

Beef of Burden?

*An investigation of attitudes towards beef consumption among
Norwegian consumers*

Siri Karlsen Bellika



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CO₂ – Carbon Dioxide

EU – European Union

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GHG – Green House Gas

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

SIFO – National Institute for Consumer Research

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

SUM – Centre of Development and the Environment

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1. Introduction

Presenting the problem

This thesis investigates the potential for reduced consumption of beef among Norwegian consumers. How do Norwegian consumers think about beef, and who is perceived to be responsible for making a shift towards a more sustainable diet?

Today, the way we eat is threatening our own existence by depleting natural resources and causing environmental degradation. Eating meat is a natural part of most people's lives, at least in the western part of the world. Still, the social and environmental effect of our meat eating habits has only recently been given public attention (Austgulen 2013). It is estimated that there will be 9 billion people on the planet by 2050. If we are to meet the predicted demand for animal products, we need to double the production. At the same time, we must halve the environmental impacts of the production to prevent the present level of ecological damage from being exceeded. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO) reported that as much as 18 percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions originate from the production of animals (Steinfeld et al 2006: xxi).

In 2012, the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) released a report assessing the environmental impacts of consumption and production globally. The message was clear: the impacts of agricultural production are expected to increase substantially, both because of population growth and due to an increase in global consumption of animal products. The report also states that dealing with effects of food production is hard because people need to eat. According to the report, the only solution to this problem is "a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products" (UNEP 2012: 82).

Norway has always been unsuitable for large-scale agricultural production; climate is rough, the soil is poor and the terrain is difficult. As the arable land was scarce,

Norwegian farmers traditionally made use of rough grazing in outfields and harvest of fodder. As a result, Norwegian agricultural production is focused mainly on livestock farming¹. However, outdoor grazing has decreased dramatically and the arable land is being encroached with trees (Syse 2012: 146).

Cattle in Norway are eating more and more concentrated feed based on grains and proteins. Today, about 30 to 50 percent of their diet consists of concentrated feed. A large share of the proteins in this concentrate derives from soybeans imported from Brazil. Throughout the 2000s we have imported about 650 000 tons of grain and other food crops annually for feed concentrate, which equals 250 000 hectares of land in other countries (Løkeland-Stai & Lie 2012: 110-117). At the same time, Norwegian beef production is declining², which has led to Norway becoming one of the largest importers of beef in the EU. In 2011, 10 percent of the Norwegian beef market was imported beef, and it is predicted to increase further (SLF 2012). In other words, both imports of beef and food crops for concentrated feed are increasing.

Global beef production is highly resource intensive. Excessive use of scarce water resources, water pollution, large land and feed requirements and significant carbon dioxide and methane emissions have impacts on both people and planet (Kasa 2008: 153). Addressing the problem from a consumption perspective is important.

Rationale for topic

Exploring Norwegian consumers' thoughts and attitudes towards food is a relatively new field of study. The National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO) introduced

¹ Approximately 75 percent of agricultural income derives from livestock farming and most of the meadows and grain is used for animal feed (SSB 2009).

² In the period 1990-2011 the proportion of beef and veal in the total meat production in Norway decreased from 39 percent to 25 percent. This can be seen in relation to a reduction in the consumption of dairy products, as dairy-cows in Norway are used for beef production as well, the reduction in dairy-cows have great impact on the production of beef (Rognstad & Steinset 2011: 60-62).

the first projects investigating the social aspects of Norwegian food culture in the 1980s. Researcher at SIFO, Unni Kjærnes, commented on the topic in a special Nordic Food edition of the web journal “Anthropology of Food”: “In Norway there is a striking contrast between the limited research on food culture and food as a political issue, which has been an on-going scientific debate for decades, addressing primarily production and health issues” (Amilien 2012).

There is a need for a broader understanding of how people think and act when it comes to beef consumption. Research has tended to see consumers merely as rational actors. However, we need to investigate the social and cultural factors that form Norwegians’ attitudes and consumer behavior. The study of everyday eating habits is a research field, which has traditionally had a low status within social science (Bugge 2006: 9). Yet, eating food is not only about fulfilling basic needs, but it has gradually become a way of symbolizing and marking yourself in the social world, addressing the issue from a social science perspective is important.

Private consumption patterns are increasingly being identified as the cause of resource depletion and environmental degradation. Following this, consumers are given a key role in securing environmental sustainability, as they are expected to be aware of their responsibility and adapt their consumer habits accordingly (Thøgersen 2005: 144). There is a call for consumer engagement in sustainability issues and measures promoting voluntary consumer engagement are becoming more common. My aim is to investigate Norwegian consumers’ attitudes towards beef, in order to explore the potential for a change towards a reduction of beef consumption.

Limitations and clarifications

The study of food and human behaviour is an extensive research topic. Within the timeframe of a Master’s thesis, the topic needs to be dimensioned accordingly.

This thesis will not be dealing with all types of meat; I have chosen to focus on beef. By beef, I mean meat deriving from bovines. I will concentrate on Norway and mainly Norwegian consumers living in the capital city, Oslo. However, I will also touch upon some national tendencies, using data from a national survey. As Norwegian beef consumption has implications both here, and in other countries, I believe it is important to address this issue. Norway's contribution to environmental problems is high considering the small number of people.

I have chosen to use a definition by Harold Wilhite (2008: 3) which states that consumption is "the acquisition and use of things". Addressing food consumption, I am not only referring to the actual eating of food, but also the acquisition and cooking of food.

I will be using the UNEPs definition of *sustainable* consumption, where sustainable consumption is seen as:

The use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

(UNEP 2011:1)

My point is not that all consumption of beef is unsustainable. The debate on what is considered sustainable beef consumption has many different aspects and considerations. Some may claim that the only sustainable choice would be to not eat beef. Yet others may state that how sustainable the consumption of beef is, depends on the way the beef is produced. Following this, some may claim that eating only organic beef is sustainable. This again depends on what is considered organic beef production. I argue, on the other hand, that it is the amount of beef being consumed

that is the most pressing problem. The number of cattle has a large impact of the greenhouse gas composition in the atmosphere, through their emission of methane.

Research question

This thesis questions how people relate to their consumption of beef. If people regard beef consumption as problematic, are their perceptions linked to issues of sustainability? As the pressure on the planet resources is increasing, there is a call for a worldwide dietary change, away from animal products. I want to investigate whether or not Norwegian consumers reflect upon these problems, and if there is any potential for self-regulatory measures concerning beef consumption. In addition to this, it is important to map some of the major hindrances to achieving a reduction in the overall consumption of beef.

My research question is three layered:

Do Norwegians view beef consumption as problematic, and if so, is this due to sustainability issues?

How do critical consumers address these issues?

What are the main obstacles in getting consumers to reduce their beef consumption?

The first question address the general tendencies among the Norwegian population, based on quantitative data and qualitative data. The qualitative findings will be used to further investigate what is regarded as problematic, and if this is related to sustainability issues. The second question addresses how the informants from the qualitative interviews view their role as consumers. This is to investigate to what extent a reduction of beef consumption is regarded as a viable option trying to reduce the global consequences of consumer practices. The latter research question is aimed at detecting some of the obstacles for consumers to reduce their beef intake.

Structure of the thesis

In the introduction chapter, I provide insight to issues related to beef production and consumption and why this is an important topic to address in academic research. In chapter two, I elaborate on the concepts relevant in this thesis, presenting existing theory on the topic and look at the different perspectives within research. In the third chapter, I present the research methods used, and the background for the findings.

I then continue by presenting some of the findings from the quantitative research in chapter four, in addition to presenting an overview of the public debate on beef consumption in Norway. In chapter five, I present some of the findings from the in-depth interviews. I explain how the informants were sceptical towards beef and explore their attitudes towards the modern food system.

In chapter six, I look into the practice of beef consumption and how the informants talk about their beef consumption. After this, I continue to address how they perceive their role as consumers, and whom they believe are responsible for facing the problems linked to beef consumption.

In chapter seven, I look at some of the tendencies that are presented in the previous chapters, and discuss the findings. Finally, in chapter eight, I summarise the findings and present my conclusions.

2. Understanding beef consumption

Several concepts and theories are relevant for this thesis. During the process of doing research, analysing and writing I have looked for one grand theory that fits perfectly with my understanding of the problem. There have been small and major moments of clarity where it seemed like all the parts of the puzzle fitted perfectly. This puzzle is shattered when you are introduced to new concepts, new theories and new approaches. In this chapter, I will introduce the concepts most central in my thesis, giving a brief review on existing literature on the topics relevant in this thesis.

The ethical consumer

An important aspect when addressing the issue of beef consumption is the ethical responsibility that lies within the act of consuming. Freedom of choice comes with responsibility. How do the consumers perceive this responsibility? To discuss this, the concept of *ethical consumption* needs further explanation.

Animal- and environmental ethics are the most central concepts of ethics in this thesis. Barnett et al. (2005b), defines ethical action in regards to consumption as “a choice made to accept a widened scope of responsibility towards both human and non-human others and to act upon that acceptance through one’s identity as a consumer” (Barnett et al. 2005b: 30).

In other words, ethical consumption means including and accepting a wider responsibility for animals, humans and planet in ones actions. During the past twenty years, consumption and social responsibility have become more closely connected and ethical consumption has developed as a concept in academic writing.

The anthropologist Daniel Miller (1995) claims that power of the economic discipline and the theory of demand has led to the neglect of the topic of consumption. In neo-classical economics, human beings have been portrayed as the

Homo Oeconomicus, a rational self-interested individual that optimizes a subject to constraints. In economic theory, there are given tastes and preferences and the individuals' motivation is to maximize personal utility from the given income available (Fine & Leopold 1993: 47). In later years, this approach to consumption has received criticism from the social science stance. The economic approach has been said to dehumanize consumption, emphasizing that we need to address the nature of consumption as a social, cultural and moral project not only a question of utility maximization (Miller 1995: 18).

The green movement has attempted to construct a new relationship between consumption and the market. They are trying to raise awareness about the social and environmental implications of today's consumer trends. Miller argues that we need a 'middle range' morality, where the consequences of the production are emphasized. This requires a transformation towards more conscious, responsible, moral citizens who are concerned with the consequences of their demands, especially among the middle class of the First World (Miller 1995: 48).

The sociologist Unni Kjærnes (2011) investigates this approach to consumption in her paper "Ethics and Action". She argues that in today's liberal democracies, freedom is closely linked to responsibility. Being a responsible citizen is not only to engage in political processes but it is also about being a responsible consumer. 'Consumer choices' is a notion that gives the consumer individual autonomy and agency, as well as responsibility (Kjærnes 2011: 147).

This way, purchasing, cooking and eating food has become political. Consumption is in some ways seen as a way in which everyday practices can be directed to solve social problems. In relation to food, this might be reflected in public demands for a change in the food provisioning system, encouraging boycotts and pressuring the industry for more corporate accountability. Through public communication, consumers can be convinced that they are shopping to fight climate change, support local communities and encourage farm-animals wellbeing. These ethical demands are

coming from societal actors like the private sector, NGOs and public authorities (Kjærnes 2011: 147).

How is responsibility dealt with when consumers are facing pressure, dilemmas, frustration and uncertainties? Structural constraints influence how people take on these responsibilities. When consumers lack knowledge and insight, and at the same time face asymmetrical power relations, their perception of their own responsibility is affected (Kjærnes 2011: 153). It remains to be seen how consumers react to the ethical responsibility that has been placed within their consumer choices

Humans, animals and the beef

The extent of which the issue of beef consumption is an ethical matter, is related to how consumers view the relationship between humans and nature. The use and exploitation of animals and other natural resources are legitimized by our way of looking at the world.

The relationship between humans and animals has been placed aside the dichotomies between subject and object, person and thing and culture and nature. This way of looking at animals arose from René Descartes' concept of *res cogitans* (the thinking thing). Descartes excluded animals from the *res cogitans*, and saw them as merely self-moving machines (Descartes 1986: 161). The anthropologist Rane Willerslev (2007) argues that "The Cartesian Legacy" has influenced how we think about ourselves in relation to other nonhuman animals (Willerslev 2007: 13).

The ecological humanist Val Plumwood (2002) addresses the dualism of human/animal in her book "Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason". She explores how animal rights defenders look at the human/nature relationship. She argues that there is a tradition within animals rights defence to extend the category of the human in the human/nature dualism, rather than to break down the original dualism between human and nature. Some animals are treated as individual subjects;

man's best friend or a member of the family, while other animals are treated as commodities or mere sources of protein. The dualism in this sense is between animals that belong to the 'human' group that is morally considerable (e.g. pets) and the rest – which are to a large extent considered as 'things' and do not count ethically, but is rather seen in terms of rational instrumental use (e.g. farm animals). Plumwood (2002) argues that having a substantial outclass of living beings that are excluded from moral considerations, has allowed humans to have an ethical basis for human survival (Plumwood 2002: 143-55).

Researchers at SUM, Karen Syse and Kristian Bjørkdahl have addressed how the human/animal relationship becomes problematic when eating meat, in their article "Death and *Meateriality*". Bringing in Franklin (1999), they argue that in the second half of the twentieth century the human relationship to animals began to change. They claim that one understands more about the current tension between human, animals and meat if one "recognizes that anthropocentrism, slowly and across multiple sites, is giving way to biocentrism" (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2013: 227).

By endowing moral status to animals, meat eating becomes morally difficult. I explore how my informants view this issue, and to what extent they treat beef consumption as an ethical issue.

« Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es »

"Tell me what you eat and I shall tell you what you are". The famous quote by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin has been repeated over and over again since it was first stated in 1826, and is today mostly referred to as "You are what you eat" (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2013: 213). By consuming food, people are not only covering primary needs, they are also trying to tell a story about themselves. Consumption of food is also linked to the concept of *class*. Making a specific dish, using an exotic ingredient and caring for quality also contribute to telling a story about who you are and your position in the social world (Bugge 2006: 91).

Thorstein Veblen is one of the most influential and most cited scholars in the literature exploring the social implications of consumption (Campbell 1995: 103). Veblen's theory on 'conspicuous consumption' explores the link between consumption and social status, and even though he formed the theory in the late 19th century, it is still relevant today. Veblen argues that individuals of the leisure class used consumption as a tool to 'climb the social ladder'. By displaying their wealth through expensive luxury goods they established their position in the social hierarchy (Veblen 2011: 48-49). In Veblen's eyes consumption of these goods was indeed, a performative act put on to achieve a higher social recognition. All social classes were trying to emulate the consumer behaviour of the class above it

Another scholar who has written about the performative aspect of consumption is Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of individuals' cultural capital rather than their material possessions (Campbell 1995: 104). Cultural capital can be explained as the 'stock of knowledge about the product of artistic and intellectual traditions' (Triggs 2001: 104). This knowledge is acquired through education and social upbringing. Bourdieu saw consumption as a way for people to display their stock of cultural capital through *taste*. The taste of individuals with high cultural capital is used to secure their position in the social hierarchy. Through consumption, you signal your social position (Triggs 2001: 104-105).

The meaning of taste in this setting can be ambiguous. Taste can refer to the actual flavour of the food and it can also refer to your general taste in things. Taste is closely linked to quality, and high quality food is assumed to taste better. Knowledge about quality food is related to cultural capital. Having a trained palate is a way of signalling cultural capital. George Orwell illustrates this perfectly:

[The] English palate, especially the working class palate, now rejects good food almost automatically. The number of people who prefer tinned peas and tinned fish to real peas and real fish must be increasing every year, and plenty of

people that could afford to have real milk in their tea much sooner have tinned milk

(Orwell 1937:89, in Fiddes 1991: 31)

Social differentiation is an important aspect of the cultural and social implications for food consumption. People portray themselves as different from ‘the Others’ by underlining how they are different, trying to emphasize their cultural competence in the kitchen. This is just what Orwell does through his statement; pointing to how ‘the others’, meaning the British working class, has no sense of quality, and how he has the ability to define what is good and bad food, because he is different from them, possessing a higher share of cultural capital.

Annechen Bahr Bugge (2006) has written extensively on Norwegian dinner patterns, and she underlines how people with higher level of education and income, especially urban middle class people, see it as important to portray themselves as different in their food ways. I investigate how my informants portray themselves with regards to food, and at the same time, I will look at how they differentiate themselves from what they see as ‘The Others’.

How is beef viewed in this context? Beef has historically been used as a symbol of wealth and prosperity. Cattle were expensive and therefore limited to the higher social classes. Beef consumption is also linked to health and nutrition; it is an important source of protein, which again gives it high economic value. At the same time, beef is also linked to gender; sayings like ‘a man needs his meat’ and ‘macho steak’ are applying sexual symbolism into the consumption of beef (Fiddes 1991: 146). How beef consumption is perceived in modern society is therefore of significance for peoples consumption patterns.

On the other hand, one must not over-emphasize this way of looking at consumption; people do not consume just to signal something about themselves to others. This is especially true when talking about food consumption. People eat food because they

need to, but at the same time, they can use food both materialistically as well as symbolically. Although it is easy to interpret everything as a message or performance with regards to consumption, I believe it is important to stress the fact that consumers today are not always aware of how, why and when they eat.

The importance of practice

Consumption of food is in many ways different from other types of consumption, because it is something every human being needs to do daily. This means that the practice of consuming food is highly routinized and shaped by everyday practices. I will now elaborate on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and argue for how everyday practices are relevant to understand beef consumption.

The acquisition, eating and cooking of food are distinct, but also closely interlinked as they are habitual everyday activities as well. The consumption of food is not something you reflect upon at all times; yesterday's dinner did not require you to reflect as much upon your choices as if you were buying a car. The making of dinner is seen to be highly habitual and routinized. Routines and habitual practices require little, if any, reflections over the purpose of the practice. Dinner patterns are often routinized and standardized practices, because they are repeated everyday: you buy the food, you put it into the fridge, you cook it, you eat it and you clean it up. Many of these practices are embedded with cultural, social and emotional values that people have acquired through their life (Bugge 2006: 247). Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is central here. *Habitus* refers to the predispositions for actions that humans inhabit. As human beings, we have acquired skills and ways of acting that we are not always conscious of. These dispositions are acquired through every-day life in our social context, and cooking practices is one of them (Bourdieu 1979, in Bugge 2006: 247).

The knowledge on how to cook food is the result of all the social experiences people have acquired and internalized – consciously or unconsciously. Viewing food

consumption from this perspective, it is in contrast to the approach to the responsible consumer. If your habits are internalized to the extent that you are not aware of them existing, it is hard to reflect on them and take responsibility for your actions. This is also an important aspect of beef consumption, seeing how routinized behaviour is relevant when reflecting upon own consumption.

3. Methodology

Doing research is as much about providing information about *what* is known as *how* it is known. In this chapter, I give a description of methodological approaches, and ontological and epistemological backgrounds for the use of methods.

LeCompte and Goetz address problems concerning validity and reliability in qualitative research. They emphasize that the value of the research is partially dependent on the ability of the researcher to demonstrate the credibility of the findings (LeCompte & Goetz 1982: 31-32). In the next section, I will discuss my approach to research and explain why the approach I have chosen is a suitable research method in studying beef consumption. I elaborate on my process of gathering information and share some of my own reflections about doing research. I see myself to be an integrated part of the research material, and so a reflection around this is relevant. As my background is in multi- and interdisciplinary studies, I have no specialization in a specific and defined methodology. I see method as a pathway you follow seeking knowledge (Ariadne 2013).

Approaching knowledge

My ontological standing is constructivist. The political scientists Moses and Knutsen (2007) elaborate on the constructivist and the naturalist approach to research in the book “Ways of Knowing”. The constructivists see the social world and the patterns we study as socially constructed and of our own making. History, society, ideas and language influence the patterns we use to explain and understand social phenomenon, hence we can never observe or know the ‘objective’ social world. According to the constructivists approach, human knowledge is learned through sense perception. These perceptions are conditioned by ideas, and so, knowledge is influenced by individual inspiration and scholarly imagination (Moses & Knutsen 2007: 165- 183). Researchers studying the social world are all members of the society that they study.

They carry with them prejudices. These prejudices are built on personal experience, scholarly background, beliefs and how one sees the world.

Qualitative research requires cognizance of the position and power of the researcher, and the quality of the research is only as good as the reflexivity of the researcher (Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 72-73). A reflexive researcher does not simply report facts or ‘truths’ but actively constructs interpretations of his or her experiences in the field, and then questions how those interpretations came about. As knowledge and power are so closely related, it is important to approach knowledge with scepticism and self-awareness (Moses & Knutsen 2007: 194).

Triangulation

Bruce Berg (2004) points out how the divide between qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be considered strict or dichotomized. Qualitative and quantitative methods are not mutually exclusive approaches to learning, and both can be necessary, depending on the questions being asked. This thesis is based on research conducted with three different methods: analysis of a national survey, several open-ended interviews and a short survey.

