted to market professionals and politicians alone; however, this is also something that concerns and engages us all in our daily dealings as both consumers and citizens (Cochoy et al., 2016). Thus, several actors can argue a need for change and for new forms of market and consumer action (De Certeau, 1998; Geiger et al., 2014). This works to circulate concerns across the social and the economic, and between

consumption and markets. Both as concerned actors and as targets for change, consumers are part of the on-going experiments in the “concerned markets”. Herein, the participants try to develop democratic and technical ways to balance the social and economic in morally and politically equitable combinations (Geiger et al., 2014; Cochoy et al., 2016). In order to ground the circulating processes of agencing and concerning into something more tangible, I will turn to a practice theoretical perspective.

### 3.3 A Practice Perspective on Agencing and Concerning Consumers

As a means of studying the processes of concerning and agencing consumers, I will attend to situated practices performed in relation to different moments of consumption. In doing so, I will primarily rely upon the conception of socio-material practices as developed within consumption and market studies: two separate, yet inter-related, streams of practice research. I will first review different conceptions of practice within social science, and the relative weight these perspectives place on materiality. I then introduce how a practice approach has been manifested within consumption studies, as well as within market studies. Thereafter, I will frame the different elements of practice in relation to markets and consumption, and discuss how these can be used to study the agencing of consumers.

#### 3.3.1 Practice Theories in the Social Sciences

Practices form the basis for a growing number of social science approaches that turn away from the individual vs structure dualism towards viewing social action as located in practices (Schatzki, Knorr, Cetina, and Savigny, 2001). According to Reckwitz (2002), the social is not placed in mere mental qualities, discourses, or interaction; instead, it is found in practices. Although practice theories are quite disperse and do not represent a unified body of thought, a shared interest among practice approaches lies in the performance or practical instantiation of mundane and everyday activities (e.g. Gronow and Warde, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002). Reckwitz (2002, pp. 249-250) makes a useful distinction between practice (praxis) and practices

(praktik) in order to more specifically conceptualize what it is that makes up a practice. Practice (praxis) is a way of describing “the whole of human action (in contrast to ‘theory’ and mere thinking)”. Conversely, practices (praktik) as a theory of social practice are defined as follows:

A routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of others, etc. – forms so to speak a ‘block’ whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements. (Reckwitz, 2002, pp. 249-250).

Practices, thereby, consist of specific patterns composed of multiple and unique actions that, together, (re)produce them. The individual is seen as a bodily and mental agent who acts as a “carrier” of a practice, which should also be coordinated with many other practices that take place in everyday life (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). The individual performer of a practice, however, is not only a carrier of behavioural patterns, it also carries “certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how, and desiring” (ibid). However, these elements are seen as traits of the practice, not of the individual participating in the practice.

This implies a similarity to the notion of actor-networks within and through which individuals act. However, there is a difference in how a practice is perceived compared to an actor-network: where practice theories tend to stress the habits, routines, and shared understandings that make up a practice (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002); actor-networks are always seen as constituted in specific situations that thus render them dynamic. Nevertheless, practice perspectives also acknowledge variations in the performance of practices, reflecting varying levels of commitment and competence on the part of practitioners (Warde, 2005). While this has led to some studies of changes in practices (see, for example, Bjørkeng, Clegg, and Pitsis, 2009; Pickering, 1993 and 2001; Schatzki, 2013), Gherardi (2015) argues that the notion of agencement has proven to be a blind spot to practice theorists.

Agencement is suggested to help practice researchers to better account for processes of becoming through which multiple human and non-human actors and resources become assembled into a practice (Gherardi, 2015). How, then, have practice theories accounted for the non-human, material dimension of practices?

### 3.3.2 A Socio-Material Practice Perspective

The role that material actors play in a practice has been referred to as a dividing line between different practice approaches (Fuentes, 2011). By definition, even though human and non-human elements can be seen as being given equal importance (cf. Reckwitz, 2002), the significance of material elements, however, is often stressed in different ways depending upon the chosen research perspective.

A social science practice approach would stress the human actors as carriers of practice (Reckwitz, 2002) by reproducing as a set of established understandings, procedures, and engagements. According to Halkier (2010), these work implicitly to govern the practice into routines. Practices are also generally viewed as being constructed and reproduced by the human actors involved in a practice: where collective learning and experience in the building of capacities become important (Warde, 2005). A socio-material practice approach would conversely see competence: not only as a human characteristic, but also as “distributed between practitioners and the objects they use” (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010, p. 1029). Similar to this, the material and social constitute each other and come into being as a single phenomenon entangled as ‘sociomaterial’ (Orlikowski, 2007): where the material is social and vice-versa (Gherardi, 2012). Or, as Orlikowski (2007, p. 1437) says: “The social and the material are considered to be inextricably related – there is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social”. Thus, the social and material constitute each other in practice, through which agency also become configured (Gherardi, 2012).

A socio-material perspective would, thus, not view individual agency as an essential human characteristic built up through previous experience, but as configured through multiple acting entities, including material objects, that together construct a practice (Andersson et al., 2008; Hagberg, 2010). Therefore, material objects are given an active role in enabling or obstruct-

ing practices (Fuentes, 2011). I adopt a socio-material perspective to practices in order to more fully understand what it is that constructs consumers' capacity to act and how different socio-material elements of a practice are involved in this process. In so doing, I will draw upon practice research developed in studies of consumption and markets. Therefore, in which ways has consumption been studied from a practice perspective?

### 3.3.3 Practice Theory in Consumption Studies

Socio-cultural empirical inquiries into what people do when they consume initially formed the foundation for a field of study called consumption practice (Holt, 1995). Consumption practice was a concept that was primarily used to describe consumers' actions and dispositions of the self toward consumption objects. From this perspective, consumption is argued to be not only constituted by a process that uses up materials; rather, it was seen as "a type of social action in which people make use of consumption objects in a variety of ways" (Holt, 1995, p. 1). A typology of four inter-related practices was proposed where, for example, consumption is performed as an integration of the object and the self, as experience and as play (Holt, 1995). This stream of research is part of interpretive consumer research that primarily view cultural meanings as explanations for consumption (Arnould and Thompson, 2005).

Critical voices regard this field to have upheld the individual consumer as an "active, expressive, choosing consumer motivated by concerns for personal identity and a fashioned lifestyle" (Warde, 2014, p. 283). Meanwhile, an increasing number of scholars turned to a sociological and materially oriented practice perspective in consumption, stressing the routine, mundane character of ordinary consumption based upon practical competence, embodiment, materiality, and meanings (Gronow and Warde, 2001; Shove and Pantzar, 2005; Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012; Warde, 2005). A return to consumption as using material and natural resources in mundane activities also held particular interest for studies on environmental degradation and sustainability (e.g. Shove, 2010; Shove and Spurling, 2013). According to Warde (2005), consumption should not be viewed as a practice in itself; rather, it should be seen as an element in almost any type of practice in our everyday lives: for example, where practices of cleaning,

cooking or keeping oneself warm or cool gives rise to moments of consumption. Consumption, then, is seen as an effect of all other practices in which consumers engage throughout their everyday life.

The positioning of consumption as an outcome of other practices is in line with the anti-essential stance that actors are results (Kjellberg, 2008); this implies that acts of consumption adopt different forms depending upon the situation in they are performed. Categories of different forms of consumption would need to be treated in relation to the practices that constitute them (*ibid*). This makes it difficult to *à priori* define of what consumption consists. Warde (2005), however, makes a distinction of practices related to consumption depending upon how it is performed: consumption *as purchase* and consumption *as usage*. The former notion of consumption has been relatively less researched within practice approach to consumption: where consumption as usage and the notion of appropriation as non-market exchange has been stressed. Appropriation captures the domesticating and use of consumer goods in which items become incorporated in and used for practical purposes (Warde, 2014).

Warde (2005) goes on to broadly define consumption as:

“a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian, expressive or contemplative purposes, of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion” (Warde 2005, p. 137).

Thus, this definition pre-supposes an already active agent endowed with some degree of agency to choose, appropriate, and appreciate whatever is consumed. Based upon a distributed view of agency (Bowker and Star, 1999; Latour, 2005), agents should be conceived as “provisional outcomes, as collectives, or networks of associated materials” (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009, p. 207).

I extend Warde’s conceptualization, which is in line with Araujo and Kjellberg (2009), Kjellberg (2008) and Andersson et al., (2008), by directing attention to how actants –heterogeneous elements involved in acts of consumption - work to produce the consumer as an agent equipped for a specific situation. Thus, I understand practices related to consumption as a process whereby socio-material actants - defined as whatever acts in a prac-



tical situation - become aggregated and attributed as an agent able to consume. Such a view of consumption and the consumer keeps the outcome of the process open for empirical inquiries, while necessitating constant questioning of how different categories - such as consumption and consumers - become (re) produced (Canniford and Bajde, 2016).

Such a perspective posits that processes of consumption in which the consumer acts, must acknowledge the contribution of other agents in processes of consumption: such as material devices and tools in markets, marketing and consumption theories, and so on. This way, studying consumption and the consumer should not be treated in the same way; as Cochoy et al. (2016) point out, this is done so often in consumer research. Rather, in order to better understand their complex integration, they must be treated as two distinct categories that mutually shape each other. The capacity of the consumer to engage in different forms of consumption is, thereby, seen as distributed across actor-networks; this, in turn, are outcomes of different, and sometimes overlapping, practices that constitute forms of consumption (figure 1).

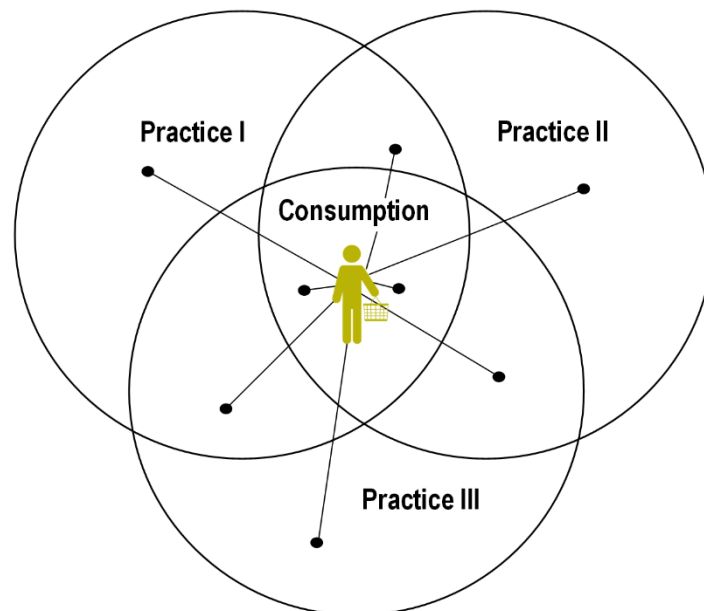


Figure 1: Consumer actor-network in consumption as constituted by elements distributed in various practices.

Consumption as purchasing food, for example, is integrated with the practices of cooking as well as practices of travelling to the shop, in addition to the exchange practices in store. The capacity to make an in-store decision thus depends upon a number of heterogeneous elements that are involved in those practices: the recipes used for cooking, shopping lists designating what to buy, means of transportation that determine how to carry the food home, in addition to the various offerings in store. To better understand how especially market practices contribute to shape consumption, I will now turn to how practice theory has been applied in market studies.

### 3.3.4 Practice Theory in Market Studies

In contrast to marketing and economic theories that study what markets are in principle, another approach developed within STS is the study of how markets are constituted in practice (Araujo, 2007; Azimont and Araujo, 2007; Callon, 1998; Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006 and 2007). Although “marketing practice” is widely used as a catchphrase for everything that is not marketing theory (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007), the wider interest in practices as *praktik* (Reckwitz, 2002) was initially not recognized in relation to markets (for exceptions, see Holt, 1995; Belk, 1998). However, the influential work of Callon and the publication of *The Laws of the Markets* (Callon, 1998), initiated an inter-disciplinary field of market studies that takes an interest in the continuous efforts required to organize and shape markets. From this perspective, the attention to practice is primarily motivated as way to methodologically study on-going social and economic ordering (e.g. Latour, 1987; Lynch, 1994; Pickering, 1993), as opposed to parallel efforts to mainly theorize practices (e.g. Schatzki et al., 2001).

From a market practice perspective, markets are not seen as stable, universal superstructures; rather, as things that are continually emerging through practices that involve materially heterogeneous entities (Geiger et al., 2014; Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006; Latour, 2005). Therefore, markets come in multiple versions (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006). In market studies, market practices are defined as “all activities that contribute to constitute markets” (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007, p. 141). More specifically, such activities are grouped into three types of practices in order to guide

empirical inquiries: namely *exchange practices*, *normalizing practices* and *representational practices*. These are seen as being interlinked through translations that work to constitute markets in different ways. First, exchange practices work to carry through individual economic exchanges: where both buyers and sellers are involved in configuring the modes, objects, and actors of exchange. Second, representational practices involve the generation of images of the market and how they work, which is regarded to also perform markets. Third, normalizing practices work to establish normative objectives on how a market should work which, for example, involves efforts to change the directions and regulations of the market (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010). Moreover, market actors partaking in these practices are conceived as having multiple agencies that vary depending upon the specific and practical situation (Hagberg, 2010; Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010).

According to Araujo and Kjellberg (2009), the attention to how economic agencies are constituted in practice - as opposed to what they are in principle - challenge established ideas about who or what it is that acts in markets. Applying a market practice perspective could contribute with a richer understanding for what is being shaped by market practices: for example, economic agents, objects of exchange, or the modes of exchange (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006). Moreover, it also provides the means to study the processes of how markets and different market actors become configured. Thus, the economic organizing of markets is closely connected to the constitution of economic agencies (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009). This perspective has four implications for how to understand how economic agencies are configured.

