

Animal welfare in Danish broiler production –
marketing and ethics

PhD dissertation

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English Summary

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Many consumers are concerned about the welfare of the animals whose produce they eat (Eurobarometer, 2016). Broilers are usually raised using highly intensified production methods, in windowless stables without access to the outdoors. Additionally, an OECD study predicts considerable growth for the production and consumption of poultry meat¹. This makes broiler production an interesting case to analyze.

Animal welfare is relevant for marketing scholars because there is increasing reliance on market-driven animal welfare. There are animal welfare labels, and welfare as well as organic products are widely available. However, these initiatives are sometimes criticized as mere PR (Buzby, 2015).

In my thesis, I analyze marketing and animal welfare in Danish broiler production. Farm animal welfare can conflict with goals such as feeding a growing human population or environmental protection.

I conducted 22 semi-structured interviews about broiler production in Denmark followed by a discourse analysis. The three articles I wrote draw on institutional theory, sensemaking and marketing ethics. They deal with the definition of animal welfare in Danish broiler production, how actors argue for or against change and the ethical considerations marketers of welfare broilers have.

I found that the different definitions of animal welfare as well as goal conflicts pose a barrier to its improvement. Those who argue for change by problematizing institutionalized practices regarding farm animal welfare do so using utilitarian or altruistic arguments, while defenders use mostly ethical egoist phrasing. The changes that happened during the last two decades can be perceived as

¹ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5116021ec010.pdf?expires=1496738160&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9150864DD65442D85AFC594F85D4AC78>

institutional maintenance (e.g. Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006), because they mostly change broiler production on a superficial level. Finally, those who market welfare broilers because of ethical concerns regarding conventional production do not necessarily improve welfare more than those who market the products for other reasons.

By analyzing farm animal welfare a complex issue, I highlight how sensemaking and institutionalized practices regarding broilers increase the complexity of animal welfare problems.

Resumé

Dyrevelfærd i dansk kyllingeproduktion – etik og markedsføring

Størstedelen af forbrugerne er bekymrede over dyrevelfærden, når det gælder produktionsdyr (Eurobarometer, 2016). Kyllinger tilbringer normalt deres liv i store stalde uden vinduer eller adgang til udendørsarealer. Desuden forudsiger en OECD-rapport, at mængden af fjerkrækød, der kommer til at blive produceret og spist af verdens befolkning, vil stige². Derfor er fjerkrævelværd et vigtigt og spændende emne.

Ud over den stigende efterspørgsel efter især fjerkrækød er dyrevelfærd relevant for forskere inden for markedsføring, fordi tiltroen til markedsdrevet dyrevelfærd er stigende. Dyrevelfærdsmærker, velfærds- og økoprodukter er bredt tilgængelige. Imidlertid kritiseres disse initiativer for alene at være PR (Buzby, 2015).

I min afhandling analyserer jeg marketing og dyrevelfærd i den danske kyllingeproduktion.

Produktionsdyrevelfærd kan være i strid med andre mål, som for eksempel at brødføde verdens voksende befolkning eller at beskytte miljøet.

Jeg gennemførte 22 semi-strukturerede interviews om kyllingeproduktion og derefter en diskursanalyse omkring kyllingevelværd igennem de seneste to årtier i Danmark. Mine tre artikler trækker på institutionel teori, sensemaking og litteraturen omhandlende marketing-etik. Artiklerne beskæftiger sig med definitionen af dyrevelfærd i den danske kyllingeproduktion, hvordan aktører argumenterer, når de vil fremme eller forhindre forandring, og aktørernes etiske overvejelser, når de markedsfører velfærdskyllinger.

Resultaterne viser, at de forskellige definitioner af dyrevelfærdsbegrebet og målkonflikter udgør en

² <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5116021ec010.pdf?expires=1496738160&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9150864DD65442D85AFC594F85D4AC78>

barriere for forbedringer. De, der argumenterer for forandring ved at problematisere institutionaliserede metoder, gør det ved hjælp af nytteetiske eller altruistiske argumenter, mens de, som forsvarer metoderne mest, formulerer sig etisk-egoistisk. De seneste to årtiers forandringer kan ses som institutionel vedligeholdelse (fx Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006), fordi kyllingeproduktion kun er ændret overfladisk set. Endelig forbedrer de, som markedsfører velfærdskyllinger på baggrund af deres etiske overvejelser vedrørende kyllingeproduktionen, ikke nødvendigvis dyrevelfærden mere end dem, som markedsfører velfærdskyllinger af andre grunde.

Ved at analysere produktionsdyrs velfærd som et komplekst emne, peger jeg på, hvordan sensemaking og institutionaliserede metoder vedrørende kyllinger øger kompleksiteten af dyrevelfærdsproblemer.

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1. Introduction and overview

The overall purpose of this thesis is to explore how partisan actors make sense of animal welfare issues in the marketing of broilers and how they work to change or maintain institutionalized practices related to animal welfare. The overall research question is therefore: “How does animal welfare influence the marketing of broilers in Denmark?”

Animal welfare is a complex issue, because multiple values and goals conflict. For example, many jobs are tied to animal production and most people enjoy consuming animal products. On the other hand, animal production can cause suffering to the animals and humans involved and often has a detrimental effect on the environment.

The study of animal welfare from a marketing perspective is relevant for several reasons. One reason, as I argue in the third article, is that farm animals have not yet been considered in marketing ethics literature. Another reason is that farm animal welfare appears to move people to a considerable extent. Thus, Appleby (2003) writes that animal welfare issues are the ones that make EU citizens contact their politicians about most often and a recent Eurobarometer (2016) study finds considerable interest in the topic. Furthermore, farm animal welfare is an issue that involves both regulation and market-based measures. Governments pass laws defining animal welfare requirements. Some also introduce labels promoting animal welfare products, as in Denmark³ and Germany⁴. In many countries, animal welfare organizations⁵ also set up labelling schemes, as do some supermarket

³ <https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Leksikon/Sider/Fakta-om-dyrevelfaerdsmaerket.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/news/wirtschaft/agrар-agrарminister-schmidt-plant-staatliches-tierschutzlabel-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-161230-99-696271>

⁵ <http://www.dyrenesbeskyttelse.dk/anbefalet-af-dyrenes-beskyttelse>, <https://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/>, <https://www.tierschutzlabel.info/home/>

chains⁶. These facts give the impression that farm animal welfare is already being taken care of – to a large extent by the market itself. However, existing initiatives are criticized for being insufficient or mere PR (Buzby, 2015). Because different types of animal production involve different processes and actors, they are confronted with disparate points of criticism, for example, egg production involves the destruction of male chicks, sows are fixated in farrowing crates, etc. I decided to focus on broiler production, which is the production of chickens for consumption, as opposed to the production of egg-layers. As the name indicates, egg-layers are kept for commercial egg production. The difference is important, because egg production and broiler production link with different actors, animal breeds and welfare problems. From the moment they are born or hatched to when their lives end, the wellbeing of farm animals relies on multiple organizations organized in supply chains. In the case of commercial broiler production, the animals go from a hatchery to a producer and from the producer to a slaughterhouse. These structures and associated practices, have been nearly the same for decades, which for many actors makes them appear as “normal”.

There are multiple reasons for my decision to analyze Danish broiler production: one stems from the empirical context itself, where multiple types of welfare broilers have been marketed for a few years now; the second is based on research showing that broilers are often de-animalized, i.e. they are perceived as objects rather than animals (Bock et al., 2007). Furthermore, windowless stables increase the risk of neglect and abuse (Broom, 2014). Broiler production is particularly interesting to analyze, because it is one of the most intense production forms (Broom, 2014). Moreover, the

⁶ <http://dyrevelfærd.coop.dk>,
http://www.waitrose.com/home/inspiration/about_waitrose/the_waitrose_way/waitrose_animal_welfarecommitments.html

OECD estimates that poultry will be the driver of the growth in meat production in the future⁷. It is therefore fair to assume that industrialized broiler production will persist and become even more intensified, which means that considerations regarding broiler welfare become even more essential. The increasing trust in or reliance on market-driven animal welfare mentioned above enhances the topicality of this issue.

In my thesis, I draw on sensemaking and institutional theory to analyze how actors aim to decree animal welfare problems and the related responsibility as well as whether and how they aim to change or maintain institutionalized practices concerning broiler production. As I interviewed partisan actors in the field of broiler production, a sensemaking perspective enables me to explore the actor's different views and how they relate animal welfare to their identity and goals.

In the following section, I briefly outline the three articles that constitute this thesis. Then I introduce the literature I draw on and discuss my research approach.

1.1 The articles

This section gives a brief overview over the three articles and how they relate to each other and to the overall purpose of the thesis. In a sense, the first article, titled “Happiness is in the eye of the beholder? How different actors make sense of farm animal welfare in broiler production”, serves as a basis for the following two articles. Here, I analyze the animal welfare definitions that can be found in the institutional field of Danish broiler production. The research question is “How do actors in Danish broiler production make sense of farm animal welfare?”. Regarding their welfare

⁷ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5116021ec010.pdf?expires=1496738160&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9150864DD65442D85AFC594F85D4AC78>

definition, actors from along and beyond the supply chain differ. Along the supply chain, there is a focus on animal health and beyond the supply chain, actors prefer natural living conditions for animals. The article's contribution lies in the detailed analysis of the interpretation of a recurring issue on a field level, a topic which has not yet been dealt with in sensemaking literature (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2015). The specific recurring issue, broiler welfare, constitutes valuable knowledge for social science research on animal welfare, as broiler production is known as a highly intensified production form of which there was not yet a comparable analysis.

The second article investigates instances when change did happen, e.g., when a new animal welfare law was implemented and has the title "Adding an ethical dimension to institutional change – a historical discourse analysis of animal welfare regarding Danish broiler production". I analyze which ethical perspectives are used when actors promote or try to prevent change and there is a main as well as two sub-research questions. The main research question "How have institutionalized practices in Danish broiler production changed during the last decades?" is rather broad and therefore split into "Who was involved in critical incidents?" and "How did those who promoted change versus those who defended an institutionalized practice use ethical arguments?".

Some of the findings include that in two out of three critical incidents, the immediate needs of the broilers were aligned with those of the producers. Furthermore, when actors tried to promote change, they usually argued using utilitarian or self-referential altruist arguments. A self-referential altruist position is one where those one is close to are given more consideration than strangers.

From a consequentialist position this makes sense if one assumes that such an approach will lead to overall good. When they defended an institutional practice, they used ethical egoistic statements.

The combination of institutional change and ethical perspectives is the theoretical contribution of

the second article. Institutional theory scholars have analyzed many aspects of change on an organizational and field level, but they did not yet connect it with ethics. Adding this element is useful for scholars who ask why and how change happened and opens up for work on the role of ethics in change. Future research could for example analyze what types of arguments (e.g. utilitarian, self-referential altruist or ethical egoist) were used when institutional work successfully altered an institution. The third article, “Farm animals in marketing ethics – a study of institutional entrepreneurship in Danish broiler production” questions institutional entrepreneurs’ decisions to market welfare broilers. Therefore, it tries to answer the following question: “Why do actors in Danish broiler production market welfare broilers rather than conventional or organic ones?” Only the marketer behind one of the four products analyzed actually had a distinct wish to improve animal welfare. However, this is not the broiler that differs most from conventional production conditions. The article considers market-driven animal welfare from a marketing ethics perspective, which has so far been overlooked in marketing ethics literature. It therefore aims to add a discussion about the role of non-humans to marketing ethics. As animals are sentient beings but animals (e.g. companion animals), their body parts (as food), or animal based experiences (e.g. zoo visits) are routinely marketed, the absence of a reflection on the consequences for marketers appears curious.

1.2 Literature review

In this section, I discuss the literature on farm animal welfare and the theoretical perspectives that I draw on in my articles: institutional theory, sensemaking and the literature about marketing ethics.

1.2.1 Farm animal welfare

Research in farm animal welfare draws attention from different disciplines such as biology (e.g. Broom, 2014), philosophy (e.g. Sandøe and Christiansen, 2008), and, in recent years, also from the social sciences, including marketing (e.g. Verbeke, 2009). As a result, publications on farm animal welfare discuss a wide range of issues, for example, from the influence of breeding programmes on animal welfare (Dawkins and Layton, 2012) to the determinants for consumer attitudes towards animal-friendly products (Cembalo et al., 2016). The variety of contributions to farm animal welfare literature makes it a fascinating topic, but also hard to grasp and integrate. Therefore, I will focus on marketing-related farm animal welfare literature, which is where this thesis aims to contribute.

First, however, I will briefly outline the philosophical and ethical literature of relevance for animal welfare. Even though terms such as animal welfare, animal ethics and animal rights might be used synonymously in everyday speech, these concepts should not be mixed. Animal welfare is about increasing the welfare for animals, mostly animals that are in contact with humans, e.g. farm animals, companion animals, etc. Animal rights thinking takes a different stance and in its most extreme forms demands the abolishment of all animal (ab)use, for instance questioning the practice of keeping companion animals (Fraser, 1999). Animal ethics is connected to both animal welfare and animal rights research because it ponders underlying questions, for example, if/when it is acceptable to kill an animal (Broom, 2014). Philosophers such as Regan (1984) are commonly associated with the animal rights movement, while others, Sandøe & Christiansen (2008), for example, lean towards the animal welfare perspective. Philosophical reflections on humans' relationship with animals are by no means a recent development, with Bentham (1789), Kant

(1886), Schopenhauer (1841) and Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) all having discussed this topic. Even religions have rules for how animals should be treated (Waldau, 2010), indicating that cultures around the world and in different eras have found the topic important.