Combining the three has provided me with invaluable information and greater insight to the research area. This is what is referred to as *triangulation*: to use more than one method or source of data to observe a social phenomenon. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods give greater credibility to the research, as it enables the researcher to crosscheck the findings (Bryman 2008: 379). The quantitative findings will work as a background for the qualitative findings. The majority of my findings are based on the data collected through qualitative research, but the findings from the survey worked as a starting point for my research.

Using data from a national survey

Through a research project I have participated in at SIFO, I have gained access to a data set from a survey performed by TNS Gallup on the behalf of SIFO. The survey “Holdninger til Klimaendringer” [Attitudes to Climate Change] set out to explore the general attitudes towards climate change among the Norwegian population. As a part of this survey, there were questions concerning consumer responsibility and attitudes towards meat consumption in relation to climate change. Except from questions number eighteen and twenty, this part of the survey has not yet been published. The rest of the survey, also including question eighteen and twenty is presented and analysed in the report “Nordmenns holdninger til klimaendringer, medier og politikk” [Norwegians attitudes towards climate change, media and politics] by researcher at SIFO Marte Håvik Austgulen (Austgulen 2012).

The survey was answered by 1532 people from an access panel consisting of 50.000 people already established by TNS Gallup. The participants were randomly recruited and make up an *active* panel certified according to ISO 26362. The survey was conducted in November 2011 and was sent out to 3500 respondents. These respondents had been stratified according to categories of gender, age and place of residence³. The sample is weighted according to their probability of selection based on education, gender, age and place of residence, meaning that the sample is unbiased and therefore seen to be representative for the Norwegian population. The analysis of this dataset has been done in IBM SPSS Statistics and the relevant questions from the survey are listed in section 9.2 in the appendix. The survey was conducted in Norwegian, meaning that the questions referred to in the text are translated by me.

I will not be doing extensive analysis of the data material, but I will be using it to get an understanding of the general tendencies and as a point of departure for my thesis.

³ You find the characteristics of the sample and the comparison between sample and general population in section 9.1 in the appendix.

The survey shows how issues related to meat and climate change is perceived on a national level. However, my main approach to research was qualitative, seeking knowledge through interaction with people.

Open-ended interviews

I wanted to use a method that would allow an open dialogue between researcher and informant. The primary approach to research was in-depth, open-ended interviews or ethnographic interviews. Wilhite et al. (2001) applied this method interviewing Norwegian and Japanese households about energy consumption. The aim of their study was to uncover some of the cultural implications for electricity use, comparing the two countries. The method allows for an open dialogue, where the interviews are conducted as a conversational flow (Wilhite et al. 2001: 160). I found this to be a well-suited approach to the research situation. This is also coherent with the sociologist Daniel Bertaux's take on a successful interview: "A good interview is when the interviewee takes over the control of the interview situation and talks freely" (Bertaux 1981: 39).

I structured the interview in a historical manner. I focused not only on the present thoughts and practices, but I also began my interview by asking what the participants had been taught about food during their childhood. A person's upbringing has implications for how they consume food later in life. It is the first context for learning about food- and eating practices, and is thus of importance for this research. This was also stressed by sociologists Guzmán and Kjærnes (1998) in their qualitative study on meat consumption in Oslo. Tying together previous experiences and present practices enabled my informants to reflect upon the changes and choices they had made throughout their life. The depth and the historical linearity of the interviews allowed for an analysis and interpretation of attitudes, behaviour and motivation for change in practices.

By allowing my informants to ‘tell a story’ about themselves, collecting memories from childhood until present, they clearer reveal their own *self-identity*. According to the sociologist Anthony Giddens, self-identity is ‘the self as reflexively understood by the individual in terms of his or hers biography’ (Giddens 1991: 244). This biography ties past, present and future together with the individual’s social roles to create a coherent understanding of their life in the context of modernity. How people perceive themselves in the social world has relevance for the choices they make as consumers. Identity and consumption is tied closely together (Paterson 2006: 37). These aspects of consumption will be addressed in later chapters.

My informants knew that I studied at the Centre for Development and the Environment, as it said so in the letter of informed consent that all of my informants signed⁴. Being a student at SUM has some implications for my perceptions of the issue, and might have led the informants to feel as they ought to answer ‘politically correct’ and present themselves as environmentally considerate. It was important that the interviews were conducted in an open manner, and that I was not perceived as a ‘moral police’ making my informants feel like they had to answer for their behaviour.

I had an interview guide⁵ that I only followed loosely. Following the guidelines provided by Scheyvens and Storey about how to form a questionnaire I began with the least intrusive questions and then progressed to more complex and sensitive questions as the interview went along (Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 39). Steering my informants into topics like animal ethics and responsible consumption was done in a subtle way, so that the conversation still had a deep and good flow.

Altogether, I conducted nine in-depth, open-ended interviews. Doing these interviews enabled me to understand the systems of meaning that is hard to reveal through a survey. I found the number of informants to be sufficient to get a clearer picture of

⁴ See letter of informed consent in section 9.3 in the appendix.

⁵ See interview guide in section 9.4 in the appendix.

the opinions, motivations and beliefs that lies behind the statistical findings. Giving meaning to the numbers is one of the most important functions of qualitative research, describing the phenomenon in depth, putting the pieces of knowledge together and drawing a picture as a whole by analysing it (Bertaux 1981: 40-41).

My interviewing skills progressed throughout the process. As a result, my interview guide was changed and restructured as I saw it appropriate. Conducting these interviews has given me insight and experience, allowing me to see the limitations of my research and what could have been done differently. However, given the time limit of a master's thesis, I find the method that I used and the number of informants to be satisfactory.

I decided to interview people who visit different food arenas in Oslo. The sociologist Annechen Bahr Bugge (2006), talks about the *Oslo-effect* when discussing innovation and developments within Norwegian food culture. She shows how innovation and change in a food culture arise from the higher social classes in urban areas, and are then integrated into the food culture of the common people (Bugge 2006: 56). Furthermore, statistically, people that practice ethical consumption are often women with higher education, living in urban cities (Terragni et al. 2006: 31).

Interviewing visitors at food arenas in the capital city did not give me insight to national tendencies or introduce me to the 'typical Norwegian food consumer'. This was not the intention. I wanted to investigate if there was a critical voice towards beef consumption within the food interested urban population, as people seeking alternative food markets often are more conscious and critical towards the food they consume (Popppe & Kjærnes 2003: 23). This is largely why I wanted to interview people who sought alternative food markets. Were they critical towards the food provisioning system? Did they want better quality, healthier and more natural products? Were they also concerned with sustainability issues related to the food they eat? If they were concerned with sustainability issues, I would be able to get better

insight into their approaches to ethical consumption and the relation to their consumption of beef, by interviewing them.

I decided on two different arenas for recruiting informants for my in-depth interviews: Mathallen and Matstreif. Mathallen is a newly open food court in Oslo. Mathallen is built to match the European food courts in London, Barcelona and Copenhagen. It consists of speciality stores, cafés and restaurants specializing in a variety of products like meat, seafood, vegetables and coffee. Mathallen addresses consumers wanting to learn more about quality food, and is open to everyone. Matstreif is an annual food festival in Oslo, which I visited in September 2012. Over 100 food producers exhibit their products over a time period of two days. The exhibitors range from major food actors to small-scale farmers presenting homemade products.

Recruiting informants was one of the greatest challenges in conducting the research. There were mainly two reasons for this. First, the scope of the interview required the informant to be interviewed for one hour (or more). Second, the informant had to be willing to be interviewed and have a positive attitude towards it, in order for them to reflect and enable a ‘deep’ conversation. I approached people and asked them if they would be interested in participating in a research project, presenting myself as a Master’s student at the University of Oslo. In total, I recruited seven informants from Mathallen and Matstreif. The two remaining informants, I recruited through contacts that I knew had a special interest in food.

I tried recruiting informants from different age groups and having a somewhat equal gender division. This turned out to be harder than expected. I interviewed seven women and two men in the age group 20– 35, 35- 55 and 55- 70. As the informants were recruited during daytime, it put certain limitations on the types of people I encountered. Generally, people are at work during daytime, meaning that I mostly encountered people that are either retired, on maternity leave or students. Women were generally more willing to talk and participate in the research project than men.

This is reflected in the characteristics of my informants that are listed in section 9.7 in the appendix.

The interviews were conducted in informal places like Mathallen, in the informant's home or at a cafe. I recorded all of my interviews and transcribed them word by word. They were conducted in Norwegian, meaning that the direct quotes that occur in the text have been translated by me. The coding of the transcription was done in the software program NVIVO10. This software allowed me to code and categorize my material in an orderly way.

A short survey

The informants gathered at food arenas saw themselves as a somewhat different type of consumer compared to the rest of the Norwegian consumers. To have a comparison, a natural place to conduct interviews concerning meat is Strömstad, Sweden. A known phenomenon in Norway is border shopping in Strömstad. In 2012, Norwegian consumers spent 11, 6 billion NOK border shopping. Most of this was spent in Strömstad (SSB 2013). Researcher at SIFO Randi Lavik has made a report on the phenomenon of border shopping based on a quantitative survey conducted in 2004. The price difference between Norway and Sweden is what motivates this type of shopping and the most bought products are meat products (Lavik 2004: 15-17).

The survey⁶ had to be shorter and more precise in its form. I assumed that people going border shopping have a tight time-schedule, and do not want to spend an hour doing an interview. The question in the survey is listed in the appendix. The aim was to see if the 'border-shopper' approached the subject of beef consumption differently from the Oslo informants. I stopped people on their way out of the shopping malls, asking them if they were Norwegian. Many people were reluctant to answer the survey, so after spending one day at the mall in Strömstad, I had six people answering the survey. I recorded and transcribed the answers given to me by the

⁶ See the survey-questions in section 9.5 in the appendix.

respondents. I was cautious not to form the questions in a biased way, in order to avoid leading the respondents to answer in a certain way. Face-to-face interaction allowed me to explain the questions the respondents found to be unclear. I will however not be using the answers from the short survey extensively. The survey was not a success because, as stated, most people were reluctant to answer the survey. As they were not particularly positive to the survey, their answers were quite half-hearted. A comparison between the in-depth and survey respondents would not serve the respondents from Strömstad right. The information the short survey provided me, gave me little insight to their opinions and thoughts on beef consumption.

However, in order to separate the answers from the in-depth interview and the survey I will refer to the people answering the short survey as respondents, while the in-depth interviewees will be referred to as informants.

Other sources

In order to achieve further insight into the topic of food consumption, sustainability, animal ethics and agricultural politics I have participated in and observed the public debate on the subject. I have attended several seminars to learn more and to get a broader understanding of issues related to beef consumption. Some of the seminars I recorded and transcribed parts that were relevant. I also conducted two interviews with two key actors in the debate: Yngve Ekern⁷ and Håkon Fossmark⁸. This has allowed me to get familiar with the most common arguments from the different stances in the public debate concerning beef consumption.

⁷ Yngve Ekern is a food journalist working in Aftenposten. He is known to write about the political and environmental aspects of food consumption and has recently published a book called “Meat-free days”.

⁸ Håkon Fossmark is the communication advisor at Future in Our Hands, one of Norway’s largest environmental organizations, responsible for the “Meatless Monday”-campaign in Norway.

To map the area of research, reading already existing literature on the subject has been vital to understand concepts of consumption, human/animal relationship and consumer attitudes and practices.

My research field is in some ways divided into two different tracks of addressing the issue. Researchers at SIFO have written extensively on consumer habits and attitudes in Norway, addressing issues of meat consumption (Bjørkum et al. 1997; Guzmán & Kjærnes 1998; Lavik 2008; Kjærnes et al. 2010) and trust in food (Poppe & Kjærnes 2003). The researchers addressing the issue of food consumption at SIFO have their background in social sciences, mostly sociology and social anthropology. Research at SIFO has been of special importance for this thesis, giving me background information about consumer attitudes and behaviour in relation to food and especially beef in Norway.

The other track that has given me insight to the research field is the academic scholars writing on philosophical and anthropological approaches to meat consumption. The relationship between human and animals is of importance, because it affects to what extent beef consumption is seen as an ethical issue or not. The anthropologist Nick Fiddes book “Meat – a natural symbol” from 1991, has been central here. He investigates the social and cultural symbols related to meat in modern society. Researchers at SUM Karen Syse and Kristian Bjørkdahl (2012) have provided me with further insight to the human/animal relationship, through their work on alienation to meat in modern society. Other scholars writing on sustainability, consumption and social change have also been of great importance.

I have used the existing literature as background and context for my research. This has allowed me to address issues I had not been familiar with if I had not done proper background research. At the same time, it also influenced the way I approached the topic. Altogether, following the academic- and public debate has providing me with a better understanding and strengthened my analytical skills.

4. National tendencies

In this chapter I give insight to the public debate on beef consumption and sustainability issues. First, I introduce some of the official policy documents addressing the problem. I touch upon the public debate in the media before I go on to explore how actors in the civil society have approached the topic, here represented by the environmental organization Future in our hands.

Following this, I introduce the findings from the national survey performed by TNS Gallup. As previously explained, the survey addresses Norwegians attitudes towards Climate Change. The last section of the survey relates to how consumer behaviour can help climate change reduction. These findings are presented in the section “Meat consumption and Climate Change”.

I argue that beef consumption is not seen as an effective measure in reducing climate change. This can be linked to a lack of consensus in the public debate on the subject. First, it is important to illustrate the development of meat consumption in Norway in the past fifty years.

Table 4.1: Numbers showed in million kg

	1959	1969	1979	1989	1999	2005	2009	2010	2011*	2012*
Beef*	48	56	80	74	90	92	91	91	95	95
Sheep	15	18	22	25	24	28	25	27	25	26
Pork	50	67	86	83	103	116	123	125	131	131
Chicken	3	6	11	19	38	59	85	82	86	90
Other	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	121	150	202	204	257	298	327	327	339	345

Source: Directorate of Health 2013

The numbers presented are from the last report of the Directorate of Health addressing the development of the Norwegian diet. They clearly illustrate the dramatic increase in meat consumption during the past fifty years.

Public approaches to beef and sustainability

Government policy

In 2011, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food presented a white paper on Norwegian food- and agricultural politics, where sustainable farming for the future was given wide attention. The white paper clearly states that population growth, climate change, pressure on natural resources and increasing prices on food commodities have made food security issues highly important both on a national and international level. Further, the report states that one of the four overarching goals of Norwegian agriculture policy is to secure a *sustainable* agriculture (Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2011a: 11 – 14).

In 2008, the government issued a white paper focusing particularly on the role of agricultural sector in relation to climate change. The white paper does not address the option of a reduction in the consumption of beef. Quite the contrary they suggest that in order to reduce the overall emissions from cattle production, Norway should aim to intensify this production. By increasing the proportion of feed concentrate in the animals' diet, the animal grows faster, lives shorter and emits less GHG (Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2008: 97-100).

As a response to the growing demand for beef, several political initiatives have been taken to increase domestic beef productions. In 2012, the Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food put down an expert group to focus on how Norway can increase the production of beef to avoid import dependency (Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2012). Even though an encouragement to reduce consumption of beef poses no direct threat to Norwegian cattle farmers, it is evident that the government is

unwilling to address the beef shortage as a consumption problem. As mentioned in the introduction, beef production holds a special position in the Norwegian agricultural sector. Cattle farming secure food production throughout the country, in areas where it otherwise would be hard to cultivate the land. It is therefore worth noting the economic and political incentives that influence the government's position in this case.

Media

In an analysis of the public debate on meat consumption, researcher at SIFO Marthe Austgulen (2013) found that the subject of sustainable meat consumption has just recently been addressed in the Norwegian media. It was first after 2006 that the subject was put on the agenda. Austgulen argue that the disagreements on the environmental impacts of meat consumption characterises the debate, and lack of consensus on the subject. The main opponents are the environmental organizations versus the agricultural organizations. Environmental organizations emphasize the responsibility of the government, but give attention to the role of the consumer and the importance of information on the environmental consequences of their actions. The agricultural organizations argue that it is important to make use of the large grazing resources in Norway, and that we need to work to increase the production of beef (Austgulen 2013: 9-14).

Politically, the Socialist Left Party⁹ and the Centre Party¹⁰ are the two most significant political actors in the debate. They hold two different views on the issue, which coincides with the differences between the environmental organizations and the agricultural organizations. As the Socialist Left Party holds the Ministry of the Environment and The Centre Party holds the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in the

⁹ A political party focusing with a special focus on environmental issues and social inequalities. The Socialist Left Party has been in government since 2005.

¹⁰ A political party historically representing farmers interests in Norwegian politics. The Centre Party has been in government since 2005.

current government, it is hard for them to agree upon a common policy on the area of sustainable meat consumption. This has led to a debate where the government's representatives and other politicians are vague and avoid references to what political measures that can be used to deal with the sustainability issues related to meat consumption, essentially leaving the problem to the consumers (Austgulen 2013: 18).

Environmental NGOs

Austgulen (2013) concludes that the main obstacle for consumers is the lack of consensus among the actors involved in the debate. An NGO called "The Future in Our Hands" is the single most active participator in the debate, together with Green Living. They are the only organizations voicing the topic of reducing beef consumption. Their campaign "Meatless Monday" is directed towards the consumer, giving out vegetarian recipes and informing about the consequences of our meat consumption.

I met with their communication adviser to discuss about how they approached the problem in Norway. Fossmark explained how they mainly used three different arguments to address why people should reduce their consumption of meat: environmental issues, animal welfare issues and health issues. In the campaign, they mainly used the latter two, as these engage people the most. Fossmark was concerned about how emphasizing the environmental effect of meat consumption alienates more people than it engages.

To be able to understand how the organization perceived the public debate, I asked him how they saw the government's position in this case. He stated that the actors working actively to increase meat production dominated the debate and Fossmark emphasize how the different sides of the debate are not equally represented:

It is a question of power. The political interests of both the Centre Party and Ministry of Agriculture and Food dominate the public debate. The Directorate

of Health argue for a reduction of the overall consumption of red meat due to health risks, but they are hardly considered.

Fossmark also emphasize that the media has given little attention to the problems. He continues by explaining how climate change seems abstract and distant to people. Adding meat productions influence on climate change on top of that might just lead to even more confusion: “I do not think people see meat production to be particularly environmentally destructive”.

It is evident that due to conflicting political interests, the debate on reduced meat consumption has fallen short¹¹. The problem is left to the consumer, as there is a lack of political consensus on the topic. I will now present some of the figures from the national survey, which illustrates the Norwegian people’s attitude towards issues concerning meat and sustainability.

Meat consumption and climate change

The survey addresses how the respondents’ own consumption patterns have changed due to the threat of climate change. It emphasizes their attitudes towards meat consumption in relation to climate change. Keep in mind that the type of meat is not specified in this survey, meaning that it is not only beef that is addressed, but all meat products. I will now present the survey questions and results¹² relevant for the thesis.

The first part of the survey investigates whether the respondents perceive their actions as consumers as relevant in trying to reduce climate change. 77.4 percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that consumers can help in reducing climate change. It is difficult to say anything about *how much* the respondents believe the individual consumer can contribute, but this indicates that they acknowledge that

¹¹ For instance, Norwegian children’s schoolbooks in domestic science are subsidized by the meat sector (Thoring 2013).

¹² The frequency tables are listed in section 9.6 in the appendix.

consumers have a responsibility as well. However, when asked if they believed that new technology would limit climate change without leading to big changes in our way of living, the majority either partly or fully agreed and only 20.4 percent disagreed with this. These findings are supported by Tangeland (2013) who has done similar studies on the topic. He concludes that the technology optimism in relation to climate change issues is increasing among Norwegian consumers. This is a common problem when addressing consumption and climate change. Believing that technological innovations will limit the consequences of climate change reduces people's incentive to change consumer behaviour. It also affects their feeling of personal responsibility is reduced. As Tangeland also found, the belief that consumers can contribute to reducing climate change has steadily decreased during the past decade (Tangeland 2013: 35).

Then, the respondents were asked if environmental issues have led them to reduce their meat consumption. Here, 78.3 percent answers 'no' and 13.9 percent answers 'yes'. In comparison, 51 percent stated that they had reduced their electricity consumption because of environmental issues. Of the six alternatives¹³ given in question 20, fewest stated to have reduced their meat consumption due to environmental issues. It is important to note, that one does not know what time period they are referring to and it might be other reasons than environmental issues that have influenced their change in behaviour.

Next, the survey focuses on food practices. The respondent is informed that the production, distribution and consumption of food has a significant impact on the environment, and is asked to range various measures according to which they believe has the most positive effect on the environment. The alternatives are 'reduce the production and consumption of meat', 'reduce food waste', 'increase the production and consumption of organic food' and 'increase the production and consumption of

¹³ Reducing use of oil heating (20 percent), reducing car use (30.2 percent), fly less (17.2 percent), reduce consumption of clothes (20.1 percent).

local food'. 10.9 percent ranged 'reduced meat production and consumption' as the most effective measure, while 25.8 percent ranged it to be the least effective measure.