First, agencies should not be regarded as something that endures over time; rather, they should be based upon real-time accounting and is, thereby, oriented toward the present (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009). This perspective stands in contrast with models that account for the cognitive capacities of actors where actors makes sense (backward looking) or account for their intentions to do things (forward looking). As Andersson et al. (2008) state: such backward and forward looking concepts direct attention away from practice by “implying that the sources of agency lies elsewhere, and indeed, that they are already in place when practice starts to unfold” (Andersson et al., 2008, p. 68). Secondly, actors are temporary achievements and emergent

outcomes in situated practices, which unfold in processes related to other actors and the contexts in which they operate (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009). Thirdly, this subsequently calls to question a priori assumptions of the relative size and power of actors operating in markets, which rather becomes a question for empirical inquiry. Macro and micro actors do, of course, exist (Callon and Latour, 1981; Helgesson and Kjellberg, 2005); however, it is not until actors become recognized as such by others (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995; Andersson et al., 2008). Lastly, a market practice perspective brings in material agency as a possibility among many different heterogeneous actor assemblages; taken together, with the three aforementioned points, these work to decentre human subjects and their agency. As previously discussed, this does not replace human agency; attention is instead directed toward agency as being distributed in the multiple possible agential configurations that become enacted through market practices (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009).

The agential capacity of consumers in the form of agencements would be a result of how market practices are framed and enacted. As aforementioned, framing refers to the creation of multi-dimensional boundaries that formulate who is to be part of the exchange, when and where it takes place, and what is to be exchanged (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009). Thus, it is important to note that consumers, as well as other market actors and actors external to the market, may be part of this boundary work in an effort to shape markets in different directions (Harrison and Kjellberg, 2016). In this way, markets can be seen as a collective device (Callon, 2007): employed by consumers and other actors driven by matters of concern, to pursue different goals in society. Meanwhile, since consumption results from other forms of practices rather than constituting a practice in itself (Warde, 2005), markets can also be employed to steer and engender different forms of consumption; as a frame that challenges and redefines consumer agencies (Brembeck, Cochoy, Moisander, 2015; Moisander, Markkula, Eräranta, 2010). In this way, consumers are both part of producing market practices, while also being produced by those practices.

According to Kjellberg (2008) and Hagberg (2015), the research streams of practices related to consumption and markets clearly have intellectual overlaps and possess much in common; however, there are relatively

few studies that have actively integrated these perspectives (for exceptions, see Kjellberg, 2008; Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010; Shove and Araujo, 2010; Brembeck et al., 2015; Hagberg, 2015); this is especially true in relation to the processes of concerning and agencing of consumers. In order to better understand how to integrate these perspectives in relation to agencing and concerning, I will next attend to some identified central elements of practices, which can be applied to the study of consumption and markets.

### 3.3.5 Elements of Practice Related to Consumption and Markets

To integrate the different practice perspectives related to markets and consumption, it becomes important to first acknowledge the difference in how practices have been treated. Practice studies related to consumption have been traditionally occupied with trying to define practices and their constituting parts (see e.g. Warde, 2005; Warde, 2013). Market practice studies are more instrumental in their use of practices, treating them more as a way to study other things: such as, the economic organizing of markets and consumption. The assemblage that constitutes the practice is rather seen as an open empirical question. Regardless of this, some elements have been noted as central in the constitution of a practice.

Shove and Pantzar (2005) define practices as consisting of *materials*, *meanings* and forms of *competence* (Shove and Pantzar, 2005, p. 45), which provides a frame of reference for studying the co-constitution of practices and agencies based on both markets and consumer studies. Hagberg and Kjellberg (2010) also showcase the usefulness of integrating these elements in a study of the agential variations in markets. Building upon a socio-material practice perspective, Shove and Pantzar suggest that the materiality involved in a practice should not merely be seen as something put into use in a practice; rather, it is an active part involved in reproducing the practice itself. Hagberg and Kjellberg (2010) also recognize that both human and non-human actors can be “carriers of practice”, as Reckwitz (2002) states. The shopping bag constitutes one example that not only has carried a range of consumer goods in different times; it has also shaped the practices of which they are part (Hagberg, 2015).

A practice perspective would also imply that consumers are not seen as mere users, but as competent practitioners who reproduce the practice through the materials involved (Shove and Araujo, 2010). Competence is thus embodied in both people and things, and should not only be regarded as a human characteristic; it should also be seen as being distributed between practitioners and the objects they use (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010; Watson and Shove, 2008). Moreover, the competence of agents to engage in practices varies depending upon how broadly or narrowly the individual practice is defined (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010). Thus, the definition of a practice would need to correspond to the definition of the agent who performs it: for example, the practice of setting up national trade tariffs requires a different actor than that of distributing flyers to consumers about a price reduction. The agential competence, therefore, depends upon how the situation is framed (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009).

Agents may also attribute different meanings and purposes to practices (Shove and Pantzar, 2005). This can work to configure the practices and objects involved in the practice as well. Material objects can be inscribed with different meanings and images: for example, where the designers of products and services have particular images of users in mind, which helps to configure consumers (Woolgar, 1991). Instead of using meanings, which favour a human agent, Hagberg and Kjellberg use the term *programs of action* (Latour, 1994) to balance the potential asymmetry caused by the interpretive component of meanings. They thereby capture a larger range of agential variation (according to different meanings, functions, goals, and so on). Programs of action involve different *scripts* (Akrich and Latour, 1992), which can also be designed according to broader societal matters of concerns (Latour, 2004).

The relationships between the different elements of a practice become important when considering how practices take shape and evolve. In this way, the rearranging of different elements in practices is open for multiple actor configurations. One should note, however, that where and how these elements come together and how and who accomplishes the work of integration, remains an empirical question that should be answered according to the different situations. Nevertheless, one way to approach the processes involved in arranging and adjusting practice elements is to attend to the

agencing of practices. I therefore return to the subject of agencing, in order to define how this concept can be used in relation to the shaping of practices and the actors involved.

### 3.3.6 The Agencing of Practices: Mutual Adjustment of the Elements Involved in a Practice

Hagberg (2015) studies practices related to the development of shopping bags by using the notion of agencing. He defines the agencing of practices as:

...a process in which agency is acquired and sustained by the continuous *arranging* of the elements of practices, accompanied by continuous *adjusting* of these elements in relation to other elements of the practices in which they are included (Hagberg, 2015, p. 2, italics in original).

Hagberg demonstrates how shopping bags have contributed to shaping practices involved in consumption, while the bags have been also shaped by these practices. Thus, agencing involves a mutual configuration of the actors involved in a practice (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010).

This reciprocal adjustment between actors involved in the developments of practices is central to the notion of agencing and, thus, to the development of practices. The notions of arranging and adjustment are similar to other notions proposed to account for the processes of becoming in practice approaches. For instance, Pickering (2001) argues:

The only generally reliable and enduring feature of practice that I can discern is the pattern that I have so far called tuning, and elsewhere analyzed in detail as a dialectic of resistance and accommodation: 'the mangle' for short (Pickering, 1993, p. 1995a). And mangling is a temporally emergent process: its upshots are not given at all in advance (Pickering, 2001, p. 164).

Thus, the constant tuning and adjustment between elements of practices is in line with the notion of agencement and agencing to highlight that actors do not have stabilized natures or characteristics (MacKenzie, 2009). Actors

should, instead, be seen as outcomes of the mutual adjustments between different elements involved in a practice. Moreover, in line with Callon and Law (1995; 1997), I add the important insight that agencies must also be *put in motion* to be able to act. This is a process whereby human and non-human entities - or combinations of these two - are converted into active agents, or rather actors (Cochoy et al., 2016). This conversion can be *mediated* by a number of different actors, places, and spaces. Therefore, I will consider possible forms of mediation of the concerning and agencing processes.

### 3.3.7 Mediating Agencing and Concerning of Consumers in Junctions

In their efforts to understand ways to interconnect various spheres or conflicts of interest, different forms of mediation in markets and society have been a topic that has long since interested researchers. The work of Hen- nion, Méadel, and Bowker (1989) brought up the notion of mediation: where advertising and market professionals were found to play an im- portant role in mediating the world of products to consumers. Mediation can, however, also denote a more abstract place where different interest groups meet to negotiate terms in markets and politics. Oldenziel, de la Bruhèze, and de Wit (2005) reveal how Europe, through a continuous and concealed mediation between production and consumption, became inte- grated long before its formal union. This mediation took place in *junctions* where different interest groups met and stipulated new forms of technology and design, which in turn configured new consumer identities. In similar ways, *consumption junctions* (Cowan, 1987) have been used to illustrate how the work of integrating consumption and production often falls into the hands of users and occur in specific places, such as kitchens (Hand and Shove, 2004). However, in the adaption to new socio-technical systems and routines, the work of integration often remains hidden due to its on-going performance in everyday practices (Alexander et al., 2009; Watson and Shove, 2008). Consumer agency would thus need to be seen in relation to the different mediators, places, and spaces that work to integrate different dimensions that, together, produce a capacity to act.



Thus, this directs attention to agency as distributed, and at the same time, mediated. As Araujo and Brito (1998) suggest, the capacity of an actor must be seen in connection to the multiple of games in which that they are involved. This can be compared to all the different situations that humans get involved in throughout the course of a single day: consider, for example, the different practices at home, at work, during shopping, and travelling between places (cf. see figure 1). In any given situation, an actor can be perceived of as an aggregation of several different actants (Andersson et al., 2008). As discussed above, actors are defined as entities that are ascribed certain actions, while actants are seen as whatever acts in any given situation (Kjellberg, 2008). Thus, it is within the overlapping entities of the different actants that a junction emerges, which mediates a connection between them.

The junction constitutes the lowest common denominator for the different acting entities; it is thus through the junction that specific actors emerge, which share certain characteristics that then can be subsumed under the same label (cf. Andersson et al., 2008, p. 80). Some entities - for example, human beings - are involved in several different actor-networks throughout the course of a day; therefore, they as persons become the lowest common denominator (that is to say, a junction) in the different situations (Kjellberg, 2008). Therefore, people are often ascribed agency across different situations. But since they are part of several different agencements, they sometimes act in seemingly inconsistent ways. For example, certain practices involved in the performance of work-related tasks within academia are built around specific arrangements: such as travelling long distances by air to conferences in foreign places. The individual actor who engages in this environmentally harmful practice may be part of practices, in other situations, that are arranged for more environmentally-friendly agencies: such as, producing home-grown, organic food. Thus, the challenge is to handle the inconsistency if this becomes a matter of concern: to converge and mediate the different actor-networks to act consistently across different practices and situations.

As a form of mediation between practices, connections between different practices can be seen as being facilitated in *conduits* (Finch, Horan, and Reid, 2014), *crossing points* (Hagberg, 2015), or *nexus points* (Paddock, 2015);

these work to bridge different forms of practices. Finch et al. (2014) examines how a conduit, as an assemblage of investments and practices among interested actors, can facilitate connections between business and practices of sustainable waste management. As aforementioned, Hagberg (2015) uses the shopping bag case to illustrate how a particular object can be seen as a crossing point between several practices, both shaping and being shaped by them. Moreover, Paddock (2015) raises food practices as a nexus point: to facilitate an understanding for how to disentangle practices in households toward adopting more sustainable food practices.

Drawing upon food practices as a way of better understanding conversions to green consumption, I will in this thesis attend to food as a practice that is situated in particular places (vegetable gardens, food stores, and kitchens), which correspond to different moments of consumption: production, exchange, and usage. As places of situated practices, these arenas constitute meeting spaces where multiple heterogeneous actors work to arrange, adjust, and put into motion a capacity to act in accordance with specific matters of concern. Attending to food thus becomes a way of studying other things being performed, rather than studying food as a practice in itself with its different constituting parts (cf. Warde, 2013). Food has instead been used as a context in which different distinctions, identities, cultures, and social relations are formed (for example, see Anving, 2012; Tellström, 2015). Similar to how Anving (2012) studies the notion of family as being constructed through the different doings and sayings that are related to food practices, I will examine the production of green consumers by attending to food practices. These practices thus become a context and a nexus point for studying the work of integration between various actors and practices toward more green food practices.

### 3.4 Summary of the Conceptual Framework

This research applies a socio-material practice perspective as a theoretical frame to study the processes of agencing and concerning consumers in everyday food practices. I will next summarize the theoretical perspective and specify the central concepts of this thesis.

### 3.4.1 Agencing and Concerning of Consumers

The agency of consumers has come to the forefront in efforts to transform unsustainable food consumption and production (Björklund et al., 2008; Boström and Klintman, 2009; Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2017). Previous research has regarded the consumer to be an active driver in changing markets and consumer cultures towards sustainability, yet they are also portrayed as being more passive and controlled by powerful forces in markets and politics. I adopt an anti-essential stance to consumers and regard their capacity to act as a result of different socio-material arrangements in actor-networks. These collectively produce specific agencements, which are defined as “arrangements endowed with the capacity of acting in different ways depending on their configuration” (Callon, 2007, p. 320). From this perspective, consumer agency is seen as produced by specific assemblages and as an integral part of producing those assemblages.

I rely upon the concept of agencing to study how agency becomes constructed in practical situations. According to Cochoy et al. (2016), agencing is used to refer both to the arrangement of entities - the processes that work to produce specific agencements - and the process of putting them in motion: converting humans, non-human entities, or hybrid collectives, into actors (Callon and Law, 1995, 1997). Agencing efforts however also produce differences and asymmetries, thus, leading to overflows that, in turn, may spur the emergence of matters of concern.