The understanding that animals are sentient beings is scientifically and commonly accepted. It is even mentioned in the Lisbon treaty⁸ and used as an argument to improve animal welfare. Sentience is not clearly defined, but it is about awareness, being able to feel, remembering own actions, etc. (Broom, 2014). If animals were non-sentient, just like a pair of sneakers, they could not feel better or worse. There are such enormous differences across species that we have to assume that different animals have different levels or types of sentience, compare, for instance, a gorilla and a mosquito. However, the animals we use in farming are fairly developed, and regarding chickens there has been research attesting them individual personality traits, cognitive skills and emotions (Marino, 2017). The actual level of sentience of a species and the level of concern the human population has for this species are not always interlinked. Arluke and Sanders' (1996) sociozoological scale ranks animals according to how much value humans assign to them. Beloved pets are "good animals", while production animals are less highly regarded but perceived as useful tools. Animals such as rats, insects etc. are mostly seen as bad and often described as vermin or even as demonic. However, a species can occupy multiple positions in this scale, for example, Arluke and Sanders (1996) mention Pit Bulls as a demonized dog breed and therefore "evil" and a burden on society while a Golden Retriever puppy is probably the epitome of a good animal. Similarly, most farm animals are kept as production animals, however there are people who keep them as pets. Particularly miniature pigs are often bought as companions without any intention of slaughtering them. This type of classification

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare_en

depicts how humans relate to animals, not how much regard animals deserve based on their sentience. It is not based on science, but on underlying ideas about animals that are interlaced in our culture. Therefore, the sociozoological scale can help to explain why the abuse of some animals is more readily condoned than the abuse of others.

Some authors (e.g. Broom, 2014) refer to humans as the “human animal” and other animals as “non-human animals”. While I think this approach stresses that humans are part of the animal kingdom, for reasons of simplicity I stick to the conventional dichotomy and write about humans and animals.

Various food and agricultural journals have published articles that relate to marketing and animal welfare. A possible explanation for this interest is the belief in market-driven welfare that the EU has proposed⁹ or citizens’ interest in animal welfare (Eurobarometer, 2016). Marketing-related contributions to farm animal welfare literature can be broadly separated into two groups, research regarding consumer attitudes and behavior and research regarding other aspects of marketing. This thesis contributes to the latter field of research. Concerning consumers, scholars have investigated if current production methods are deemed acceptable (e.g. Boogaard et al., 2011), and if consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that have been produced under animal-friendly conditions (e.g. Lagerkvist & Hess, 2011) or what characteristics animal-friendly products should have to succeed in the market (Heerwagen et al., 2013). Contributions regarding other aspects of marketing have focused on the supply chain and analyzed barriers to the improvement of farm animal welfare (Franz et al., 2010) or its responsibility for the improvement of farm animal welfare (Harvey & Hubbard, 2013a). Harvey and Hubbard (2013b) adopted a political economy perspective to analyze

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw_brochure_strategy_en.pdf

animal welfare as a case of market failure, and Ventura et al. (2015) discuss stakeholders' values regarding farm animal welfare in dairy production.

1.2.2 CSR and farm animal welfare

The definition of Corporate Social Responsibility is not always clear. McWilliams and Siegel (2001, p. 117) define CSR as “actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law”. CSR emerged as a field of research in the 1950s (Carroll, 1999) and has been discussed in all kinds of business contexts, including agriculture. Below, I review CSR research from an animal welfare and marketing perspective. After all, consumers, animal welfare NGOs, and other groups often call for better treatment of animals and if an organization lives up to these wishes, it could be argued that they are furthering a social good.

Analyzing CSR in agricultural settings is enticing because this business sector faces numerous challenges from different stakeholders. Animal welfare, environmental protection, production of healthy foods and proper working conditions for staff are only some of the demands we often pose on farming (Forsmann-Hugg et al., 2013). In order to discuss this literature, a search including Web of Science and Scopus for articles on CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility and broiler or chicken or animal or farming or agriculture was conducted. The articles needed to have these terms in their title or in the topic or keywords. In addition, I went through the references in the articles to identify other relevant literature. Broadly speaking, the literature can be classified into three groups: articles that discuss what types of social concerns there are in agriculture, that criticize agriculture and/or that reflect on the alignment of agricultural goals with broader societal expectations.

Forsmann-Hugg et al.'s (2013) article is an example of the first category of articles. They identified

seven dimensions that are relevant for food chain CSR. These are environment, product safety, nutrition, occupational welfare, animal welfare, economic responsibility and local well-being. They conclude that defining specific content of CSR for food chains is challenging because of the complexity of these chains. Luhmann and Theuvsen (2017a) set out to find which CSR parameters German consumers find relevant in agribusiness and identified economic, internal and external responsibility. They note that Carroll's (1991) pyramid model does not apply well in their context, because consumers do not differentiate between legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. Luhmann and Theuvsen (2017b) thematize public concern when they analyze what type of CSR activities consumers would prefer in poultry production. Animal welfare is among those activities but also the welfare of the workforce seems to be important for consumers. Luhmann and Theuvsen (2017b) explain that both topics have received considerable media coverage, which might explain why consumers find these issues particularly relevant.

The second category comprises studies that are skeptical of agriculture. An example for this is Griffiths and Steinbrecher's (2010) article about a conflict between PETA and KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken). They find that KFC promised change but never lived up to these promises. KFC used them for stalling purposes, to enable them to go on with practices that had been criticized. Lobao and Stofferahn (2008) conclude that public concern about industrialized farms is reasonable. They, therefore, argue that studies on industrialized farming are valuable in two ways, because they can contribute to existing knowledge on farming while also providing critical insights in a sector that is of interest to the public.

Among the third category of studies that reflect on the alignment of agricultural goals with other societal expectations instead of focusing on the conflicts between animal welfare and agriculture, Dawkins (2017) aims to show that efficiency in farming and animal welfare are not always in conflict and can

even be aligned, e.g. by using modern technology. Similarly, De Jonge and Van Trijp (2013) set out to find what market there is for higher welfare meat and how it can be served. They argue that middle segment meat products with a higher welfare should have a well-balanced price level and that information on welfare should be visible on the packaging. They believe that only a minor consumer segment buys animal welfare friendly products because of moral motivations and that it is often a supporting benefit, i.e. in addition to taste or health. Maloni and Brown (2006) stress the importance of labelling and availability of higher welfare products. They further explain that consumers often disassociate between animals as living beings and the meat they consume (Schroder and McEachern, 2004), that consumers do not know of different approaches to animal welfare (Harper and Makatouni, 2001) and named other barriers such as insufficient labelling or lack of availability of high welfare products. Van der Heijden & Cramer (2017) investigated how a pork supply chain developed towards sustainability, including improved animal welfare, using sensemaking to show how sustainability becomes rooted by adaptively navigating social interactions. They observed how the producers started to engage in partnerships with others inside and outside the supply chain.

Summarizing, one can conclude that animal welfare has been addressed in CSR literature, sometimes on a species specific (e.g. Heijden & Cramer, 2017) and other times on a general level (Maloni and Brown, 2006). It has also been analyzed that consumers find animal welfare to be an important CSR element in agriculture (e.g. Luhmann and Theuvsen, 2017b). Generally speaking, this literature seems to derive the relevance of animal welfare as an element in CSR from the interest human stakeholders have in animals, i.e. organizations consider animal welfare, because consumers care. The animals themselves are apparently not perceived as stakeholders. This makes sense as animals cannot complain, protest or take their business elsewhere, but it is also questionable. After all, the animals' welfare exists independent of

how much consumers know or care. And one cannot assume that all markets are equally invested in animal welfare (Lever and Evans, 2017) or that average consumers have thorough understanding of how animal production works and the consequences production methods have for animals. Some consumers even willfully ignore information on animal welfare to avoid guilt (Bell et al., 2017). Lever and Evans (2017) conclude that CSR regarding animal welfare is “reactive, unfocussed and separate from the core business agendas of large corporate retailers and global food companies”.

CSR literature and marketing literature on farm animal welfare appear to have a shared interest in consumer behavior, as both investigate questions concerning consumers attitude towards farm animals. However, many of the non-consumer related marketing articles on farm animal welfare set out to find ways to improve animal welfare (e.g. Franz et al., 2010), while some of the non-consumer related CSR articles seem to be quite skeptical of organizations willingness to actually improve animal welfare (e.g. Griffiths and Steinbrecher, 2010, Lever and Evans, 2017). It is difficult to argue that it is a case of CSR whenever an organization treats animals better than the law obliges them to. The organization changes the living conditions of the animals and passes the increased production costs on to the consumer, who pays a higher price for the product. Furthermore, the organization might hope that such changes make their business model fit for the future if there is an anticipation of changes in consumer habits or legislation. It is entirely legitimate that an organization considers future developments in its markets and adapts to its customers’ wishes, but they might or might not aim “to further a social good” while doing so. Therefore, activities that involve higher animal welfare might or might not be CSR, which is why I did not use this literature as an overall frame for this thesis. Nonetheless, this literature should not go unmentioned particularly because of chapter 4, which deals with the motivation behind marketing specific welfare broilers.

1.2.3 Theoretical positioning

The articles in this thesis draw on marketing ethics, sensemaking and institutional theory to, on the one hand, contribute to the understanding of farm animal welfare and to the body of knowledge regarding these literature streams, on the other. Sensemaking and institutional theory are both well-established theories in business research. Elsbach (1994) wrote about legitimacy in the California cattle industry, and Franz et al. (2010) used institutional theory to discuss barriers to a European animal welfare label, but animal-related articles using sensemaking or institutional theory are uncommon. Marketing ethics literature has existed since the 60s and is concerned with all kinds of ethical issues in marketing, e.g. false advertising or e-commerce (Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010). Scholars contributing to marketing ethics have included the environment in their considerations (Davis, 1992), for instance covering wildlife. However, farm animals and their welfare have not been examined in this context. The approach I am taking to discuss animal welfare in broiler production is an extension of mature, widely known literature streams. I will go through the literature I used in the sections below and comment on why I chose this approach.

1.2.2.1 Marketing ethics

There are different definitions of marketing ethics and we can, generally speaking, distinguish between broad and narrow definitions. Chonko and Hunt (1985, p. 340) write that “ethical problems occur only when an individual interacts with other people”, making it very clear that (to them) animals are excluded from any kind of consideration in marketing ethics. They might have used a narrow definition of “interacting” that has to do with markets and marketing – the buyer wants a certain product, the seller the revenue. From this perspective it makes sense that animals are excluded, as animals do not purchase or sell anything. However, using a broader understanding of interaction,

there is no obvious reason to exclude animals. Humans can and often do interact with animals and have the power to treat them well or poorly. Smith (1995), on the other hand, wrote that a marketing manager must respect and care for the welfare of those affected by marketing decisions. As sentient beings, animals can be affected and should therefore be considered in decision-making. Also, Laczniak and Murphy (1993) wrote that marketing ethics is about how moral standards are applied to marketing decision-making, behavior and institutions. This is a comparably broad definition that qualifies many topics as legitimate topics for the marketing ethics scholar, from the deception of consumers to what makes a product (un)ethical.

Schlegelmilch and Oeberseder (2010) begin their review of 50 years of marketing ethics literature by stating that many ethical issues in marketing that were discussed back then, such as misleading advertising, are still being discussed, and new topics, e.g. related to e-commerce, have come up over time. Nevertheless, Schlegelmilch and Oeberseder (2010) find that interest in marketing ethics has increased considerably, both regarding the amount of articles published and the number of issues discussed. Particularly during the 90s a wealth of new issues was being addressed, some of which were green marketing (e.g. Davis, 1992) and vulnerable consumers (e.g. Austin & Reed, 1999).

Nill and Schibrowsky (2007) also presented a literature review of marketing ethics stating that most articles follow a positivist approach and mainly work with quantitative data, while other scholars choose a normative lense. They further differentiate between contributions dealing with micro and macromarketing. Macromarketing is concerned with the consequences marketing has on a societal level (Prothero, 2008), while micromarketing deal with single organizations. Macromarketing lends itself to add animals to marketing ethics, because the treatment of animals in food production has consequences beyond the boundaries of the organizations who produce meat or animal products. Most

consumers do not produce their own food, they rely on supermarkets where they choose their groceries. If there is no concern for animals among those producers who supply this food, most consumers are unable to choose meat produced under more animal friendly conditions, even if they wanted to. As the consumer usually does not know the producer and has not seen the animals during their lifetime or at slaughter, it is up to the supply chain and legislation to ensure that the animals living conditions lived up to the specifications that are indicated to the consumer. In addition, animal production affects the environment and different production systems can have different environmental consequences. As everyone relies to some extent on a healthy environment (Consider the water we drink, air we breathe, natural landscapes many enjoy etc.) how production animals are treated in the end affects humans and wildlife too. However, wanting to add domestic or production animals to macromarketing ethics is an unspecific aim. Therefore, the article on this topic seeks to investigate specifically if those who market welfare broilers actually do so out of ethical concerns for the animals. The motivation might not always directly affect the broilers (they do not know why they live in a certain production system and if they would have it better or worse if their owner thought differently about them), but it can make a difference e.g. when the marketer enters a market where consumers are not (yet) as concerned about animal welfare.