Then, the respondents were asked which measure they saw to be the *easiest* to apply of the four alternatives and 13 percent ranged 'reducing meat consumption' as the easiest measure. The majority ranged it to be the 'least easy' of the four to apply. However, about one third¹⁴ of the respondents did not range any of the alternatives in neither of the questions. They stated either that they did not know or that they chose none of the alternatives. 'Reducing food waste' has the highest rating both in terms of effectiveness and what the respondents see to be the easiest measure to apply, with respectively 29.8 and 31.5 percent rating it as number one. As we see, reducing meat consumption is not considered the most effective or the easiest measure to apply.

The next section of the survey is a list of statements that the respondents are asked to range according to how much they agree or disagree with the statements. The alternatives listed are: Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree or don't know. These questions to a larger degree portray some of the attitudes towards meat consumption and environmental issues. I have listed them in table 4.1 to give a better overview of the answers.

Starting with the first statement, about one third of the respondents are undecided when asked if one should switch from red to white types of meat in consideration of environmental issues. The 'Don't know' category also indicates that many of the respondents have not thought about, or lack knowledge about, the environmental effects of different meat products. It is also important to note that 25.2 percent agrees with the statement. This indicates that many people are also familiar with the environmental effects of red meat, at least to some extent.

¹⁴ 488 respondents did not answer question 21, while 504 respondents did not answer question 22. They are presented as 'system missing' in the tables in the appendix, and the frequencies for the 'don't know' and 'none of them' is listed in separate tables.

Table 4.2: Answers showed in percentage, the frequencies are also listed in the appendix

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
It is good for the environment to switch from red to white meat	15	12.5	28.3	25.2	5.2	13.8
It is a good idea to have a 'meat-free day' a week	14.9	8.6	18.1	22.6	26.5	9.1
In relation to food, health concerns are more important than environmental concerns	2.7	6.7	18.9	35.0	34.6	2.0
It is hard to reduce my meat consumption	17.5	24	23.4	22.2	11.2	1.5
Prices on meat should be increased, considering the environmental effects.	37.6	22.1	20.2	10.9	5.4	3.5
Everybody should become vegetarians	81	5.6	7.1	2.0	2.7	1.4

Almost half of the respondents agree that a meat-free day a week is a good idea. By comparing this statement to “Everybody should become vegetarians”, it becomes clear that the personal loss of giving up meat once a week is not considered a dramatic loss compared to not eating meat at all.

69.6 percent states that they consider personal health more important than environmental issues when consuming food. This statement touches upon the question of common versus individual good, a central dilemma when addressing environmental issues and consumer behaviour. However, it is important to keep in mind that a reduction in overall beef consumption also gives you health benefits. Environmental benefits and health benefits are far from being mutually exclusive - it is rather the opposite.

When asked about reducing own meat consumption, one third of the respondents states that it would be hard for them to reduce their consumption of meat, while 41.5 percent disagree with this. However, it is easy to state that you are able to reduce

your consumption of a good; another thing is actually reducing it. People might be interested and concerned, but research show that there is still a discrepancy between people's attitudes and their actual consumer behaviour (Kjærnes 2011: 146).

Almost two thirds of the respondents disagree with the statement that we should increase prices on meat to reduce meat consumption. A price increase would directly affect the consumer, and only about 16.3 percent of the respondents are willing to accept this.

The statement that everybody should become vegetarians is largely rejected by the respondents. The statement is rather normative and resistance or scepticism of this claim may be both because the respondent does not want to moralize over others as well as that he or she does not want to become a vegetarian. However, I do not see the vegetarian/not-vegetarian discussion to be fruitful in this setting. Vegetarianism is often seen to be extreme, and there should rather be a focus on an overall *reduction* instead of prohibition. The proportion of vegetarians in Norway is considerably lower than other European countries, only adding up to one percent of the population (Lavik 2008: 32). Framing this as a debate about vegetarianism might lead to a polarization of the debate, not contributing to the overall reduction.

Summarizing remarks

The sustainability issues related to the consumption of beef have been given increased public attention in the past six years. The debate mainly focuses on the character of the problem, rather than policy measures that can be implemented. This has led to a situation where the responsibility has been placed with the consumers.

In the national survey, it becomes clear that the sustainability issues related to meat consumption is not a problem that is familiar to all respondents. The environmental effect of meat consumption is a topic that has not received a lot of attention compared to issues related to car use and electricity consumption. This also becomes evident

when as much as 78.3 percent of the respondents states that they have not reduced meat consumption in concern for the environment.

Another interesting finding in the survey is that reducing meat production and consumption is rated low in comparison to the other measures that were listed. This indicates that the Norwegian public do not consider reduced meat consumption to be an effective measure in reducing climate change. Keeping in mind that the FAO report states that as much as 18 percent of the GHG emissions stems from the livestock sector, it is evident that there still a need for more information addressing meat production and its effect on the environment.

These indications encouraged me to get deeper insight into how people actually perceive their food practices and what they see to be problematic. Is the environmental impact of meat only familiar to those with special interest in environmental issues? What about people with a special interest in food? What are their attitudes towards beef, and what do they find problematic about it? The following chapter will elaborate on this.

5. Thinking critically

Looking at the national tendencies, it is evident that meat consumption is a topic that needs to be addressed. In order to investigate the potential for reduced beef consumption among Norwegian consumers, I turned to the group of people in Norwegian society that statistically should be in the vanguard concerning food consumption and sustainability issues: the urban middle class consumer. This chapter will elaborate on this group's attitudes towards beef, in order to find out where the potential for change can be located.

The informants' thoughts on food in general have been important, as this works as the context for their beef consumption. I will now elaborate on the informants' attitudes towards the food provisioning system, as this is relevant to understand the context for their scepticism towards beef.

I divided the reasons for scepticism into four categories: quality issues, health, animal welfare and social and environmental issues. The former two categories are issues that directly relates to the consumer – affecting them as individuals. The latter two are somewhat different because it does not directly affect them as individuals.

Trust in the food system

Through the interviews, it became evident that the concern for the industrialization of the food provisioning system was the most engaging subject. In order to understand the cultural and social aspects of food consumption we need to look at how people perceive the world and how modern society shapes us as individuals and influence our choices.

Gunnar Aakvaag (2008) elaborates on the sociological theories of modernity in his book “Moderne Sosiologisk Teori” [Modern Sociological Theory]. Aakvaag explains how during the 1980s, there was a growing need to revise and revitalize the concept

of modernity within sociology. The claim was that we had left the industrial era for a more complex society, based on communication and services rather than industrial production. Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Zigmunt Bauman have been especially influential in modernization theory (Aakvaag 2008: 259).

In the feudal- and industrial society, choices were based upon traditions and social norms that were given. Drawing on Giddens (1991), Aakvaag explains how the modern institutions differ from all the proceeding forms of social order in respect of their dynamism, the degree to which they undercut all former traditional habits and customs, and in their global compact. The new modernity is characterized as 'reflexive' (Aakvaag 2008: 271).

The concept of 'reflexive modernity' refers to how today's society requires the individual to take active and well thought through choices based on the information available. The social institutions and systems are often highly professionalized and of technical nature. Giddens refers to these systems as 'expert systems', and explains how today's society are built up by different systems of expert knowledge that are embedded in our everyday life. Social practices in modern society are dependent on these expert systems (Giddens 1991, in Aakvaag 2008: 273-274).

An example of this is the global food provisioning system. The increasingly complex and dynamic character of the food provisioning system is seen to be more unpredictable, fragmented and contradictory. It has become nearly impossible to have direct knowledge and complete control over the production process. This lack of control requires the consumers to *trust* the modern institution and 'expert systems' that provides us with our food. Without trust, society will not function (Giddens 1991: 18).

With the increasing differentiation, division of labour and global markets, we need to delegate the responsibility for our food to others – a chain of strangers. There is always a possibility of a misuse of power, when the power relation in a market

exchange is asymmetrical. For this reasons, third party actors work to control and assure that the consumers' rights are respected. These third party actors are the public inspection bodies, like the Food Safety Authorities and the Consumer Council, together with interest organizations, experts and media (Kjærnes & Torjusen 2012: 88-89).

Generally, Norwegian consumers have a remarkable high level of trust in Norwegian food. Several research projects show that compared to other European countries, Norwegian consumers have a very high level of trust in both the governmental bodies controlling the food and in the safety of the food (Torjusen 2004: 13). Yet, through the interviews, it became clear to me that there was a strong sense of scepticism towards the food system. This scepticism directed towards food producers and food suppliers. It is, however, important to remember that the in-depth informants represent a small segment of consumers as they were recruited in alternative food arenas, it is expected that they are more critical than the average consumer.

Their critique can be seen as a reaction to the *commodification* of food, a tendency that has been addressed by political scientist Thor Øivind Jensen. Few and relatively anonymous chains have taken over for the traditional store (Jensen 2007: 208). In Norway there are now four major companies controlling people's access to food. These are Rema 1000, ICA, Coop and NorgesGruppen (Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2011b: 19 - 20). Two major cooperative companies dominate the dairy- and meat market: Tine¹⁵ and Nortura¹⁶. They also operate as market regulators on behalf of the government. The establishment of cooperatives has been a central feature in Norwegian agricultural politics. This has led to a food market dominated by big-

¹⁵ TINE SA is a cooperative owned by over 15.000 farmers. TINE is the largest dairy producer controlling the majority of the dairy market (TINE 2013)

¹⁶ Nortura is one of Norways largest cooperative companies and is owned by over 18.000 farmers. Nortura was established after a fusion between the Gilde and Prior. Gilde is the largest meat producer in the country, while Prior is the leading supplier of egg and white meat. Together they control the majority of the Norwegian meat market (Nortura 2013).

volume sales of uniform products (Terragni & Torjusen 2007: 259). As the food production is large-scale, the food products need to be easy to store and transport, which requires the food to be standardized with a long durability. Standardized, processed food fits better with the food systems requirements (Jensen 2007: 208).

Several of the informants were critical of the industrialization of the food system and the asymmetrical power relations between the consumer and the food chains. The food chains pursuit of profits was seen to compromise the quality of the food and the diversity of products. Inger was one of the informants expressing her concern for the development within the food system: “I react to the industrialized way of doing it; it is all about profits, profits, profits. The food suppliers get more and more money, while we get worse selection of food products”.

This is in line with the general critique of the capitalist system according to Marxist theory. Food is often used as an example when explaining how economical (read capitalist) powers are seen to destroy products, identity and culture. As Karl Marx argued, capitalist mass production will promote products that are anonymous, only recognizable by their technical standards, and their market price is controlled by the producers. The product loses the origin and background, and the identity and culture represented in the product disappears. Standardization and alienation of the products are an important part of the industrialization critique (Jensen 2007: 207-208). The concept of alienation, developed by Marx, is explained by Giddens:

As the forces of production develop, particularly under the aegis of capitalist production, the individual cedes control of his life circumstances to the dominating influences of machines and markets. What is originally human becomes alien.

(Giddens 1991: 191)

It was evident that many of the informants felt as if they had lost control over their food. In this way, they felt alienated to their food. Another factor that fuels this

scepticism is the food scandals¹⁷ that have occurred in the past decades. These scandals remind consumers about the risk related to food consumption and might affect the level of trust in the food system. An excellent example of this is the horsemeat scandal that was revealed in the spring of 2013. When horsemeat suddenly ended up in people's food, labelled as beef¹⁸, consumers realize how complex and 'out-of-control' the food provisioning systems can be. Their scepticism is often fuelled through media and public debates. When consumers learn about the production methods and the complexity of the 'expert systems', the feeling of control might be lost and trust relations might be reconsidered. Before the food ends up on people's plate, it has been through a complex and global system, which creates greater distance between the producer and the consumer. All of this contributes to elements of uncertainty that can be perceived as risk-taking.

Kjærnes (2011) addresses the relationship of trust between consumers and the food provisioning system. She claims that a more critical public has emerged, where trust is conditional. She sees how distrust has become a way of expressing discontent, giving feedback and influencing institutional conditions. It is a matter of questioning distribution of power within the food system. People are becoming more concerned with their rights, which indicate that people are more aware of their role as a legitimate and active consumer (Kjærnes 2011: 154). I am, however, reluctant to address my informants' scepticism as distrust, as distrust often is deeply seated and indicate a total lack of trust. Nevertheless, I will argue that many of the informants

¹⁷ The BSE disease that hit Britain, France and other European countries in the winter of 2000/2001 claimed 170 human lives, and resulted in over three million cows being infected (Woods 2013). In 2006, seventeen people was infected by E.coli and one child died as a result of eating a meat product from Gilde (Norwegian Institute of Public Health 2013). In 2011 meat products containing MUK (mechanical trimmings from meat) received a lot of public attentions, as a known chef in Norway brought the issue out in the open.

¹⁸ Horsemeat has been discovered in cheap and convenient ready-made food labeled as beef. It was first discovered in Ireland, where they found horsemeat in the ready-made lasagna. It turned out, that the producers had no control over the supply chain, and that beef had been exchanged with horsemeat deriving from Eastern European countries. As the producers tested their products, horsemeat has been confirmed in a range of products from lasagna to the IKEA meatballs (Lawrence 2013). The effects of this is that the consumption of processed meat has gone down with over 40 percent in some places (Neville 2013)

were highly critical and sceptical towards the food provisioning system and the major actors that were seen to control it.

British researcher and author of the book “Consumption and everyday life”, Mark Paterson, divide consumers in to the ‘sucker’ and the ‘knowing’ consumer. The ‘sucker’ is the mindless consumer, easily manipulated by the marketing forces of the capitalist society. Paterson relates this vision to Marxist and neo-Marxist concepts of the consumer. The ‘knowing’ consumers are aware of the manipulative forces of the large corporations, and form their identity as consumers through their unwillingness to comply with the manipulation (Paterson 2006: 142-143).

It was evident that the majority of my informants identify with the more knowing consumer, caring for quality and health and being ‘better’ informed than the what they saw to be the typical Norwegian consumer (read the ‘sucker’). The quality of the food was one of the main motivators for being conscious in their way of consuming food. The negative attitude towards the quality of Norwegian beef was a prevailing feature of their critique of beef.

The problematic beef

Issues concerning quality

A reason for why many of the informants were discontent with the quality of the Norwegian beef was rooted in the way beef is produced in Norway. Norway has a long tradition for not raising separate beef cattle for the production of meat, so dairy cows are used for meat production.

The Norwegian red cattle (NRF) is the most common cattle breed in Norway. According to Lars Risan’s analysis of the NRF-cow, this breed was created as a social democratic hybrid to fit the Norwegian agricultural sector. The NRF cow allows for a combination of dairy- and beef production in a country with limited agricultural land and few farmers. Following this, Risan argues for how this has

influenced Norwegian consumers' concept of taste and preference in beef. The market for beef was developed to be a market, not based on taste and quality, but rather on price. Norwegian agricultural sector focused on productivity and animal health rather than on the consumers' preferences. As a result, the Norwegian consumers developed a taste that did not separate meat from dairy cows and beef cattle. The consumers' taste was standardized (Risan 2003, in Jacobsen 2007: 196). The informants saw this to be an unfortunate development, as they saw the quality of the beef to be vital. They preferred local and speciality beef products. As Hanne stated: "I am sceptical to how Norwegian cows change gender after they are killed; the cows are sold as oxen"

She compared Norwegian beef to a cut of Hereford cattle she bought in Denmark. She explained how tender it was, deriving from cattle grazing in the reeds in Jylland. Buying beef in Norway, she could not be sure if she was eating a cow or an ox.

Grete also echoed this when I asked if she could think of anything problematic with beef¹⁹: "When you say *beef*..."

I reaffirmed her that I was talking about beef as in meat deriving from both cows and oxen. She replied: "That is exactly the problem. If I am offered beef, I would rather not eat it, because I want to know what kind of animal I am eating"

The fact that cows used for dairy production ends up as beef in the end seemed to bother some of the informants. They saw the quality to be lower and preferred beef deriving from beef cattle.

My informants were also sceptical towards Gilde as they were seen to have a monopoly on beef supply. As they are the biggest actor in the beef market, Gilde controls how the beef should be cut and sold. Several of the informants were sceptical to the standardized beef supplied by Gilde. Espen explained it this way:

¹⁹ Beef (Storfe in Norwegian) work as a term for meat deriving both from ox and cow.

Gilde is the dominating supplier of beef in Norway and Gilde delivers beef with incredibly varied quality and origin. It is close to impossible to say anything about where the meat derives from. An entrecôte in the store has everything from good marbling to no marbling, and it is randomly packaged and they all cost the same.

Again, the discontent with the *commodification* of food products was emphasized. The beef is standardized and pre-packaged, leaving the consumer unable to judge the quality of the product. Some of the respondents from the short survey also mentioned this. They complained about the quality of the Norwegian beef, stating that this was the reason why they went border shopping. Berit and Harald preferred Swedish to Norwegian beef, because of the standardized beef products in Norway: “We’re not able to judge the quality of the beef when it is pre-packaged, and quality is very important to us.”

Locality and origin was important for how the informants judged quality. Local food where the consumer has more control over the supply chain is generally seen as better and safer (Skarstad et al. 2007: 74). My informant, Lise, reaffirms this when she states:

I do not trust Gilde. However, the people standing behind the meat counter in Stokke are different; they are qualified professionals that know what they are doing. They have work integrity and from them I can buy meat, because they do not accept low quality meat.

It is evident that personal interaction and local expertise is perceived as a better and safer option. Jensen (2007) points to how less alienation of the production and better quality products are a general pattern within food consumption today. He argues that there is an increasing trend within Norwegian food consumption to be more concerned with healthy food, more interest for Norwegian food culture and to encapsulate political and ethical issues into consumer choices. These trends are seen

to be a reaction to the 'commodification'-process. Jensen calls this the *de-commodification* movement, the group of consumers that value local and authentic food products (Jensen 2007: 211). It was evident that the informants can be seen in relation to the de-commodification movement. For the majority of them taste, quality and origin were highly valued attributes.

Health

Throughout time, meat has been seen as the primary source of protein. The anthropologist Nick Fiddes (1991) emphasizes how a lot of money and effort from the meat suppliers have gone into informing the public about how meat is an indispensable part of a healthy diet arguing that a high intake of protein is vital (Fiddes 1991:176).

Yet, the past decades' high meat- and fat-containing Norwegian diet has been labelled as hazardous and generally unhealthy. A high intake of red meat is linked to obesity, heart diseases and cancer. Food nutritionists and the Directorate of Health have tried to inform people about the health risks related to an extensive consumption of red meat and beef. The Directorate of Health recommends people with a high consumption of red meat to switch to white and leaner types of meat and fish (Directorate of Health 2012: 5).

My informants were all concerned about health issues, and their consumption of food was closely related to their perception about what was healthy. When talking about meat, several of the informants stated that they preferred leaner types of meat, especially white meat deriving from chicken. I asked my informants if they could think of any changes that had occurred in their meat consumption habits, and a change towards leaner meat often from chicken was emphasized. Grete stated that she had changed her diet during the past years, and almost only ate chicken. Johanna emphasized how she had reduced her consumption of meat in general and switched from red to white meat. Mette expressed it like this: "For me it is important not to eat

too much fatty meat. Health issues always lies in the back of my mind influencing my choices”.

Some of them argued that they did not like the feeling of being physically full from eating meat, because it gave them a very ‘heavy’ bodily feeling. Statements like “There is something about that kind of meat that makes your body feel heavier, I feel better eating lighter food” and “I do not like the feeling of being full of meat, and it is not good for your health either” illustrates how beef has received an ‘unhealthy’ label, expressed by an uncomfortable bodily feeling. Bugge (2006) also encounter this during her interviews of urban housewives. She explains how previously, a vegetarian diet were politically orientated showing solidarity with third world countries and animal. However, vegetarians today eat less meat due to health and well-being. Danish researchers, Holm and Møhl also found that several of their informants described the experience of eating meat as unpleasant, as it made them feel heavy. Holm and Møhl argued that this form of repulsion might be an expression of moral disgust through a sensual food preference (Holm & Møhl 2000: 282). It became clear in my interviews that due to health considerations, white meat was preferred.

The animal and the beef

As explained in the previous chapter, the relationship between humans and animals is a contested topic in academia. Willerslev (2007) claimed that the Cartesian Legacy, separating humans and animals, has influenced western thinking about the human relationship to animals. Plumwood (2002) argued that instead of breaking down the original divide between human and nature (animals), humans have included some animals into the human category. By keeping farm animals in the nature/object category, the use and exploitation of animals for meat production has been legitimized. However, in the latter part of the 20th century and onwards, a tendency towards biocentrism has made this separation hard to keep intact (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2013: 227).

Syse and Bjørkdahl argue for how in the modern era, the human/animal relationship has changed and become more complex. In the pre-industrial era, humans had an unchallenged domination over animals, at the same time as we were dependent on animals for survival. The situation has now flipped; we are distancing ourselves from the animal we eat and dress our pets up and try to make them more human (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2012: 103).