Matters of concern are defined as “those things and situations that – for better or for worse – are related to us, can affect us, and worry us” Geiger et al. (2014, 2). This notion of concern includes three dimensions: worrying, relating, and influencing. Matters of concern often arise at the boundary between the economic and the social, which are entangled in markets. The market boundaries often become assembly points for different concerned actors. Furthermore, markets can be seen as on-going collective experiments (Callon, 2009) that, through their very mechanisms, work to take different matters of concerns into account. Consumers can both be among the concerned actors and a target for other concerned actors. This makes consumers an integral part of on-going collective market experiments where participants try to find new solutions to balance the social and economic in different ways (Cochoy et al., 2016; Geiger et al., 2014).

Emerging matters of concern are rendered visible through processes of concerning, which can be described as:

...the collective process through which a variety of stakeholders (public authorities, suppliers, consumers, NGOs etc.) contribute to shape the resources that make market transactions compatible with these matters of concern (Mallard, 2016, pp. 56-57).

The making of concerned actors is a collective process (de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 88) involving multiple entities. Matters of concern provide the means to connect and bind together members of such groups, who can then develop common actions. This process of concerning simultaneously works to configure entities and actors that yet have nothing to be concerned about (Geiger et al., 2014). As actors become allied in their concerns and recognized by each other, they appear as one actor with an amplified voice (Andersson et al., 2008).

Concerning efforts may in turn provoke actors to engage in new agencing activities. Agencing is conceptualized in relation to the concept of concerning. Together, the two constitute a reciprocal process where concerning works as a driver for agencing efforts, while agencing drives the formation of new matters of concern. Thus, the processes of concerning and agencing are thus interlinked and can together explain how processes of change from one stabilized assemblage of entities may lead to the formation of new ones. Figure 2 illustrates how the reciprocal processes of concerning and agencing circulate through practices related to consumption (Figure 2).

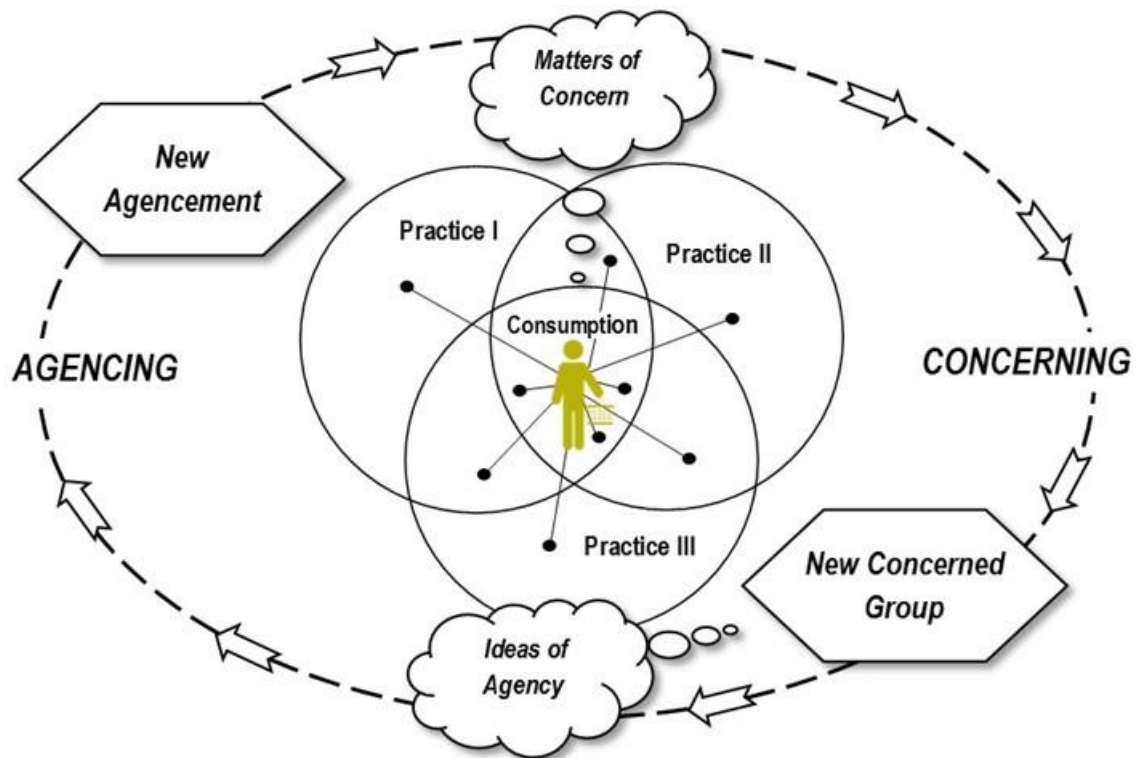


Figure 2: Processes of concerning and agencing as circulating through practices related to consumption.

These processes may start from a matter of concern, which through concerning efforts work to form new concerned groups. In turn, these concerned actors come up with ideas of what types of agency is needed to address the matter of concern. Through the processes of agencing, these ideas turn into new forms of agencement that is used to address the matter of concern. These processes are iterative, since agencing efforts also may lead to asymmetries producing overflows, which in turn may give rise to new matters of concern.

### 3.4.2 A Socio-Material Practice Perspective on Consumption and Markets

I will attend to the performance of socio-material practices in order to study the processes of agencing and concerning consumers. Material ob-

jects are given an active role in a socio-material practice approach since they can be seen to enable or obstruct practices (Fuentes, 2011). Therefore, a socio-material practice approach views agency not as a human characteristic; but rather as “distributed between practitioners and the objects they use” (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010, p. 1029). Thus, the social and material constitute each other through practices, whereby agency also becomes configured (Gherardi, 2012). I adopt this perspective in order to more fully understand what it is that constructs consumers’ capacity to act in different situations. I primarily combine practice theoretical approaches developed within market and consumption studies.

Practice perspectives on consumption stresses the routine and mundane character of ordinary consumption, based upon practical competence, embodiment, materiality, and meanings (Gronow and Warde, 2001; Warde, 2005; Shove and Pantzar, 2005; Shove et al., 2012). From this perspective, consumption is primarily seen as the practical organization and use of resources, rather than an expression of the self and identities in relation to specific consumer cultures involving certain consumption practices (cf. Holt, 1995). According to Warde (2005), consumption should not be viewed as a practice in itself; rather, it is an element in almost any type of practice. Therefore, consumption becomes an effect of the practices that consumers engage in throughout their everyday lives.

The view of consumption as an outcome of other practices fits well with the anti-essential stance that actors are results (Kjellberg, 2008) and conceived of as “provisional outcomes, as collectives, or networks of associated materials” (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009, p. 207). Different forms of consumption would need to be treated in relation to the practices that constitute them (*ibid*). This makes it difficult to *à priori* define what it is of which consumption consists. Therefore, I understand practices related to consumption as the performance of a process whereby actants - defined as whatever it is that acts in a practical situation - become aggregated into socio-material agents able to consume. Thus, the capacity of consumers to engage in different forms of consumption is seen as distributed throughout actor-networks; this, in turn, are outcomes of the different and sometimes overlapping practices that constitute forms of consumption. Such a view of

consumption and the consumer keeps the outcome of the process open for empirical inquiries.

A practice perspective on markets stresses the emergent character of markets as being produced through various practices involving multiple materially heterogeneous entities. Markets must be framed by multi-dimensional boundaries in order to function; these decide who and what should be part of the exchange, in addition to where and how the exchange takes place (Araujo and Kjellberg, 2009). The agential capacity of consumers to act in markets would, therefore, be a result of how markets are framed and enacted. Consumers, in addition to other (market) actors, may also be part of creating these boundaries in an effort to shape markets in different directions (Harrison and Kjellberg, 2016). Markets can thereby be seen as a collective device (Callon, 2007) to pursue different goals in society. Meanwhile, since consumption is a result of other forms of practices rather than a practice in itself (Warde, 2005), markets can also be employed to steer and engender different forms of consumption as a frame that challenges and redefines consumer agencies (Brembeck et al., 2015; Moisander et al., 2010). Consumers are, therefore, both produced by and produce market practices. This perspective allows studies where equipped consumers are seen as competent practitioners in the market, working to shape markets and consumption, while also being shaped by them.

### 3.4.3 Agencing Practices Through Mutual Adjustment of Practice Elements

As a means of further understanding how consumption is shaped by practices, I will attend to the central elements of practices and the processes in which these elements are formed. Shove and Pantzar (2005) define practices as consisting of materials, meanings, and forms of competence (Shove and Pantzar, 2005). The relationships between the different elements of a practice become important when considering how practices take shape and evolve. The elements thus provide a point of entry to study the co-constitution of practices and agencies based upon both markets and consumer studies. The integration of the elements can be studied through the conceptual lens of agencing, which involves the arranging and adjusting of practice elements (Hagberg, 2015), in addition to the work of putting them

into motion (Callon and Law, 1995 and 1997; Cochoy et al., 2016). Where and how these elements come together, and how and by whom the work of integration is accomplished, are empirical questions that the proposed practice framework can help to address.

#### 3.4.4 Mediating the Integration of Practices in Junctions and Situated Practices

Previous studies have revealed that different actors, places, and spaces can mediate the work of integration of practices and agencies. These are commonly referred to as junctions: where different actors and practices meet and become integrated. Junctions constitute both physical places where the work of integration is performed - such as, a kitchen - and more abstract spaces where different interest groups meet to negotiate the terms in markets and politics (Cowan, 1987; Hand and Shove, 2004; Hennion et al., 1989; Oldenziel et al., 2005). Consumer agency must be seen in relation to the different mediators, places, and spaces that integrate different elements and produce the capacity to act.

Moreover, junctions also emerge in the overlapping of different agencies (Andersson et al., 2008). The junction is constituted by an actor, or element, that are involved in several different actor-networks and that makes up the lowest common denominator for these agencements. Even though these disparate networks have one entity in common - for example, an individual consumer - they constitute different agencies, which provide different capacities to act in different situations. This can help to explain why one and the same actor sometimes performs contradictory actions. The challenge becomes how to converge and mediate the different actor-networks to act consistently across different practices and situations.

Connections between different practices can be seen as facilitated in different junctions; these are referred to as conduits (Finch et al., 2014), crossing points (Hagberg, 2015), or nexus points (Paddock, 2015); and they all work in different ways to bridge practices. Food practices have been identified as a form of junction to better understand how to disentangle practices in households toward more sustainable food practices (Paddock, 2015). In this thesis, I will attend to different forms of consumption of food in order to examine the work of integration between various actors



and practices toward greener food practices. Thus, food practices are used as way of studying the unfolding of other events, rather than studying food practices in itself (cf. Warde, 2013). Therefore, food is used as a context for studying situated practices where different matters of concerns are raised and addressed. Food practices thus become spaces in which green food consumption is produced.

# Chapter 4

## Methodology: Research Approach, Methods, and Design

In this chapter, I will describe and motivate the choices I have made during my journey in exploring the phenomenon of green food consumption. The chosen theoretical framework implies certain ontological and epistemological positions, which I first will discuss. These theoretical stances favour a method of situationalism in which the construction of green consumption can be studied as part of practices. The different methods deemed suitable to study socio-material practices are then explained in conjunction to the overall research design. I then explain how these methodological positions have played out when entering the empirical field by describing the specific selection of cases in relation to different moments of consumption. The chapter ends with a discussion on the methods of analysing and recording the studied cases.

### 4.1 Positioning the Ontology and Epistemology of Practice Studies

When studying practices, it becomes necessary to distinguish between ontologies of *being* and *becoming* (see e.g. Pickering, 1993; Bjørkeng et al., 2009; Gherardi, 2012). According to Bjørkeng et al. (2009), most practice studies

are concerned with defining already established practices, while relatively few deal with how practice unfolds over time. As Gherardi (2012) describes, the distinction between an emergent view of reality and a stable one can be explained through looking at the underlying difference between *theories of action* and *theories of practice* (cf. Cohen, 1996). This distinction illustrates that theories of action tend to locate the social in the intentions and meanings of actors, while theories of practice locates the social in how a particular conduct is carried out through its performance and enactment. Thus, individuals and their intentions in performing an action become the starting point in action theories; this is the opposite of a practice perspective that takes a prime interest in the actions as they are carried out in a “network of connections-in-action” (Gherardi, 2012, p. 77). Moreover, these different positions tend to attribute the sources of action as either stemming from a pre-defined individual entity – such as in action theories - or as an action that is constituted during its performance by both human and non-human actors – such as in socio-material practice theories. Hence, adopting the latter position of theoretical ontology of becoming is in line with my inquiry to study how capacities to act come into being.

Practice theories, however, can also be used in rather different ways depending upon whether a practice is regarded as an *empirical object* or as *epistemology*. This becomes important to acknowledge for the method of this thesis. According to Gherardi (2012), the difference lies in whether one assumes a *realist ontology* that objectifies practices into an independent study unit or entity, or whether one adopts a *social constructionist* view of the world that does not make a difference between the production of knowledge and the construction of the object of knowledge. These positions have different methodological implications. As Cooper and Law (1995) suggest, two distinct forms of epistemology can be confined depending on whether one adopts a “distal” or “proximal” position to the object of study, which respectively indicate the distance and closeness to the point of origin under study. Gherardi (2012) highlights the variances in the following:

Distal thought prioritizes results and consequences, the products and finished objects of thought and action, everything that is pre-packaged. Proximal thought instead addresses what is continuing and incomplete, towards which it constantly tends but never reaches (Gherardi, 2012, p.78).