Chonko and Hunt (1985) explain that ethical conflicts happen when someone experiences their duties towards one group as conflicting with their duties towards another group. The person must then try to resolve the issue, which is problematic. Davis (1992) stresses that all violations of marketing ethics are distasteful, but that some have more severe immediate or long-term consequences for individuals or society than others. The worst kind of ethical violation has a detrimental effect on individuals and society. Davis (1992) states greenwashing as an example of such a violation, as consumers'

conviction that they are acting in a pro-environmental way would actually cause damage and might hamper the wellbeing of future generations. One might add that as a form of deceit greenwashing also shows disregard for consumers. If greenwashing was used by marketers of animal products, this would most likely fall into the category of being detrimental to individuals and society. Even if animals are excluded from ethical concern, this production is still harmful to the environment (United Nations, 2006) and the working conditions for humans who earn their wages in meat production have been criticized in some countries, e.g. by Human Rights Watch¹⁰. The search for statements on animals' role in marketing ethics remained fruitless. For the purpose of connecting marketing ethics with considerations for domestic animals, two dominant schools of thought in animal ethics, consequentialism and animal rights, are briefly discussed in paper three. The basic difference is that consequentialism is only concerned with the consequences of a given action and aims to cause most good (Brink, 2006), while animal rights is about respecting the rights of sentient beings (Palmer and Sandøe, 2017). The contribution of this thesis to the topic is a macro-marketing perspective on welfare broiler production.

1.2.2.2 Sensemaking

There is no single definition of sensemaking (Brown et al., 2015), but it is commonly used to explain how people construct and reconstruct meaning in the ongoing flow of their experience (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, Weick, 1995). This is why I use it to analyze how farm animal welfare is defined in the field of broiler production and how these definitions lead to barriers to the improvement of animal welfare. In a conventional business context, situations that would trigger sensemaking could be the loss of a certain job, strategic change in the company or a scandal that came to light.

¹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105/usa0105.pdf>

Business and management research drawing on sensemaking examines, for instance, how sense is made in an organization (e.g. Cornelissen, 2012; Sonenshein, 2007), but also how it affects organizational processes such as strategic change (Sonenshein, 2009) or innovation (Drazin et al., 1999). Sensemaking is thus an activity positioned at the very core of organizing. Anand and Peterson (2000) view markets as the result of collective sensemaking of market actors. Because of its focus on practical activities that individuals engage in when facing specific situations (Boden, 1994), it is a vital concept in ‘the practice turn’ (Whittington, 2006) in organizational research. Weick (1995) perceives sensemaking as a process consisting of the three elements noticing (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988), interpretation and enactment. After someone’s activities have been interrupted, this person will try to come to an initial understanding by paying attention to their environment where this person notices and looks for cues. Once this is achieved, interpretation leads to a more detailed and organized understanding of what is going on. Based on this interpretation, the person will try to act in a certain way to continue the interrupted activity. Further iterations of these three elements can happen, until the person notices that their actions fit the situation and allow them to move on. It is not only individuals who find themselves in confusing situations that force them to make sense of their environment, also organizations (i.e. the humans that make up the organization) face these challenges. If, for instance, a slaughterhouse was about to face legal consequences because of animal cruelty, the supermarkets who routinely buy from this organization would first look into what the allegations are about (e.g. was it a single case of human failure or is there proof that the slaughterhouse routinely abuses animals). Then they would interpret what the problem means for them (e.g. “Are we going to be blamed for supporting animal cruelty?”, “Do we need to drop the supplier?”, “How have such problems been handled in the past?”, “How are other supermarkets reacting?”) and afterwards choose certain actions (e.g. writing press releases,

dropping the supplier etc.). If they are still attacked, they would initiate further actions (e.g. checking up on other suppliers to show that they do not tolerate animal cruelty etc.) until they can go on with their normal activities.

Maitlis and Christianson (2014) find that enactment is a critical feature of sensemaking, because the actions that humans take in order to make sense of a particular situation at the same time produce the environment that they want to fathom. For example, if someone trying to rethink broiler production is successful with an alternative product, others might also rethink their practices. Anand and Peterson (2000) argue that this is how markets come to exist. They explain that in competitive fields, organizational actors make sense of their environment based on performance-based information which leads to them enacting a market. Work focusing on social construction instead of objective reality (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1966) enabled sensemaking-related research (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). This thesis does not deny that there is an objective reality, but that individuals can have different perceptions and that reality can change. Consider markets again as an example. One could measure how many broilers there are sold annually in Denmark and what percentage is produced under conventional conditions. However, if the supply chain and consumers think that these conditions are not good enough, that humans should not eat so much meat or that other broilers taste better etc. the market might gradually change. If the volume of broiler meat produced or the dominant production system changes, reality has changed through the actions of those who produce or consume broilers. In that way, scholars who argue that elements of an objective reality (e.g. the products offered in a supermarket) change as a result of people's perception and enactment, imply a realist stance. Critical realism is based on the assumption that there is an objective reality, but that we cannot perceive it fully (Bhaskar, 1998).

Actors who engage in everyday activities are not sense-less either, but more commonly involved in immanent sensemaking. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) state that this has been overlooked by scholars contributing to sensemaking literature, despite being probably more common than the types of sensemaking this literature stream usually deals with.

My article about various definitions of and their consequences for the improvement of farm animal welfare uses sensemaking in that way. Sensemaking enables me to investigate how different actors construe their view regarding animals' welfare and responsibility connected to welfare problems. Furthermore, some publications in sensemaking are devoted to sensemaking concerning ethical problems, enhancing the match further. Existing work on ethical issues has implied sensemaking processes. For example, Butterfield et al. (2000) find that issues with considerable consequences are more likely recognized as moral problems than issues with minor consequences.

1.2.2.3 Institutional theory – change and entrepreneurship

Essentially, institutionalization is the process through which a shared reality is created. This shared reality contains rules and social norms (DiMaggio, 1988; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). When norms are institutionalized, they often become unquestioned (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Institutionalization can occur in all kinds of social systems, e.g., work, religion and family life, each have their norms of behavior. The market is as much a social institution as religion (Dixon, 2002) and therefore also subject to institutionalization. Hence, institutional theory is relevant for – and has been applied to – marketing (e.g., Humphreys, 2010, Handelman & Arnold, 1999).

In agribusiness, highly industrialized production methods constitute an institution, as they have been dominant since the 1960s (Harrison, 1964), i.e., actors in the food marketing system as well as public

authorities and other external stakeholders have adapted to those methods. Hence, despite being subjected to criticism, industrialized production prevails and has only been subjected to minor changes.

One of the best known studies about institutional theory is DiMaggio and Powell's (1983), in which the authors ask why organizations in a given field are so similar to each other. Maybe because of the popularity of institutional theory, scholars have applied it to answer a wide variety of questions on an organizational, interorganizational or field level. This has led to "spin-offs", such as institutional logics (e.g., Meyer & Hammerschmid, 2006), institutional entrepreneurship (e.g., Battilana et al., 2009) or institutional work (e.g., Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). These developments are tied to other trends; for example, discourse analysis has been deemed useful to investigate institutional change (e.g., Hardy & Maguire, 2010), and Ocasio et al. (2016) use a historical approach to theorize about the connection between collective memory and societal logics.

For the thesis at hand, literature on institutional entrepreneurship, and broader speaking, institutional change is most important. This is due to the dominance of conventional production in Denmark, which normalized certain processes that are attributable to conventional production, such as closed stables containing 30,000 broilers at a time. In my articles, I investigate if actors who produce welfare broilers, i.e. institutional entrepreneurs, do so for ethical reasons and who or what caused change during the last two decades.

De Leeuw and Goessling (2016) analyzed publications about institutional change to contribute to the preexisting knowledge (e.g., Greenwood et al., 2002; Oliver, 1992) on antecedents to change. They find examples of antecedents from inside and outside the institutional field and political, functional

and social sources. Institutional fields can be comparably open, meaning that they frequently interact with actors outside their own field, but they can also be more closed and therefore less likely to be influenced by outside developments. If the boundaries are more permeable, it is more likely that the field is influenced by changes from the outside. The evolution of organizations and their members can be an internal antecedent of change, because the practices that have been readily accepted before might not be reproduced anymore, when the “population” of a field changes over time (De Leeuw & Goessling, 2016).

Scholars have also been occupied with discourses connected to change (e.g., Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, Hardy & Maguire, 2010). Analyses have, among other things, dealt with the birth, change and abolishment of institutions. Organizations as such have been viewed as constructs that can be altered by discourses and scholars developed an interest in issues such as power, knowledge and meaning. Even though institutional theory is often connected to social constructivism, this hints at a realist perspective, as topics such as power seem to be considered as relevant for organizational life generally speaking, independent of someone’s perception. In the section “Critical Realism”, I explain the difference between realism and social constructivism and the consequential considerations regarding the choice of methods.

For analysis of oral or written texts, institutional scholars usually rely on discourse analysis. In organizational research, the term discourse is most often used in a commonsensical way, even though there is also interest in Foucault (e.g. Hardy & Maguire, 2016). There are two “naïve” definitions of discourse, one that is almost synonymous with words like “conversation” underlining the interactive exchanges of direct communication. A broader definition of discourse refers to interrelated ideas and how they are expressed, often in writing. Organizational scholars mix and

extend these definitions, because often they are also interested in how the ideas in discourses are constructed and how they influence the context in which they are situated.

Institutional entrepreneurship literature is about change regarding institutions. Battilana et al. (2009) explain that actors can make use of opportunities arising from changed field conditions. These conditions can be a scarcity of resources or a higher degree of heterogeneity. Lower degrees of institutionalization offer opportunities for institutional entrepreneurship, because there is more uncertainty (DiMaggio, 1988; Fligstein, 1997). However, this does not mean, that institutional entrepreneurship is impossible in intensely institutionalized fields.

The social position of actors also influences their access to resources (Lawrence, 1999) and their perception of the field. Very often, change is initiated by organizations in the periphery of the field, but also central actors have instigated change (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006).

These actors are institutional entrepreneurs. The term stems from DiMaggio (1988) who stated that new institutions come into being when actors with sufficient resources perceive an opportunity to implement interests that are important to them. This stream of research is thus connected to agency, interest and power (Garud et al., 2007). Because the ambitions of an institutional entrepreneur impact existing institutions, their actions tend not to be readily accepted by actors who are following the already accepted way of doing things. For this reason, institutional entrepreneurship is also perceived as a political process (Seo & Creed, 2002).

Lawrence (1999) differentiates between intended and unintended strategies that institutional entrepreneurs might follow. Adopting an intentional strategy, an actor aims to affect an institution in a way that is beneficial for its own position. Unintended strategies are those Mintzberg and Waters (1985) call emergent. In the context of institutional entrepreneurship, it refers to an

institution being altered as a side effect of what the actor wanted to achieve.

1.2.2.4 On combining sensemaking, institutional theory and marketing ethics

Weber and Glynn (2006) discuss the function of institutions as mechanisms to prompt sensemaking. They assume that institutions can constrain sensemaking, because they influence what we take for granted (Zucker, 1991). However, the reverse has also been researched, and institutions can be seen as the result of collective sensemaking being construed by stakeholders who discuss and maintain practices in fields. An example of the limited number of studies on this topic is Zilber's (2007) article on narratives as sensemaking tools in institutional entrepreneurship.

It should be noted that even though sensemaking is important, it is rarely purposive, meaning that just because actors are engaging in sensemaking does not mean that they intend to transform an institution (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Dealing with ethical issues can challenge actors by making situations difficult to understand (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). Sensemaking can be used to create an understanding of how actors cope with the ethical issues they encounter. It is defined as a social process (Maitlis, 2005), and Gephart (1992) argues that it should be studied via discourses of social members, while Sonenshein (2007) emphasizes the importance of analyzing interpretive processes through which ethical issues are constructed out of social stimuli.

When organizational scholars adopt a sensemaking perspective and talk about ethics in general, in many cases their research is set in a business context, i.e., they are discussing business ethics. Marketing is a sub-discipline of business administration, therefore marketing ethics should be a sub-field of business ethics. Sensemaking and institutional theory are connected by the connection

between institutions and sensemaking. Neither institutional theory nor sensemaking require scholars to write about ethics, i.e. the literature does not state that maintaining or abolishing institutions is per se right or wrong and neither is the tendency of human beings to try to make sense of their situation. However, as discussed above, some scholars have found an interest in sensemaking regarding ethical issues, and others (e.g., Kennedy, 2016) write about institutional theory in connection with societal issues. Therefore, it is possible, if not common, to combine these research fields with ethics. I chose a marketing ethics lens, because my third article deals specifically with the marketing of welfare broilers and because I believe that considerations regarding farm animal welfare can only enrich marketing ethics literature.