Nick Fiddes argues that by endowing animals with some semi-human status, they cannot be slaughtered and consumed. When we try to make animals more human, the thought of eating them will evoke some feeling of cannibalism (Fiddes 1991: 133 - 136). The solution to this is to try to remove the animal from the meat we eat - de-animalizing the meat. Eating meat in today's society has become ethically difficult. Therefore, in order to be able to continue eating meat, the industry does their best to hide the characteristics of the animal in the meat. By concealing the source of the meat, or de-animalizing it, people are not directly confronted with the ethical issues of eating an animal (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2013: 214).

My informants brought up the commodification and de-animalization of meat several times. Several expressed concern about how the industry removed the animal from meat products. The argument was that the food system and the meat production had become so industrialized and anonymous that consumers had no knowledge of meat and animals at all. Espen was especially taken by this:

People have little or no knowledge and the fewest engage upon it; de-animalization is something we need to talk more about. I have a friend who believed that the chicken filets were on the back of the chicken. People cannot even imagine where the part of the animal derives from.

Working in a speciality food store selling meat, Espen had thorough knowledge on the subject and was concerned with the general level of knowledge on meat among Norwegian consumers.

The problem of de-animalization is addressed by Syse and Bjørkdahl (2012) in their study of Norwegian cookbooks, comparing a 1955 edition with a 2002 edition. The 1955 edition uses images of real carcasses, when illustrating different parts and cuts of the animal. Describing how to handle intestines and butcher the animal, the reader is left with no doubt that the meat derives from a dead animal. In the edition from 2002, the illustrations are somewhat different. There are no longer images of carcasses, but rather drawings in black and white. The description of the meat has left out references to muscles, tissue and bones. Syse and Bjørkdahl argue that the animal is no longer part of the 2002 edition; meat is seen and referred to as an ingredient. The edible animal has disappeared (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2012: 94-100).

This is also addressed in John Berger's essay "Why Look at Animals?" from 1980. He looks at how the process of industrialization in the 19th century and corporate capitalism of the 20th century has broken the traditional bond between human and nature. The mutually dependent relationship between human and animal ended as a consequence of the modernization process. The draught animal was replaced by factories and streets and the countryside was transformed into suburbs. The urban citizens were removed from the production of food (Berger 1980: 3). The claim is that humans have become estranged from all things natural, especially the animals we eat. The informant Inger expressed a similar concern: "Many children haven't even seen a real cow, all they have seen is that talking cow in the TINE commercial."

Sigrid also emphasized the spatial distance between urban citizens and animals, when I asked her about the connection between meat and animals:

My sister's children lives in Oslo, while my older brother's children lives in the countryside. The difference between them is huge. My sister's children have probably never seen a real sheep up close, while my brother's children run around in the forest all day. Living in Oslo, you are more trapped and you learn that the food comes from the store – not the soil.

Sigrid ensured me that she would emphasize the origin of the meat when her daughter grew up. This approach is the other solution to what Syse and Bjørkdahl refers to as “the biocentrist’s dilemma”. One solution to the ethical dilemma of eating meat is to conceal the source of the meat, the second is to maintain the contract originally established between humans and animal. The latter option is to honour the contract in traditional western agriculture; “I will feed you, take care of you, and treat you well, and I will in the end eat you” (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2013: 225).

This contract, in many ways, summarizes my informants’ view of animal welfare and beef consumption. Treating the animal with respect and care legitimizes us eating it. It is part of the contract between humans and animals.

Skarstad et al. have done an analysis of the perception Norwegian consumers have of animal welfare. Through arranging conversations with focus groups, they got people to talk about how they define animal welfare. They concluded there are two important aspects that define whether the animal has had a good life or not: closeness to nature and a good farmer-animal relationship (Skarstad et al. 2007: 78). The more ‘free’ the animal has been in its life, the more ethically sound it is to eat it. My informants also echoed this. It was important that the cow had been held outside parts of the year and that they were able to move freely eating grass. When I asked Inger what she saw as problematic with eating beef she answered:

I do not like the thought of cows and oxen that are inside all-year round. I think that cows and oxen should have a good life where they spend time outside eating grass. I will gladly eat animals raised that way. There is a significant difference in the quality of the meat depending on how the animal has been raised and how they are killed. However, there are so many links in the supply chain that makes this problematic, which again is related to the industrialization of the food and agricultural sector.

As we see, Inger does not see the beef consumption as a problem in itself; it is the industrialization of animals that is seen to be the problem.

Fiddes underlines how the meat industry knows how vulnerable they are to associations with industrial farming. Therefore, they spend a lot of time investing images of a natural and wholesome production of the meat, where the animals live in a natural environment (Fiddes 1991: 193). The only time that Gilde illustrates an animal in their TV commercials is when they promote “local” high quality products said to come from small villages and fjords in the rural Norway. These are the speciality high-end products. The butcher in the commercials has a rural Norwegian dialect; a soft-spoken caring butcher. Quality products like entrecote, steaks and lamb are promoted in natural surroundings; there is nothing industrial about them. This illustrates how the meat industry adapts to the preferences of the consumer. They present their products as local to convince the consumers they are not industrially produced and therefore can be trusted.

The informants were generally comfortable with eating beef when it was properly produced. When asked about animal welfare, they stated that the animal should be treated with respect and care while alive and not as a commodity. Several informants were concerned about the development of the general population, having a harder time dealing with consumption of beef. As they saw it, as long as you acknowledge the fact that you are eating an actual animal and it has been raised in a decent way, it is ok. Drawing on Parry (2009), Syse and Bjørkdahl refer to this phenomenon as “*meat nostalgia*”. Meat eating is justified as long as the consumer is aware of what they are eating and the meat is produced knowingly and responsibly. As they argue, a new animal ethic has evolved addressing the negative impacts of industrial meat production. By re-establishing the relationship between animal and meat, meat consumption is justified (Syse & Bjørkdahl 2013: 228).

Lise illustrated it this way:

That is just how we are. In the western world we are “Disneyficing” the animals. I’m against people paying for surgery for their dogs; I have a lot of friends who do this. They see things as children; they are not capable of relating to death. At my friends abattoir all the animals have names. You always write what part of the animal it is, where it is from, when it was slaughtered and the name of the animal. This way, you have a much more personal relationship to the animal. One relates to the animals that are alive, those that are dead; we eat. But that is nice.

Environmental and social issues related to beef

As previously mentioned, Norway is getting more dependent on imported beef and soy for concentrated feed to meet the consumers demand. Producing beef demands a large share of both feed crops and water and takes up large areas of land. Beef production has a 40:1 ratio for energy input to protein output and demands about 200 000 litres of water per kilo beef (Pimentel & Pimentel 2003: 662S). Methane emission from livestock farming is also a large contributor to GHG emissions. In 2010, 51 percent of Norway’s methane emissions derived from ruminant animals (e.g. cows, goat, and sheep) that produce significant amounts of methane as part of their normal digestive processes. Methane is a GHG that is about 21 times stronger than CO₂ (Bye et al. 2011: 11). Accordingly, beef production becomes a threat to both humans and the general wellbeing of the planet.

The critique of industrialized meat production developed in the 1960s and 70s. Starting out, the critique addressed the use of food crops in animal feed relating it to food security issues. While the majority of the developing world’s population still relies on a plant-based diet, the western diet is primarily based on meat. Following this, the use of food crops in the animal feed is seen to threaten global food security. The Consumer Council launched a campaign in Norway in the mid-70s called “Sløser vi med maten?” [Are we wasting our food?], were they encouraged people to

eat less meat for a more equal distribution of food on the planet. The environmental movement in Norway have also addressed these issues, stating that the western diet needs to change towards a diet consisting of vegetables, grains and grass-fed cattle (Bjørkum et al. 1997: 178). The majority of my informants referred to the issues concerning food security and resource scarcity, when we talked about what they saw as problematic with beef.

Inger phrased it like this when I asked her about her relationship to beef:

If there was more beef that is not raised on concentrated feed [having grass-fed cattle instead] things would have been different, but unfortunately, things are not like that. There is something about concentrated feeds, developing countries and poverty that do not go too well together.

The older informants were generally more familiar with resource dilemmas, rather than problems concerning climate change. Ethical aspects of beef consumption were related to the problem of unequal distribution between developing and developed nations. Climate change is a relatively new problem, only receiving wide public attention in the past two decades. Energy consumption, transportation and fossil fuels are often seen to be the most prominent problems with regard to climate change. It was first when the FAO report “Livestock’s Long Shadow” was released in 2006, stating that as much as 18 percent of the GHG emissions were related to meat production, that the link between climate change and meat production received worldwide attention.

Environmental problems seemed to be confusing to some of the informants. When I asked what they knew about the methane emissions from cows and how beef production contributes to climate change through methane emissions, this was ridiculed and seen as a digression in the debate by the majority of the informants.

When I asked Mette about it, she answered: “Ha, yes that is kind of funny. I’ve read about it in the paper, I do not really know what to think of it, but they say that the cows actually emit more CO₂ than cars. And that is a little bit funny”.

I continued to ask her about why she thought it was funny, and asked if she had thought about how food production effects the environment. She then said: “Yes, of course, it might be true, I do not really know. I just think it is kind of funny”. I got the impression that it was ‘just another’ thing affecting the environment, and that the whole debate had taken a wrong turn, as some argued that “cows had always farted”, or like Inger phrased it:

I haven’t really taken the fact that cows emit methane gas seriously, I’ve heard about it, but I really do not think this is where the problem is. For me it seems like a digression in the debate; stop digging up the oil in the North Sea and shut up about the cows.

However, three of my informants stood out compared to the others when talking about environmental effects of beef consumption. Sigrid, Johanna and Espen were all very conscious about their consumption of beef, seeing environmental issues as the main reason for reducing their beef consumption.

They form an interesting case for further study as they in some ways can be seen to represent a new generation of consumers; taking active choices more motivated by ethical considerations and environmental engagement. Furthermore, they were more aware of their role as consumers: largely linking it to individual responsibility and used their position to protest the industrialized food system seeking alternative food channels. I will elaborate on the views of the three in the next chapter, addressing the way the informants viewed their responsibility as consumers.

Summarizing remarks

In this chapter, I have looked at what people know about the problematic aspects of beef consumption and how they relate to these problems. I found that there are three different ways of criticizing beef consumption.

First, a scepticism towards the food provisioning system influence the way all major food producers and food products are looked upon. Some of my informants talked about how they boycotted beef products from Gilde, because it was seen to be of low quality and they did not want to contribute to the profits of what they saw to be a ‘greedy market actor’. This can be related to the commodification critique; feeling alienated from the food products, lacking personal control and distrusting the market actors.

The *second* way of looking at it is from a health perspective. In the past years, beef and other types of red meat have been labelled as unhealthy and are seen increase chances of cancer and other lifestyle related diseases. As all of my informants considered the health aspect to be a large motivator for food consumption practices, they preferred white and leaner types of meat.

Thirdly, ethical considerations in terms of animal welfare, food security issues and environmental degradation were also reflected upon. The most evident feature was that as long as the animal was treated with respect and care, beef consumption was legitimized. Environmental issues were touched upon, but the majority did not have that much knowledge about the subject and GHG emissions from beef production were mainly ridiculed. Three of my informants stated that environmental issues were the main reason for them to reduce their beef consumption.

Food consumption has only recently been seen as a way of showing political and ethical engagement. Following this, most of the informants were mainly engaged in issues directly affecting them, either through low quality products or unhealthy food

products. The problem was mainly addressed as a *production* problem rather than a *consumption* problem.

6. Acting responsibly

In the previous chapter, I introduced some of the critical thinking about beef consumption and the modern food provisioning system. A general scepticism towards the system, the market actors and the governmental third party was evident. However, talking the talk does not mean walking the walk. As mentioned previously, values do not necessarily imply action. The act of consumption is a complex practice, motivated by a multitude of considerations; not only ethics.

In this chapter, I explore the practice of beef consumption and how the informants talked about this. I then address how the informants perceived their role as consumers, linking it to national tendencies on consumer responsibility. How do consumers take on their responsibility, if they acknowledge that they are responsible as consumers at all? Moreover, if they do not see themselves as responsible – who are?

The practice of eating beef

In order to understand food consumption, insight into routines and practices is essential. Food consumption must be understood as a broader phenomenon and examined as an integrated part of everyday life. Eating is something that everybody does, several times a day, and is therefore highly routinized. These practices are not static, but changes and develops through individuals' actions. However, the socially shared practice is the reference point and change occurs with reference to the already existing structures of the practice (Kjærnes 2010: 10).

These practices can be linked to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, as explained in chapter two. As human beings, we have acquired skills and ways of acting that we are not always conscious of exist. These types of dispositions we have acquired through every-day life in our social context. Wilhite (2008) also emphasizes the need to look at practice to understand consumption.

The background for our food practices are formed in our childhood and food consumption is an integrated part of people's biographical history. People's food practices are rooted in the persons upbringing and traditions and these practices are then formed and developed when the person leaves home and move on their own (Guzmán & Kjærnes 1998: 44).

Mette illustrated how childhood socialization influenced her concept of a proper meal, when I asked her how she decided what to have for dinner:

No, or my subconsciousness always told me to remember to eat fish. That is what I was taught at home; it is important to eat fish. I often think of fish first, however I know that the fish here [Oslo] is not as good as other places. I am married to a man from the southern parts of Norway and the fish there is so much fresher. The fish in Oslo has laid there for days and so I am not tempted to buy it. This means that you eat more meat than fish, and so we did and still do.

She had constantly been reminded of the importance of eating fish during her childhood. However, since she believed the available fish to be of low quality, she preferred meat. Mette saw choosing fish to be the 'right' thing to do, but practical challenges made her choose meat instead. Unni Kjærnes (2011) addresses this when talking about ethical considerations in everyday life. She sees how ethical considerations in everyday purchasing and eating may be regarded as normative structures and individual expectations about what is preferable for the individual, household and society at large. In the 'daily life', conflicting interests are often solved by pragmatic compromises. Normal is about what is conceived as good enough, feasible and the appropriate thing to do in the given situation (Kjærnes 2011: 151).

When addressing beef consumption, the dinner is of particular importance. Norway is a 'cold-food' nation, meaning that the majority of the meals are cold. The Norwegian

eating pattern usually consists of two or three cold meals and one hot meal, where the hot dinner is the main meal (Kjærnes et al. 2001, in Bugge 2006: 13). Traditionally, the Norwegian diet did not contain much meat compared to other European diets. However, this has changed during the 20th and the 21st century. Today, meat is the most central part of the Norwegian dinner pattern (Bugge 2006: 14-15). In a study of Norwegian eating practices performed by Døving and Bugge in 2000, about half of the respondents stated that their last dinner contained meat. Meat is used both on weekdays and on weekends, in different forms depending on the situation (Bugge & Døving 2000, in Bugge 2006:15).

People have different ideas about dinner meals depending on the situation. Bugge (2006) found that dinners have different structures depending on *where* the dinner is being served, *how* the dinner is eaten and *who* takes part in the dinner. During weekdays, the dinner meal need to be reasonable pricewise, healthy and practical. On the weekends however, the meal is about pleasure and comfort. Thus, the practice of consuming food is perceived differently depending on whether it is a weekday or weekend (Bugge 2006: 127-129).

According to Bugge, the most common weekday dinner dish is ‘something made of minced meat’. The use of minced meat has increased throughout the past decades. In 2006, about half of the population had dinner meals containing minced meat three times a week or more (Bugge 2006: 16). A reason for the widespread use of minced meat is the practicality of the product; it is an easy and fast way of making dinner. Moreover, it is cheap. Minced meat is versatile and can be used in pasta dishes, tacos and of course the traditional Norwegian dish ‘meat balls and brown gravy’ (Bugge 2006: 130).

On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays the dinner is more special. Both Friday and Saturday are the days of the week when people experiment with new and exotic dishes. These types of food are typically tacos, tapas, pizza and steaks. Sunday is the day for traditional Norwegian food (Bugge 2006: 135).

One of the informants, Inger, illustrated this structure when talking about how the meals were arranged when she was younger:

We had a lot of meatballs, and also sausages and sauerkraut on the weekdays. Roast, or roast beef was the typical Sunday supper, which was a more superior meal. We had meat loaf on Christmas Eve. That was probably the finest meal we could get.

This is a good illustration of the Norwegian dinner hierarchy. Dinners are arranged according to how 'fine' they are and how much time it takes to make them. Beef fall into all the categories; weekday dinner eating meatballs, tacos on Friday, pizza on Saturday and the Sunday roast. Espen illustrated how he saw beef in this system: "minced meat is more like another ingredient, while a steak is the centre of the meal".

Sunday supper traditionally has meat as the centre of the dish, served with potatoes and vegetables. This structure of the meal is what Bugge refers to as the dinner plate-model (Bugge 2006: 133 – 139). The model was created to communicate nutritional advices. The ideal dinner plate-model divides the plate into three different sectors: two parts equally sized, while the third is smaller. The largest sectors are for carbohydrates (e.g. potatoes, rice, pasta) and vegetables. The third and smallest is for meat (Bugge 2006: 81).

In many ways, the dinner plate-model has shaped the Norwegian perception of what a proper meal should look like. Like Sigrid portrays it: "When I grew up, mom and dad's idea of dinner was meat, potatoes and vegetables". While people have adopted the model as an ideal and a reference, the relative proportions have in practice changed significantly over time. The proportion of meat has increased, reflected in the increase in meat consumed.

Most of the informants answered in terms of specific dishes where they used beef, when I asked about their relationship to beef. The informants that were in their 60s mentioned traditional stews and soups. In the traditional beef soup, the short rib or

the chuck steaks are used and several of the informants commented on how hard it was to get a hold of these parts of the animal. These types of dinners were also time-consuming, which was another reason why these meals were served more rarely.

The steak was associated with having a good time. The steak was the main association to beef, or more precisely the entrecote. Like Mette: “If we want something special we often buy a good entrecote”.

The younger informants mentioned minced meat in relation to beef, like Johanna: “I’m used to using minced meat when I eat tacos for example”. Knut stated that he mostly used minced meat for making meatballs. It was evident that, as Espen mentioned, minced meat is seen as an ingredient. It is also seen to be practical; you can buy it on sale and store in the fridge.

For the older informants beef was something nostalgic. In the ‘old days’ it was easier to get a hold of specific parts of the animals over the counter. Now, it was only pre-packaged beef from Gilde. The majority of them therefore almost exclusively mentioned steak and entrecote when I asked them about their consumption patterns today. Minced meat was mentioned by four of the informants, and was mentioned in relation to the practicality of it or a specific dish.

It was however, hard to get the informants to talk more in depth about their practices when eating beef. The reason for this is that all but one stated that they did not eat that much beef and did not see the questions as relevant for their consumer practices. They seemed to have a somewhat distanced relationship to the subject of own beef consumption.

Reflecting on own consumption

In all the interviews, both the in-depth and the short survey, I asked the informants how they saw their own consumption of beef. It was clear that none of them

considered their level of beef consumption to be problematic. There were mainly three different reasons for this:

- They did not see beef consumption as problematic and therefore did not see their level of consumption to be too high.
- They mainly ate white and leaner types of meat, and therefore did not see their consumption of beef to be problematic.
- They had actively worked to reduce their consumption of beef due to ethical and social issues related to beef production, and therefore saw their consumption to be at an acceptable minimum.

Three of the nine in-depth informants stated that they had considered reducing their level of consumption when asked directly about it. None of the short survey respondents had considered it. Altogether, eleven out of fifteen people that I interviewed stated that they did not consider reducing their level of beef consumption. As the informants stated that they did not see their consumption of beef to be problematic, they saw no reason why they should reduce their level of consumption.

When I asked Inger if she considered reducing her consumption of beef, she answered:

I do not really eat that much beef, so I do not think it is necessary to reduce my consumption. I am trying to think about what I eat that contains beef, but I eat a so many different things. I eat porridge, pancakes and vegetable-based dinners as well, so I do not think I need to reduce my consumption of beef.

As the conversation was more directed towards attitudes and reflections about the subject, the amount of beef consumed was often not answered in specific terms. Some of the respondents from the short survey answered that they ate beef once every other week or every third week. It is hard to say if this reflects their actual

consumer behaviour. To be able to state something about the level of beef consumption of the informants I would have to perform a different type of research, were I participated and observed their everyday practices or made them keep a diary.

Nevertheless, anthropologist Pat Caplan (1996) states that underreporting own consumption of meat is a known tendency. In her paper “Why Do People Eat What They Do?” she argues that most people believe that they are buying and eating less meat, and then especially less beef. However, sales statistics shows that the consumption of beef is not declining much in comparison. A possible explanation for this is that people believe they are consuming less meat because they eat more outside the house, and that the meat is often ‘hidden’ in processed food (Caplan 1996: 220). In this case, it might also be that for some the compositions of meals have changed; the dinner plate-model has been replaced by more mixed dishes. The meat does no longer work as the centrepiece, but is used as an ingredient.