The distal stance can be referred to as realist ontology: where knowledge about this reality is retrieved in a substantialist epistemology, in which specific entities are seen to pre-exist the relations among different entities (Gherardi, 2012). The proximal stance can conversely be confined to ontology of social constructivism: where knowledge is generated through a relational epistemology in which social reality and its entities are formed in a continuous process.

Adopting a relational epistemology to practice, I follow Law and Urry (2004) who assert that social reality can be seen as a relational effect where methods of inquiry help to enact social realities, since “while the ‘real’ is indeed ‘real, it is also made, and that it is made within relations” (Law and Urry, 2004, p. 395). This does not, however, mean that reality is mere social constructions being carried out in a fluid and formless matter (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007, p. 140); as Law and Urry (2014, p. 395) express, this process is “simultaneously material and social.” Thus, I can formulate my inquiry based upon these insights, as positioned in an ontology of becoming: where I see reality as emergent and plastic, being produced in a process of interaction between heterogeneous entities (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007). From this perspective, actors and their agency are seen as emergent and constituted in action (Pickering, 1993). Moreover, by using practices as epistemology, rather than as an empirical object to be defined on its own, I can approach practices as a source of knowledge for getting to know how green consumers become produced and how the acquired capabilities become enacted in practice. As a researcher, I also play a role in constructing this reality (Heiskanen, 2005), hence, working to give a distinct perspective of the production of green consumers in social science. Or, as Law and Urry (2004, 395) conclude: “The world we know in social science is both real and it is produced.”

## 4.2 Studying Practices through Methodological Situationalism

In order not to ascribe empirical phenomenon to be part of some pre-given structure or pre-determined essential quality of its performers, it becomes

important to adhere to *methodological situationalism* (Knorr Cetina, 1981; 1988). According to Woermann (2016), this implies that consumer research needs to go “back to the roots” by being “grounded in empirical observations of manifest meaning or social order in concrete situations” (Woermann, 2016, p.3). This assertion rests upon the insight that social construction is a reality that can be subject to empirical investigations (cf. Latour, 2005; Law and Callon, 1995). Knowledge of these realities can, therefore, be generated by attending to the immediate and on-going accomplishment of order and meaning in the situational grounds of social phenomena (Woermann, 2016). This stands in opposition to, for example, interpretive consumer research that attempts to understand some given situational order that exists behind the consumers back, which the researcher needs to discover and interpret. Practice theories also run the risk of starting the empirical analysis by relying upon already stabilized inventories of what specific practices entail, with the danger of missing the important details, which serve as the foundation for the unfolding practices. Instead, it is in the concrete situations that the specific manifestations of practices can be found. This, in turn, directs attention to the methods of inquiry that would take seriously the situatedness of practices. As Woermann hypothesizes, the use of interviews as the main source of data for researching practices would, at most, reveal the practice of giving interviews. What methods, then, can be applied that are coherent with the methodological positions based on situated practices?

### 4.3 Ethnographic Methods Rooted in Situated Socio-Material Practices

Ethnographic fieldwork and methods are commonly employed to study social phenomenon whereby researchers can obtain first-hand experiences by visiting specific sites where the phenomenon occur. Doing fieldwork is a way to immerse oneself as a researcher in the performance of social action and social organization, while being attentive to the slow and repeated doings of everyday life (Atkinson, 2006). It is about learning how to become a practitioner (Garfinkel, 2002). Traditionally, ethnography has been con-

ducted in distant places and in cultures different from the western world; it is now widespread in social sciences to better understand our own cultures as well (van Loon, 2001). The field of consumer and marketing research is no exception (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). According to Moisander and Valtonen (2006), ethnographic methods of observation and participation can provide important insights to better understand the performance of marketing and consumption activities. Due to the diversity of different ethnographic methods, it becomes important, however, to choose methods that correspond with the purpose of the research.

According to Halkier and Jensen (2011), there are methodological challenges with making analytical translations from practice theory to methods. In contrast to more mainstream approaches in consumer research that privilege either individual consumer perspectives or cultural structures beyond the reach of the consumers themselves, a practice approach would see practices as the unit of analysis. Methods to study practices are part of the ordinary repertoire of qualitative research, particularly involving participant observation and interviews in addition to time studies, for example, diaries (Ellegård and Wihlborg, 2001). The difference lies in what you pay attention to during data collection and what you disclose in the report. As Atkinson states:

“Far too much qualitative research consists of accounts of social life: there is a danger of forgetting to study what men and women actually do in their everyday life” (Atkinson, 2006, p. 134, italics in original).

Atkinson and Coffey (2003), however, contend that interviews, which provide social accounts, are as much enactments of social life as those that are generated by participant observation – it is just practitioners’ performances in different social spaces. The different doings and sayings of individuals can still form the basis for practice studies, since these are seen as carriers of practice; however, individual performance must be seen as entangled in dynamic social reproductions at the intersection of multiple practices (Halkier and Jensen, 2011).

In the quest of studying practices through interviews, I have made use of a technique called “interview to the double” (Nicolini, 2009). This meth-

od builds upon the idea that the interviewee is required to imagine that they have a doppelganger that is going to take their place the following day at work (or in any other tasks performed). The interviewee, therefore, needs to explain to the double (that is to say, the researcher) what they do at work, so that it can be executed accordingly the following day. This gives an opportunity not only to disclose the different doings of a practice; it also portrays the held image of the practice, capturing both experience and the reflections (that is to say, doings and sayings).

According to Nicolini (2009), it is important to reflect upon how to discursively interact with the interviewee and what kind of narrative is performed. As a researcher, one should not only be careful with what instructions to give; one should also be observant to distinguishing between a given account of what is seen as the acceptable way of doing things and what is actually done. Consequently, this often provides a narrative that is moralizing and idealized. However, this could also give interesting clues to the “morality in use.” Some specific doings in relation to food practices can be seen as being more correct to perform than others: for example, “good” parents should give their children a particular kind of food (Anving, 2012). By discussing the particular food habits around the breakfast table, what we do and perhaps others do, reveals what is and is not considered to be good enough. Moreover, Nicolini (2009) argues that the interview technique should not be used by itself, but it should rather be accompanied by participant observation in the field of study. This would give a familiarity to the local practices and special wordings, in addition to establishing a required trust to the interviewee.

Moreover, paying attention to the heterogeneity of practices and tracing the processes of socio-material construction becomes important when accounting for the materiality involved in the reproduction of practices. This type of field study is called *heterogeneous ethnography*, which is inspired from research methods in STS (see e.g. Bruni, 2001; Fuentes, 2011). Cochoy (2007) has proposed sociology of “market things” in the field of market studies, which involves examining how “commercial objects, frames, and tools equip consumer cognition” (Cochoy, 2007, p. 109). How markets and consumption are constructed cannot only be traced through theories and “backstage mechanisms” of the market; they can also be seen through what

our very eyes disclose to us. Thus, knowledge about practices in markets and consumption can be derived through studying concrete exchanges and the specific objects being involved. Attending to devices and tools as part of a data collection technique involves identifying various objects that enable the practice to be conducted. For example, it could involve the specific design of product shelves in a grocery store or the use of shopping baskets or carts (see Cochoy, 2007 and 2008). In line with Cochoy's sociology of "market things" (Cochoy 2007, p. 109), these objects could just as well be traced to an online setting in the form of virtual versions of the same objects. The objects can also be followed from the stores into the lives of consumers: to study how they become appropriated and altered, and can potentially change courses of action when they are in use. This would imply a wider scope for market studies to incorporate how demand is created in use-situations (Burr, 2014). Following Fuentes (2011), the notion of green can be seen as being constructed and performed by various elements in a practice: for example, how a product becomes inscribed with green messages through a shop display. Thus, objects shape green practices in that they perform what is green. The role of the consumer becomes to actively fit or position the green object into practices in a symbolic and material way, which gives the object meaning and function.

The methods of data collection are, hence, congruent with the study of practices being based in ethnographic field studies including participant observation and interviewing, as well as the tracing of different artefacts that enable the production of green.

#### 4.4 Research Design: Multi-Sited Ethnographies of Green Food Consumption

Given that the phenomenon of green consumption can be studied as part of peoples' everyday lives in various situations, I have conducted ethnographic studies that occur in multiple places and spaces across different forms of food consumption. I have performed multi-sited ethnographies using complementary case studies with the purpose of exploring situated practices of green food consumption. Cases have been selected based upon



the criteria that it should encompass *efforts to do green* in relation to *food* with some degree of *consumer involvement*. In order to obtain a broader understanding of an individual's capacity to act in different moments of consumption, I deliberately searched for cases that spanned across three specific situations: *exchange* (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007); *produce* (Finch and Acha, 2008; Hartmann, 2015); and *usage* (Burr, 2013; Warde, 2005), which afforded or encouraged the performance of green food practices (see Table 1 below). Striving for this diversity allowed for new perspectives in understanding consumers' capacity to act and how agency is socio-materially constructed in different situations. The scope was also developed in response to research in socio-cultural consumer research; this meant looking beyond the exchange situations in order to capture other forms of consumption (Barnett et al., 2010; Belz and Peattie, 2009; Shove, 2010; Warde, 2005; Webb, 2012).

The task has been to understand how green consumption is enacted in these different situations, where I primarily have been interested in trying to find out what people do when they engage in green consumption (cf. Holt, 1995). Moreover, I also took an interest in procedures of how other actors worked to engage consumers to become concerned and to do green, in addition to illuminating different means to enable and equip consumers to produce and consume green food.

The research design was developed in an emergent procedure: where research ideas came to the fore by iteratively going back and forth between theories and empirical cases. Facing a phenomenon that only over the past decade has grown in popularity, both in the empirical world as well as the academic, the research process could sometimes be characterized as finding ways to cope with an excess of information and possible cases to study (Czarniawska and Löfgren, 2013). Moreover, the process of finding a suitable theoretical lens through which to study this emerging phenomenon has also been a rather long journey. I have tested various research perspectives in my PhD courses and while attending to different research conferences. It was not until I serendipitously began reading *Den där marknaden: om utbyten, normer och bilder* by Helgesson, Kjellberg and Liljenberg (2004) that I felt that I was really onto something interesting. This book provided me with a research perspective that I felt was open to the unfolding of events, while still

grounded in the empirical details. I subsequently developed a research strategy to “follow the actors” (Latour, 2005), which then characterized the design of my case studies.

A certain challenge, however, arose when I first should determine which cases of green consumption to include in the study, since the theoretical anti-essential stance prevented me from deciding beforehand which cases were or were not green. Nevertheless, whilst drawing upon the insights of Bruno Latour, it is not I, as a researcher, who should decide what is green – it is the actors that I follow. Instead, the notion of green could be seen as a *metaphorical box* that actors continuously fill with diverse content, which they label as green (Latour, 1986). Thus, there is no definite list of what can be subsumed under this label. One way to approach the task at hand to single out specific case studies, was to simply start from any actors’ claims of doing green, and then following how it unfolds in practice. What cases did I then obtain, and what were the reasons why?

Table 1: Overview of the Empirical Cases and Methods

	<b>CONSUMPTION AS EXCHANGE</b>	<b>CONSUMPTION AS PRODUCTION</b>	<b>CONSUMPTION AS USAGE</b>
<b>SITES</b>	The grocery store	The vegetable garden	The kitchen
<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	1) Mataffären.se/ Cooponline.se; 2) SCCS Owner representatives	3) The Food Park's study circle on Organic Vegetable Production	4) SNCS's study circle on Climate Clever Food; 5) Historical kitchens in magazine <i>Husmodern</i>
<b>METHODS</b>	- Participant observations - Interviews - Online store	- Participant observations - Auto-ethnography - “Interview to the double”	- Participant observations - Auto-ethnography - Interviews - Focus group - “Archaeology of Present Times”
<b>PAPER</b>	2+3+4	2	1+2

## 4.5. Choice of Cases

There are five different cases that form the basis for this thesis; these have been selected to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' capacity to act and do green in different situations related to food (see Table 1). These contemporary and historical cases are situated in specific places and spaces in which various forms of green food practices take place: spanning from the grocery store, the vegetable garden, and the kitchen. I have selected specific case studies in correlation to these sites that pertain to the performance of green food practices in which consumers are involved to different degrees. All of the cases are situated in Sweden with a geographical closeness to Stockholm and Uppsala where I live, due to the otherwise practical difficulties of actively participating in and studying the cases over some time. The archive where I accessed the historical magazines was also located in the Uppsala library, Carolina Rediviva. There, I have spent countless hours researching the magazines for data collection.

### 4.5.1 Consumption as Exchange

Consumption within marketing research is mostly associated with individual consumers' buying behaviour in a store environment (see e.g. Diamantopoulou et al., 2003; Chatzidakis et al., 2012). This perspective, however, provides a rather limiting view of how exchange situations are constructed for different purposes under the influence of the different actors that are involved in the exchange. Moreover, merely looking at consumption as purchase (Warde, 2005) also leaves out the formation of other forms of exchange and non-economic allocation systems (North, 1977).