1.3 Research approach

The three articles in this dissertation are based on two rounds of data collection. Semi-structured interviews were used to identify existing definitions of farm animal welfare and to analyze actors' ethical considerations when they produce welfare broilers. These interviews are the main data source for the first and third paper. In addition, a discourse analysis was conducted for the second paper. In order to be able to conduct a discourse analysis, I first conducted a content analysis to get an overview of what had been published on the topic. The content analysis deals with 21 years of broiler welfare in newspapers, industry publications and supermarket flyers. The discourse analysis is an in-depth analysis of critical events that occurred during these 21 years. In critical realist research, using a combination of multiple methods is quite common (Ackroyd and Karlsson, 2014), as it is not tied to a specific method (Fletcher, 2017). Therefore, it is up to the researcher to find the methods that are suitable, meaning that they create insight and are realistically doable (Maxwell, 2012). Semi-structured interviews are used to collect extensive qualitative data (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The advantage of this type of interview is its flexibility, as the interviewee can go into more detail about something the person finds important. Yet, there is a somewhat pre-defined structure making it easier to compare the findings across interviews, which is important from a realist perspective (King, 2004). Individual interviews appeared preferable to focus groups for multiple reasons. For example, it was obvious that some of the interviewees know each other, but they do not all know each other or share the same type of relationship. Some individuals even depend on other interviewees (customer-supplier-relationships, source of funding). Group dynamics of strangers and acquaintances can differ, and it is therefore not unproblematic to mix them. Gibbs (1997) mentions that the researcher cannot assume that the participants in a focus group are articulating their individual views and that this makes it difficult to

detect someone's individual perspective. I assume that dependencies among the interviewees increase this problem and if interviewees are not fully comfortable the focus group is often unproductive (Morgan, 1998). In addition there was also a practical challenge of finding dates when all interviewees were free to participate in a focus groups. The interviewees live and work all across Denmark and it was not always easy to find time even for an individual interview.

To extend the understanding of animal welfare in Danish broiler production, I conducted a discourse analysis covering 1995-2015. I assessed that interviews and a discourse analysis could complement each other. Discourse analysis enables the researcher to see how a topic was communicated to a certain audience, in this case the public (newspapers, supermarket flyers) and the industry (industry publication), but interviews can give a personal account and the researcher can ask questions for improved understanding (e.g. "Could you elaborate on that?").

Discourse analysis has become popular in organizational research (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000). Fairclough (2005) highlights its relevance particularly when conducted from a realist perspective and addressing organizational change, as it enables the researcher to address wide-ranging concerns about e.g. how some organizations are more resilient than others. Also Phillips et al. (2004) state that organizational scholars tend to be interested in how a discourse affects the environment in which it occurs. The discourse analysis conducted for this thesis follows an approach that is typical for discourse analysis (Phillips and Oswick, 2012) in an institutional theory context in two ways. First of all it concentrates on written language and second on concepts and ideas shared by texts and how these ideas evolve.

In order to enable me to conduct the discourse analysis, I first analyzed the content of the newspaper, industry publications and supermarket flyers that I had selected. Bennett (2015) writes about the potential of combining (computer assisted) content and discourse analysis, stating that this could be a

particularly fruitful mix. He argues that a quantitative analysis can help the researcher in pinpointing texts that are particularly valuable for the research question. Combinations of multiple methods and quantitative as well as qualitative analyses were also used by Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli (2015) when they set out to define institutional logics in yoga to enable them to delve into the topic.

1.3.1 Critical realism

Critical Realism is an alternative to positivism and constructivism, but draws on elements of both.

Because of the underlying philosophical considerations, Critical Realism is a methodological framework for research, but it is not tied to a specific method of data collection (Fletcher, 2017).

Bhaskar (1998) criticized that both positivism and constructivism limit reality to human knowledge.

Critical Realism on the other hand rests on the belief that ontology (the nature of reality) cannot be reduced to epistemology (our knowledge of reality). The critical realist researcher also assumes that some views of the world are more accurate than others. O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014) illustrate this with an example – modern science probably has a better explanation for what thunder is and why it happens than medieval pagans. However, according to critical realism there is no single correct understanding of the world (Maxwell, 2012).

A further difference is that Critical Realists perceive mental states, meanings and intentions as part of the real world, even though they are not directly observable. This is denied by positivism and constructivism (Maxwell, 2012), as they focus on what is evidenced empirically (O'Mahoney and Vincent, 2014).

In addition, Critical Realism is committed to truth, which is not the case for constructivism, and thick explanations – as opposed to positivism (O'Mahoney and Vincent, 2014).

Critical Realist researchers have a flexible attitude towards methods and often switch between them. Their goal is to develop their understanding of a certain phenomenon and they use their intellectual creativity to identify ways to achieve this (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). Consequently, the critical realist researcher will typically review literature on the research topic at hand before starting the data collection (O'Mahoney and Vincent, 2014). Critical Realism implies that the data the researcher collects functions as evidence for real phenomena; therefore, the researcher should consider how a planned data collection aids the understanding of the topic under investigation (Maxwell, 2012).

Healy and Perry (2000) find realism particularly relevant when conducting interviews or focus groups that are held with the support of probe questions based on what the researcher tries to discover about a “predetermined outside reality”. Smith and Elger (2014) conclude that the critical realist interviewer has a somewhat active, informed role and often combines interviews with other research methods. Also Maxwell (2012) discusses the value of combining multiple qualitative methods and Greene (2007) finds that this approach adds value in multiple ways, e.g. by better enabling the researcher to shed light on different aspects of a complex phenomenon.

Fairclough (2005) argues for applying Critical Realist ontology on discourse analysis in organizational research, particularly research on organizational change. He believes in this, because a realist approach distinguishes organizational processes and agency from organizational structures. The focus is then on how they relate to each other. Therefore, it enables the researcher to address questions about how organizations resist to change or open up to it.

As discussed above, critical realism is a type of middle ground between a positivist and a social

constructivist position. It follows the assumption that the existence of something does not depend on one person's knowledge about it. For example, individuals can have differing opinions on how important farm animal welfare is compared to other goals and consequently how much effort should be put into this issue. However, the animals' ability to suffer does not depend on these evaluations, it exists independently, whether someone finds it important or not. It follows that farm animal welfare is an issue, even if some important stakeholders (or an entire society) were not thinking of it as such. Consider another example: Laying hens used to be kept in conventional cages until the skepticism against this system grew so much that these cages were banished¹¹. Enriched cages still exist, but there are also countries who are already phasing out these (Austria¹² and Germany¹³). However, citizens' growing dissatisfaction with conventional cages did not cause the hens to suffer and neither did they suffer more when humans worried more— their welfare was equally good or bad independent of how citizens feel about cage production. Conventional cages lost their legitimacy through some kind of sensemaking and institutional work that made people believe that conventional cages were highly problematic.

Therefore, this thesis rests on the assumption that our interpretation of certain activities (raising animals for human consumption etc.) change over time and across cultures but that there are elements that exist independent of our interpretations and institutions.

During the two data collections, first interviews and then a discourse analysis this critical realist orientation showed. Before conducting the interviews I developed an interview guide to find out about broiler welfare, which indicates that I presupposed that broiler welfare, i.e. that broilers can be better or

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/farm/laying_hens_en

¹² <https://www.bmnt.gv.at/land/produktion-maerkte/tierische-produktion/gefluegel-eier/Ei-Artikel.html>

¹³ <http://www.ml.niedersachsen.de/service/pressemitteilungen/meyer-und-hoefken-hennen-kaefighaltung-wird-in-deutschland-endlich-verboden--137448.html>

worse off, exists independent of how the interviewees might think of it. The discourse analysis shows how broiler welfare was discussed in Danish media over time, how this discourse changed and what consequences there were (e.g. new law).

1.3.2 Addressing the quality of qualitative data

This thesis relies mostly on qualitative methods, namely semi-structured interviews and a discourse analysis. There is no single right method of working with qualitative data, but the aim should be to reach transparency about the sources, the analysis and in-depth discussion of the findings (Bansal & Corley, 2011). Bansal and Corley (2011) add that different approaches are suitable for different kinds of data. Coding data is a rather popular choice, but it is also possible to look for patterns, themes and narratives in the data. Scholars have come up with numerous ideas to make the quality of their qualitative data visible to readers (Gioia et al., 2013). Tracy (2010) found the following eight indicators for high quality in qualitative research: worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence. I will discuss these indicators and how I address them in my work in the following paragraphs.

A topic can be worthy for disciplinary, societal or personal reasons. This introduction and all three articles state why farm animal welfare is an important and contemporary research topic. One reason is that farm animals are sentient beings who are in our care; consequently they suffer or thrive under the conditions we provide them with. Other reasons are the environmental impact of animal production and the increasing reliance on market-driven animal welfare. There is also disciplinary interest in social issues (Hampel et al., 2015), if not specifically farm animal welfare. Miles and Huberman (1994) add that current controversies, such as the reliance on market-driven animal welfare, supposedly are superior to opportunistic or convenient topics that are analyzed in a shallow way. The perceptions of the individuals interviewed for this thesis and positions in newspaper

articles, industry articles and supermarket flyers are interesting, because they depict the attitude of actors in the institutional field as well as illustrate how broiler welfare is communicated.

Rich rigor describes that qualitative studies should show context, examples etc. In order to achieve this, the researcher should be well-read within the field of enquiry and have abundant data available.

I made sure to live up to this criterion by reviewing literature on sensemaking, institutional theory, marketing ethics, books and articles about broilers (e.g., Taylor et al., 2002), farm animal welfare (e.g., Harrison, 1964), animal welfare and animal rights (e.g., Munro, 2012), animal ethics (e.g., Regan, 1984). The richness in combination with thorough work leads to face validity, making the study appear sound. Questions regarding rich rigor include if the researcher spent enough time gathering relevant data, if the context is aligned with the goals of the study, if the researcher used appropriate procedures when interviewing, taking notes etc.

Including the planning, I spent about six months on each of my data collections. Before I went out to do the interviews and called individuals, I had made lists of who would be most appropriate to talk to and made sure that I would cover different perspectives on the topic. The choice of the industry publication for the discourse analysis was also based on the interviews, during which I asked the interviewees about their industry publication reading habits. All the interviews were conducted with an interview guide at hand, in Danish. They were recorded and later transcribed. For the discourse analysis, I took notes on events that were covered more often than others and that led to some kind of observable change, e.g. a new law. There is no simple rule for how much time in the field is sufficient or how many interviews one should conduct, because it depends on the phenomenon the researcher is investigating (Tracy, 2010).

As sincerity is about honesty about the motivation for and goal of the research, I do not see issues

regarding this parameter in my research. That this thesis is specifically about broilers is partly based on the amount of broilers there is and partly, because there have been attempts to market welfare broilers during the last years. The reason for writing about farm animal welfare is that I think it is a timely topic.

In order to achieve credibility, I have involved interview partners with different backgrounds, multiple sources for the content and discourse analyses and by discussing my findings and articles with other scholars. From a realist perspective, using multiple sources, etc., improves the insight into a phenomenon (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014).

Within case generalizations, such as Geertz's (1973) study of cockfights as "deep play" are a means to improve resonance. In my articles, I have followed this idea by analyzing the very specific context of broiler welfare as an issue, differentiating, for example, between direct and indirect motivation to improve animal welfare (article 1), consequentialist and animal rights arguments (article 3), and ethical egoism, self-referential altruism and utilitarianism in discourses (article 2). Lincoln and Guba (1985) state the importance of rich descriptions, as they lead to transferability, meaning that insights can be transferred to other situations. Transferability is so to say what generalization is to quantitative studies. I discuss the transferability of my findings in chapter 5.2.

In order to constitute a significant contribution, an article should "bring clarity to confusion, make visible what is hidden or inappropriately ignored, and generate a sense of insight and deepened understanding" (Tracy, 1995, p. 209). The overall contribution for all three articles is to further the inclusion of animal-related topics in the social sciences, particularly marketing research. The three articles contribute to the understanding of sensemaking regarding a recurring issue on a field level, the positioning of farm animals in marketing ethics and the exploration of an ethical dimension in

institutional change.

Miles and Huberman (1994) write about ethical conduct that the researcher should be aware of his or her ethical responsibility regarding people in the research context, colleagues and those who fund the research. Failing to consider the rightness or wrongness of one's actions is in itself unethical. In order to protect the privacy of my interviewees, I have given them pseudonyms and I try to make sure that it is clear from which position a certain quote is taken, without giving away details about the interviewee. Tracy (2010) writes that the researcher should also consider how the findings can be interpreted. For example, studies about marginalized groups can contribute to further stereotypes about them, despite it not being the researcher's intention. When I critically discuss certain ideas in the articles, for example blaming consumers for welfare problems; relying on market-driven animal welfare; my aim is not to portray that these initiatives are useless and should be stopped, but that there are fallacies to them, and that there is no easy way out when dealing with complex issues.

Meaningful coherence is achieved when a study accomplishes its goal, features well-matched methods and theories and interconnects these sections. The connection of my articles is outlined in the introduction and the links regarding the findings are discussed in the overall conclusion.

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2 Happiness is in the eye of the beholder? How different actors make sense of farm animal welfare in broiler production

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Abstract

While scholars have analyzed many aspects of sensemaking, sensemaking about the interpretation of recurring issues has been mostly overlooked.

Reflecting on the illustrative case of broiler production in Denmark, I show how an issue is interpreted by partisan actors and find that the ambiguity of the issue hampers progress. First, by complicating common goal setting and second by enabling an “anything goes” attitude. The study contributes to the understanding of recurring issues on a field level and knowledge on farm animal welfare in social sciences.