Another explanation is that even though people report that they eat more white- and leaner types of meat, this does not necessarily indicate that they have reduced the consumption of the other meat types. In the past ten years, several changes in the way people consume meat has occurred. Even though the consumption of white meat has increased dramatically, the consumption of other types of meat has not been reduced. Instead of substituting white meat with beef, the increased amount of white meat is added to the overall level of consumption (Lavik 2008: 95).

Further, the way people refer to own level of consumption is relative compared to others. The informants generally considered themselves as healthy and informed consumers, more ‘knowing’ than the majority of the Norwegian consumers. This might also lead them to see their consumption as below than average, according to their own norms and ideals.

I will now go on to illustrate how my informants perceived responsibility and consumption. Following that Norwegian consumer practices have environmental

implications, consumption of beef is an ethical question framing issues of responsibility. In the following sections, I will elaborate on how the informants viewed responsibility and how this responsibility was connected to their role as consumers.

Addressing responsibility

Both cultural and political factors influence how people take on responsibility. I will briefly elaborate on the historical relationship between state, consumers and the market, before I account for the characteristics of the Norwegian consumers.

Drawing on Miller and Rose (2008), Kjærnes (2011) explains the relationship between the state, market and consumer from a historical perspective. In the nineteenth century there was a clear distinction between public and private. The consumer was primarily a housewife caring for the family. The state received increasing critique for its inability to solve social problems. As a result, the state expanded in the inter-war period, getting more legitimacy in areas that previously were seen to be private. This was the start of the *welfare state*, where the state was the guarantor for development and individual welfare. Drawing on Foucault, Kjærnes explains how the welfare state can be regarded as paternalistic; caring for and protecting the consumers. The liberalization processes of the 1970s and 80s led to a reduction in direct state intervention. Social problems were to be solved by encouragement to self-regulate by individuals, organizations and companies (Kjærnes 2011: 148-149).

Typically, Norwegian consumers see the government to be the responsible party. Kjærnes et al. (2007) found that Norwegian consumers, together with Danish consumers are beneath the European mean when it comes to all topics indicating consumer responsibility. Norwegian consumers are also the ones that see their voice to matter the least, and express consistently that they have little responsibility for key food issues such as safety, nutrition and ethics (Kjærnes et al. 2007: 106-108).

Talking to the informants about issues related to food consumption and production, I also tried to understand who they felt were responsible for making change happen. The way my informants frame responsibilities for the issues related to beef consumption is an important key to understand how they see themselves as consumers and how they regard the role of other actors such as producers, public authorities and organizations of the civil society. Giving and taking responsibility, expressing trust and distrust are important indicators for own sense of agency.

The responsibility of public authorities

In the previous chapter, I explained how the majority of my informants were highly sceptical towards the major actors in the food system; this also included the Food Safety Authority.

The mission of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority is to ensure safe and healthy food together with healthy plants, fish and animals. They are also instructed to promote ethical keeping of fish and animals, environmentally friendly production, good quality and fair traded products and enhance innovation in the food sector (The Norwegian Food Safety Authority 2013). Together with several other institutions, like The Norwegian Consumer Council, they serve as ‘watchdogs’ in the market. Their job is to ensure that market actors do not bring negative consequences upon the other parties involved.

The retailers and major food producers were seen to destroy the quality of the food production through their race for profits. The Food Safety Authorities was mostly mentioned when I asked the informants whom they saw as responsible for improving the situation. Talking to Johanna, she was concerned about the production methods used for raising animals for meat production. As she saw it, the animals are raised in an unacceptable way but as a consumer, she felt helpless. I asked her who she saw to be responsible, and she answered:

There are rules for what they are allowed to feed the animals with, but they are getting more lax. The Food Safety Authorities has just allowed a completely new set of toxicants to be used for food production. In my eyes, the Food Safety Authority is the state. It is a public institution, they have a responsibility, and they cannot leave all the choices up to the consumer.

I asked Lise about how she perceived her responsibility as a consumer. She saw the consumers to have the responsibility of making the right choices, at the same time she did not feel as the Food Safety Authority took their share of the responsibility. She felt that there were not enough regulations, leaving the market to be controlled by the major food producers, as she stated: “The Food Safety Authority and the Government are deaf, dumb and blind at the same time”.

In Norway, the welfare state still holds a strong position. The Norwegian state has played a major role in organising and protecting the consumers’ interests. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion are responsible for consumer policies in Norway. Their task is to secure relevant and correct information to consumers, so that Norwegian consumers can take well-informed choices. The main consumer institutions, like Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO) and the Consumer Council of Norway, are financed by the state. As a result, there is less space for independent and self-financed consumer organisations (Terragni & Torjusen 2007: 260).

Following this, the government holds an even more central position, serving as the third party working to protect the consumer and make sure that the food is safe and sustainable. This was brought up by several of my informants. They argued that there was a lack of consumer mobilization in Norway. As Inger puts it:

I think the only possibility of making a change is through consumer organizations, but then they have to step up and take responsibility.

As individuals we cannot do anything, it has to be collectively organized and I do not see that happening in Norway.

Lise also echoed this:

We need more arenas where the consumers are allowed to state their opinions. Consumer interests and consumer power are relatively new concepts in Norway. When it comes to demanding change, we do not have it in us. You have to start in school, teaching children about quality and their rights as consumers.

As we see, Lise recognized that the consumers had to be the ones demanding a change. However, she did not see the structures to be in place. The informants saw the consumer to be the one actually having to act. Nevertheless, the authorities were seen to have the responsibility to inform the public, regulate the market and organize the consumers so people can make the right choices. Several surveys also indicate that Norwegian consumers state that they lack proper information about sustainable products, and that is what hinders them from acting more responsibly. As Jensen (2007) points out, securing proper information is central in developing more ethically sound consumers (Jensen 2007: 214).

Media's responsibility

Media was also seen to have a responsibility. They were seen to be an important channel of information about the consequences of beef production, leading the consumer to make well-informed choices. Espen Løkeland-Stai and Sverre Arne Lie writes about the role of media in their book "En nasjon kjøttthuer: ni myter og en løgn om norsk landbrukspolitikk" [A nation of meatheads: nine myths and one lie about Norwegian agricultural politics]. They try to uncover nine myths established by media about how the Norwegian food and agricultural sector works, among them: the price myth. The public debate on food issues has in the past decade been concerned with the price level for food. Løkeland-Stai and Lie argue that if you look at the food

prices and compare it to the average wage level in Norway the picture is somewhat different. From 1999 to 2010, the food prices increased with 18 percent. In the same time period the average wage level in Norway increased by 60 percent. Relatively speaking, food in Norway has become cheaper (Løkeland-Stai & Lie 2012:43-49).

I asked the food journalist Yngve Ekern why journalists primarily write about the high food prices: “Editors might say that it is part of a journalist responsibility to inform the public about where they can save money, on the other side it is also our job to write about the consequences of it”. He then pointed out that the most important thing for a journalist is to getting people’s attention, writing about issues that directly concern the reader.

Johanna also talked about how The Directorate of Health struggles to get the message out about the health risks related to a high level of beef consumption. She claimed that by only focusing on the price of the food, the media neglects other issues like the environmental- and health effects of beef consumption. She argued that they did not take their share of social responsibility. The media were seen to mislead the public, giving away incorrect nutritional advices; covering how to lose weight with the Atkins-diet instead of addressing the health problems related to a high intake of beef.

Hanne also emphasized this:

I think it is important that media informs people about what is good and healthy food. They should not only focus on price. This is probably part of the reason for why people do not know too much about food (...) it ends up being a few people caring for the quality of the food, while the rest just cares about the price.

It is true that media plays a vital role in informing the public, giving out correct information to the people. In her analysis of changes in Norwegian meat consumption, Randi Lavik (2008) also found that information from media was an important factor when people changed their consumption of meat (Lavik 2008: 40).

Talking to my informants it was clear that a lot of the information they had about beef production they had learned through either environmental organizations or documentaries showed on TV. I asked Lise where she first heard about how beef production effected the environment; she responded that she watched many foreign TV channels:

They are flying huge cargo aircrafts with food for our cows, but they do not talk about that in Norwegian media. Media is not to be trusted. They advocate for their own interests but do not write about the important issues. It is hard for ordinary people to get access to all this information, and here media has the responsibility.

Johanna also talked about how she recently saw a documentary addressing the conditions for animals in the American meat industry. She stated that the documentary made her realize how unsustainable the production of meat was, and encouraged her to reduce her beef consumption.

The responsibility of the consumer

The majority of my informants recognized that the consumer was the main responsible part; the consumers were the ones having to demand a change. Lise phrased it like this: “We have to start with the consumers. We have to start demanding better quality food. We need to be more conscious about what *is* ok and what is not ok”. When I asked Knut where the responsibility was placed he stated: “I think *I* am the one that has to do something, but then again everybody have to do something. We have to do something *collectively*.”

They all recognized that the consumer had to be the one who needed to act, but the structures in the system made it challenging to have an influence. Like Sigrid explained:

I once went into the store to tell them that they should stop selling uncertified scampi, but all I got was strange looks. They probably wondered why I was telling this to them. I do not really feel like I have something to say on these kinds of issues.

This is coherent with what Kjærnes et al. found in their study of European consumers. As mentioned earlier, Norwegian consumers are the consumer group that sees their voice to matter the least (Kjærnes et al. 2007: 108). Another argument was that the general lack of knowledge and price-obsession of *the other* consumers made the processes difficult. Identifying with the more 'knowing' consumers, they felt helpless, representing a minority. Johanna expressed it like this:

I think I influence and contribute as much as everybody else, unfortunately I think few people is conscious about health and environmental issues when they shop. People do not care; they buy whatever is cheapest and are happy with that.

When I interviewed the informants, they often talked about the typical Norwegian consumer, or *the others*. Bugge (2006) also encountered this phenomenon writing about how Norwegian housewives described their dinner patterns. The women she interviewed often used the phrase 'today's mothers', when talking about other mothers in a negative way. They talked about how 'today's mothers' serve processed food and quick meals for dinner. Bugge bases the distinction on Meads concept of the *generalized other* (Bugge 2006: 167).

It became clear that a majority of my informants had specific characterizations of the Norwegian consumers. A very evident characteristic was how Norwegians were price-obsessed and had low expectations to quality.

Sigrid was concerned about the Norwegian public's 'price-obsession':

The problem is that Norwegians are so incredible stingy, they come here [Mathallen] and taste things – but it is too expensive for them to buy anything. Then they go to Statoil and buy sliced cheese for 50 kroner. Moreover, everybody complains about the gas prices. It is 13 kroners per litre; still they buy water costing 50 kroners per litre. The priorities are all wrong.

Lise also stresses the importance of educating the Norwegian consumer:

That is the problem you know, we have started in the wrong direction: having a large range of products, but nobody has taught us how to choose the right things. You have no knowledge to base your choice upon, so instead you chose based on price, because you know nothing about quality. We cannot have a society based on consumer choices when the consumers are unconscious and incapable of making the right choices. If you are talking about the importance of having freedom of choice, you need conscious consumers; we do not have that in Norway.

It was evident that the behaviour of the ‘Typical Norwegian’ consumer was seen as an obstacle in developing a more sustainable food provisioning system.

They were also concerned about the naivety of the Norwegian consumer. Many have argued that the Norwegian people see themselves as inherently ‘nature-friendly’, and that they perceive the agricultural sector in Norway as natural, local and healthy. That is a recognized notion within research as well. Several scholars have concluded that it is hard to make consumers in Norway act on behalf of environmental issues, because everything produced in Norway is seen as ‘natural’, ‘healthy’ and ‘considerate of animal welfare’ (Jacobsen & Borgen 2010; Skarstad et al. 2007: 75).

This is an aspect of Norwegian mentality that also is challenged by the Polish culture historian Nina Witoszek in her book “The Origin of the ‘Regime of Goodness’- Remapping the Cultural History of Norway”. Norway is seen as the exporter of ‘goodness’ to all corners of the world, and the former prime minister and chairman of

the ‘sustainable development’ commission Gro Harlem Brundtland stated a phrase has had an large impact on Norwegian mentality: ‘It is typically Norwegian to be good’ (Witoszek 2011: 13). Nature is regarded as deeply embedded in the national identity, and Witoszek points to how this helps ‘nurture the ethical and political predispositions of Norwegian culture’ (Witoszek 2011: 22).

When I asked Inger why Norwegian consumers do not take environmental considerations when they shop, she answered: “I think it is related to how we perceive ourselves. I think we are suffering from a ‘best-in-class’ syndrome... we believe that everything is inherently healthy and good around here, we do not really have to do anything about it”.

To sum up, the majority informants very much acknowledged that the consumer had a responsibility in making the ‘right’ choice and demanding a change. However, due to what they perceived to be a lack of consumer mobilization, a passive government and a price-obsessed and ‘blinded’ public, they felt powerless. As Lise states:

If only Bellona²⁰ were interested in food issues, then things might have been different. Talking about food consumption and environmental issues it is important that people not get too fanatic about it. You have to be careful not to point your finger at people all the time. I think it is better to educate people about the benefits of good quality food, to get people off the ‘price-obsession’ wagon.

Being a responsible consumer

In the former section, I presented the different actors that were seen to play a role in making a change towards a more sustainable food system. When addressing this, the informants mainly talked about how the actors should act to make improvements in

²⁰ Bellona is an environmental NGO.

the *production* of beef. However, addressing an overall reduction of beef consumption the consumers have a special responsibility, because they are the ones actually having to cut their intake.

Talking about consumers' responsibility in a general sense is different from how people actually see their own roles as consumers. The way they took on *own* responsibility varied across the informants: from the ones that felt that their actions did not count in the bigger pictures to the ones that tried to change the world through their consumer practices. I will now present two analytical categories: the pragmatic and the idealist.

The pragmatic

When addressing issues related to responsibility and individual action, the situation has a tendency to become locked when the individual sees it as a loss to give up something for a common good. In order for a person to do so, having other people doing the same is essential. Knut illustrates this when I ask him whether he had considered reducing his consumption of beef:

If everybody had done it, then I would have considered it. However, I do not like to be denied eating things I like. I just cannot see how one person can change anything...If I decided not to eat beef in order for the rest of the world to get enough food; somebody else will buy that piece of meat. Therefore, I do not really see the point of it.

The way Knut portrays it, can be seen in relation to Garrett Hardin (1968) essay "The Tragedy of the Commons". Counter to Adam Smith's theory of the 'Invisible hand' from his well-known book "The Wealth of Nations", Hardin argues that decisions reached individually, will *not* necessarily be the best decisions for the society. Hardin explains the concept of "The Tragedy of the Commons" using an open pasture as an illustration. He states that each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible on the commons, maximizing his gain. The illustration has one positive and one

negative component: the positive component is the value of one additional cattle (+1), the negative component is overgrazing as a result of keeping too many cattle on the commons. However, this negative component is only a fraction of -1, as it is shared by all herdsmen (Hardin 1968: 1244). In this way, it is rational to add cattle to the commons because the value of the cattle exceeds the loss due to overgrazing as it is shared by all.

In this case, the positive component is eating the beef. As Knut enjoys his beef, the rational thing is to buy the piece of beef in the store. The environmental consequences of beef production are shared by all, and he either way expect others to buy it. Why should Knut act responsibly when nobody else is? As Hardin states in regards to overpopulation “It is a mistake to think that we can control the breeding of mankind in the long run by an appeal to conscience” (Hardin 1968: 1246). Knut underlined that he did not see the point in reducing own pleasure because some found it to be ethically wrong:

I think people just restrain themselves, not being able to enjoy good food. There is no reason why you should not eat something just because someone says that you should not. If you do not have a personal relationship to the animal you are eating of course. I might not eat a dog or a cat, so the only reason I see for not eating something is if I have a personal relationship to it.

The general welfare of others did not determine private purchases, as the responsibility for the general welfare is not regarded as lying within the role of the individual consumer. Knut only mentions one reason for not eating meat – if he has a personal relationship to the animal. In his view, beef consumption is a private matter and is not imbued with morality. An important aspect was that Knut saw red meat and beef in particular to be an important source of proteins for his body. He stated that he mainly ate beef, and it seemed, as he was not aware of the health risks related to a high intake of red meat.

When asked about his priorities when shopping for food, they were based upon what enabled him to make the best out of what he got:

As I started enjoying making food, I looked for better quality food. I started working out, so then I also started thinking about nutritional advices as well; I focused not only on quality but also on health. Then, if I want to be able to buy an apartment, I need to save money. My aim is to find food that is of good quality, healthy and enables me not to spend a large share of my salary on food.

His priorities are linked to quality, health and value for money. This might come across as purely self-interested motivators, not considering ethical issues. Nevertheless, as explained by Kjærnes (2011), the 'daily life' conflicts are often solved by pragmatic compromises and ethical concerns can be seen in a variety of forms. Barnett et al. (2005a) also challenge this in their article "Philosophy and Ethical Consumption". Drawing on Miller (2001), they argue that one should not set off 'ethical' against 'unethical'. Concern for value for money, quality and so on, can also be understood as a set of specific learned ethical competencies (Barnett et al. 2005a: 20). What characterizes an ethical or responsible action is differently understood. Ethical consumption does not translate to environmental- or animal friendly consumption for everyone. For Knut ethical consumption might mean taking responsibility for own health and body while managing a tight budget in order for him to provide for his future family.

Barnett et al. (2005a) addresses the philosophical approaches to ethical consumption. Their criticism is aimed at two of the main approaches to ethical consumption: the consequentialist and deontological approach. The consequentialists are concerned with the outcome of their actions; the right thing to do is what maximizes the good. The consequentialist approach lies within utilitarian philosophy, a class within philosophy where among other the animal rights advocate Peter Singer is said to

belong. The deontological approach defines right actions independently of its contribution to human happiness or other favoured goals. Deriving from John Rawls "A Theory of Justice" the deontological approach to ethics defend the right over the good, ensuring that definitions of the collective good do not come at the cost of individual liberties (Barnett et al. 2005a: 12-13).

Barnett et al. (2005a) criticize both the consequentialist and deontological approach to ethical consumption, as they see them to be far too stringent in the demands they make on the capacities of ordinary people. Neither of the approaches leaves room for the complexities and ambivalences of ethical decision-making. Both assume that sustainable consumption initiatives generate change in consumer behaviour as long as one exposes the public to scientific knowledge. In this case, the climate effect of beef production. Sustainable consumption policies tend to ignore the social structures of consumption already established which again makes a change in consumer behaviour difficult. Ethical consumption is often perceived to compromise the consumers' capabilities and freedom as social beings (Barnett et al. 2005a: 13).

As Knut had no personal relationship to the animal he ate, he did not see the point of reducing his intake because other people said he should. Barnett et al. (2005a) argues that assuming that ethical consumption can work simply by bringing to view the consequences and connection between consumer and producer, by appealing to people's sense of self-sacrifices and altruism, is highly simplistic. Neither of the approaches to ethical consumption gives adequate attention to what motivates people to be concerned about ethical issues in the first place. They assume that by knowing that climate change is occurring, people will restrain their consumption and take social responsibility (Barnett et al. 2005a: 14-16).

The respondents to my short survey also emphasized that they did not consider ethical or political issues when they shopped for food. The responsibility placed on the individual, limiting their freedom of choice through appealing to their conscience,

seemed to lead to resistance rather than action. All but one answered a firm ‘no’ when I asked if they considered the ethical aspects of their food consumption.

Another reoccurring problem with ethical consumption (e.g. organic, animal-friendly, fair trade), is that it can be seen as something reserved for the privileged and highly affluent consumers; alienating the ordinary consumer. This was also echoed by Knut when I asked him about organic beef: “I can’t really see the difference; I think it is a niche thing for people who are well-off. As it is more expensive, they buy the meat so they can feel good about themselves.” Knut considers organic food a niche product for the higher social classes, and saw it as a way for people to portray themselves as considerate and ethical. In this way, ethical consumption is an act of social distinction. Taking ethical considerations in regards to consumption can also be seen as a performative action to signal something about yourself. I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

To appeal to people’s conscience by using guilt to make people take social responsibility has been challenged by several scholars, as it is seen to lead to alienation and resistance. Here, virtue ethics is central. Barnett et al. (2005a) argues that we need to redefine the overarching question of ethical theory away from “What ought I do?” to “What sort of person should I strive to be?”. Using Sigrid as an example, I will elaborate on the second analytical category: that of the idealist.

The idealist

In the other end of the scale is Sigrid, whom I mentioned in the former chapter together with Johanna and Espen. All three of them saw the value of each individual’s action, actively using their position as consumers to make a change. I will now elaborate Sigrid as a specific case. I will use her to illustrate a green living discourse: a green movement that considers the environmental effects of our consumer habits and see themselves as a part of the solution. What are the drivers? And how do they perceive the issue of beef consumption?