In order to study how green consumption is constructed in market exchanges, I have looked into efforts to realize green, as well as convenient and democratic modes of exchange. The Swedish consumer cooperative Coop constitutes an interesting case because, as a cooperative, they deliberately seek to involve consumers in their market practices. Meanwhile, they also have an outspoken mission to contribute to a more sustainable consumption. Therefore, it becomes possible to study how Coop seek to involve consumers in efforts to create more sustainable markets and consumption. I have chosen to follow Coop and one of its local consumer

associations in two of their endeavours: first in Coop's development of its online food shop where the company seeks to facilitate consumers' daily shopping in a more environmentally friendly way; secondly, I have followed the Stockholm Consumer Cooperative Society's efforts to vitalize the democratic organization in markets through politically elected owner representatives. I will now describe some of the procedures I followed that were necessary in deciding which cases to study as well as the way in which I received access to the case.

The Swedish Consumer Cooperation actively seeks to promote green and to involve its consumers in its operations. Thus, this provided a good place to start my research quest. I first contacted Coop's Environmental Manager to learn about Coop's current endeavours. I was then informed about Coop's online initiative that was being developed as a response to calls from its Internet member panel. I was intrigued and decided to pursue this. I thought this provided an especially interesting case as it had only just begun and was, therefore, in a phase of development. After some initial interviews with the CEO of *Mataffären.se* (later developed into *Cooponline.se*), I received access to follow the deliveries to customers' homes. I, thereby, participated in the deliveries in which I was able to observe Coop's physical interaction with its customers, in addition to receiving a first contact for conducting further interviews with the customers. The results of this study can be found in papers: two and three. I identified a need to better understand if and how consumers perceive themselves to have any direct influence over Coop's business operations, which directed attention to the democratic organization of the company and the representatives that are elected by the members. When I later heard about the plans in one of the consumer societies to introduce a new parliamentary organization with the aim of strengthening the link between members and the stores, I decided to follow up on this case.

Following an initial interview with the project manager at *the Stockholm Consumer Cooperative Society* (SCCS), I was granted access to follow the introduction of owner representatives in the SCCS. I followed the different activities that were designed to elect and educate the owner representatives. I also took part in a meeting designed to establish contact between the representatives and the managers at its local store. I spoke with some of the rep-

representatives and store managers during the meetings and asked for permission to study their activities in the store. I obtained access to five different stores where I first sat with the representatives in meetings with the store manager. I subsequently followed at least one in-store activity that the representatives performed in which they interacted with the customers. During these activities, I also took the opportunity to talk with customers about their experiences at Coop, and the perceived needs and ways of influencing the store. The results of this study are provided in paper four.

#### 4.5.2 Consumption as Production

Scholars have long since debated the dualistic relationship between consumption and production; in fact, many call for its integration after studying the productive aspects of consumption (e.g. Cova, Dalli and Zwick, 2011; Dujarier, 2014; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Grönroos, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). The “prosumer” (Toffler, 1980) has frequently been called upon as someone who works to link and reconfigure the division of labour between consumption and production (e.g. Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010; Ritzer, Dean and Jurgenson, 2012): where consumers for example produce their own goods rather than buy them. In the promotion of local and sustainable food systems, consumers engaging in growing and producing their own food constitute an important element in reconnecting consumers to a place of production (Sage, 2014). However, a practice perspective would conversely de-emphasize the individual as the link between consumption and production; instead, the two spheres are seen as becoming integrated through the multi-actored work in practices (Hartmann, 2015). How, then, would the building of capacities to produce food as a consumer be studied from a practice perspective?

I have followed the work of integration between consumption and production based upon a case called *The Food Park* (Matparken), as it unfolds in situated practices in the vegetable garden (see Table 1). The Food Park represents a growing trend around the world of urban agriculture, in which consumers take on the role as producers with the purpose of creating greener living spaces in the cities (Delshammar, 2011; Flodin Furås, 2012). The Food Park is situated in the community of Gottsunda: just outside Uppsala; it is known as a community garden, initiated by two people

who wanted to engage with locals in the community, and grow organic vegetables for household needs in a more efficient way. The purpose was not only to grow vegetables; it was also to create a meeting place for people with different cultural backgrounds in the community.

I conducted participant observations at The Food Park by entering one of its study circles in how to grow organic food. These groups gave people with different backgrounds and experience the opportunity to come together to learn how to grow vegetables for household use. I was able to follow the processes and practices involved in equipping individuals to produce their own food. I openly participated as a researcher and found that people were positive to sharing their endeavours as urban farmers during the growing season: from March to September. As a way of documenting the process during the study circle, I performed an *autoethnography* where I kept a diary reflecting upon my own experiences as a practitioner. An autoethnography is a combination of an autobiography and ethnography and is increasingly used in consumer research to better capture cultural experiences in research (Ellis, Adams and Bocher, 2011; Gould, 1995) as well as practices (Valtonen, Markuksela and Moisander, 2010; Valtonen, 2012). Thus, in doing the autoethnography, I was not merely focusing upon myself; I positioned my experiences in the unfolding of events and materiality that is involved in the growing of vegetables.

To triangulate my own experiences I also conducted interviews with other participants using the aforementioned technique called “Interview to the Double” (Nicolini, 2009). This enabled participants to reveal and reflect upon the practical matters that probably would have been left unnoticed in a normal interview situation: for example, what sort of equipment was required to bring to the field (for example, wellingtons, bags to transport the food), and in the specific procedure they would do various things. Moreover, I used a camera to trace and document the different materiality involved in the practices. By capturing the moments where different objects were put to use, I could illustrate how competence, as a productive moment of consumption, was distributed among materially heterogeneous actors. I reveal the results of this study in paper two.

### 4.5.3 Consumption as Usage

In its most general form, consumption is by definition ‘the action of using up a resource’ (Oxford dictionary, 2017), which thus can be distinguished from consumption as purchase and as production. In his definition of consumption, Warde (2005, p. 137) use the term appropriation to capture the domestication and use of consumer goods in which items become incorporated and used up for practical purposes (Warde, 2014). This seemingly destructive last frontier of consumption should however not be seen as an end in itself, but rather as a part of the accomplishment of other social practices (Shove and Spurling, 2013; Warde, 2005). In order to find ways to decrease the use of resources and thereby reach a more sustainable consumption, it become crucial to direct attention to how consumption as usage is integrated in various socio-material practices. Moreover, consumption as usage is also likely to in turn create market demand for particular products (Burr, 2014). This way, consumption as usage is linked to both consumption as exchange and consumption as production.

I have conducted two cases studies that are situated in the kitchen as a way of better understanding these interrelationships. In one instance, I participated in a study circle, organized by *the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation* (SSNC), which taught different ways of cooking “climate-clever food”. This three-week study circle occurred in the Home Economics classroom at a local school in Uppsala. During the three consecutive cooking sessions, I performed participant observations: where the participants were informed about my role as a researcher. I documented the different events and materiality involved with the camera in my mobile phone and collected different materials that were provided (leaflets, recipes, and so on). I also conducted a focus group during the dinner at the last session where we discussed the aspects of climate-clever advice that had been provided in a SSNC leaflet. As a follow up to the study circle, I also interviewed its two leaders. This provide me with insights into how interest groups typically seek to influence and equip consumers in a practical manner in order to make greener and more climate-friendly choices in their everyday lives.

In order to broaden the perspective on how consumption becomes connected to systems of provision in the kitchen, I also performed a study of historical kitchens as manifested within the Swedish magazine *Hus-*

*modern*. This study was the result of a workshop for PhD students (called LancStock) that was jointly designed and written with some of my colleagues at Lancaster University and The Stockholm School of Economics. During my visit to Lancaster, I discussed with Elisabeth Shove the need to conduct practice studies by drawing upon broader data sets: for example, that spanned over time and across larger populations. Moreover, based on my previous studies, the kitchen was regarded as an interesting unit of analysis as it can be considered a place of integration where different practices occur. This is in line with the sociology of “market things” (Cochoy, 2007); market objects and systems of provision can be followed into the kitchen and the way in which they become appropriated and used can be studied. I and my co-authors decided to trace these types of market-consumption interactions under the influence of different historical matters of concern (thrift and convenience).

We adopted the methodological principle of situationalism (Woermann, 2016) and looked for different manifestations of the matters of concern, as related to different kitchen practices in *Husmodern*. Drawing upon Cochoy’s *Archaeology of Present Times*, we set out to bring together mute material in the form of images, in addition to more loudly speaking texts, in order to better understand the social action that unfolded over time. *Husmodern* was used as a source for knowing how various concerns, and the efforts to address them, are presented to its readers. By studying historical data as expressed in a popular magazine aimed at housewives, we explored “things in the making” (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2007): we positioned us as researchers in historical contexts that would enable us to explore how things unfold, rather than trying to make sense of a particular outcome, in retrospect.

In my case studies, specific use situations range from historical kitchens involving actors’ various efforts to realize thrift and convenience, to contemporary kitchens where actors seek to realize values of green climate-friendly and thrifty food. Insights into historical dilemmas and technological developments in the kitchen become important in understanding contemporary lock-ins and ways to negotiate changes: where connections between market objects and consumption can highlight different forms of shaping green consumption as usage. Taken together with the other mo-



ments of consumption, these situated practices represent multiple efforts to enable consumers to “do green” in their daily dealing with food.

#### 4.5.4 Analysing and Writing the Cases

The methods used to study the cases typically generate a lot of data in the form of interview transcripts, field notes, images, and texts. In analysing the data sets, I first wrote up a coherent story of the unfolding events where I traced the inter-linkages between actors and the activities in relation to different moments of practice. The respective research questions being developed for each case, in relation to a wider theoretical frame, provided me with some guidance into what to look for in constructing the narrative. I usually ended up with quite a long and detailed story, which I worked to narrow down in order to crystalize critical passages in the flood of events. Mapping, orientation, and context building can facilitate the process in elucidating certain patterns in the text (Fellman and Popp, 2013). Becoming familiar with the pertinent background literature, in addition to developing knowledge about the specific context of the study, helped me to discern broader themes that I later matched with empirical examples from the study. This way of analysing the data could best be described as an abductive research process (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 1994): I iteratively move from empirics to the theory and back again.

I drew out patterns of social and material conduct within complex and situated practices by basing the analysis upon practices rather than individual actors. As Halkier and Jensen (2011) underline, it is difficult to make any generalized claims about patterns of distribution of individual actors, as performed in statistical generalizations. Instead, it is possible to make analytical claims about the patterns of the dynamic interrelations of different categories, which are referred to as analytical generalization (Halkier and Jensen, 2011; Kvale, 1996). The results from qualitative practice studies can be generalized based upon the perceived validity of the empirical samples for the studied concepts. In this way, the results from a specific context become transferable to other contexts (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006).

# Chapter 5

## Summary of the Research Papers

The papers that serve as the basis for this thesis focus upon the formation of consumer agency to do green in different moments of food consumption. The research deals with diverse places in the integration of use, production, and exchange of food: where different matters of concern and practical solutions come to the fore. The concerning and agencing of consumers run as central processes throughout the papers. Consumers and other socio-material actors are involved in different ways to both concern and agence situations to produce green food practices. The papers are here organized with reference to an overlapping continuum between the themes of concerning or agencing in different moments of consumption. On the one hand, Papers one and two focus on the concerning processes within consumption as usage and produce. On the other hand, the processes of agencing consumers within consumption as exchange are central to Papers three and four.

## 5.1 Summary of Paper 1

### **“Kitchen Concerns Driving Thrift and Convenience: Bridging Markets and Consumption Toward Novel Practices (Sweden 1938-1958)”**

*Authors: Ingrid Stigzelius, Luis Araujo, Katy Mason, Riikka Murto and Teea Palo. This paper has been submitted to the journal Consumption Markets and Culture in its Special Issue entitled “Bridging boundaries in Consumption Markets and Culture.” The paper is currently in the second round of reviews.*

This research studies Swedish kitchens during and after the Second World War with the aim of better understanding the places, spaces, and mechanisms involved that connect markets and consumption to render practice change. The paper is based upon archival material collected from the Swedish housewife magazine *Husmodern*: 1938-1958. This represents a period in time when the society in Sweden went through a major crisis: the Second World War, which was characterized by a scarcity of resources, toward a more affluent society that was characterized by convenience. The study illustrates how two matters of concerns - related to a scarcity of food in markets and a scarcity of time in consumption - became manifested in kitchens. In this paper, the kitchen is conceptualized as a market-consumption junction, wherein multiple actors connected to markets, consumption, and socio-political systems meet to negotiate new terms of condition under the influence of different matters of concern. In turn, these concerned groups generate efforts to come up with new solutions that render housewives capable of coping with the matters of concern. In this study, we follow how establishing new connections between markets and consumption generate novel agencies that enacted practices of thrift and convenience. We conceptualize these changes as being reciprocal processes of concerning and agencing that work to disrupt and bring about new associations between meanings, objects, and competences in kitchen practices.

For example, the home economic teachers that worked for the magazine *Husmodern*, took part in concerning the housewives to be thrifty: for example, by using gas, water, and in cooking. In tight couplings between presenting concerns, these home economic teachers also provided profes-

sionally tested recommendations on how to cope with the portrayed matters of concern. Being thrifty often meant re-evaluating the meanings around available foodstuff: for example, exchanging meat for the use of vegetables. Housewives also became equipped, through the recipes in the magazine, with the necessary skills and tools to adjust cooking to the ongoing rations in the food market. Meanwhile, market products were also adjusted to the matter of concern, which facilitated the kitchen work: for example, by offering meat bullions that had a “delicious meat taste”.