Keywords: sensemaking, broiler production, farm animal welfare

2.1 Introduction

Farm animal welfare has been perceived as an issue since the 60s (Sandøe & Christiansen, 2008). A large number of actors have to cooperate and agree on what good animal welfare means and how it can be achieved. The different conceptualizations of its definition (Fraser, 2008) together with the conflicting sustainability goals the agricultural sector faces (e.g. Dawkins & Layton, 2012) and the demands society poses on agriculture (Forsmann-Hugg et al., 2013), make it difficult to resolve issues regarding farm animal welfare. Consider the following examples: The initiative for animal welfare (“Initiative Tierwohl”) is a cooperation between German

supermarkets and the agricultural sector that involved a major German animal welfare organization (“Deutscher Tierschutzbund”); this organization left the project after a falling out. The CEO of the animal welfare organization accused the other actors of deception and of setting up the initiative as a mere PR tool¹⁴. Meanwhile, the CEO of the initiative stated that he regrets that the animal welfare organization no longer wants to be part of their realistic ideas to involve an increasing number of farmers.¹⁵ In Denmark, the largest supermarket chain opted out of the government’s new animal welfare label. They introduced their own label, stating that “as opposed to the Minister’s label, we want to improve animal welfare significantly” and criticizing the label to be poorly conceptualized and that it might hamper sound animal welfare.¹⁶ The Minister for the Environment and Food, on the other hand, argued that his label makes it obvious to consumers which animals had a better life.¹⁷

The purpose of this study is to explore how a recurring issue is dealt with on a field level by shedding light on the illustrative case of broiler production in Denmark. Broiler production is a fitting setting, because it is one of the most intense production forms, leading to a perception of chickens as objects rather than animals (Bock et al., 2007). Additionally, chickens in conventional production are kept “hidden away” in stables as opposed to outside on fields; this may increase the risk of neglect and abuse, because they cannot be seen by passersby (Broom, 2014). The broiler supply chain in Denmark begins with chicks being transported from Sweden to Denmark, where they are reared. When these chicks grow mature, they lay eggs which are hatched on site and subsequently transported to producers. There, the chicks stay for about 38 days before they are picked up and brought to the slaughterhouse. In 2013, 107 million broilers were produced which translates into 159.5 million kg, of which 131 million kg were exported.¹⁴ In Denmark,

¹⁴ Det danske fjerkræråd, Årsberetning 2013

buying fresh chicken breast is the most popular option¹⁵; however, processed products, e.g. chicken nuggets, make up half of the exports.¹⁶

In order to analyze actors' sensemaking I conducted semi-structured interviews on a field level. The research question is "How do actors in Danish broiler production make sense of farm animal welfare?" As the article focusses on interviews with organizational actors alongside and beyond the supply chain, consumers and their preferences are only included to the extent they were mentioned in the interviews.

Commonly associated with Weick's (e.g. 1969, 1993, 1995) work, sensemaking is a prominent perspective in management for scholars who investigate how actors grasp and enact their realities (Brown et al., 2015). Often sensemaking studies are conducted on an organizational level, however, field level analysis has been conducted before by Nigam and Ocasio (2010) who named field-level sensemaking "environmental sensemaking".

In the present study, I am investigating a recurring issue that keeps following people, instead of exploring a single impactful event, which has been common regarding the sensemaking perspective (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). I find the sensemaking perspective to be a fitting match, because shared interpretation regarding the definition and importance of animal welfare could lead to potential solutions to animal welfare-related issues. Conflicting interpretations, on the other hand, hint that solution finding might be hampered. Existing studies on the attitudes of experts and laypeople regarding farm animal welfare have found that farmers assess animal welfare under current conditions to be more positive than consumers (Vanhonacker et al., 2008). According to Bracke et al. (2005) consumers think of traditional farming methods and animals in their natural

¹⁵ Fødevareanalysen, 2015

¹⁶ Dansk årlig fjerkræksport, markedsanalyse, 2014

environment, when they describe good animal welfare, while scientists want quantifiable indicators and policy makers' conceptualizations are influenced by their relationships with farmers, NGOs, consumers or scientists. Heleski et al. (2006) added scientists' attitudes regarding a number of potential farm animal welfare issues to the discussion. They found that women, scientists with liberal political views and individuals who were not religious were more concerned about animal welfare. Verbeke (2009) concludes that different stakeholder groups aim to offer farm animals good living conditions and that limiting suffering is a shared value. Vanhonacker et al. (2012) tried to conceptualize animal welfare including consumers' and other stakeholders' views and found animal-based and resource-based dimensions.

The article aims to contribute to two fields of research. Firstly, to the field of sensemaking research by adding to existing research a study of the interpretation of a recurring issue on a field level, and secondly, to the social scientific research stream about farm animal welfare, by analyzing the interpretation of farm animal welfare specifically for broiler production comprising actors along and beyond the supply chain.

2.2 Theoretical background

2.2.1 Farm animal welfare as an issue comprising different conflicts

Even though the relationship between humans and animals has been a topic throughout history (Waldau, 2011), the issue of farm animal welfare first caught popularity after Ruth Harrison's book "Animal Machines" was published in the UK in 1964. After the concern for the welfare of farm animals spread to other European countries, governments began to fund research on farm animal welfare, which sparked the development of a new field of biological research.

However, animal welfare concerns also the social sciences, because human beings' conceptualization of farm animal welfare influences animals' lives and because farm animal welfare influences the life conditions of humans. For example, it is a common assumption that healthier animals result in healthier food for the human population (Allen & Lavau, 2014).

Therefore, researchers such as Carenzi and Verga (2007) called on social scientists to contribute to this body of knowledge.

Discussions about farm animal welfare are not only complex, because the animals themselves are complex, but for several other reasons. These reasons will be referred to as conflict 1, 2 and 3. I draw on Fraser's (2008) morphology because it depicts various welfare definitions and their overlap. Fraser (2008) argues that there is a lack of clarity regarding what constitutes good animal welfare, meaning that even actors who want to work towards the improvement of animal welfare might have conflicting goals. This is conflict 1. Conflict 2 is that increased farm animal welfare can conflict with other goals in agriculture.

Dawkins and Layton (2012) illustrate this, explaining that broilers have to meet requirements regarding financial feasibility, food safety and production intensity. The third conflict arises from the demands society has regarding agriculture. For many consumers, animal welfare and

environmental protection are important, but they also want to consume meat and are not always willing to pay considerably higher prices (Carlsson et al., 2007). Of course there are also different opinions on agriculture and animal production among consumers, those who do not believe animals should be eaten at all and others who do not think that animal welfare is an important topic.



Figure 1: Conflicts in broiler production (own illustration)

2.2.1.1 Intra-Animal Welfare Conflict

Regarding the definition of animal welfare, a conflict arises from a lack of clarity concerning what the term includes and thus what counts as an improvement of animal welfare. The term animal welfare is a broad, loosely defined concept, although it usually contains aspects concerning health and species-specific behavior. As an example, the World Organization for Animal Health keeps it short: “*Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives*”¹⁷. This means that an animal which struggles to cope with its living conditions has poor welfare, but the definition does not state what can affect welfare. Constrained access to water or air certainly decreases welfare, but should a concept such as the animals’ emotions be taken into consideration?

¹⁷ <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-at-a-glance/>

Also Carenzi and Verga (2007) write that the concept of animal welfare involves several issues, such as suffering and needs. Many definitions have been suggested, but due to the numerous attitudes towards animals or methodologies used to evaluate welfare, the term still lacks a consistent definition (Weber & Zarate, 2005).

For this article, I utilize a framework suggested by Fraser (2008). He discusses three different notions concerning animal welfare. Of those three notions the first mainly focuses on basic health and functioning, the second perceives the affective states of animals such as pleasure or distress (also hunger and thirst) as focal, and the third emphasizes natural living. These notions overlap, but pursuing a single one of them might still not lead to good welfare as interpreted by others.

Fraser (2008) argues that the root of the multiple interpretations of animal welfare lies in the debate about human welfare during the industrial revolution. At that time, proponents of simple, natural lifestyles were opposed those valuing progress and a life improved by technology.

Interestingly, the different notions have all provided a foundation for numerous approaches to animal welfare research. In that way, Fraser (2008) argues humans' understanding of animal welfare is at the same time value and science based. Broom (2014) mentions that these approaches can conflict, for example regarding slaughter methods. There are cases when the less bloody and therefore aesthetically less disturbing method was chosen, even after scientists favored other techniques based on their findings.

Depending on what element of animal welfare one chooses to focus on, different actions might seem preferable. For example, outdoor enclosures with a varied environment that suits the species enables animals to better show their natural behavior. However, allowing animals to roam outdoors also entails giving up an element of control. The weather changes independent of the farmer's wishes, predators might endanger the animals and wild or feral animals can transmit

diseases to the production animals. Because animals kept indoors live in a more controllable environment, these systems can sometimes bring about better results e.g. regarding the occurrence of parasites (Van Wagenberg et al., 2017).

2.2.1.2 Intra-sustainability conflict

Godfray et al. (2010, p. 817) emphasize that agriculture can no longer just maximize productivity, but has to “optimize across a far more complex landscape of production, environmental, and social justice outcomes.” The need for increased farm animal welfare is not the only sustainability related challenge, the agricultural sector is confronted with. Others are financial feasibility (Lawrence et al., 2004, D’earth et al., 2010) or production of healthy food (consider health threats such as antimicrobial resistance, e.g. Van Boeckel et al. 2015) and all of this facing a rising human population (Dawkins & Layton, 2012). These different sustainability demands can sometimes be in harmony and other times pose conflicting demands. Scholars have shown interest in how humans can be fed in the future and discuss possible solutions for sustainable food systems. Muller et al. (2017) analyze the sustainability of organic production and find that animal production and other factors such as food waste would need to be reduced to feed all humans on an organic diet. Others, such as Witzke et al. (2017), assess conventional agriculture to be far more sustainable than alternative production systems. Conflicting goals can potentially lead to minimization of the efforts invested into improving animal welfare.

Particularly natural living of production animals can be disregarded when one chooses to focus on economics or other goals. However, health and affective states, which include hunger and thirst, can only rank low in a list of priorities, but cannot be fully ignored. If diseases such as avian influenza cause havoc in the stables, potential income is lost and no food has been produced for the human population, therefore resources have been wasted and the actor failed regarding all potential goals listed before. The same holds true if the animals starve to death. In

line with this, D'Eath et al. (2010) note that sometimes improvements in welfare can lead to economic benefits, such as in the case of cows that produced less milk but also showed decreased predisposition for mastitis, which was costly because of rejected milk and veterinary costs (Christensen, 1998).

2.2.1.3 Goal-conflicts in society

Not everyone prioritizes the same values. For example, the majority of citizens in the EU wish for higher farm animal welfare (European Commission, 2016), but only few consumers are willing to pay premium prices for increased animal welfare alone - they prefer animal welfare as one attribute in a bundle, such as animal welfare and taste or health (Maloni and Brown, 2006). This citizen-consumer gap which describes that citizens see something as meaningful (e.g. environmental protection, animal welfare etc.) but do not adapt their purchasing behavior to these values (e.g. buying meat from a system that they do not believe to offer a high level of animal welfare) has been discussed by scholars. De Barcellos et al. (2011) analyzed empirical data from Brazil and found that consumers' thoughts about pig production systems are only weakly linked to their consumption choices. They explain this difference with the importance of prices and incomes for food shopping (Januszewska and Viaene, 2005). In line with this, Grunert et al. (2014) also find that consumers have a higher level of concern with sustainability issues on a general level, than they have when they are confronted with actual food products choices. Furthermore, in a German study, 13.4 % of respondents claimed that they would consume more meat, if it were cheaper. On the other hand, the number of vegetarians and those who only occasionally consume meat is also growing (Cordts et al., 2013). Predictions show that meat consumption in Europe will stabilize or only decrease slightly (European Commission, 2017), but citizens also want to protect the environment (European Commission, 2014). It is obvious that

some of these demands are rather easy to combine, while others are hard to achieve. For example, meat can be produced in vast amounts and at prices that enable most consumers to eat meat products on a regular basis. However, producing that much meat takes a toll on the environment and it means that production animals must be kept in intense systems. As discussed before, that does not necessarily mean that their welfare is always worse than when they are allowed to roam outdoors, but it limits the possibility for natural behavior. Because not all consumers have the same opinion on animal welfare and sustainability in agriculture or the importance of these topics, it is also very unlikely that everyone will be satisfied with any direction the market or animal welfare legislation might take.

To sum up, Fraser (2008) presents us with three notions concerning animal welfare: natural living, affective states and health. These different interpretations of the term can cause disagreements, even when individuals agree that animal welfare is truly important. Two additional goal conflicts are the sustainability goal conflicts that the agricultural sector faces plus the conflicting demands society poses on agriculture. Natural living conditions can be neglected in agriculture, but minimum standards of health and affective states are needed to maintain productivity.

2.2.2 Sensemaking and the interpretation of routine issues

Sensemaking is an influential theory in organizational research; it is used for multiple levels of analysis and seeks to understand how people decree their realities (Brown et al. 2015).

There is no clear definition of sensemaking, but authors tend to agree that sensemaking deals with how people try to understand ambiguous situations. Sensemaking in organization studies draws extensively on the work of Karl Weick (1969, 1993, 1995). Explicit efforts at making sense often ensue when what is happening differs from what the individual expected to happen. When actors

make sense of a certain situation, they go through three steps (Weick, 1995). Noticing (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988), where they come to an initial sense of the situation, is followed by interpretation. This step involves a more in depth understanding of a given situation. Third, the actor takes action. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) explain that actions can lead to further iterations of these processes, until the actor finds that sense and action are in sync, so that nothing prompts them to undertake renewed attempts of making sense.