Sigrid is a 25-year-old woman living in Oslo, who had recently given birth to a child. Sigrid was very interested in food; making everything from scratch “based on fresh ingredients that is not covered with pesticides”, as she explained. She was deeply concerned with the environmental effects of the food production. Together with her partner, Sigrid had bought a share in a farm. Every Saturday, Sigrid could come and pick up whatever they had ordered from the farm at the Farmers Market. She explained how they also delivered meat, and so almost all the meat they ate came from this farm. When I asked her why they had decided to buy a share in the farm, she answered:

I think Rema 1000 is making enough money as they are, so I’d rather contribute and support local businesses that are not able to make it if we did not support them. It is about supporting Norwegian agriculture, we mostly have monoculture here in Norway. The farm we are shareholders in is a biodynamic farm, and so they have everything. They have bees that give them honey, twenty different types of vegetables, chickens, goats, cows and grains. They keep the whole cycle going.

Here, Sigrid explains that one of the main motivations for using alternative food provisioning channels is that she feels as she contributes and that her consumer choices make a difference for the local businesses. It gives her a sense of agency as a consumer. Without her support, the local businesses might not survive. In comparison, Knut did not feel as his choices mattered, as ‘someone else would buy that piece of beef’. Using small-scale food provisioning might give the consumer more sense of agency and motivation to take active choices.

Sigrid preferred local and seasonal food when she shopped in regular stores. This was due to environmental considerations and to support local farmers. She could not remember the last time she had beef, as she and her boyfriend had been very conscious about this. She also emphasized how important it was that her partner also was interested in this, stating that: “If I had met someone that did not care about these

kinds of things, it would have been way more difficult. Then you kind of have to fight the same battle everyday”. This was also emphasized by Guzman and Kjærnes (1998) in their study of meat consumption. Food practices and the establishment of routines is a negotiation within the household. They also found that the man’s taste preferences influences the family’s eating habits to a larger extent (Guzman & Kjærnes 1998: 57).

Sigrid was highly critical of beef consumption. As she saw it, beef production was too resource intensive and not good for the health. In general, they did not eat much meat:

We try to reduce the overall consumption, we mix beans into the stew to reduce the use of meat. Yesterday we had a package of three sausages from Grøstad Gris²¹, we had one each and saved the last one for lunch today instead of eating it all at once.

For her, the food and environmental engagement had turned into a lifestyle. When I asked Sigrid what motivated this kind of lifestyle she answered:

The more information I get, considering my conscience, I can’t *not* do anything and pretend everything is ok... You just realize that something needs to change, and like everything else, you need to start with yourself. You can’t go around talking about how everybody should change and not do anything yourself.

Her reasons for living a sustainable lifestyle can be linked to virtue ethics. Virtue theory emphasizes the habits and practices through which virtues are learned. Barnett et al. (2005) argue that virtue ethics is an important tool in order to understand ethical consumption, because there is empirical evidence that suggest that ‘ethical consumption’ is motivated by a sense of personal integrity (Barnett et al. 2005a: 17).

²¹ Grøstad Gris is a Norwegian farm/brand selling pork meat with a special focus on animal welfare.

The important question is, according to Barnett et al., how one addresses the relationship between individual actions, consumption, and broader concepts of ‘the good life’. In order to do this, consumption needs to be seen in a much broader sense, not only as a specific and distinct practices, but rather as an aspect of any social practice. In this way, one opens up to developing a fully political sense of responsibility in relation to consumer practices, because consumption becomes a more integrated practice in the everyday life of a citizen (Barnett et al. 2005a: 19).

This can also be related to the British philosopher Kate Soper (2008) concept of the ‘alternative hedonist’. Soper argues that the element of ‘self-pleasuring’, that often drives consumption, has in the case of the ‘alternative hedonist’ extended to an interest in the pleasure and well-being of others. According to Soper, the ‘alternative hedonist’ is sensitive to the “tragedy of the commons”, and is keen to adjust individual consumption in the light of it. As she states:

This is the ‘citizen-consumer’ who recognizes the impact of aggregate individual consumer decisions in stealing the personal pleasure of each and every one, and for that reason tries to avoid personally contributing to the aggregate “tragedy”.

(Soper 2008: 198)

As I see it, Sigrid, Johanna and Espen recognized the responsibility placed on the consumer and actively worked against personally contributing to the problem. They might represent the group where the change is likely to arise. As Soper argues, the change will come in the form of consumption decisions to downsize, simplify and settle for a less material encumbered and work driven existence. As Sigrid stated:

I’d rather work less and have more time to make things myself. Per [Partner] and I have agreed that when we are done studying, we are not working more than sixty percent jobs. We want to have time to make our meals from scratch, move out of the city and grow more of our food ourselves.

This attraction to a ‘simple’ life can be traced back to Aristotle’s concept of ‘a good life’ and the moralistic approach to the ‘art of living’. Aristotle, in line with several other political philosophers, sees the good life, not to be a quest for wealth and pleasure, but rather a more frugal lifestyle considering the importance of caring for the natural environment, where being in contact with nature is important for a well-spent life (de Geus 1999, in de Geus 2009: 115).

Summarizing remarks

In this chapter, I have elaborated on the practice of eating and the role of beef in Norwegian dinner patterns. Beef is both considered an everyday ingredient in the form of minced meat while it at the same time serves as the centrepiece of the meal in a traditional Sunday supper. Talking about reducing the level of beef consumed, the majority of the informants did not see the need for this. They stated either that they did not eat too much beef or they did not see beef consumption as problematic.

I then addressed how the informants viewed issues of responsibility. Consumers are increasingly awarded more responsibility. The main approach to consumer policy in Norway is to provide the proper knowledge and information for the consumer to make the right choice. As the government is restrictive in giving the consumers information about the consequences of Norwegian beef consumption levels, the consumers are left to fend for themselves.

In the previous chapter, I addressed the different reasons for scepticism towards beef. Consequently, it is important to address who the informants see to be responsible for making a change. I have elaborated how the informants addressed responsibility issues. Public authorities, media and the consumers were all seen to have their share of the responsibility in bringing about information and pushing for a change. Even though the retailers and the beef producers like Gilde were seen to be the ones causing the problem, pressing the prices down, they were dismissed as a responsible part. The informants had ‘given’ up the retailers and food producers as they were

seen to be a product of a 'price-obsessed' public and paralyzed third party actors, like the Food Safety Authority.

Media was also mentioned, as they play a major role in informing the public about problematic issues. By not focusing on the consequences of the consumption of beef, but rather on the price, they were also considered as part of the problem. The informants believed that the consumers were the ones that actually needed to make the right choices. However, they saw themselves as victims of passive third party actors, profit-seeking market actors, and uncritical media backed by a price-obsessed consumer group, not taking their responsibility. Among several, there was a strong feeling of powerlessness.

I presented two different ways in which the consumer role was taken on by my informants, illustrated in the section "the Pragmatic" and "the Idealist". By contrasting the two informants in this way, I am aware that I establish a dichotomy between the rational and the altruistic consumer. However, it remains to be said that the majority of my informants fall in-between these stereotypes. My goal is to point to the different approaches people have to their role as consumers: to what extent this role is linked to their role as citizens and to what extent their responsibility as consumers is acknowledged.

In the following chapter, I will discuss my findings and try to clarify some of the most evident problems that I have discovered during this process.

7. Challenges

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings and look at the main obstacles to reducing beef consumption. I will elaborate on the most evident problems and discuss how the informants' attitudes and behaviour fits into the debate on beef consumption in general.

De-commodification of beef

To my informants, the food system seemed to represent low quality and standardized food products, and it was regarded as compromising environmental sustainability and animal welfare. When asked explicit questions related to beef, the informants often answered in more general terms, and so the conversation often diverged into talking about the general tendencies of the food system. As I have showed in the previous chapters, not only were the food producers and consumers seen to be the problem, but also system at large. Beef production and consumption is seen as one of the many problematic issues in the food system. The highly technical and abstract food system left many of the informants feeling powerless. In general, it was the mass production and commodification of food that was regarded as problematic.

Murdoch and Miele (1999) point to how there has emerged a 'double structure' in modern experience with nature. In their article "Back to Nature: Changing 'Worlds of Production' in the Food Sector" they elaborate on the two different approaches to nature in modern society and concerning food. The first structure sees nature as a resource for human exploitation and the other sees nature as the ultimate source of goodness. In this case, the industrial food production manifests the view of nature as a resource for human exploitation, with a standardized and globalized food system producing food at the expense of environmental sustainability. Murdoch and Miele (1999) emphasize that there is a growing concern for this development, and evidence suggests that there is a growing trend for more local and natural products. This

movement appreciates the intrinsic value of nature, and represents the view of nature as the ultimate source of goodness. According to them safety and variety is essential in this food movement (Murdoch & Miele 1999: 466-469). This can be linked to Jensen's (2007) statement about the *de-commodification* trend within Norwegian food consumption. I will explain this further in the following section.

Safety, quality and distinction

Most of my informants' point of view was in line with the assumption that standardization and commodification of food, compromise quality and the variety of the products. They want personal relationships, local and natural food.

As previously mentioned, several food scandals (e.g. BSE, E.coli) have rolled up in the past decades, putting a focus on food safety and consumers trust in food. The rather abstract and globalized food system depends on consumers' trust in order to function. Giddens (1991) has emphasized how the expert systems 'deskill' all sectors of social life that they touch. The modern food provisioning system has deskilled the day-to-day life, alienating consumers from the food they eat as the expert system undermines the pre-existing forms of local control (Giddens 1991: 137).

The informants wanted better control over what they put into their body, and therefore seek alternative food provisioning, by having local products and face-to-face interaction between consumers and producers. Yet, it is important to stress that most Norwegians' generally have a high level of trust in food and the Norwegian provisioning system is high. While they may be sceptical towards profit-seeking market actors, most people feel well protected by public authorities. People seeking alternative provisioning channels in Norway represents a small portion of Norwegian consumers. It is important to keep in mind that my informants belong to this group, and are not representative for the general trends among Norwegian consumers. Still, they represent a group where changes are likely to occur first.

The demand for local and natural food is not only linked to issues of trust. Murdoch and Miele (1999) argue that a demand for better quality and variety of food products might be seen as a consequence of affluence and a high standard of living (Murdoch & Miele 1999: 469). The industrialized production of food has established standardized consumption patterns, promoted through marketing and advertising, which again has been central to economic growth. Giddens (1991) addresses how both the process of alienation and commodification in modernity influence the project of the self and the establishment of lifestyles. He argues that the capitalist market system based on the principles of individual freedom of choice becomes a framework of individual self-expression (Giddens 1991: 197). This is related to how modern society has broken with former traditions, where class, gender and nationality were important characteristics for a person's identity formation. In modern society, he claims that individuals express their identity through consumption. What you buy constitutes "who you are". People use consumer goods as means to tell a story about themselves (Aakvaag 2008: 281). Caring for quality and being critical towards standardized food, is also an expression of peoples self-identity.

The informants all considered themselves a more 'knowing consumer', which is reflected in their criticism of the capitalist mass production of food. This way, they differentiated themselves from the other consumers as they saw them to be unknowingly trapped in the capitalist production system and manipulated by marketing forces. This is reflected in the informants' scepticism towards Gilde, TINE and other major actors controlling the food market. They perceived themselves to be more informed and not as easily manipulated.

The market system has generated a variety of choices in the consumption of food. It is not only the mass produced and standardized products, but also more speciality products for a niche market. Local, organic and 'homemade' speciality products are made to serve the more conscious consumer. Nevertheless, this might not be a

critique of consumer society as much as it is another form of consumption. Advertisers orient themselves to sociological classification of consumer categories and foster specific consumption ‘packages’ (Giddens 1991: 198). Speciality products sold at Mathallen can also be seen as a new consumption ‘package’ aimed at the ‘knowing’ consumer.

Consuming speciality products can be seen in relation to *taste* following the concept of Pierre Bourdieu (1984). I elaborated on Bourdieu’s concept of taste and cultural capital in chapter two. I will use this to illustrate how these concepts fit with my informants’ preferences for local and natural food. Looking back to Orwell’s statement about the British palate, it reflects the social hierarchy embedded in the concept of taste. What is considered tasteful is often depicted by the people situated on the top of the ‘social ladder’; individuals inhabiting higher share of cultural capital and education. Regarding food, natural and local food is preferable. It is the opposition to the standardized food of the masses. Being critical towards mass commodity consumption signals a knowledgeable consumer, familiar with the concepts of capitalism and the general situation of the food provisioning system (Barnett 2005: 12).

The emphasis placed on the quality of the Norwegian beef by the informants, can be seen as an act of social distinction. They valued local and speciality beef products; beef from Hereford cattle in Jylland rather than pre-packaged entrecotes from Gilde. In this case, we see how the Norwegian NRF-cow and Gilde symbol the mass produced beef eaten by the so-called ‘price-obsessed’ Norwegian consumer. The Hereford cattle, on the other hand, symbol the safe and natural production of beef. As they see it, Hereford cattle grazing in the reeds in Jylland are eaten by the knowledgeable and caring consumer.

As for safety, natural unprocessed food symbolises nature’s natural safeguard against diseases and illness, while local food gives you the opportunity to trace the origin of the product. Standardized food is set as the equivalent of ‘unnatural’ food, it is

impossible to trace and too uniform. Local and natural foods, on the other hand, become desirable objects of consumption because they enshrine both product differentiation and proximity to nature (Murdoch & Miele 1999: 469).

There are however some problems with this approach in respect to beef consumption and sustainability. Starting off, I argued that an overall reduction of beef consumption is needed, irrespective of what kind of beef it is. Whether it is organic beef or conventional beef: the consumption of beef, in itself, is problematic. To a large degree the informants' criticism of beef, can be seen as a matter of distinction. The majority of the informants have addressed the issue of beef consumption as an issue of choice and production, not seeing the aggregate level of consumption to be problematic. However, the level of consumption is too high, the production demands too much resources and take up too much land. My argument is that the debate about beef consumption is a debate about the *production methods*, addressing how one can make the production more environmentally sustainable and still keep the consumption at today's level.

Sustainable “Beef Nostalgia”?

Barnett et al. (2005) distinguish between the ‘ethics of consumption’ and ‘ethical consumption’. Debates concerning the ‘ethics of consumption’ look at the morality of the whole system of provisioning, arguing for a reduction of the aggregate level of consumption. Debates concerning ‘ethical consumption’, on the other hand, address consumption not as the object of moral evaluation, but rather as a medium for individual and political action (Barnett et al. 2005a: 21).

In the findings from chapter five, I showed how most of the informants saw beef consumption as unproblematic as long as the beef was produced with care and consideration, referring to the concept of “meat nostalgia”. It is a question of quality, rather than a question of quantity. Here, organic and sustainably produced beef consumption is used as a medium to promote individual and ethical consideration. In

the case of my informants, it was not given that ‘ethical consumption’ implies less consumption. It is often quite the contrary; as long as you buy sustainably produced beef, you can buy as much as you want.

Jovian Parry (2009) address this problem in his article “Oryx and Crake and the New Nostalgia for Meat”. Analyzing the universe of Margaret Atwood’s novel “Oryx and Crake”, Parry makes some interesting observations about human relationship to meat in modern society. As Parry phrases it:

Meat, it is accepted a priori, simply must be eaten; in order to do so *honestly*, the role of the living animal must be acknowledged, and proper respect must be shown for the idyllic rural life-rhythms governing the animal’s life and death.

(Parry 2009: 249)

He further emphasizes that one needs to keep in mind, that for the vast majority of animals that end up on our plate, this idyllic rural setting is a complete fiction. Parry argues that such romanticized narratives of “honest” husbandry play an important role in obscuring the reality of meat consumption (Parry 2009: 249). Thinking back to Lise’s statement about her friends’ abattoir and the “honest” way of killing animals, there is a clear link; the cow is here for us to eat. Preferably, the cow has lived a good life before it is slaughtered; living in natural circumstances and treated with respect. However, as also Parry indicates, industrially produced beef is tolerated out of necessity, but ideally, the animal one consumes should have lived a good life. The option of not eating beef is at large not considered.

Another scholar, Anne Willetts (1997) encountered some of the same thoughts when conducting fieldwork in South-East London in the early 90s. She wanted to look at and compare vegetarians and meat-eaters, and found a group of people that saw meat eating as a symbol of one-ness with nature. Most social scientists at that point addressed vegetarianism and meat eating as two unique and oppositional worldviews; the barbarity and domination inherent in meat eating was juxtaposed to the gentle

humanity of vegetarianism. Red meat was the symbol of vitality and strength favoured by men, vegetables was considered lower status food. Seeing it from the perspective of vegetarians, red meat symbolized cruelty and aggression, reflecting the forces of human destruction (Twigg 1979, in Willetts 1997: 112). Willett points out that both Fiddes (1991) and Twigg (1979) sees meat eating as the representation of an anthropocentric worldview, while vegetarianism is seen to represent a biocentric worldview (Willetts 1997: 114).

The dualistic approach to the subject was challenged as she interviewed a British environmental group. This group based their lifestyle on the principles of 'permaculture'. In line with most environmental philosophies, permaculture has its roots in the disenchantments with the excess of the modern industrial society and a belief that human behaviour is causing an ecological crisis. They believe in sustainable use of the earth's resources and taking own action to create a change (Willetts 1997: 126).

By growing their own organic food and establishing their own wholefood cooperative, they mainly operated within an exchange economy. They avoided factory meat; however, a meatless diet did not bring them closer to nature but rather represented their alienation from it. By raising and slaughtering their own animals, taking responsibility for their own meat consumption, they felt a one-ness with nature; identifying with the animal (Willetts 1997: 128).

Romanticizing the rural life and seeing nature as a symbol of goodness can still be detected in the informants' values. However, they still exist within a market structure where the industrialization of food is the dominant discourse. As we learned, Sigrid used alternative food provisioning channels and dreamt about a simple life on the countryside where she could grow her own food. Nevertheless, she had also taken an active choice not to buy factory meat. Not everybody will commit him- or herself to this kind of lifestyle. While the majority of the informants stated they wanted more natural and speciality beef, this does not mean that they abstain from factory-farmed

beef sold by Gilde when that is convenient. Local and environmentally friendly beef is of course ideal, but as we saw, the option of reducing their consumption of beef was not considered by the majority of the informants.

Market actors response

As the problem is framed as a discontent with the production methods and scepticism towards the food system, the producers may be willing to adjust to the demand from the consumers. Consumers seem to be increasingly aware of the industrialized methods of production and how several food scandals threaten both health and safety. As mentioned earlier, consumers turn back to more 'local' and 'natural' foods as a response to this. By embracing these qualities, consumers hope they can avoid problems related to the drive for efficiency and low prices. However, this can also be a business opportunity.

Kjærnes and Torjusen (2012) touch upon some problematic issues when they discuss the potential for innovation in the food sector as a result of consumers distrust. Some argue that consumers distrust in the food system will lead to niche-led changes, pointing out a new direction for the modern food production system. However, local and sustainable food networks only constitute a small proportion of the national food market, and in several areas, they are not present at all. At the same time, scaling up these initiatives challenges the foundation they are built upon, namely local networks where trust relies on personal relations. Using the organic food market as an example, they argue that small-scale initiatives can often shift into conventional and commercialized markets as a result of their expansion. It is now an increasing trend of transferring organic vegetables from distant countries to Norway for the environmentally concerned consumer. Still, the difference in environmental impact might be insignificant. Altogether, it might just lead to companies building their legitimacy and increasing profits by using environmental issues as a marketing strategy (Kjærnes & Torjusen 2012: 100).

Murdoch and Miele (1999) show how the largest egg producer in Italy started producing organic eggs to diversify the market. They saw the discontent with the standardized product as an excellent opportunity to capture critical consumers' interest by introducing organic eggs (Murdoch & Miele 1999: 481). By diversifying the market, you reach out to different groups of people. This is the same as Gilde has been doing with their speciality beef, in presenting it as natural and local they try to reach out to a segment of the market that normally would not buy their products. Products promoted as local and natural products, might just be another way for producers to build profitable niches where they can get a price above the standard products (Jacobsen & Dulsrud 2007: 474). Even though this makes out a small portion of the market today, the 'conventionalization' of sustainable foods might undermine environmental sustainability and depoliticize the debate, leaving the consumer feeling like they are doing the right thing without actually having reduced the impact of the aggregate consumption level.

The informants expressed scepticism and some forms of distrust towards the food system, which might work as an incentive for action. This action however, is largely taken in the form of consumption of local and quality beef instead of an overall reduction. As mentioned, this can be seen as an act of distinction as well, not necessarily aimed to improve environmental sustainability. To the majority of the informants it is a question of quality (e.g. organic, grass-fed beef) rather than an aim to systematically change the system and reduce their overall consumption of beef. The alternative still exists within the market economy, using their consumption as voting and possible as a means of distinction. The recurring concern is that this becomes a moralistic stance, where ethical consumer behaviour becomes a practice of social distinction, alienating more people than it engages (Barnett et al. 2005a).

