

**Developing one's particular foodway:  
A quest for harmony nourished by diversities<sup>1</sup>**

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**Food and foodways as socially and culturally shared and transmitted**

Foodways are defined as the totality of practices and representations related to food (Anderson, 2015; Di Giovine & Brulotte, 2014). Many authors show how these are socially and culturally shared and transmitted (for example Di Giovine & Brulotte, 2014; Fischler, 2013; Ochs, Pontecorvo & Fasulo, 1996). They are a means to construct, maintain and affirm group identity (Bruegel & Laurioux, 2002; Margarito, 2008; Mennell; 1993; Montanari, 2010). Nevertheless, this focus on the social and cultural dimensions of food may bring us to miss the individual and the way in which they may potentially elaborate they own particular foodway (Farquhar, 2006).

On another side Fischler and Pardo (2013) highlight the development of particular foodways (alimentations particulières), which are characterized by the fact that individual choices or needs take priority over the sharing of meals and which go against what is common or habitual in their socio-cultural environment. One of its illustration is vegetarianism in western Europe (Fischler & Pardo, 2013), as this diet is rare in this part of the world (Cazes-Valette, 2007; Larue, 2015).

**How can we understand the development of an individual's particular foodway, without overlooking the social dimensions of foodways and their development?**

**Theoretical background: A dialogical perspective**

The dialogical self theory considers the Self as "a multiplicity of positions" (Hermans, 2001, p. 243) called I-positions. These positions express different voices which dialogue more or less with one another, that why the self is also said "multivoiced" (Aveling, Gillespie & Cornish, 2015). The self is considered as social (Hermans, 2001).

"Humans live in the world of others' words (Bakhtin, 1979/1986, p.167). The limits of the self are not within the I, but within the relationship with the other, "I and thou". " (Marková et al., 2007, p. 8)

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<sup>1</sup> This poster presents a part of an ongoing PhD thesis about creativity and values in the development of a vegetarian foodway, under the supervision of Prof. A. Iannaccone (University of Neuchâtel) and Prof. V. Glaveanu (University of Aalborg). The analysis is in an exploratory phase, and the interview used here is presented as an example.