Research on sensemaking has broadened and encompasses work on organizational outcomes, such as strategic change (e.g. Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) or culture (Drazin et al., 1999). However, studies on sensemaking have traditionally focused on impactful interruptive events rather than other incidents. Actors who, e.g. engage in routine activities are not sense-less, but more commonly involved in immanent sensemaking. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) state that this has been neglected by the contributions to sensemaking literature. They assume that it is more common than the types of sensemaking that the literature typically focuses on. This article seeks to add to the understanding of sensemaking regarding recurring issues by exploring sensegiving regarding a long-standing issue, i.e. broiler welfare. Reflections on animal welfare are not routine in the same sense as brushing one's teeth every morning, i.e. an activity that one does every single morning and usually at around the same time, but they pop up again and again. In that way they also differ from the impactful single events that are usually discussed in sensemaking. In some cases the topic might also be dealt with daily, e.g. if someone teaches animal welfare.

Scholars have identified different types of sensemaking. One term that should be mentioned in this context is environmental sensemaking. This term was coined by Nigam & Ocasio (2010) who set out to theorize about cognitive realignment and change of institutional logics. Environmental sensemaking describes a situation in which people do not only make sense of an event, but of the organizational field the event is embedded in. Nigam & Ocasio (2010) argue that actors are

permanently engaged in environmental sensemaking. Regarding farm animals e.g. animal welfare problems at a slaughterhouse would prompt other field actors to reflect on their field and what the problem might mean to them and for their own business.

2.3 Methods

The case study at hand is aligned with Dyer & Wilkins' (1991) approach to classic case studies. The reason for this is that Dyer and Wilkins (1991) believe that a rich case study leads to in-depth understanding of a certain context. Dyer and Wilkins' (1991) approach is also more interpretative than Eisenhardt's (1989) positivist arguments, making the classic case study approach a fitting match with sensemaking.

Animal welfare is not a mere technicality, only discussed within and between organizations that actually produce chicken meat. Animal welfare organizations, the Ministry of Environment and Food, consultants, educational facilities for prospective producers, suppliers to the focal supply chain and the media influence each other. In order to find out how they interpret farm animal welfare and who they hold responsible for the compliance and advancement of broiler welfare, 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Fourteen interviews cover the entire supply chain and seven additional interviews deal with key stakeholders beyond the supply chain. Semi-structured interviews are used to collect extensive qualitative data (Qu & Dumay, 2011). To limit bias, several knowledgeable informants with different perspectives on welfare broilers were identified.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect extensive qualitative data (Qu & Dumay, 2011). These interviews are flexible, as the interviewee can ask follow up questions or go into more detail when something sounds interesting or is difficult to grasp. However, the somewhat pre-defined structure enables the researcher to compare the findings across interviews, which is important from a realist perspective (King, 2004).

Individual interviews were a better fit than focus groups for multiple reasons. For example, it was obvious that some of the interviewees were familiar with each other, but they do not all share the same type of relationship. Some interviewees even depend on other interviewees (customer-

supplier-relationships, source of funding). It is challenging to mix strangers and acquaintances, because the group dynamics can differ. Gibbs (1997) argues that researchers should not assume that the participants in a focus group are articulating their individual views. I assume that dependencies among the interviewees amplify this problem and if interviewees are not at ease the focus group is often unproductive (Morgan, 1998). In addition there was also a practical issue of finding dates when all interviewees were available. The interviewees live and work all across Denmark and it was not always easy to find time even for an individual interview.

In order to qualify as informants, individuals had to have the power to affect the conceptualization of broiler welfare within and outside their organization. For instance, the power of a category manager (e.g. deciding to give a new product a chance) and a campaign manager in an animal welfare organization (e.g. determining how to depict welfare issues) to influence the conceptualization of farm animal welfare, of course, differs considerably, yet within their organizations they are the relevant interview partner. Because of his role as an outside observer without a direct stake in marketing broilers, I included an interview with a journalist who had recently planned and been featured in a documentary about broiler welfare. I screened for interviewees without considering their personal information, such as gender or religion. Each of the interviewees has been equipped with a pseudonym, and only the type of organization they are working for (e.g. supermarket) is reported instead of the specific name of the organization. The list of interviewees is in the appendix. The sampling method was mostly purposive, meaning that I identified who to interview upfront. However, there was a minor element of snowballing that served in two ways. For example, the journalist who was interviewed was mentioned in some interviews and included for that reason. In addition, interviewees' comments served as a control mechanism. It happened sometimes that a helpful interviewee wanted to recommend someone else to talk to that I had already included in the study. It is positive that they are familiar with

each other, if nobody had heard of the others, the actors could hardly be said to contribute to the same discussion (broiler welfare in DK).

The interview guide was inspired by perspectives on animal welfare of philosophers (e.g. Sandøe & Christiansen, 2008, Fraser, 2008) and ethologists (e.g. Broom, 2014), on the one hand, and by information published by organizations in the field of broiler production, on the other hand (e.g. animal welfare organizations, industry associations). I employed this duality to stimulate thoughts about the three types of conflicts. By doing so, I could gain rich insights into the interviewees' perceptions. The interview guide was structured in two parts. The first part covers the interviewee's position in the organization and the organization's position in the field. The second part deals with their own perception of animal welfare, the stance of their organization, the interviewees' perceptions of how animal welfare is treated in the field, who is responsible for it, etc. The interviews lasted between 26 and 80 minutes and were conducted in Danish, three of them via telephone, the other ones face to face either at the author's office or at the interview partner's office and, in one case, at a library. All of the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim using N*vivo. The codes used in N*vivo come from the interview guide and are labelled, e.g., "responsibility for animal welfare" and also have sub-nodes to structure the findings, in this example, e.g., "producers" or "consumers". By looking for patterns in the material, I found a dichotomy of actors along the supply chain and beyond the supply chain, which is why the discussion below is structured accordingly.

2.4 Findings

The finding section is structured by discussing the three conflicts discussed earlier. I further differentiate between two groups of actors, "along the supply chain" (including suppliers to the supply chain) and "beyond the supply chain", including all other interviewees. I begin by

contrasting how actors define farm animal welfare, e.g. whether they focus on the animals' health or natural living. Related to that, I analyze if the other two problems, conflicting sustainability goals in agriculture and conflicting values in society appear in this case study and how they add to the complexity of farm animal welfare as an ethical issue, e.g. by making common goal setting difficult to imagine.

2.4.1 Intra-animal welfare conflict

Along the supply chain a health definition of animal welfare is dominant. This entails that an animal that is not sick, is perceived as an animal that enjoys good welfare (Fraser, 2008). The following quote of a hatchery CEO exemplifies that “*they [the broilers] have an equally good life in conventional production as in other systems*”. This attitude conflicts with the belief that good welfare can only be achieved under natural conditions. Someone who adheres to the “natural living” definition cannot believe that animals that live in windowless stables live as good a life as animals that roam outdoors.

Concerning need states, “basic” ones such as thirst are mentioned, but not needs typically assigned to humans and their companion animals such as joy or happiness. There are actors who indicate a welfare definition that differs from the commonplace health notion. One importer of gourmet broilers says that “good meat comes from animals that had a good life (freedom)”. The importer sells gourmet broilers via Danish supermarkets but is independent of the other links of the supply chain. However, stating that good meat comes from animals that live in freedom is also anthropocentric. The chickens are supposed to run loose so they taste better, not because their freedom is more important than human needs, in this case enjoyment.

The marketing manager of a producer declares that “*things (the chickens' living conditions) should change step by step, [...] otherwise there won't be any development*”. Also this producer

diverges from the norm by marketing their own chickens instead of selling to slaughterhouses.

Their readiness to adopt slowly but surely different production methods can be seen as an attempt to improve the animals' quality of life for their own sake. Neither of these actors could go with the norm, because their products do not fully correspond to conventional production methods, which is why they had to do their own marketing. Had the supply chain organizations adopted a welfare definition that has a strong base in natural behavior or affective states or if they were compromising human interests for the sake of animal welfare, there would be a considerable mismatch between their practice of mass-producing cheap meat and their beliefs. As individuals' interpretation of stimuli is influenced by their motivation, it is unlikely that they would have a different definition (Pittman, 1998). Further, actors along the supply chain are somewhat co-dependent which makes it unlikely that a single actor has a diametrically opposed perception of broiler welfare (Maitlis, 2005), also because they can observe what other actors in their environment are doing and adopt these activities (Nigam & Ocasio, 2010). The two examples above concern actors that are less integrated in the supply chain.

The actors beyond the supply chain see things differently. Their perception of animal welfare deviates considerably from the views analyzed above. Interviewees within this group do not tend to believe that good animal welfare without natural conditions exists (Fraser, 2008). The following quote by an ethologist shows this: *"I would rather live...if I was a broiler, or a chicken, I would rather live a shorter life where I could fulfill my behavioral needs than live a longer life, where I'm just sound and healthy."*

When these actors talk about more natural conditions, they are thinking of increased freedom for the animals and a generally more active, richer life, as the quote in the beginning of this section shows. Conversely, the elements that make life in nature less charming, such as the presence of

predators, harsh weather etc. are not discussed.

Proponents of a natural living view have two main reasons to object to conventional broiler production. One is the physique of the broiler breed. Not only does it grow fast, but its breast is also considerably larger and heavier than the one of old fashioned breeds. In addition, conventional broilers are kept indoors and have little space. This analysis shows that these actors do not forget about health, but they mostly see it as a basic condition and want species-appropriate conditions, such as outdoor enclosures, on top of health. For example, a member of the animal ethics council elaborates on welfare problems in organic production: "*Organic production is often seen as problem-free in Denmark, but it appears that there actually are massive problems in organic production regarding the survival rate of broilers etc.*" Thus, I argue that most of them are aiming for a higher level of animal welfare in that their view is more inclusive. Interestingly, regarding affective states, there is no difference between supply chain and other actors – "hunger" or "stress" are mentioned, while concepts such as "joy" remain undiscussed.

2.4.2 Intra-sustainability conflict

For the supply chain actors, the health focus is a fitting match with their interpretation of conflict 2, sustainability goals. Regarding those, the social context in a broader sense can indicate to the actors that trying to keep up good health within the conventional system is not only good enough, but even the right thing to do. For example, the communications manager of a slaughterhouse reports a stronger social responsibility to humans all over the world than to the animals that are slaughtered at his own employer's premises, i.e. he argues that it is unfair to produce meat that is so expensive that it is outside the reach of many consumers. In line with this notion, the CEO of a

company that produces stable ventilation systems adds that “the whole world needs to be fed”.

These actors rank “feeding a (growing) human population” higher than “improving animal welfare”. Their arguments are anthropocentric in the sense that their conceptualizations of animal welfare do not consider the animal as a sentient being but as nutrition for humans or as a commodity. Again, these actors seem to share the same opinion which is well aligned with their motivations and legitimate in their environment (Nigam & Ocasio, 2010).

Among the “beyond the supply chain”-actors there was little about the growing human population. The actors found it terrifying that “*animals are treated like that in a civilized country*”, as an animal welfare organization’s consultant phrased it, and did not understand why broilers need to be sold at such a low price, or why consumers should not cut down on their consumption and buy meat from alternative production systems, as suggested by an animal ethics teacher. This view is the reversal of the arguments the other group brought forward: Humans are allowed to consume meat, but only as long as it does not impede the animals’ welfare too much. Thus, they interpret animal welfare as being a higher ranking goal than feeding a growing human population with meat. Contrary to the supply chain actors, their reservations about animal production concern the animal itself, not the deliciousness or affordability of the meat. As they are not directly involved in the production of broilers, they have no stake in legitimizing conventional broiler production (Sohnenshein, 2009).

2.4.3 Goal-conflicts in society

Conflict 3, different values in society were mentioned multiple times but limited to the understanding that not everyone wants to or is able to spend more on meat produced under non-conventional conditions and that these products have to be easy to find in the supermarket. For example, a supermarket category manager explained that “*the products have to be there...and the*

price has to be right. That is crucial for consumers.”

Among the actors beyond the supply chain, conflict 3 was again limited to consumers' willingness and ability to pay. To illustrate this, an ethologist explained that “*What holds consumers back is the price. So if a cheaper chicken [compared to organic] with good welfare is developed, there is market potential in it.*”

This is the only one of the three conflicts that actors along and beyond the supply chain interpret the same way. It shows that there is common understanding that in order to achieve a larger market share, animal friendly products would have to be sold at moderate prices. Considering the citizen-consumer gap (e.g. De Barcellos et al., 2011) it makes sense to strengthen the availability of welfare friendly products, as even consumers who find animal welfare important might not make purchasing decisions that are aligned with their wish for better animal welfare.

2.5 Implications and Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have analyzed how actors in Danish broiler production interpret the recurring issue of farm animal welfare on a field level. This type of environmental sensemaking is relevant here, as farm animal welfare is affected by organizations alongside and beyond the supply chain. Regarding the improvement of farm animal welfare, I identified three different conflicts. The first one results from conflicting definitions of animal welfare, the second from conflicting demands within the agricultural sector and the third from conflicting values in society. In this case study of broiler production, I found that actors along the supply chain tend to define animal welfare differently from those beyond the supply chain. The prior focus on health, the latter on natural living. Further, supply chain actors prioritize human needs over animals' needs: they want satisfactory animal welfare, because humans should have access to sufficient, healthy meat. The actors beyond the supply chain reverse this thinking. They believe that humans are allowed to use and even consume animals, but only if this does not infringe the animals' wellbeing too much. Neither supply chain nor other actors address the animals' emotions, such as joy. Conflict type 3, the conflicting values in society, came up in the form of statements about consumers' willingness and ability to pay an increased price for meat from non-conventional production. The interviewees in this article stated that even if consumers are interested in animal welfare, this does not mean that they would be willing to pay a significantly higher price for these products.