In the Norwegian agricultural sector, there is no real alternative to reducing beef consumption, considering the environmental effects. Organic farming and grass-fed cattle is largely seen to be a production for a niche market. There are no immediate

plans on restructuring the agricultural production; efficiency and large-scale production dependent on imported food crops is still very much the reality.

Responsibility and consumption

Consumers sense of own responsibility

Responsibility is linked to freedom, but it also represents pressures, dilemmas, frustrations, and uncertainties. Structural constraints influence how individuals take on these responsibilities; *lack of knowledge and insight, asymmetrical power relations, and distribution of resources* all affect their freedom to maneuver.

(Kjærnes 2011: 153, emphasis added)

The national survey indicates that people lack knowledge about beef consumptions' effect on climate change. At least, a reduction is not considered an effective measure in regards to climate change mitigation. In general, it seems as people both lack knowledge and insight to the problem. The majority of the informants had a pessimistic view on consumer power in relation to food consumption. As they saw it, market actors had too much power, the government did not act and other consumers were blinded by capitalist marketing strategies. They believed their voice was not heard.

As Kjærnes et al. (2007) found, this is a common attitude among Norwegian consumers. Even though the trust level in general is high, they do not feel like their voice is heard. This influences the ability to mobilize consumers, as they largely feel powerless. As Kjærnes et al. (2007) found, Norwegian consumers see neither their own individual voice, nor the voice of their consumer association to be important, so they are individually inactive. On the contrary, Norwegians rely mainly on the state

to take responsibility concerning food issues (Kjærnes et al. 2007: 109). If consumers feel powerless, this works as an obstacle when trying to encourage them to take action. The state is seen to have the responsibility of securing a sustainable agricultural production. Yet, the state leaves the issue of beef consumption to the consumers.

Another factor that might contribute to consumers feeling powerless is the asymmetrical power relations in the food provisioning system. The Norwegian food system is dominated by few and powerful food suppliers. Together they control people's access to food. Sigrid felt that she made a difference when she bought food from local businesses; it gave her a sense of agency as a consumer. Yet, the majority of the Norwegian population do their grocery shopping in one of the four major retail chains. Their decisions might not be seen to matter in a bigger picture, and there is no real encouragement to make active choices.

Sigrid, Johanna and Espen recognized how the situation requires consumers to act. Following this, they had accepted their responsibilities as consumers regarding sustainability issues and worked actively to reduce their consumption of beef. How they address their role as consumers contradicts what Kjærnes et al. (2007) argued, namely that Norwegian consumers, compared to other European consumers take little action themselves (Kjærnes et al. 2007: 108). Still, the three informants make out a small proportion of the Norwegian population. First, they are within the group of consumers that actively seek alternative food provisioning systems. Second, they all acknowledge that human beings are causing environmental degradation and that our consumption of beef is problematic in this sense. Third, they acknowledge their responsibility as consumers and feel that their behaviour can contribute to making a change.

The potential for self-regulatory consumers might lie within their approach to consumption. However, they represent a very small segment of the population. Tangeland (2013) also found that the number of people that believes that consumers

can help reduce climate change has decreased steadily throughout the past ten years. To consider consumer power important was most prominent among the youngest respondents, especially in the age groups 18-24 and 25- 39 (Tangeland 2013: 33). As we see Tangelands findings show how young people believe they have the ability to contribute through their own actions, consistent with Espen, Johanna and Sigrid thoughts. They were all under the age of 28.

However, the Norwegian population in general is still characterised as inactive consumers, with a high level of trust in public authorities and the food production system. If Norwegians were to change their diet away from animal products, the problem needs to be properly addressed by the government and consensus on the issue needs to be reached. Consumer mobilization is closely linked to collective mobilization in general. Few environmental organizations have addressed consumption issues and consumer mobilization. This has led to consumption practices being a neglected topic in the environmental debate.

Public debate and economic interests

The national survey indicates that reduced meat consumption is not considered an important measure in reducing climate change, as only 10.9 percent rated it to be the most effective measure of the four. When asked if environmental issues have led them to reduce their meat consumption, 78.3 percent answered no. However, 77.4 percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that consumers can help in reducing climate change. This indicates that some consumer goods are to a larger extent seen as efficient measures in relation to climate change. It is evident that beef is not one of them. Comparing meat and energy proves this right. Compared to the 13.9 percent that stated having reduced meat consumption because of environmental issues, a staggering 51 percent claimed to have reduced their electricity consumption for the same reason.

The government has been active in fronting reduced energy use as an important measure in mitigating climate change. The willingness to address this as a consumer problem has been something quite different from meat consumption. The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy finance the state enterprise, ENOVA, which work actively to reduce household energy consumption in Norway by making it more efficient. As they state on their homepage:

Significant changes to behaviour often occur on the basis of new, fundamental understanding. By spreading knowledge of today's many potentials to adopt efficient, environmentally friendly energy solutions, and the positive results each individual can achieve, it will be possible to motivate smarter behaviour.

(Enova 2013)

There is an empty space in the public sphere for addressing problems concerning the aggregate level of beef consumption. If there was a public body working explicitly on reducing meat consumption, the numbers might have been different. This can also be seen in relation to the lack of consensus in the public debate. The political economy of beef production in Norway makes this difficult, as the agricultural sector is heavily dependent on the production of meat.

Princen et al. (2002) address how a deeply seated economic reasoning and a politics of growth that cuts across the political spectrum dominate the debate on sustainable development today. Accordingly, the analytic and policy attention is directed towards production. Concerning the debate on beef, the question asked is “How can Norway produce more beef in order for us not to import?” or best case “How can more beef be produced sustainably?”.

Why is the question not: “How can we encourage people to consume less beef?” The governmental policy on consumption and production is coloured by the economic reasoning. As Princen et al. state: There is a much greater willingness to examine the

way things are done, especially the way things are produced, than to question the purposes served or not served by the doings of those things.” (Princen et al. 2002: 8).

Changing how we think about consumption

Kate Soper (2008) argues that if there is to be a radical shift in the western world towards a more sustainable future, it will not be driven by the traditional labour movements, but rather by a broader trans-class body of concerned producers and consumers fuelled by the moral revulsion of the affluent lifestyle in itself. She sees consumption as the potential site of political agency and influence for change (Soper 2008: 199).

Most people addressing issues related to capitalism and the de-regulated corporations draw on Marxists theory and regard *production* as having more relevance politically. Soper argues that we need to see the consumer as something more than a passive victim of the capitalist expansion of needs. She stresses the interdependence of production and consumption; the one level is responsible for what happens in the other (Soper 2008: 200). It is therefore important that production and consumption is not treated as two separate things, problems related to production methods is also related to consumption.

Drawing on Barnett et al. (2005a), I argued that ethical should not be opposed to unethical consumption. Our relationship with food is a deeply moral one, either way. It involves caring for your family and taking care of your own health. Miller (2001) argues that moral shopping is opposed to ethical shopping. Moral shopping is here seen to be shopping to provide for your family, saving money for the household at large. Ethics implies caring for others, and in particular, distant others (Miller 2001: 133). Within the complexities of everyday life, ethical concerns might tend to lose against the moral obligations. As previously mentioned, the informant Knut saw his moral obligations of saving money for an apartment and eating healthy was opposed to eating less meat as this was seen to be a good source of protein.

However, in the case of reduced beef consumption ethical action may be compatible with what Miller refers to as moral shopping. Reducing your intake of beef actually saves you money *and* is good for your health. There is no necessary opposition between being concerned for own health and environmental considerations. The benefits of a reduced beef intake need to be more openly addressed. As Barnett et al. (2005) emphasize, concerns for the ethics of food production are not only motivated by abstract concerns for ‘the environment’ or ‘future generations’, they are also motivated by care and concern in everyday social relations of domestic family life. Like the concern for long-term health risks of the food you give your children. The success of an ethical consumption campaign is likely to be enhanced if they connect ordinary routines and values of care and consideration that already exists rather than having ethical consumption campaigns encouraging a completely different set of activities that requires a wholesale abandonment of self-concern. They state that ethical consumption works best when individual and collective interests coincide, rather than using guilt as the main driver (Barnett et al. 2005a: 17-19).

As argued by Bennett et al. (2005) the consequentialist and deontological approach to ethical consumption focuses on individual conduct, but it is crucial to remember that consumption happens within a broader network of social relations and cultural codes. In order to enhance ethical consumption, it is important to connect the everyday practices of care to environmental and societal considerations as well. Meat consumption is a part of everyday consumption patterns and is largely non-reflective and mundane. This is why it is important not to over-emphasize the role of the active consumer weighting the consequences of each individual purchase.

Today, most dinners are structured around meat. The dinner-plate-model has influenced what Norwegians perceive to be a proper meal, and beef consumption needs to be addressed in a way that makes people actively reflect on their own intake of beef. As we see, the majority of people I have talked to stated that they do not eat that much beef. Perhaps people lack insight into their actual consumption practices.

Primarily, people mentioned steaks when I asked them about their beef eating habits. Steak dinner is typically a weekend meal, and is seen to be special and grand. This might also be a reason for why people first mention steak. The minced meat in the spaghetti Bolognese on Tuesday is forgotten, as it reflects routinized behaviour and is largely mundane and non-reflective. Ann Swidler (1986) suggests that in everyday life, humans experience waves of opening up and closing down of issues where the normative aspects are brought to the surface and contested, perhaps altered, before they gradually close down again and become habitualized and taken for granted (Swidler 1986: 279).

If beef consumption is to be contested and brought to the surface, the public debate is important. Reducing the consumption of beef does not require a wholesale abandonment of self-concern; it is coherent with your concern for health and value for money. This was also emphasized by Espen, Johanna and Sigrid. In their case, they saw reduced beef consumption to be a triple win; good for private economy, health and planet. These aspects need to be addressed. Environmental concerns and the individual concerns, in regards to reduced beef consumption, are not mutually exclusive. When consumers see the environmental problems as a production problem where better and more sustainable beef is seen as the solution, it contributes to blurring the debate.

I argue that it is evident that most people in Norway do not consider reduced intake of beef to be an efficient measure in reducing climate change and environmental degradation. Not only does the national survey show this, but it became evident in my interviews as well, seeing as only three of my nine informants had actively considered reducing their beef consumption.

Summarizing remarks

In this chapter, the findings have been discussed and I have pointed to problems that should be taken into consideration both regarding the qualitative and quantitative findings.

First, it was evident that my informants preferred more natural and local products. This can be linked to a feeling of alienation and scepticism towards the highly technical and abstract food system. They wanted natural beef products, the opposition to the mass produced beef. This can again be related to the ‘double structure’ explained by Murdoch and Miele (1999). The local and speciality beef can be related to the view of nature as a source of goodness; beef produced with care and respect in accordance with environmental sustainability. The mass produced beef represent the capitalist production system, where nature is a resource for human exploitation. However, the romanticized view of beef production, as it was done in the ‘old days’, can help blur the real issue which is a growing population and an over-consumption of beef. The problems with beef were related to quality and safety, not to actual levels of beef consumption. As I argued, beef consumption in this way can be performed as an act of distinction, telling a story about yourself as a knowing and concerned consumer, without actually addressing the most pressing problem with regards to environmental sustainability, namely the aggregate level of consumption. In this way, local and speciality beef becomes another ‘consumption package’, not addressing consumption levels as the core issue.

Second, the government is not willing to address this as problem of consumption, as the production of beef is a cornerstone in Norwegian agricultural sector. The environmental issues linked to beef production is subordinate to economic interests and this has led the debate on beef consumption to be largely neglected. A consequence of this, as we saw in the national survey, is that the majority of Norwegian consumers do not consider reduced meat consumption to be an effective measure in reducing climate change. Another factor that further complicates the matter

is that the informants largely felt powerless and did not feel like their voice was heard. This is a common attitude among Norwegians in general and can be related to the lack of consumer mobilization and the strong position of the welfare state.

The problems with beef consumption need to be further problematized, and consumers need to be part of the solution. The practice of eating beef is of significance here. The purchasing, cooking and eating of meat is so mundane that people do not reflect actively upon their consumer practices. The role of beef, and meat in general, in the Norwegian diet needs to be problematized and the way we think about consumption needs to be put on the agenda.

8. Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate Norwegians' attitudes towards beef consumption. UNEP calls for a worldwide dietary change, away from animal products. Still, the problem of consumption levels is not addressed by the Norwegian authorities. The issue is left for the consumer to solve. The role of beef in the Norwegian diet needs to be challenged, and the responsibility of the consumer needs to be emphasized.

The production and consumption of beef today is causing environmental degradation and contributing to climate change. The inefficient feed conversion rate of beef poses a serious threat to food security and water access globally. As the consumption of beef has been steadily increasing throughout the past fifty years, the Norwegian population consumes more beef than the Norwegian agricultural sector is able to produce. Not only does beef consumption pose serious threat to animal welfare and the environment, it is also linked to health issues. Dairy-and beef production is vital in securing food production in Norway today. The economic and political incentives of the agricultural sector have led the public debate about beef consumption to be largely neglected.

My intent was to investigate how Norwegians' see this problem, and to what extent there is a potential for an overall reduction of beef consumption. As the research question was three layered, I will go through them systematically, connecting them to the findings.

Do Norwegians view beef consumption as problematic, and if so, is this due to sustainability issues?

The quantitative survey focuses specifically on the link between climate change and meat consumption. The reduction of meat consumption and production was not perceived to be an effective measure by the majority of the survey-respondents. I wanted to explore what people that statistically should be more aware saw to be

problematic about it. This led me to conduct nine in-depth interviews with a group of people that statistically should be more concerned with ethical issues linked to our food consumption. I found that primarily, these people were critical to the modern food provisioning system. The informants explained how profit-seeking market actors, together with price-focused consumers, fuelled the industrialization and commodification of food. In this setting, the quality and taste of beef was considered problematic. Mass *production* of beef led to lower quality beef.

Health issues were also touched upon, and the majority of the informants stated that they mainly ate white meat (e.g. chicken, pork). This is related to the health discourse, where the consumption of chicken and pork is seen to be a 'light' product compared to beef. Beef was seen to give you a feeling of heaviness. In the case of health, *consumption* of beef was in some ways problematic. It was, however, not the amount of meat consumed that was problematized, but rather what kind of meat.

Animal welfare issues were also considered problematic. The food system's drive for efficiency and profit come at the expense of animal welfare. The informants generally did not like the thought of industrializing husbandry; they should be treated with respect and care. Drawing on the concept of *meat nostalgia*, I explained how eating meat in modern society might be a way to reconnect with nature. The informants had problems with people who were not willing to be honest about the fact that we eat animals, by concealing the source of the meat. None of the informants had any problems with the fact that humans eat animals. However, they did have problems with the production methods used.

As I argue, being critical to the mass production of cattle can be seen as a form of social distinction. Identifying with a more knowledgeable consumer, the informants were keen to portray themselves as critical, not manipulated by the capitalistic forces of the modern food system. Having knowledge about production methods and being critical towards processes and standardized food, many of them saw themselves as

different from the typical Norwegian consumer. In this way, consumption can be used as social signalling: a way to tell a story about yourself in the social world.

Issues of sustainability were not most of the informants' primary concern. Their critique was mainly focused on issues directly affecting them, like health and quality. Talking about the environmental impact of beef consumption, most of the informants acknowledged that the resource intensity of beef production was problematic. GHG emissions, on the other hand, were largely ridiculed by the majority, especially in discussions about methane emissions. It seemed, as methane emissions from beef production were an issue that was not taken seriously in this manner, as cows "have always farted". It is evident that many do not consider the scale of the global cattle population.

How do critical consumers address these issues?

Generally, the complex and abstract food system was considered the main problem. Environmental issues were seen to be an effect of the capitalist market system; sustainability issues linked to beef was seen as a production problem rather than a consumer issue.

The informants recruited for the in-depth interviews should statistically be more concerned with environmental issues and ethical consumption, as the education level is higher in the urban cities. People seeking alternative food channels are also more prone to be critical of the consumption and production of food. I put my lens over a part of the population that should be in the vanguard of linking sustainability issues with food consumption. As meat consumption contributes to a large share of environmental problems, this should be an engaging subject.

I found that the critique was mainly directed towards the food system and the *other* consumer and little attention is paid to own consumption practices. All together eleven out of fifteen people that I interviewed stated that they did not consider reducing their level of beef consumption. This was mainly because they felt as they

did not eat unhealthy amounts of beef, or they did not see the problem with their consumption level. It is however important to note that six out of the fifteen people were recruited at Strömstad through the short survey and is not considered to be among the most 'aware' consumers statistically. Throughout this thesis, I have explained how most informants saw the issue of beef consumption to be a production problem, and how the main goal for their critique is to improve the quality of the beef: in terms of actual taste, animal welfare and environmental issues.

According to the majority of the surveys done on ethical consumption, the female urban middleclass is seen to be the one that is leading ahead in a process of change. Nevertheless, through the interviews it became clear that the majority of the informants did not actively try reducing their consumption of beef. This can be seen in relation to general trends of Norwegian consumers. Norwegian consumers have some of the highest levels of trust in Europe when it comes to food. Compared to other European countries, they also score below average on acknowledging consumer responsibility (Kjærnes et al. 2005: 106). In total, three of my nine in-depth informants stated that they had reduced their overall beef consumption. They were young people with a special concern for environmental problems. They did, to a larger extent, connect the production problems to their role as consumers.

What are the main obstacles in getting consumers to reduce their beef consumption?

I have found that even among the urban middleclass, who have a higher interest in food, there were few signs of a critical assessment of the overall beef intake. What is important for them is the situation of the food provisioning system. The way major actors seem to be destroying the food system and the mass production of meat lowered the quality of the product. This can be linked to Marxist critique of the capitalist production system. The in-depth interviewees can be compared to a *de-commodification* movement, seeking to reconnect with nature, as they are increasingly aware of the consequences of human exploitation of nature.

However, the debate pivots around whether or not one should buy local and natural beef products, rather than reducing the overall intake. In this way, there is no real room for improvements as this is mainly a different form of consumption. There seems to be little understanding for the fact that Norway cannot be self-sufficient with sustainably produced beef and maintain the present level of consumption. The overall consumption level must be reduced and the interdependency between production and consumption needs to be emphasized.

This also requires that each individual take on responsibility, and recognize their agency as consumers. This is problematic, as the levels of trust in government and food systems generally are high. Norwegian consumers are among the least active consumers in Europe. Lack of consensus on the issue further complicates the subject. The government and public authorities are unwilling to address the issue, due to political and economic interests of the agricultural sector.

The role of consumer needs to be addressed, and the link between consumption and production needs to be clarified. Consumption determines production, as production determines consumption. They are interdependent and cannot be separated. This means that criticizing the production methods is only seeing half the problem.

To conclude, I believe it is important that the debate about beef consumption emphasize the importance reduced beef consumption in total. It is also important not to frame it like a question of either/or: either being a vegetarian or *not* being a vegetarian. We should look at this as a question of amounts: an encouragement to reduce the level of consumption in general. In order to contribute to solving the issues related to climate change and resource depletion, a reduction of the amount of beef being consumed is needed. Thus, *reducing* overall consumption of beef is significant, irrespective of what kind of beef you consume. Finding a way to encourage this is a poignant topic for further research.

9. APPENDIX

9.1 Information about the quantitative survey

This table illustrates the distribution of gender, age and place of residence for the respondents to the “Holdninger til Klimaendringer” [Attitudes towards Climate Change] survey:

UTVALG		18-29år	30-39år	40-49år	50-59år	60-89år	Totalt
Oslo/Akershus	Menn	2,5	2,5	2,3	1,8	2,4	11,6
	Kvinner	2,5	2,5	2,2	1,8	2,9	11,9
	Totalt	5,0	5,0	4,6	3,6	5,4	23,6
Resten av Østlandet	Menn	2,5	2,2	2,6	2,3	3,7	13,3
	Kvinner	2,3	2,2	2,5	2,3	4,4	13,7
	Totalt	4,8	4,4	5,1	4,7	8,0	27,0
Sør- og Vestlandet	Menn	3,4	2,9	3,0	2,6	3,7	15,6
	Kvinner	3,2	2,7	2,8	2,5	4,4	15,5
	Totalt	6,6	5,5	5,8	5,1	8,1	31,1
Trøndelag og Nord-Norge	Menn	1,9	1,5	1,8	1,6	2,3	9,1
	Kvinner	1,8	1,4	1,6	1,5	2,7	9,0
	Totalt	3,7	2,9	3,4	3,1	5,0	18,1
Totalt	Menn	9,1	6,9	8,8	10,1	15,5	50,3
	Kvinner	10,8	6,1	8,1	8,7	16,0	49,7
	Totalt	19,9	12,9	16,9	18,7	31,5	100,0

This table illustrates a comparison of level of education between the general population and the sample population:

Høyeste fullførte utdanning	BEFOLKNING 16 år og eldre*	UTVALG 18 år og eldre
Grunnskoleutdanning		7,0
Fagutdanning/yrkesutdanning/fagbrev/videregående yrkesfaglig	29,8	25,5
Videregående utdanning	42,9	40,9
Universitets-/høgskoleutdanning med inntil 4 års varighet	20,8	18,4
Universitets-/høgskoleutdanning med mer enn 4 års varighet	6,5	8,2
Totalt	100	100
Antall	3877727	1532

* <http://www.ssb.no/utniv/tab-2010-06-25-01.html>

9.2 Questions from the survey

Q18- Hvor enig eller uenig er du i følgende påstander?