In this way, we demonstrate how boundaries between markets and consumption become more visible as matters of concern arise in either domain, while processes of agencing conversely work to blend them together again. However, agencing efforts also lead to asymmetries and disturbances elsewhere that, in turn generate new matters of concerns. For example, rationing lead to a lack of time due to the need to wait in line to buy food. The subsequent promotion of convenience became manifested by redesigning kitchens to become more rational work places, as well as through renegotiating temporal demands on what constitutes a proper meal. Thus, we suggest that the two processes of agencing and concerning need to be studied in conjunction with each other in order to better understand the mechanisms involved when practices change and work to bridge the boundaries between markets and consumption. However, the links between markets and consumption are never direct or obvious; they need to be understood in relation to the on-going and situated practices that occur in the kitchen. In this way, the kitchen mediates and creates room for negotiations as new elements of practice enter food practices. We claim that, when new meanings, objects, and competences take place in a market-consumption junction – such as the kitchen - it generates new forms of consumption and demand that transform markets. Using the kitchen as market consumption can, in turn, enable a deeper understanding of the processes of change toward more sustainable practices.

## 5.2 Summary of Paper 2

### **“Doing Green: Environmental Concerns and the Realization of Green Values in Everyday Food Practices”.**

*Authors: Hans Kjellberg and Ingrid Stigzelius. This paper has been published as a chapter in “Concerned Markets, Economic Ordering for Multiple Values” (2014), edited by Geiger, Harrison, Kjellberg & Mallard: Edward Elgar.*

This paper explores matters of concerns related to the environment and the efforts to realize green values in three complementary case studies related to food production, exchange, and cooking. In these cases, multiple actors engage to integrate elements of green in the provision and consumption of food. The first case illustrates what it is like to produce one’s own food in the Food Park. This is a collective allotment where people grow their own vegetables for household needs. Meanwhile, they also produce many other values: such as a green living space, social sustainability, and the knowledge of how to become more self-sufficient on food. The case study follows a study circle throughout a growing season: where people learn how to grow organic vegetables, both in theory and practice. The case illustrates how the practice of growing one’s own food is also dependent upon the coordination with exchange practices and practices related to consumption. For example, coordination is performed by altering what to buy (for example, buying seeds instead of ready-produced vegetables) and by trying to domesticize the produce into the kitchen practices (for example, finding space to clean and dry the vegetables). Fitting the life as an urban farmer with the everyday life as a normal consumer proved to be difficult: for example, going away on holidays over the summer clashed with the need to weed and water the plants. However, for the participants in the study circle, the objective of engaging in the Food Park was not necessarily tied to the amount of produce; rather, it was to engage in the process of learning how to grow and be an active part of nature.

The second case of Cooponline.se looks into a stark contrast to the first one: where people through online grocery shopping instead conveniently choose to get the food readily produced, picked, washed, and delivered straight to the door. This can however also be seen as a way to do

green, since the online food store delivers organic and conventional food using biogas driven vehicles.

Nonetheless, purchasing food online is associated with multiple concerns, which mostly have to do with practical reasons (for example, not owning a car). Concerns over the assortment of food were not only tied to eating more organic food; it was also about making statements to eat less meat and more locally produced food, in addition to a desire to cook from scratch and waste less food. The possibility to buy food online sometimes addressed these concerns: for example, by implicitly forcing customers to plan their meals ahead due to the weekly deliveries. This could lead to less spontaneous purchases and reduce overconsumption; it also reduced the flexibility that sometimes lead to a surplus of food when meal plans suddenly changed. Thus, the new modes of exchange need to be coordinated with the overall food practices in order to support environmental concerns.

The third case follows an NGO's efforts to educate consumers on how to do green by organizing study circles on how to cook "climate clever food." The case study illustrates how the demand for different kinds of green products are created and negotiated in use-environments: such as the kitchen. The participants get the necessary tools, recipes, and food items in practical cooking sessions, which are deemed suitable for producing a green meal. Nevertheless, dilemmas still arise due to the complexity of different matters of concern, which makes it difficult to know whether or not the meal actually produces green values. Different convenient yet limited rules, thus, guide the monitoring of the degree to which the food on the table can be valued as green. The actual realization of green values is not a discrete variable; rather, it can be described as different shades of green that vary depending upon the intrinsic and extrinsic standards used for monitoring the practices.

Taken together, the three cases illustrate how consumers express multiple and at times competing concerns when engaging in different food-related practices. Connected to efforts to realize green, there are also many other values that are become produced; and that to a varying extent, become subsumed under the label of "doing green", such as thrift and convenience. However, thrift could also in other situations be evoked not to do green: for example being thrifty by refraining from buying expensive orga-

nic peppers. The multiple concerns creates tensions that must be balanced in order to incorporate elements of green in everyday life. One way to balance conflicting demand is to bracket other unfolding events deemed less important (for example, keeping a strict time line for placing an online order, or organizing weekly meetings in the Food Park). Engaging in green food practice can, in turn, lead to reverberating effects: fostering a need to adjust other connected practices (for example, the need for increased planning when buying food online, or the need to find “climate clever” ways to carry food home by using one’s own means and ability).

Consumers’ capacity to realize environmental concerns may also hinge on the efforts of many other actors to ease the situation to do green: for example, by providing scripts of what to do and by adjusting user-friendly situations (for example, ready-made food baskets). Markets can constitute an important role as middlemen, hence putting less of a strain on the work to produce green: such as, when participants in The Food Park hired someone to plough the field. Thus, there is still need for different modes of coordination in efforts to do green. The relationship to markets does not disappear; it may become altered instead, in terms of what and how you buy. To conclude, the agency of consumers to “do green” can be seen as being distributed between several actors in food production, markets, and consumption that work in different ways to equip consumers to become green practitioners. In the end, the question of whether or not these activities really produce green, all depends upon how the outcome is monitored. The role of both formal and informal monitoring becomes central to the realization of green values, where green is rarely enacted as a binary category; it is instead composed of different shades of green.

### 5.3 Summary of Paper 3

#### **“Reshaping Retailing: Consumer Responses to New Exchange Practices in Green Food E-tailing”**

*Author: Ingrid Stigzelius. The paper is published as a chapter in “Nordic retail research: Emerging diversity” (2012), edited by Hagberg, Holmberg, Sundström & Walter. Göteborg: BAS.*

The focus of this paper is the introduction of green e-tailing as a more convenient way of buying food; it studies initial responses of consumers to this new mode of exchange. The paper is based upon a case study of the efforts of the Swedish retailer Coop to reintroduce e-tailing in the Swedish market. An online member panel expressed concerns over a shortage of time affecting their food habits. Meanwhile, consumers have also expressed concerns for the environment. Coop, therefore, decided to ease the situation by adapting their services to the consumers' everyday lives. This is done by offering green services and products in combination with the convenience of buying food online and getting it delivered directly to the consumers' home. The study, however, shows that the new modes of exchange require that the consumers adapt their food practices in different ways.

To some extent, consumers can continue with already established understandings of what food practices normally entail: such as, using planned shopping lists. However, the new exchange practice also requires a long term planning that, in turn, reduces flexibility. Moreover, new forms of practices must be learned over time: such as, how to use virtual shopping lists and food baskets. Some changes in the exchange, such as a limited assortment, became a matter of concern; therefore, another type of response was to improve the exchange by suggesting specific products or new procedures of how to place an order. If there was a perceived lack of capacity to make a difference, or if the required changes were too overwhelming for the consumer, another response was to simply do the shopping elsewhere. E-tailing and retailing was also combined: a lack of particular products or information in the online shop was occasionally complemented in an ordinary store.

E-tailing's successful integration as a new mode of exchange appears to require a mutual adaption between consumers and the retailer. The paper discusses the conditions for consumers to influence markets as means of better adapting the exchange to the consumers' everyday lives. Learning new forms of exchange practices involved different degrees of engagement and competence, which can be seen as distributed between users and the objects in use. By supplying both conventional and organic products, the exchange is configured in a way that allows for different degrees of en-



agement in green food practices; this can be carried out as a practice in itself and as a part of other practices. However, when trying to understand how new exchange practices recruit new practitioners, it becomes important to understand how the new modes of exchange are adapted to the overall food practices of consumers and whether consumers have the capacity to voice their concerns when matters of concern may arise. A perceived lack of possibility to influence business operations directs attention to the conditions for consumer influence in markets: more specifically, to the consumer cooperative KF/Coop's infrastructure and how consumers are represented in the retail organization. The paper subsequently calls for further research on how consumers can voice their concerns, and if and how someone listens to them.

## 5.4 Summary of Paper 4

### **“Echoing Voice: Agencing Consumers to Voice Concerns in Markets”**

*Author: Ingrid Stigzelius (manuscript)*

This paper studies efforts to make consumers capable of voicing concerns and influencing markets by reviving the democratic mechanisms of political representation. The research builds upon a case study of the Swedish consumer cooperative's on-going work to strengthen consumer voices by producing owner representatives that constitute a link between the stores and the consumer cooperative societies. The processes of both agencing and concerning consumers are explored by attending to the situated representational practices that work to produce the owner representatives. Combining notions of both political and symbolic representations, the paper illustrates the production of spokespersons for the cooperatives' owners who, in turn, work to engage other consumers and further effectuate concerns in the cooperative. During this process, the cooperative's attempt to bring about new consumer agencements is both driven by, and works to produce, a specific image of the politically active and concerned consumer. Four stages of representational practices are identified: *(s)electing*, *equipping*, *engaging*, and *enacting*. Different socio-material actors perform these practices

that involve the gradual construction of the representative's agency, in which both political and symbolic representation work to reproduce each other.

In these representational practices owner representatives become configured through the stages of selecting and electing suitable representatives. For example, advertisements calling for candidates with specific characteristics work to pre-configure representatives, which later become elected in political elections, which in turn legitimize the link between member and representatives. Next, the representatives become socio-materially equipped in various ways: for example, through a number of educational sessions describing the organization of the consumer association and the stores. Once elected and equipped, the representatives work to engage consumers to become politically active owners through acts of qualification and provocation by relying upon a number of different material devices: such as, surveys in stores. Lastly, processes of enacting involve the representative's efforts to make its voice heard higher up in the organization, thus, working to strengthen the link to those who make the decisions. Together, these practices are conceptualized as part of processes of agencing and concerning consumers: where (s)electing and equipping work to arrange agencies, while engaging and enacting refer to ways of concerning others, thereby propelling agencies into motion. These reciprocal processes are proposed to explain the mechanisms involved in efforts to reverberate consumer engagements and sustain an echoing voice in the market.

Three interconnected themes are further discussed. Theme one relates to the performativity of representations: where the created images of consumers work to configure and enact particular versions of consumers and concerns. Theme two revolves around the multiplicity of agencies that need to be connected in order to realize the agency of political representatives. Theme third concerns the efforts to achieve reverberating effects and an echoing voice by continuously evoking processes of agencing and concerning that involve both symbolic and political representations. The elected owner representative plays herein an important role: as a mediator and an avant-garde consumer who helps to maintain consumer engagement by echoing the voices in the market.



# Chapter 6

## Concluding Discussion

The aim of this thesis has been to provide a deeper understanding of how individuals' capacity to act and do green in different moments of consumption is constituted through socio-material arrangements rather than determined by the inherent capability of the individual consumer. In exploration of this, I have attended to on-going food practices in consumption as usage, production, and exchange with a particular focus on situations and socio-material actors that have worked to modify and change food practices to become green. Questions that have guided my research throughout these cases are the following: What do consumers do when engaging in green consumption? How do other socio-material actors try to engage consumers to become concerned and to do green? How are consumers enabled to produce and consume green food?

### 6.1 Overview of the Research Papers

The papers I have written contribute toward this aim in a number of ways. The first paper entitled *Kitchen Concerns Driving Thrift and Convenience: Bridging Markets and Consumption Toward Novel Practices (Sweden 1938-1958)* delves deeper into the contemporary practices of doing green by providing a historical account of trajectories of practices as these develop in relation to broader societal matters of concerns. The paper illustrates how these concerns come into play in the ordinary everyday activities in kitchens, mediated by a number of socio-material actors through the magazine *Husmodern*.

This is multi-actored work with representatives from consumption, markets, civil society, and politics that, as concerned actors, actively work to concern and agence housewives to be thrifty and efficient in the kitchen. Both thrift and convenience have been noted as important elements when engaging in more contemporary efforts of doing green.

The second paper entitled *Doing Green: Environmental Concerns and the Realization of Green Values in Everyday Food Practices* illustrates how the multiple concerns and practicality of everyday life need to be balanced with efforts to do green, since green practices easily affect the ordinary ways of doing things. By exploring consumption from a range of angles (production, exchange, and cooking), this research reveals that green consumption is a collective achievement that involves multiple actors that work to coordinate and simplify practices of doing green in everyday life. Taken together, these two papers provide a broader understanding of how different concerns become manifested in consumption, primarily as use and production (both as vegetable production and cooking), with subsequent efforts by various actors to accommodate these concerns by rearranging situations that enable a capacity to act and do green.

The third paper, entitled *Reshaping Retailing: Consumer Responses to New Exchange Practices in Green Food E-tailing* focuses upon consumption as exchange by exploring the modification of food practices when consumers buy food online. This research shows how green e-tailing is promoted as a convenient alternative to buying food, while also offering green products and services. Multiple socio-material actors work to arrange the exchange through scripts that prescribe the necessary steps in the exchange (for example, providing customer details before entering the shop or placing orders before midnight); some scripts are more open for modification by the users (for example, deciding to assemble products from scratch or in previously filled shopping baskets). Findings show that the exchange practices develop through mutual configurations of the actors involved: where both the actors and the exchange adapt to each other. The study also highlights customers' perceived limitation to influence business operations.