Gjerris et al. (2016) are skeptical of the concept of ethical consumption itself. They argue that food production is too complex, that there are too many trade-offs and interdependencies that lead to a clash between multiple concerns consumers have (e.g. social fairness, climate change etc.).

Given that actors have different interpretations of and attitudes towards animal welfare and that also consumers have various attitudes, one could wonder what this means for sensemaking. When looking at the market for broilers in Denmark, where there is a much higher variety of products than years ago, it seems as if the tensions from the varying attitudes lead to recurrent negotiations that push the market not necessarily to abandon conventional production but to offer alternatives. In some other cases, a certain production system has even been abandoned, e.g. conventional battery cages for egg production have been phased out in the EU in 2012.¹⁸ Since then, only enriched cages or cage-free production systems are allowed. However, changes do not mean that there is no more poor welfare in broiler production or that meat production no longer affects the environment. Therefore those who abstain from meat for animal welfare or environmental protection reasons still have to live with the consequences of others' food preferences.

Even though agriculture and meat production affect the climate, this topic was not discussed. Broiler production is commonly found to be less damaging to the environment than other types of meat production (De Vries and De Boer, 2010). So compared to beef or pork, one might argue pro broiler consumption, but of course also this type of production requires natural resources and produces waste.

With the article at hand, I contribute to literature on recurring issues in sensemaking. I do so by positioning farm animal welfare as a recurring issue and by analyzing the case of broiler production in Denmark to show how actors interpret it. I find that the complexity of farm animal welfare is interpreted in ways convenient to the actors' activities. Regarding future contributions to the understanding of animal welfare as an issue, I encourage research concerning the enactment of routine or recurring issues, meaning what actions people set to deal with them. For

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/practice/farm/laying_hens_en

researchers who are interested in animal ethics, there is a plethora of issues regarding farm animal welfare, animals used in research, animals used for entertainment (e.g. in zoos, as companions etc.) and wildlife. Also scholars interested in issues regarding human welfare will unfortunately not run out of topics any time soon. Issues regarding human welfare include child labor, modern slavery, obesity, the marketing of unhealthy food, etc. Such research could be carried out on an organizational or on a field level.

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3 Adding an ethical dimension to institutional change – a historical discourse analysis of animal welfare in Danish broiler production

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Abstract

In the past animal production has been intensified more and more; however, critical incidents regarding animal welfare as well as general trends, e.g. regarding consumers' attitude towards animals, can counteract this trend. Drawing on institutional theory and focusing on historical discourse and changes, I analyze how practices regarding chicken production were adapted between 1995 and 2015. Particularly I examine the ethical stances of disruptive and defensive statements. I reviewed newspapers, an industry publication and supermarket flyers and found three critical incidents that accompanied change: a welfare report that led to a new law, a strike that resulted in a union agreement, and the marketing of welfare broilers. When practices were problematized, utilitarian arguments were often drawn on. When practices were defended, this happened using ethical egoism. An overall finding is that all changes can be interpreted as institutional maintenance, because they keep broiler production socially acceptable.

Keywords: institutional change, discourse, farm animal welfare, ethics

3.1 Introduction

Conventional food production methods, developed after WWII to supply a growing population with affordable food, have since developed into the dominant practice. One of the concerns regarding conventional methods is farm animal welfare, which is about how animals thrive throughout their

lives. Although the dominant path of animal production has been one of intensification, there are examples where critical incidents, e.g., public disclosures of serious mistreatment as well as general trends, for instance, in consumer attitudes to animal production, have counteracted the dominant development.

As an example of general trends, the latest Eurobarometer study (2016) found that more than 80 percent of European citizens believe that the welfare of farm animals should be protected more vigorously. France proposing a new law that compels slaughterhouses to videotape their activities, so that animal abuse can no longer remain concealed, is the result of a critical incident in 2016. At that point, animal activists had published footage of animals that were slaughtered without being stunned first.¹⁹ These examples show that there still are ethical issues around farm animal welfare and that EU citizens have an overall benevolent attitude towards farm animals.

Existing animal-related discourse and content analyses cover topics such as how dog walking in public spaces is perceived (Toohey & Rock, 2015), how pets are referred to in human obituaries (Wilson et al. 2013), the debate in the Dutch House of Representatives about forbidding ritual slaughter (Vellenga, 2015), polar bear tourism in Canada (Yudina & Grimwood, 2016) or the ethics of in vitro meat (Dilworth & McGregor, 2014). How farm animal welfare issues have been covered over time in mainstream media or industry publications seems to have been overlooked.

The purpose of this study is: a) to identify such critical incidents as well as general trends countering institutionalized practices in Danish broiler production in order to; b) to explore the discourses around the incidents and trends by identifying the underlying ethical considerations.

¹⁹ <http://www.politico.eu/article/french-parliament-votes-for-slaughterhouses-cameras/>

My main research question is: “How have institutionalized practices in Danish broiler production changed during the last decades?” I have split this question into two sub-questions to find who was involved in the change and how those who promoted change vs. those who defended an institutionalized practice used ethical arguments.

I chose to focus on broiler production, it being one of the most intense production systems. On the one hand, this means that animal welfare problems regarding broiler production concern an immense number of animals and, on the other hand, that broilers tend barely to be seen as animals at all (Bock et al., 2007). I selected Denmark because there is a dichotomy between the country’s focus on intense production (Danish Agriculture & Food Council, 2016) and Scandinavia having a reputation of being particularly animal friendly (Appleby, 2003).

The purpose stated is fulfilled by an analysis of 21 years of content on the case of chicken production in general media, beginning with the year 1995. I picked this year as the starting point, because previous interviews with industry actors had revealed the importance of a welfare report published in 1995. For the systematic review, I picked the three national newspapers with the highest circulation. In addition, I analyzed the best known industry publication in the field and supermarket flyers from two major supermarket chains. First I analyzed all articles regarding chickens and animal welfare to find discourses that stand out because they evolve around change, e.g., a new law. Three such discourses could be identified and were analyzed in detail regarding the ethical stance used.

The opening statements show that farm animal welfare is perceived as an important issue. It is important because a majority of citizens seem to acknowledge its importance and because animals are sentient beings, so we have to assume that they would prefer good welfare over bad welfare. There is

not one clear, universally accepted definition of sentience. However it means that a being is aware, able to feel, remember its actions etc.

It is also an issue due to the conflicts between animal welfare and other goals.

For example, improved animal welfare might increase production costs considerably, making it hard to produce meat that the majority of the population can afford to eat regularly or to stay competitive in an international market.

This article contributes to institutional theory by adding an ethical dimension to considerations about institutional change, thereby exploring a different perspective on how or why change happens or does not happen. Additionally, the issue under analysis is one of interest to citizens as well as politicians and organizations involved with animal production.

3.2 Theory

3.2.1 Institutional Change

Institutions are rules or taken for granted assumptions that shape what is appropriate in an objective sense. They can be so strong that alternative actions appear unacceptable or even unthinkable (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Change can also be averted by institutional pressure (Buchko, 1994) because actors in a field share a social reality (Zucker, 1987). Nonetheless, institutional conditions can change as the environment changes, for instance through increasing public concern. There is research on the antecedents to change with De Leeuw and Goessling (2016) coming to the conclusion that they come from inside or outside the field and that they can be political, functional or social. This finding is based on an analysis of previously published case studies on the topic. Actors in the field can either conform to the changes or counteract them (De Leeuw & Goessling, 2016). As a result, Hoffman (1999) refers to institutional fields as ever evolving. He also coined the term “issue field”, describing fields that do not evolve around a certain industry but around an issue.

One of the methods used by scholars with an interest in institutional change is discourse analysis. Over the last few years, researchers such as Hardy and Maguire (2010) or Messeghem and Fourquet-Courbet (2013) have investigated how different discourses can cause field-level change. Scholars (e.g., Green & Li, 2011, Phillips et al., 2004) have explored the relationship between texts and institutions by employing discourse analysis, because discourses are assemblies of meaningful text (Parker, 1992). The term “text” is not limited to written statements, and some scholars (e.g., Green, 2004, Phillips et al., 2004) state that the joint understanding that institutions rest on is constantly (re)produced in communication rather than being preexistent.

Maguire and Hardy (2009) state that when practices are institutionalized, discourse supports status quo by giving space to dominant field actors who depict the practice as unproblematic, necessary etc. The discourse must be adapted if practices are to be changed (Maguire & Hardy, 2006; Munir, 2005; Phillips et al., 2004), and this happens through distributing and consuming texts. Therefore, statements that illustrate the negative aspects of practices are a good starting point for an analysis of a changing institutionalized practice. This happens when texts include so-called problematizations (Maguire & Hardy, 2009), e.g. examples, stories, claims etc., that raise doubt. There are different methods of increasing the impact of problematizations, e.g. rhetorical strategies (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), collective action frames (Benford & Snow, 2000) or appealing to established interests (Fligstein, 2001).

In a research stream called institutional work, scholars have investigated “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215). Research on institutional work and change are connected, for example in Maguire and Hardy’s (2009) article about the deinstitutionalization of DDT in which they discuss how actors either engage in disruptive or defensive institutional work. By disruptive work, they mean efforts to alter or abandon an institution, while defensive institutional work is the reaction to other actors’ destabilizing work. Disruptive actors problematize certain practices they want to abolish, defenders dispute the problematization to protect or further legitimize the practice in question (Maguire & Hardy, 2009). For example, they would claim that a certain practice is in fact ethical, that there is no need for a new law, etc. However, change and maintenance are not always easily distinguishable. Consider the following example: A new law, technology (e.g., poultry stable ventilation) or societal trend (e.g., purchasing free range eggs) altering the way production animals

are kept, might be seen as a significant change and success by some, while being perceived as failing to tackle the real issue, animal exploitation, others. Hampel et al. (2015) asked scholars to connect organizational research to large social problems, and even though they focus on humanitarian concerns, also animal welfare is an important societal challenge.

To sum up, institutional scholars have discussed what causes institutional change, developed an interest in discourses as well as analyzed actors who try to attack or defend institutions.

3.2.2 Animal welfare, animal rights and human-animal studies

The terms animal welfare and animal rights might sometimes be perceived as synonyms, but these concepts differ and are in some cases conflicting. Also human-animal studies differ from animal welfare and animal rights research, but they do overlap with the aforementioned concepts. As indicated by the search terms used in the data collection, this article focuses on animal welfare but to clarify the difference, a short discussion of these concepts is relevant.

Animal welfare is based on the understanding that animals are living, sentient beings and can therefore be better or worse off. Proponents of animal welfare work towards the improvement of the living conditions for these animals, not towards the abolition of meat, egg or dairy production (Palmer and Sandøe, 2018).

Still, animal welfare is a controversial topic. The reason for this is that balancing human interests and animal welfare efforts is challenging (Palmer and Sandøe, 2018). It is also not always easy to assess welfare. For example, when assessing a certain production method, one can think of different indicators – such as injuries and disease – that can be evaluated. If all indicators are good or bad, it is

clear that the production method is good or bad, but what if the results are mixed? How good do the results for one indicator have to be in order to make up for bad results regarding another indicator? Animal rights thinking does not follow the same logic. Proponents of animal rights suggest that animals have moral rights and that these rights need to be protected (Palmer and Sandøe, 2017). From an animal rights perspective, any violation of a right requires a strong justification, such as a conflict between different rights (Palmer and Sandøe, 2017). The reason why animals are deserving of moral rights is because they have the capacities for sentience. Regan (1984) argues that those species where there is not yet any clear evidence of sentience should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Human-animal studies began as a movement among social scientists and deal, as the name indicates, with how humans and animals relate to each other. Since the beginnings in the 80s this field has grown considerably and also includes many contributions from the Humanities. Shapiro & DeMello (2010) state that animal welfare research also started to publish more about the relationship between humans and animals, and name Davis & Balfour's (1992) study of the bond between scientists and the animals they work with as an example. If we consider all animal welfare articles that focus on someone's relationship with an animal as belonging to human-animal studies, then many animal welfare articles written by social scientists count as human-animal studies articles as well. Consider the numerous articles that deal with farmers' attitude towards their animals (e.g. Bock et al., 2007, Te Velde et al., 2002, Kielland et al., 2010). Shapiro & DeMello (2010) further note that they are not sure if the empirical findings on animal use from animal welfare science will result in the abolition of those uses. They also state that some human animal studies-scholars are abolitionists and actively involved in the animal protection movement. This shows that some of the human animal-studies lean

more towards an animal rights perspective.

3.2.3 Consequentialism – value for whom

Consequentialism is a branch of normative ethics, the study of ethical action. What differentiates consequentialism from the other branches is the focus on the consequences of an action. It has also been used when philosophers argue for animal welfare (e.g., Palmer & Sandøe, 2018). As a result, consequentialism is a promising match because of the connection other scholars have made between it and animal welfare and because the article at hand is analyzing situations where actors tried to change or defend institutions. The critical incidents discussed in this article are consequences of these efforts. A consequentialist's aim is to create as much good or value as possible.