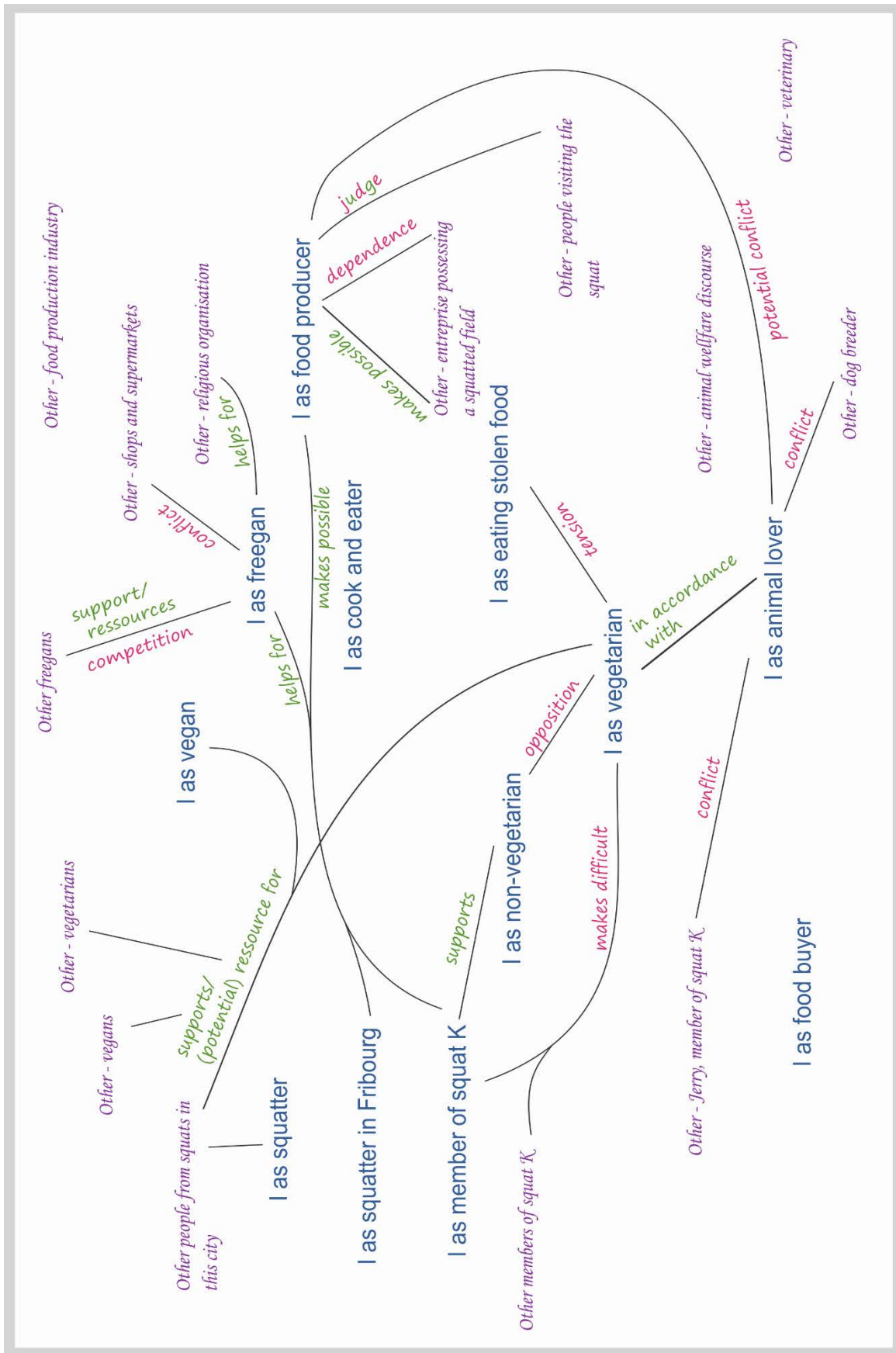


Illustration: Maeva's I-positions and inner-others related to food, and some of the relations between them.

## The data

Semistructured interview with Maeva, 24, who squats an old house with several other people for political/ideological motivations. She was vegetarian during several months approximately one year before the interview, and became vegetarian again shortly after the interview. The interview was done during an exploratory phase of an ongoing PhD thesis. The interview concerned her foodway and its evolution.

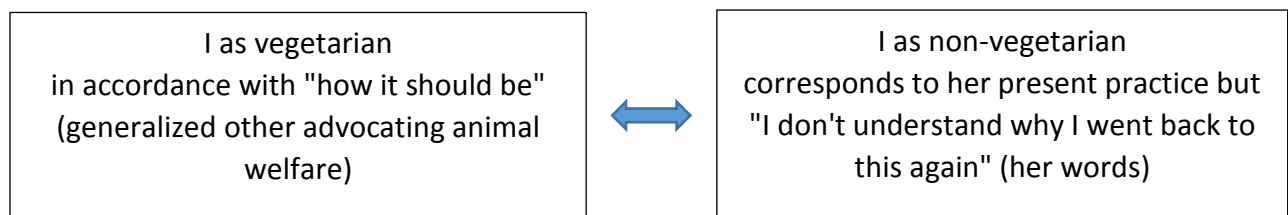
### **Analysis: a diversity of I-positions and inner others in Maeva's discourses and reflections about food and her own foodway**

Drawing on Aveling, Gillespie and Cornish's methodological proposition (2015), we identified different I-positions taken by Maeva and inner others we identified in her discourse, trying to understand how they are dynamically articulated in the interview.

Maeva's discourse about food and her foodway reveals a diversity of I-positions and a multiplicity of inner-other voices. The "others" are "inner", as they are present in the interview as they are understood, internalized and represented by Maeva. They may be specific persons, groups, or more generalized others as discourses or institutions. This allows us to see that the very personal reflection and positioning of Maeva related to food is full of voices of others - of social, which doesn't oppose to the development of an individual positioning, but nourishes, supports and constrains it in a complex way.

### **I in dialogue with myself - A tension towards harmony? "If I wanted to be totally coherent with myself"...**

In this diversity of positions and voices, one may ask if there is something holding the person together, some unity. Indeed, some contradictions between different I-positions appear in the interview, for example:



These tensions are felt as uncomfortable, and there seems to be a seeking for resolution: "I will become vegetarian again" does she announce. This dynamic towards an elimination of contradictions between I-positions is also illustrated by recurrent statements related with coherence with oneself. For example: "If I wanted to be totally in agreement with myself, I should stop supporting this" / "It's clear that to live entirely in accordance with my principles, I should stop buying beers in that shop." Nevertheless it is worth noting that here the conflict is left unresolved by Maeva, as what this "entirely in accordance" is felt as impossible to reach, at least in a near future.

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