The fourth paper entitled *Echoing Voice: Agencing Consumers to Voice Concerns in Markets* connects to the research in the previous paper by studying consumers' capacity to act and voice concerns in markets. The study at-

tends to the representational practices that work to produce active and concerned consumers in a consumer cooperative society. The democratic mechanisms are here revived through the introduction of spokespersons that seeks to link stores to the members. Processes of agencing and concerning are highlighted as central mechanisms: to equip and engage consumers to voice concerns, which are mediated and echoed through the representative's integration. Taken together, these two papers primarily focuses on agencing processes and how these become manifested in consumption as exchange, with subsequent efforts to further concern and agence other actors in a continuous process of agencing and concerning.

This leads me to the overarching themes that I have identified as central findings of my research, which also correspond to the title of this thesis: *Producing Consumers – Agencing and Concerning Consumers to Do Green in Everyday Food Practices*.

## 6.2 Producing Consumers

The main argument of this thesis is that consumption is a collective achievement. This means consumers' capacity to act and make a difference in the way to consume is dependent upon the performance of multiple socio-material actors that, together, produce consumption. The consumer is of course an important actor in this achievement, yet could be seen as the tip of the iceberg in relation to the wider network of actors that works to uphold and produce consumption. This iceberg of actors, however, should not be mistaken for any sort of hidden super structure or norm that is beyond the consumers' reach. By examining the consumers' practices, we can come to realize how the network is interconnected by socio-materially entities in chains of translations (Helgesson et al., 2004). An example can be found in an ordinary grocery store, where it is possible to detect multiple socio-material actors: such as shelves, price tags, recommendations, and advertisements that, along with the consumer, works to enact a decision. As a form of spokesperson for this actor-network, the consumer plays an important role in attributing and negotiating the meaning of the network. As a carrier of the practices being performed as part of the network, consumers can bring in new forms of competence and objects that may change the

course of action. However, it is only as a collective achievement, where the network acts as one actor (cf. Andersson et al., 2008), that it can become possible to move mountains in any particular direction. The double edged title of this thesis - *Producing Consumers* - indicates that consumption is a collective achievement in which consumers are both produced by, and part of producing specific capacities to act and consume. I will next discuss the central mechanism of agencing and concerning that takes place in a mutual configuration between consumers and the wider network of actors in the production of green consumption.

### 6.3 Agencing and Concerning Consumers

As a way of describing practice change, I have brought together the notions of agencing (Cochoy et al., 2016; Hagberg, 2015) and concerning (Geiger et al., 2014; Latour, 2004; Mallard, 2016). These two central processes work to equip and concern consumers to make a difference; these have been seen to work in a reciprocal and continuous process: one feeds the other and vice-versa. Efforts to give agency to consumers can be based upon specific matters of concern, such as climate change: where agencing processes seek to take these concerns into account by, for example, promoting low carbon ways of cooking food through specific types of food and equipment with low energy usage. Agencing, as the verb form of agencements (Callon, 2007), therefore, moves away from the individual agency of consumers to the complex socio-material entities that work to produce the capacity to act. Agencing involves processes of arranging entities and putting these into motion, which work to convert people and non-human entities (Cochoy et al., 2016). Therefore, agencing captures the processes of becoming in which actors become configured and equipped for specific situations; however, these new arrangements may also produce asymmetries and overflows in other places that may, in turn, provoke new matters of concern to arise. For example, in the case of cooking climate-clever food, participants were equipped with guidance on how to become climate clever and, thus, adopted simple rules of thumbs on the type of food to choose. However, this convenient way of deciding what to cook may also pose other problems: such as, knowing if it as a matter of fact also produces green.

This can be seen in light of extant literature on the marketing of green ethical products, where labels are often presented as being unproblematic. Labels of ethical and environmental products are commonly used to aid and, thus, agence consumers in their decisions by informing them about green and fair trade products, and where research seeks to find ways of motivating consumers to choose these (see e.g. Cicia, Del Giudice and Scarpa, 2002; De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007; Thørgersen, Haugaard, and Olesen, 2010; Lai, Cheng and Tang, 2010). As Halkier (2001) as well as Boström and Klintman (2008; 2009) emphasize, labels rarely resemble the dilemmas and ambivalences that many consumers face when trying to make the correct green food choices. This is also in line with Fuentes (2015a) who argues that the green marketing literature does not problematize and visualize wider environmental problems with the promoted green products. Such phases of problematization can be compared to processes of concerning, whereby the notion of green is continuously negotiated among several concerned actors and not kept at a closure as a matter of fact.

As Geiger et al. (2014) highlight, the difference between matters of fact and matters of concern become crucial when facing the current environmental crisis. While there is no need to doubt that human activity gives rise to the global warming we see today (Latour, 2004), the different solutions being brought forward, underpinned by science and technological innovations, do not yet have any stabilized frontiers in the form of a unified clear-cut solution. Solutions are driven by matters of concern (Geiger et al. 2014), which are open for interpretation and readily evaluated in relation to new research findings and technological innovations. Moreover, the current efforts to frame activities into new agencements cannot be easily detached from overflows and unexpected consequences. Matters of concern, therefore, need to be seen as linked to diverse, inter-linked networks, which requires a fusion of political, social, and economic perspectives.

Similar to Wägner (1941) who observed the emergence of clouds as it took form on a mountain top (see the Prologue), concerning can be seen as an emergent process as it unfolds, yet as somewhat uncertain with no clear answers. However, as Sörlin (2011) noted: the questions that are being asked in this process may be more important than the answers. Drawing upon Wägner (1941), it is the accumulation of concerns that drives the de-



velopment forward, leading to clouds of matters of concern that, in turn, lead to rain and floods that prove crucial for further development and growth. Thus, processes of concerning maintains an engagement and curiosity to continually find better solutions, which takes new matters of concern into account. The matters of concerns and framing of these through agencing efforts have taken different turns in history. I have paid particular attention in this thesis to a concern for the environment and responding efforts to do green, to which I now turn.

## 6.4 Matters of Concern Related to Doing Green

I propose to term doing green as a way of referring to the involved practicality of various doings in response to environmental concerns. In relation to food, this could involve consumers' efforts to eat seasonal and organic food, growing one's own vegetables or seeking ways to reduce the levels of consumption and waste. As seen from a historical perspective, efforts to do green can be related to both scarcity and abundance of resources, which has spurred different matters of concern throughout history (Czarniawska and Löfgren, 2013). In this thesis, doing green has been noted as a response to concerns related to both scarcity and abundance.

The focus in Paper one, upon kitchens during the Second World War in Sweden, illustrates how matters of concern arose in response to the closed borders and subsequent scarcity in food markets. Governmental bodies enforced a rationing system as a form of framing that kept demand in check and made people rethink ways of cooking and eating that used less resources (for example, gas, electricity, and meat). This can be interpreted as a form of agencing process, which enables consumer action within the frames of the matter of concern. A similar response today is based more upon scattered individual efforts: people are on the contrary found to be thrifty due to the abundance and excess use of resources in the food market. Matters of concern related to the abundance and overuse of resources pertain to food waste, environmental pollution, animal safety, and climate change. Efforts to be thrifty and green by voluntarily saving resources (for

example, by reducing meat consumption or by producing one's own vegetables) also pose new matters of concern related to the inconvenience of doing green.

Changes in the division of labour - be it on the labour market as in the post-war period (Paper one) or in the more contemporary efforts of urban agriculture (Paper two) - creates new temporal demands for efficiency and convenience in the kitchen. The double duties of the housewives, as both homemakers and workers in the 1940-1960s, created matters of concern leading to the formation of concerned groups that undertook careful governmentally-assisted studies on how to facilitate kitchen work. As in the case with the Food Park, people who similarly engaged in urban agriculture formed new concerned groups that decided to produce their own food collectively in order to be more efficient. Handling large amounts of vegetables on one's own also demanded new and somewhat creative solutions in the kitchen: for example, hanging up onions to dry in the window and cooking larger batches of vegetable-based food, according to the season.

The introduction of the online food store, as reported in Paper three, is a more convenient market initiative response to the perceived lack of time to buy and cook food; it is however also an example of doing green. In this case, the company offers to not only provide ready-made organic vegetables and other foodstuffs; it also collects and delivers them straight to the consumers' homes. Consumers can place the orders and purchase the food online, while sitting at home. In this way, we can clearly see how markets literally enter the kitchen to provide more convenient solutions. The historical kitchens, as found in Paper one, and the way in which markets mediated the efforts to agence thrift and convenience in the kitchen (cf. Arsel and Bean, 2013) was found to have a similar, yet more indirect, tendency. This required an on-going interaction with the representatives of consumption - that is to say, the home-economic teachers - where a mutual adaptation took place through experimentation with market products and recipes. The development was based upon a new envisioning of the user environment, which inspired new solutions in the kitchen. As new convenient solutions in the form of ready-made food gradually entered the kitchen; these were accompanied with a renegotiation of what was seen as proper ways of cooking, eating, and doing the dishes. Not only was there a change of

meaning in the husband's role, participation, and competence in the household duties; there was also a new interpretation of what was regarded as acceptable forms of cooking. A housewife in 1957 expressed it as such:

I can never learn how to line up coffee, bread, cake, sodas, fruit and bonbons, which is expected of a 'simple' Swedish coffee party. If I have anything of these to offer, it will have to do. Undeniably, it is more fun to talk to your friends, than eat all the time anyway! (Husmodern, 1957, vol. 2, pp. 8-9).

Thus, practice change takes place in a continuous negotiation between markets and consumption in the arrangement of the different elements involved in a practice (meaning, competence, and objects). This is in line with previous research, which claims that attention to food practices is important in order to understand changes in consumption (Warde, 2005; Paddock, 2015). My research also shows how markets and consumption are intertwined in the performance of food practices.

However, one may ask what asymmetries and overflows it creates, if the competence and labour of cooking are increasingly substituted in favour of convenience? Convenience food (e.g. tinned, ready-made meals) has undeniably granted women an easier entrance into the labour market, thus, increasing the equality between men and women; however, the inevitable lost competence in cooking and increased use of energy and natural resources in the food industry has led to other matters of concern: such as declining health and deteriorating environment. With increased affluence and convenient access to resources - readily available and cheap food, water, and electricity - we would need to rethink ways of being thrifty based upon an actual, yet not realized, restriction to natural resources. The question then is when does the perceived connection between climate change and our ways of consuming move from being a matter of concern for a relatively few concerned actors, to a matter of fact for the whole population? This transition becomes more difficult to attain without the supporting infrastructure: for example, as rationing did during the wartime. Theien (2009) raises the possibility that food rationing could be a way of attaining more sustainable consumption today. In the case of food rationing during the Second World War, consumption was found to transcend the private arena of the household, and enter the sphere of national politics. As Theien

(2009, p. 2) states: “Any policies toward promoting sustainable consumption has yet to make this important transition.”

Meanwhile, my studies have illustrated the multiplicity of the different ways to do green; this is open for interpretation and negotiation among actors in different times and in relation to different matters of concern (war, climate change, social sustainability, and so on). Other actors were also found to try to enhance the “doability” (Halkier, 2010, p. 36) for consumers to engage in green food practices in order to increase the possibilities of what can be done and to influence the way in which they are performed within everyday practices. In this way, actors also engage in “doing someone green”: an expression, which refers to giving good advice and aiding someone. Thus, doing green becomes a metaphorical box where different matters of concerns and efforts to do green are assembled and blended into the practicality of everyday life. However, determining what is green also causes problems regarding how to correctly monitor and know if it is correct to do what one wants in order to save the environment. The different concerns do not need to conflict with each other. However, as Cochoy (2014) states, there is a risk that doing green in some areas becomes a “scape-goal”, which obstructs us from doing green in more urgent areas of consumption (cf. Ellison, 2008; Fuentes, 2015a). What then becomes important to know is against which standard green is measured, and is doing green primarily an act to clear one’s conscience as a form of “trade in indulgences” (Cochoy, 2014, p. 252), while continuing to consume more intensive resources elsewhere? As agencing efforts are found to correspond to the specific formulation of the matters of concern, one must always question what the most important concern is and how it can be balanced with all the other concerns of everyday life. There is clearly a need for some form of mediation in achieving practice change, which I will discuss next.

## 6.5 Junctions and Mediators in Changing Everyday Food Practices

Food practices that take place in the kitchen might not be the most urgent area upon which to focus one's efforts in order to reduce climate change; emissions from transportation, for example constitute a critical area to combat (The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2014). Nevertheless, the kitchen constitutes an important space in trying to understand the work of integration that is conducted between markets and consumption in order to achieve practice change. I have presented the kitchen as a *market-consumption junction* (cf. Cowan, 1987), which provides a place for negotiation between different socio-material actors in markets and consumption, and that works to connect different spheres of interest and concerns. The processes of concerning and agencing are also central in better understanding these negotiations, which are enacted in situated practices in the kitchen. For example, the concerned group of actors within *the Research Institute of Homes* (HFI) undertook a series of tests in the kitchen that measured and, thereby, visualized areas in need of improvement. This created an awareness of kitchen concerns to which actors were able to respond: for example, designing kitchen sinks at convenient heights. In this way, the kitchen constituted a physical junction between markets and consumption: one that addressed particular concerns. Markets were, thus, evoked to mediate transitions in consumption.

Turning our attention to *the Food Park*, markets and other forms of allocation systems (e.g. barter trade) were also relied upon to solve problems of coordinating flows from production to consumption. As highlighted in previous research, markets are hard to escape and could also be counter-productive in efforts to do green (Kozinets, 2002; Arnould, 2007). Similar to the kitchen, the vegetable garden could also be seen as a form of market consumption junction that creates room for renegotiation for everyday food practices, which sometimes leads to reverberating effects in other parts of life. Important to note is that the socio-materially constructed "nature" is also awarded agency to change the course of action in the vegetable garden: for example, only permitting seasonal food to be consumed or de-

tering people to travel far away during the summer holidays. This may have reverberating effects in other forms of consumption: that is to say, grocery shopping, cooking, and travelling. As a form of *nature-market-consumption* junction, the vegetable garden could also constitute an important space to problematize and negotiate the ordinary ways of consuming food.