FORBRUKER Nå ønsker vi å stille deg noen spørsmål om din rolle som forbruker i forhold til klimaendringene. Hvor enig eller uenig er du i følgende påstander?

	Helt uenig (1)	Delvis uenig (2)	Verken enig eller uenig (3)	Delvis enig (4)	Helt enig (5)	Vet ikke (6)	Ubesvart (9)
Jeg tror den enkelte forbruker kan bidra til å redusere klimaendringer (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ny teknologi vil begrense klimaendringene uten at det fører til store forandringer i vårt levesett (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

q20 - Hvor enig eller uenig er du i følgende påstander?

Til slutt ønsker vi å stille deg noen spørsmål om din rolle som forbruker i forhold til miljøproblemer generelt sett. Har miljøproblemer fått deg til å redusere...

	Ja (1)	Nei (2)	Vet ikke (3)	Ikke relevant (4)	Ubesvart (9)
Strømforbruket? (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forbruket av fyringsolje? (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kjøttforbruket? (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bilbruk? (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Antall flyreiser? (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kjøp av klær (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

q21 - Produksjon, distribusjon og forbruk av mat utgjør en betydelig miljøbelastning. Hvilke av de følgende tiltakene mener du vil ha størst positiv betydning for miljøet?

Vennligst ranger alternativene i kolonnen til høyre fra det tiltaket som har størst betydning for miljøet øverst til det tiltaket som har minst betydning for miljøet nederst.

____ Redusere produksjon og forbruk av kjøtt (1)

____ Redusere matavfallet (2)

____ Øke produksjon og forbruk av økologisk mat (3)

____ Øke produksjon og forbruk av lokal mat (4)

q21_vetikke

Ingen av dem (1)

Vet ikke (2)

q22 - Dersom du skulle ønske å redusere miljøbelastningen ved ditt eget matforbruk, hvilke tiltak ville da være enklest å gjennomføre?

Vennligst ranger alternativene i kolonnen til høyre fra det enkleste tiltaket å gjennomføre øverst til det vanskeligste nederst.

____ Redusere forbruket av kjøtt (1)

____ Redusere matavfallet (2)

____ Øke forbruk av økologisk mat (3)

____ Øke forbruk av lokal mat (4)

q22_vetikke

Ingen av dem (1)

Vet ikke (2)

q24 - Hvor enig eller uenig er du i de følgende påstandene?

Hvor enig eller uenig er du i de følgende påstandene?

	Helt uenig (1)	Delvis uenig (2)	Verken enig eller uenig (3)	Delvis enig (4)	Helt enig (5)	Vet ikke (6)	Ubesvart (9)
Det er riktig for miljøet å skifte fra rødt til hvitt kjøtt (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Det er en god idé for miljøet å ha en kjøttfri dag i uka (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Når det gjelder mat, er helse spørsmålene viktigere for meg enn miljøspørsmålene (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Det er vanskelig for meg å redusere kjøttforbruket (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prisene på kjøttvarer burde øke av hensyn til miljøet (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vi burde alle bli vegetarianere (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9.3 Letter of informed consent

Samtykkeerklæring for intervju i *SUM4091*-prosjekt

Student: Siri.bellika@gmail.com

Veileder og ansatt ved Senter for Utvikling og Miljø: karen.v.l.syse@sum.uio.no

Beskrivelse av prosjektoppgaven

Jeg er en student ved Senter for Utvikling og Miljø, Universitetet i Oslo.

Prosjektet mitt har bærekraftig kjøttforbruk som tema. Som en del av prosjektet skal jeg undersøke hva privat personer/forbrukere tenker om sitt eget kjøttforbruk og hva slags grunnlag man tar avgjørelser på når man handler mat. Formålet med dette er å lære noe av de jeg intervjuer og lære hvordan man utfører kvalitativ forskningsmetode gjennom bruk av intervjuer.

Frivillig deltakelse

All deltagelse er frivillig, og du kan trekke deg når som helst. Jeg kommer til å bruke opptaker under intervjuet, men du kan be meg stoppe opptaket hvis dette ønskes. Du kan når som helst avslutte intervjuet eller trekke tilbake informasjon som er gitt under intervju eller observasjon.

Anonymitet

Notatene og oppgaven vil bli anonymisert. Det vil si at ingen andre enn meg vil vite hvem som er blitt intervjuet. Alle personidentifiserende opplysninger som navn og koblingsnøkkel slettes, alle indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger vil grov kategoriseres, må en slik måte at personer ikke kan gjenkjennes i materialet. Før intervjuet begynner ber jeg deg om å samtykke i deltagelsen ved å undertegne på at du har lest og forstått informasjonen på dette arket og ønsker å delta. Prosjektet avsluttet 01.06.2013, all informasjon skal da anonymiseres og lydopptak slettes.

Samtykke

Jeg har lest og forstått informasjonen over og gir mitt samtykke til å delta i intervjuet.

Sted og dato

Signatur

9.4 Interview guide for in-depth interviews

Generell informasjon

Navn, alder og fødselssted?

Søsken?

Barn?

Yrke og utdanning?

Barndom og Ungdomsår

Husker du hvordan måltidene foregikk i din familie når du var liten?

Hva lærte foreldrene dine deg om mat og kosthold?

Hvor sentral del av måltidet var kjøtt? Og hva slags type kjøtt var det?

Hvor ble kjøttet hentet fra da?

Hadde du noe forhold til hvor maten kom ifra?

Var storfekjøtt noe hverdagslig eller hvordan så du på det når du var mindre?

Voksenliv

Kan du fortelle litt om hvordan matvanene dine endret seg etter at du flyttet hjemmefra?

Ble du mer opptatt av mat etter at du flyttet hjemmefra? I så fall på hvilke måte?

Hva er typisk mat for deg nå?

Hva tar du utgangspunktet i?

Kan du fortelle litt om hvordan du prioriterte når du handlet inn mat?

Familieliv

Hvordan er en vanlig dag for deg og din familie matmessig?

Hva vil du si er viktig for deg og din familie i matveien?

Vil du si at dere/du er bevist i matveien?

På hvilke måte og Hvorfor?

Hva bestemmer middagen hos dere?

Om Barn og oppdragelse

Hva legger du vekt på i dine barns oppdragelse med tanke på mat?

Hvilke kunnskap synes du er spesielt viktig å videreføre til dine barn?

Er matens opprinnelse sentralt?

Hva er en godt måltid for din familie?

Er kjøttet sentralt her?

Mat og kjøtt – meninger og vaner

Vil du si at du er opptatt av hva du spise? I så fall, på hvilke måte?

Har du tatt noen beviste valg, i ditt voksne liv, angående hva slags mat du vil spise/ikke spise?

Hva mener du er et riktig kosthold?

Hvordan inngår kjøtt i det du oppfatter som riktig kosthold?

I hvilke grad legger du politiske eller etiske holdninger til grunn når du handler mat?

I så fall, er dette noe du alltid er bevist på, noen ganger eller går det aller meste på hverdagsrutine?

Kan du fortelle litt om kjøttforbruket ditt nå? – Hva spiser du av kjøtt?

Spiser du mye storfekjøtt?

Hva i såfall?

Hva kjennetegner godt kjøtt for deg?

Hvor handler du det? Bruker du slaktere?

Har du noen innvendinger mot storfekjøtt?

Er det deler av dyret eller enkelte ting ved kjøtt du har motforestillinger mot/ ikke liker/ synes er udelikat og avstår fra?

Hva er det du synes er bra med storfekjøtt?

Kommer du på eventuelle problematiske forhold med å spise storfe kjøtt?

- Dyrevelferd?
- Matsikkerhet?
- Helse?
- Miljø? – metan utslipp?
- Miljøvern – kulturlandskap & utmarksbeite?

Er det å spise kjøtt moralsk spørsmål for deg eller knytter du noen følelser til det?

Hva vet du om norsk storfeproduksjon? Hva synes du om det?

Synes du det er forskjell på norsk og utenlands storfe? I så fall, på hvilke måte?

Hva foretrekker du? Hvorfor?

Hvordan stiller du deg til økologisk vs. Vanlig kjøtt?

I hvilke grad har du vurdert ditt og din families forbruk av storfekjøtt?

I såfall, hvordan begrunner du disse valgene og hva utløste det?

Bevissthet

Synes du det er vanskelig å være bevisst i matveien?

Hva er i så fall de største utfordringene?

Hva kan motivere deg til å være mer bevisst i matveien?

Føler du at det nytter å handle mat mer bevisst? Tror du at våre handlerutiner kan utgjøre forskjeller?

Hva anser du for å være den viktigste grunnen til å spise mindre storfekjøtt?

Har du selv vurdert det? Hvorfor i så fall?

Hvordan har ditt kjøttforbruk endret seg til nå?

Hva var årsaken til de eventuelle endringene?

9.5 Interview guide for short survey

Navn, alder, yrke, bosted?

1. Typisk middagsmåltid for deg hva er det?
2. Hva tar du utgangspunkt i når du lager mat?
3. Vil du si at du er bevist i matveien?
4. Hva slags kjøtt inngår i det du oppfatter som et riktig kosthold?
5. Hva er viktig for deg når du handler kjøtt?
6. Hvilke kjøtttype spiser du mest av? - Hvorfor det?
7. Hva slags forhold har du til storfekjøtt?
8. Spiser du det ofte?
9. I hvilke forbindelse er det du spiser storfekjøtt?
10. Foretrekker du norsk eller utenlandsk storfekjøtt?
11. Kommer du på eventuelle problemer med å spise storfekjøtt?
12. Har du vurdert å redusere ditt eget forbruk av kjøtt?

9.6 Frequencies from the survey

9.6.1 Syntax

*lager frekvenstabell for alle variablene.

```
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
```

```
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Q18_1 Q18_2 Q20_1 Q20_2 Q20_3 Q20_4 Q20_5  
Q20_6 Q21_1 Q21_2 Q21_3 Q21_4 Q21_VETIKKE Q22_1 Q22_2 Q22_3 Q22_4  
Q22_VETIKKE Q24_1 Q24_2 Q24_3 Q24_4 Q24_5 Q24_6
```

```
/ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```

9.6.2 Tables

Jeg tror den enkelte forbruker kan bidra til å redusere klimaendringer (q18)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Helt uenig	59	3,9	3,9	3,9
Delvis uenig	123	8,0	8,0	11,9
Verken enig eller uenig	147	9,6	9,6	21,5
Delvis enig	672	43,9	43,9	65,3
Helt enig	513	33,5	33,5	98,8
Vet ikke	16	1,0	1,0	99,9
Ubesvart	2	,1	,1	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Ny teknologi vil begrense klimaendringene uten at det fører til store forandringer i vårt levesett (q18)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Helt uenig	71	4,6	4,6	4,6
Delvis uenig	242	15,8	15,8	20,4
Verken enig eller uenig	245	16,0	16,0	36,4
Delvis enig	639	41,7	41,7	78,1
Helt enig	214	14,0	14,0	92,1
Vet ikke	114	7,4	7,4	99,5
Ubesvart	7	,5	,5	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Strømforbruket? (q20)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Ja	786	51,3	51,3	51,3
Nei	665	43,4	43,4	94,7
Vet ikke	48	3,1	3,1	97,8
Ikke relevant	31	2,0	2,0	99,9
Ubesvart	2	,1	,1	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Forbruket av fyringsolje? (q20)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Ja	306	20.0	20.0	20.0
Nei	165	10.8	10.8	30.7
Vet ikke	23	1.5	1.5	32.2
Ikke relevant	1036	67.6	67.6	99.9
Ubesvart	2	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1532	100.0	100.0	

Kjøttforbruket? (q20)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Ja	213	13,9	13,9	13,9
Nei	1200	78,3	78,3	92,2
Vet ikke	47	3,1	3,1	95,3
Ikke relevant	70	4,6	4,6	99,9
Ubesvart	2	,1	,1	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Bilbruk? (q20)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Ja	463	30.2	30.2	30.2
Nei	894	58.4	58.4	88.6
Vet ikke	48	3.1	3.1	91.7
Ikke relevant	125	8.2	8.2	99.9
Ubesvart	2	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1532	100.0	100.0	

Antall flyreiser? (q20)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Ja	264	17.2	17.2	17.2
Valid Nei	998	65.1	65.1	82.4
Valid Vet ikke	46	3.0	3.0	85.4
Valid Ikke relevant	219	14.3	14.3	99.7
Valid Ubesvart	5	.3	.3	100.0
Total	1532	100.0	100.0	

Kjøp av klær (q20)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Ja	308	20.1	20.1	20.1
Valid Nei	1052	68.7	68.7	88.8
Valid Vet ikke	85	5.5	5.5	94.3
Valid Ikke relevant	84	5.5	5.5	99.8
Valid Ubesvart	3	.2	.2	100.0
Total	1532	100.0	100.0	

Redusere produksjon og forbruk av kjøtt (q21)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	167	10,9	16,0	16,0
Valid 2	185	12,1	17,7	33,7
Valid 3	297	19,4	28,4	62,2
Valid 4	395	25,8	37,8	100,0
Total	1044	68,1	100,0	
Missing System	488	31,9		
Total	1532	100,0		

Redusere matavfallet (q21)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	457	29,8	43,0	43,0
	2	307	20,0	28,9	71,9
Valid	3	194	12,7	18,3	90,2
	4	104	6,8	9,8	100,0
	Total	1062	69,3	100,0	
Missing	System	470	30,7		
Total		1532	100,0		

Øke produksjon og forbruk av økologisk mat (q21)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	78	5,1	7,5	7,5
	2	183	11,9	17,6	25,0
Valid	3	352	23,0	33,8	58,8
	4	429	28,0	41,2	100,0
	Total	1042	68,0	100,0	
Missing	System	490	32,0		
Total		1532	100,0		

Øke produksjon og forbruk av lokal mat (q21)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	374	24,4	35,4	35,4
	2	376	24,5	35,6	71,0
Valid	3	200	13,1	18,9	89,9
	4	107	7,0	10,1	100,0
	Total	1057	69,0	100,0	
Missing	System	475	31,0		
Total		1532	100,0		

Vet ikke (q21)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Ingen av dem	149	9.7	35.5	35.5
Valid	Vet ikke	271	17.7	64.5	100.0
	Total	420	27.4	100.0	
Missing	System	1112	72.6		
Total		1532	100.0		

Redusere forbruket av kjøtt (q22)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	199	13,0	19,4	19,4
	2	217	14,2	21,1	40,5
Valid	3	264	17,2	25,7	66,1
	4	348	22,7	33,9	100,0
	Total	1028	67,1	100,0	
Missing	System	504	32,9		
Total		1532	100,0		

Redusere matavfallet (q22)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	483	31,5	46,1	46,1
	2	246	16,1	23,5	69,6
Valid	3	191	12,5	18,2	87,8
	4	128	8,4	12,2	100,0
	Total	1048	68,4	100,0	
Missing	System	484	31,6		
Total		1532	100,0		

Vet ikke (q22)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ingen av dem	159	10.4	42.3	42.3
	Vet ikke	217	14.2	57.7	100.0
	Total	376	24.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1156	75.5		
Total		1532	100.0		

Øke forbruk av økologisk mat (q22)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	101	6,6	9,9	9,9
	2	228	14,9	22,3	32,2
	3	324	21,1	31,7	63,9
	4	369	24,1	36,1	100,0
	Total	1022	66,7	100,0	
Missing	System	510	33,3		
Total		1532	100,0		

Øke forbruk av lokal mat (q22)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	294	19,2	28,4	28,4
	2	343	22,4	33,1	61,4
	3	237	15,5	22,9	84,3
	4	163	10,6	15,7	100,0
	Total	1037	67,7	100,0	
Missing	System	495	32,3		
Total		1532	100,0		

Det er riktig for miljøet å skifte fra rødt til hvitt kjøtt (q24)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Helt uenig	230	15,0	15,0	15,0
Delvis uenig	191	12,5	12,5	27,5
Verken enig eller uenig	433	28,3	28,3	55,7
Delvis enig	386	25,2	25,2	80,9
Helt enig	80	5,2	5,2	86,2
Vet ikke	211	13,8	13,8	99,9
Ubesvart	1	,1	,1	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Det er en god idé for miljøet å ha en kjøttfri dag i uka (q24)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Helt uenig	228	14,9	14,9	14,9
Delvis uenig	132	8,6	8,6	23,5
Verken enig eller uenig	278	18,1	18,1	41,6
Delvis enig	346	22,6	22,6	64,2
Helt enig	406	26,5	26,5	90,7
Vet ikke	140	9,1	9,1	99,9
Ubesvart	2	,1	,1	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Når det gjelder mat, er helsespørsmålene viktigere for meg enn miljøspørsmålene (q24)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Helt uenig	41	2,7	2,7	2,7
Delvis uenig	102	6,7	6,7	9,3
Verken enig eller uenig	289	18,9	18,9	28,2
Delvis enig	536	35,0	35,0	63,2
Helt enig	530	34,6	34,6	97,8
Vet ikke	31	2,0	2,0	99,8
Ubesvart	3	,2	,2	100,0
Total	1532	100,0	100,0	

Det er vanskelig for meg å redusere kjøttforbruket (q24)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Helt uenig	268	17,5	17,5
	Delvis uenig	368	24,0	41,5
	Verken enig eller uenig	359	23,4	64,9
	Delvis enig	340	22,2	87,1
	Helt enig	172	11,2	98,4
	Vet ikke	23	1,5	99,9
	Ubesvart	2	,1	100,0
	Total	1532	100,0	100,0

Prisene på kjøttvarer burde øke av hensyn til miljøet (q24)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Helt uenig	576	37,6	37,6
	Delvis uenig	339	22,1	59,7
	Verken enig eller uenig	310	20,2	80,0
	Delvis enig	167	10,9	90,9
	Helt enig	83	5,4	96,3
	Vet ikke	54	3,5	99,8
	Ubesvart	3	,2	100,0
	Total	1532	100,0	100,0

Vi burde alle bli vegetarianere (q24)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Helt uenig	1241	81,0	81,0
	Delvis uenig	86	5,6	86,6
	Verken enig eller uenig	109	7,1	93,7
	Delvis enig	31	2,0	95,8
	Helt enig	41	2,7	98,4
	Vet ikke	22	1,4	99,9
	Ubesvart	2	,1	100,0
	Total	1532	100,0	100,0

9.7 Informants

The informants' names are fictional. Only their gender, age and living situation are indicated.

9.7.1 In-depth interviews

Johanna

Johanna is 25 years and a student. She lives in a co-op apartment together with others, and has lived in or around Oslo most her life. She has no children.

Inger

Inger is a 64-year-old woman. She is working full-time and lives together with her partner. She has two children that have moved away from home. She was born in Oslo, and has lived in Oslo on and off throughout her life. She has been permanently situated in Oslo for the past 10 years

Lise

Lise is a 64 year retired woman. Apart from some breaks, she has been living in Oslo her entire life. She has no children.

Mette

Mette is 67 years old, living in Oslo. She is retired from a full-time job. She is living with her husband and has three children that have moved out. She has lived her entire life in Oslo.

Hanne

Hanne is 70 years old. She is retired from a full-time job and is living in Oslo. She has two children and lives with her husband. She has lived her entire life in Oslo.

Sigrid

Sigrid is a 25-year-old girl living in Oslo. She is originally from Askim, but has lived in Oslo the past years. She is living with her boyfriend has one child that is new-born. She was currently on maternity leave.

Grete

Grete is a 53-year-old woman originally from Iceland. She has been living in Norway for the past decade. She has a full-time job and three children that have moved away, she live by herself.

Knut

Knut is a 28-year-old man living in Oslo and working in a full-time job. He has been living in Oslo for the last 10 years. He has no children and lives in a co-op with others.

Espen

Espen is a 28-year-old man living in Oslo. He is a student, and has been living in Oslo for the past couple of years. He has no children and lives in a co-op with others.

9.7.2 Short Survey

Stian

Stian is a 50-year-old man from the eastern part of Norway. He has a full time job, and lives by himself.

Vigdis

Vigdis is a 50-year-old woman living in the eastern part of Norway. She has a full time job and lives with her family.

Anne Marie

Anne Marie is a 68-year-old woman from Fredrikstad. She is retired and lives alone.

Wenche

Wenche is a 65 years old and lives in Vestby. She is retired and lives with her husband.

Berit & Harald

Berit and Harald are married. They are both 60 years old and live in Drammen. They both have full-time jobs.

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