Moreover, some actors can be seen as mediators of transitions to do green through the work they perform to concern and to enrol other actors: for example, the researchers at HFI and the home economic teachers in the magazine *Husmodern*, who worked to mediate an integration between markets and consumption through the different tests of market products and recipes to use in the kitchen. Another example of a certain class of mediators can be found in the case of owner representatives at *the Stockholm Consumer Cooperative Society*. These avant-garde consumers became equipped in processes of agencing, so that they could engage other members and market actors to become concerned about particular issues: for example, the potential harm of using canned food containing *bisphenol A*. These types of mediators become the carrying expertise (Sörlin, 2013): working to re-configure, integrate, and engage different actors and spheres of interest. Moreover, the materiality involved also carries an important dimension in rendering a change in perception: through the different forms of material equipment this expertise employed, such as measuring the use of energy through oxygen masks as in HFI, or evaluating customer satisfaction through customer surveys that the owner representatives performed. This further stresses the need to identify particular socio-material conduits (Finch et al., 2014), nexus (Paddock, 2015) or crossing points (Hagberg, 2015) that can work to channel the change of practices. Attending to situated practices in particular places where the work of integration can take place is one way of facilitating an understanding for these mediators: for example, in the kitchen, vegetable gardens, or grocery stores that each constitute a meeting point between market, consumption, and production.

## 6.6 Widening the Perspectives in the Production of Green Consumption

The work of integration through junctions also works to flatten markets and consumption (Bajde, 2013), which can contribute with a wider perspective to the study of markets and consumption. As Burr (2014) illustrates, a *market widening* takes place in how market demand is seen as created in the envisioning of new types of use environments. For example, when designing a shoe used for outdoor trekking, one needs to imagine a use environment of mountains, rock and dust, which is altogether different from designing a high heel shoe that fosters envisioning a usage on flat concrete. This type of envisioning of the kitchen as a different type of use environment was also noted to play an important role in redesigning the kitchen, thereby, creating market demand for particular products. Similarly envisioning what a new kind of sustainable consumption would look like in its use and produce environment, would foster a different type of market demand. How would a use, produce, and exchange environment be envisioned if nature was a larger part of it? (cf. Latour, 2004b; Burr, 2014)

This could contribute to a better understanding of how markets are connected to consumption beyond the purchase situation. Conversely, a similar form of *consumption widening* could be noted if we started to recognize the wider network of actors that collectively work to produce consumption in exchange, use, and produce situations. The flattening and bridging of these perspectives can, thereby, bring about a wider scope for the study of green consumption: first, by including market practice as co-constituting consumer agency and, secondly, by including user environments in the production of markets. Thus, these perspectives are suggested to contribute toward a widening of both markets and consumption in the production of green consumption.

Moreover, taking nature into account as an actor in the performance of markets and consumption could lead to a form of *nature widening* perspective: where the socio-material aspects of engaging with nature influence the performance of practices. As Hartmann (2015), who studied the practice of gardening, illustrates, nature objects hold the qualities as carriers of produc-

tive moments (for example, producing flowers and fruits), which are essential for the overall performance of gardening. What would consumption and markets look like if nature were given a more prominent role in determining the forms of consumption of what is produced, exchanged, and consumed? Returning to the metaphor of the consumer as the top of the (now melting) iceberg, we do not necessarily need to look so high for an answer to the increasingly mounting matters of concerns. In line with Asdal (2008), I would rather propagate a more down-to-earth approach where we only need to dig a little deeper to detect the myriad of socio-material actors beneath the soil of green consumption (e.g. natures, producers, consumers, marketers, media magazines, and politicians). These actors would now need to be assembled as one concerned actor to enable more efficient changes in the forms and levels of consumption, to enable a move toward sustainability.

## 6.7 Contributions to Theory

Drawing upon the findings of my papers in relation to the aforementioned extant literature, I have identified three potential areas of research to which this thesis contributes. To start with, my research contributes primarily to *market studies* by engaging with the emerging strand of literature that combines studies on market practice with practices related to consumption (e.g. Brembeck, Cochoy, and Moisander, 2015; Hagberg, 2015; Shove and Araujo, 2010). By combining these practice perspectives, my research has furthered the ideas on the agencing of consumers as constituted by the rearrangements of practice elements drawing upon both markets and consumption. These arrangements are subsequently put into motion through junctions and mediators that facilitate the bridging of markets and consumption and, hence, the enactment of consumer agency. My studies also stress the mutual configuration and adaptation of consumers and other socio-material market actors engaging in exchange practices (Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010).

Moreover, the thesis contributes to the discussion on the configuring of users and market actors within market studies (e.g. Azimont and Araujo, 2010; Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2010; Harrison and Kjellberg, 2016; Mallard, 2012; Schneider and Woolgar, 2012). I extend this line of literature by



showing how consumers become socio-materially configured as active market actors in order to engage and concern other consumers. I study the agencing and concerning processes of consumers by attending to political and symbolic representational practices in markets (e.g. Diaz Ruiz, 2013; Hagberg and Kjellberg, 2015), placing particular attention to the production of consumer images (see e.g. Cayla and Peñaloza, 2006; Fuentes, 2014; 2015b), which political representatives in turn can enact. In so doing, the thesis combines previously unrelated areas of research within market studies to show how politically active consumers become produced and continuously engaged to voice concerns in markets.

The study of concerned markets (Geiger et al., 2014), sustainability (Finch and Reid, 2014), the greening of markets (Tryggestad and Reijonen, 2012) and the enactment of green consumers (Fuentes, 2014; Reijonen, 2011) are other emerging areas of research within market studies that this thesis joins. My research reveals how an integrated perspective of markets and consumption in junctions can help to explain how matters of concern become integrated in practices, which render changes toward novel practices through agencing processes. Paper two, on concerned consumers, also show how connections are made between the overall environmental concerns and the situated practices in everyday life, which is filled with multiple other concerns that must be balanced. Moreover, by showing how consumers are made active in markets through on-going practices, these findings could also possibly feed into *CCT-research* and the growing research field related to the role of consumers in market formation (Giesler, 2008; Kozinets, 2002; Martin and Schouten, 2014; Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

A second area of research to which this thesis aims to contribute is the field of green consumer research, which particularly pertains to *socio-material practice studies*. The thesis thereby joins the growing body of research that calls for a practice theoretical perspective to better understand the formation of green consumption (e.g. Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, and Malpass 2010; Fuentes, 2014; Halkier, 2010; Hargreaves, 2011; Ozaki and Shaw, 2013; Paddock, 2015; Sahakian and Wilhite, 2013). By bringing in a market practice perspective to this field of research, this thesis works to enrich an understanding for how market actors and different material devices can

work to configure consumers toward greener practices. For example, I illustrate how food practices, as situated in kitchens, can function as a nexus point to better understand transitions toward novel practices (cf. Paddock, 2015). However, the kitchen, as such, is not seen as the main organizing principle (cf. Hand and Shove, 2004); rather, it constitutes a meeting place between different concerned actors to negotiate how to take matters of concern into account. We cannot just look to one side (consumption or markets) if we want to see practice changes to sustainability; rather, we need to see them as integrated and entangled through practices (Ozaki and Shaw, 2014).

In line with Gherardi (2015), this thesis incorporates the notion of agencement and agencing from market studies and, thereby, goes to show how processes of becoming green is enacted through multiple human and non-human actors, which become arranged and rearranged into a practice. Moreover, objects can be seen as a means to provoke reflections upon practices and alter courses of action; this is part of the problematization of practices (cf. Arsel and Bean, 2013; Barnett et al., 2010; Fuentes, 2015a). Nevertheless, by introducing the notion of concerning, this thesis attempts to show how broader public matters of concern are also part of the problematization of practices that can be used to account for unfolding concerns in society.

Lastly, and certainly not the least, a third area to which this thesis potentially contributes relates to research within *green political marketing practices* (e.g. Fuentes, 2014; 2015ab; Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2010; Moisander, Markkula, and Eräranta, 2010; Solér, 2012). Traditional green sustainability marketing has primarily a managerial approach that focuses upon trying to understand the green consumer (e.g. Laroche et al. 2001; Squires et al., 2001; McDonald, Oates, Alevizou, Young, and Hwang, 2012) and green communication (e.g. Imkamp, 2000); it also accounts for broader social contexts and the purchase context and marketing activities, as influencing consumer conduct (see e.g. Belz and Peattie, 2009; Padel and Foster, 2005; Pedersen and Neergard, 2006; Moisander, et al., 2010). However, another field of research related to practices takes an interest in what marketers do as part of marketing (green) products (for example, Echeverri and Skålén, 2011; Skålén och Hackley, 2011; Fuentes, 2015ab; Cochoy, 2007 and 2008).

My studies could contribute by showing that the central processes of agencing and concerning consumers could be seen as marketing work. Agencing and concerning generate new agencements, which may generate unanticipated overflows (cf. Czarniawska and Löfgren 2013; Cochoy et al. 2016). Marketing work related to agencing and concerning could be seen as the practices that anticipate emerging barriers from matters of concern, to enable continued performance of practices by identifying new objects, ideas or meanings that takes the matter of concern into account.

## 6.8 Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Policy

This thesis provides a socio-material practice perspective to better understand the formation of consumer agency to do green. This is in line with previous studies that call for a constructivist perspective to the construction of green consumers (e.g. Moisander, 2010; Reijonen, 2011). By attending to the on-going practices that work to produce active consumer subjects, this research also reveals that consumers are an integral part of the processes of constructing this reality. Thus, green consumers are both produced and part of producing green consumption. This suggests that green consumption is a collective achievement, which has important implications for both practice and policy in the future direction of how to achieve more sustainable consumption.

First, by adopting a practice perspective, the individual agency to engage in green consumption becomes decentred. This means that we need to direct our attention to all the different socio-material actors that enable green practices to occur, rather than focusing upon the inherent individual motives to make a difference. Secondly, a socio-material practice perspective further decentres human agency by bringing in the role of materiality as an actor in the collective performance of green consumption. Policy makers and market practitioners do not need to wait for consumers to change their attitudes; rather, they could work to directly shape the material environments in which consumers act. This could push (or “nudge”) consumers into doing green. Third, it is not enough, however, to only work with the

material structure; consumption must be understood in relation to the practices in which they are performed and formed, and through which particular demands become created. Consumers also constitute an active part in appropriating or displacing objects, while attributing particular meanings to different ways of doing things. Thus, consumers play an important role in either accepting or questioning what is taken for granted as normal conduct. Fourth, we would need to attend to the situated and on-going practices that produce consumption in order to better understand the mechanisms of how socio-materiality interact and come to change practices. For marketers as well as policy makers it, therefore, becomes important to better understand the different practices that take place in the kitchen: to better anticipate potential barriers to accommodate matters of concern.

My studies have explored the practices related to consumption as exchange, production, and usage. Drawing upon the insights of unfolding practices in households and markets, these studies highlight the central processes of agencing and concerning consumers, whereby consumers become equipped and engaged to also continually concern other relevant actors. To maintain these processes, it requires the continued efforts of multiple concerned actors, policy makers, civil society, media, marketers, and consumers: all of whom collectively work toward greener consumption.

## 6.9 Suggestions for Future Studies

During my work as a doctoral student, I have encountered a number of interesting research areas, which I found to go beyond the remit of this thesis. Therefore, I will highlight a few of these that could benefit from further studies.

First, while this thesis has focused upon the assembling of markets and consumption in building consumers' agency in green consumption, it has also recognized nature's potential role and agency to play a more active part in this achievement. In line with Latour (2004) as well as Asdal and Marres (2014), I cannot help but wonder what green consumption would look like if nature were taken into account and included as an actor in the different doings related to consumption.

Secondly, I have noted in both my historical and contemporary studies that there is a domination of female representatives; they are mainly the consumers who engage in thrifty and green food practices (cf. Boström and Klintman, 2009). Are there any connections between a care for the chores of the home, and the wider care for the climate? Given that a woman's inherited role as a homemaker keeps on changing due to increased equality in society, it would be interesting to examine how the care for the home is connected to, and translated toward, an equalized responsibility for the environment. How do meanings, competences, and objects become rearranged as men increasingly enter the domestic and environmental sphere?

Third, the role of democratic means to voice concerns is found to play an important role in my study on the consumer's capacity to participate in market formation, yet it has a diminishing role in the performance of market practices. What is the continued role of democracy in markets, and what implications are there for the wider democratic and political engagement in society?

Fourth, my studies, as well as previous research, has shown how the food rationing system during the Second World War was an important lesson in how households became engaged through policy instruments and measures to come to terms with national matters of concern. How could some of these principles be interpreted and implemented into the much more complex contemporary context of global affluent markets that ultimately hinge upon an individual morality to tackle a global matter of concern? How can a real, yet not realized, scarcity of natural resources be anticipated in the market and be framed on an international level, when there are currently no physical or moral boundaries?

The fifth area of research that could benefit from further studies regards the fact this thesis has highlighted processes of concerning as an important driver for change; however, it was unable to account for whence those concerns came and the unfolding of those concerns since different concerned actors in society became allied to carry and translate them into actions. How do we move from a matter of concern to a matter of fact, which could unite actors to make a difference in addressing those concerns?

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Part II:  
The Papers