Applying consequentialist thinking on discourses about animals involves a necessary assumption, namely that value for animals can be created (they can be better or worse off as a consequence of a decision made). Further, it is important to note that the article takes a realist position. This means that there is a reality independent of actors' perceptions. In this case this means that animals can suffer, no matter if a certain actor has witnessed the suffering or if actors think that animal welfare is an important issue or not (Maxwell, 2012).

By asking whom value should be created for, we can differentiate broadly between three stances in consequentialist thinking (Brink, 2006).

Partial consequentialism holds that actors should concentrate on maximizing their own wellbeing. It is therefore a type of ethical egoism. Ethical egoism should not be interpreted as intrinsically bad.

Arguments pro ethical egoism may include that everybody knows his own needs best, but not quite as much or maybe nothing about the needs of others and that commonly accepted moral duties such as

speaking the truth are based on self-interest (Rachels, 1986). However, this argument does not necessarily hold true for domestic animals. These animals only have access to the resources (feed, water, shelter, enrichment) their caretakers grant them access to. So even if the chicken knows best what it needs and our understanding of chicken needs is limited, chickens still need a human to provide resources.

Impartial consequentialism, of which the best known type is utilitarianism, takes the opposite stance (Brink, 2006). Everyone who can be affected by a decision counts, and the best decision is the one that creates the most value. This can include all sentient beings, not only humans (Palmer & Sandøe, 2017).

In between the two extremes of partial and impartial consequentialism, there is room for moderate approaches. Moderate consequentialism demands concern for others, but narrows the scope or lessens the weight of these considerations. Broad (1971) discussed self-referential altruism, a notion that involves a broad scope but differentiated weighting. An actor should be concerned with the wellbeing of all those who might be affected, but the strength of the concern depends on the relation to those who are affected. That means that a self-referential altruist would be concerned about strangers as well as about his or her spouse, but the good created for the spouse would be more important. A consequentialist reasoning for this attitude is that people are better at taking care of those who are close to them, so if everyone looks after those who are close to them, overall this would lead to a maximization of wellbeing. Animals can be very close to us (because they are our companions, our source of income etc.), which means it can be reasonable from a self-referential altruist view to consider some animals more than some humans. As an example, consider someone's concern for their companion dog versus a human who lives in a distant country and who they will never meet.

By applying consequentialism when analyzing discourses, one cannot only differentiate between disruptive and defensive texts, but also between the potential scopes of the intended consequences. Below is a depiction of who is taken into consideration by the three ethical stances that I have made for easier understanding. The colors indicate who a decision maker should consider. In ethical egoism, only the self, in self-referential altruism everyone, but the self and relations are to be prioritized and in utilitarianism, everyone should be considered and is equally important. The stances illustrated below are used for the discourse analysis.

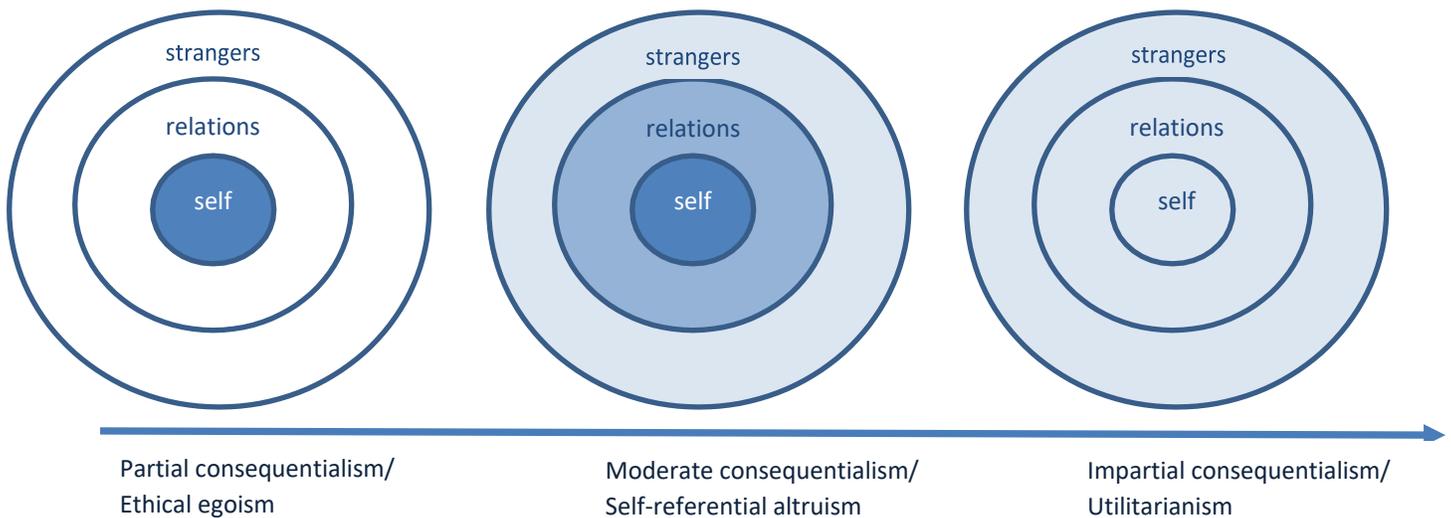


Figure 2: Three stances in consequentialism and who they aim to create value for (own illustration)

3.3. Research setting and methods

More than 100 million broilers are produced in Denmark every year²⁰. Broiler production begins at a hatchery where parent animals lay fertilized eggs. These eggs are hatched on site and the chicks are quickly transported to producers, i.e. farmers who raise them. There they live for

²⁰ <http://www.danhatch.dk/dh-slagtekyllingeproduktion>

about 38 days and then they are shipped to slaughterhouses where they are stunned, slaughtered and either prepared for sale in Denmark or for export. The vast majority of broilers are raised under conventional conditions, although some stem from organic or other systems.²¹

I am following in the footsteps of organizational scholars who use the term discourse analysis in a commonsensical way, rather than, for instance, committing to critical discourse analysis. Phillips and Oswick (2012) explain that following this commonsensical notion means that researchers usually do not focus on specifics of language but concentrate on underlying concepts and ideas shared by a particular set of texts and how these ideas evolve. They also typically refer to written text rather than speech. Phillips et al. (2004) write that organizational scholars tend to be interested in how a discourse affects the environment in which it occurs.

Prior to the discourse analysis, I conducted a manifest content analysis of what has been published during the last 21 years in the media selected. During a manifest content analysis, the scholar looks for readily observable aspects of the medium that is analyzed, such as the appearance of a certain word (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). This is step 1 and necessary to create a thorough overview over the material and find relevant discourses. Relevance in this context means that there was a tangible change. My two methodological steps directly help to fulfill the purpose of this study outlined in the introduction. By conducting a content analysis, I identify critical incidents as well as general trends in order to explore the discourses around the incidents and trends by identifying the underlying ethical considerations during the second step. Furthermore, critical realist researchers have a flexible attitude regarding methods, as long as they help them gain insight into the phenomenon they study (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014).

²¹ <http://www.dyrenesbeskyttelse.dk/dyrevelv%C3%A6rden-i-kyllingeproduktion-er-yderst-kritisk>

Step 1 – Content Analysis

This article is based on an analysis of three major Danish newspapers, an industry publication and supermarket flyers. The three newspapers with the highest circulation, Jyllands-Posten, Berlingske and Politiken, were chosen and I analyzed articles published there between 1995 and 2015. The reason for including newspapers is that they can be used as an indicator of mainstream opinions (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005). As search terms, I used “kylling” (chick/broiler) or “fjerkræ” (poultry) or “æg” (egg) and “dyrevelfærd” (animal welfare) or “velfærd” (welfare). The initial search resulted in 1247 articles. Then, I scanned the articles manually for overlap or articles that contained the keywords but were off topic. One example of this are articles that contain recipes or that call politicians “chickens” for not working towards the improvement of welfare for the human Danish population.

During 2015, I conducted 22 qualitative interviews with actors along and beyond the supply chain, such as producers, slaughterhouses, hatcheries, animal welfare organizations, supermarkets, researchers, etc. During these interviews I asked them to name industry publications that they are following. The one publication that was read by most of them is the “Gule Blad” (Yellow Page) which is published monthly by the Danish Agriculture & Food Council. Based on the interviews, I opted for Gule Blad as a source of the industry’s opinion on animal welfare. As there was no digital archive of this publication, I went to the physical archive, marked all articles that had to do with chicken welfare, scanned them and coded them in n*vivo. Also these articles cover 1995 – 2015. As supermarkets are a part of the field and the channel through which most consumers source their food, I decided to include supermarket flyers as a third source. I included one major “regular” supermarket chain and one major discounter both belonging to the same company. Because they only save their flyers for five years, the data covers 2011 – 2015. Because the data collection process

involved a good deal of reading, I developed the codes based on the review of the data collected. One example of this process are the different actors mentioned in the articles.

I ruled out computer-assisted quantitative content analysis, due to multiple challenges. One problem was the quality of the older industry publication articles. They cannot be read properly and a page might also contain another article that does not deal with animal welfare. Another concern is the ability of a computer to understand the texts it is scanning. For example, an article that includes the words “poultry” and “welfare” would have been analyzed despite dealing with pheasants instead of chickens. The disadvantage of relying on a human instead of a computer is that the large volume of articles and pages poses a challenge. I thought of simple mechanisms to minimize the risk of overlooking articles and similar issues regarding validity and reliability. For example, I kept track of the number of articles identified, discarded etc. in separate excel and pdf files, so I could cross check these numbers with those in n*vivo to make sure that the results had no obvious flaws.

Step 2 – Discourse Analysis

The scope of the data collected does not allow for close interpretation of the individual articles.

Therefore, step 1 can be seen as preparation for step 2. After the first analysis, I created a table showing the topics that were covered with more than one article each year in the newspapers, flyers and the industry publication. During the two decades covered, some discourses stood out because they led to or documented three different types of changes. These changes were chosen because they are “real”, meaning that they exist outside of someone’s perception. For example, a new law is a new law independent of somebody having heard or (dis)agreeing with it. The three changes are: In 1995, a report on animal welfare problems was published that would inspire a new law for broiler welfare.

Three years later, in 1998, a strike caused suffering among farm animals that would prompt unions to

reach a new agreement, and in 2011/2012 increased interest in market-driven animal welfare emerged, documenting the market entry and success of alternative broilers.

Discourses about animal welfare or in this case broiler welfare are embedded in a political environment. Summarizing it seems as if Danish voters were in periods more social and other times more conservative, but without ever tending towards extreme parties.²² Animal welfare was not always equally high on the agenda and some politicians even received attention for their work on animal welfare. In 2012, Dan Jørgensen – at the time Member of the European Parliament and later Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries²³ was elected “Animal Friend of the Year” by the Danish animal welfare organization “Dyrenes Beskyttelse” (Animal Protection)²⁴. While he held the position as Minister, the ministry also included different stakeholders into its plan to improve pig welfare.²⁵

Denmark is also part of the Vught-alliance (together with Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden), which is a group of countries who want to promote the advancement of animal welfare in the EU.²⁶ Denmark has been a member of the EU since 1993 and is therefore also subject to EU legislation regarding animal welfare²⁷. Of particular relevance are the Broiler Directive from 2007²⁸ which established minimum conditions for broiler production and the Poultry Meat Marketing Directive²⁹ which states what terms can be used when marketing poultry meat (e.g. free range).

²² http://www.stm.dk/_p_7812.html

²³ [http://www.ft.dk/da/medlemmer/folketingetsmedlemmer/dan-j%C3%B8rgensen-\(s\)](http://www.ft.dk/da/medlemmer/folketingetsmedlemmer/dan-j%C3%B8rgensen-(s))

²⁴ <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/regionale/fyn/dan-er-aarets-dyreven>

²⁵ http://mfvm.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/FVM.dk/Nyhedsfiler/Underskrevet_erklaering_topmoede_13032014.pdf

²⁶ https://landbrugsavisen.dk/files/dyrevelfaerdsloven_100aar_plancher_100x200_small-pdf.pdf

²⁷ <http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/danmarks-medlemskab-af-ef-og-eu/>

²⁸ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:182:0019:0028:EN:PDF>

²⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008R0543&from=EN>

3.4 Findings

3.4.1 Content analysis: overview

The following findings are taken from the first round of analysis.

| | Industry Publication | Newspaper | Supermarket flyers |
|------|----------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Year | Number | Number | Number |
| 1995 | 6 | 16 | X |
| 1996 | 6 | 8 | X |
| 1997 | 3 | 21 | X |
| 1998 | 6 | 72 | X |
| 1999 | 13 | 23 | X |
| 2000 | 7 | 12 | X |
| 2001 | 5 | 13 | X |
| 2002 | 10 | 27 | X |
| 2003 | 5 | 17 | X |
| 2004 | 10 | 16 | X |
| 2005 | 10 | 27 | X |
| 2006 | 8 | 18 | X |
| 2007 | 17 | 8 | X |
| 2008 | 13 | 5 | X |
| 2009 | 8 | 5 | X |
| 2010 | 12 | 8 | X |
| 2011 | 21 | 5 | 72 |
| 2012 | 22 | 12 | 69 |
| 2013 | 20 | 10 | 48 |
| 2014 | 18 | 7 | 43 |
| 2015 | 10 | 3 | 58 |
| Sum | 228 | 333 | 290 |

Table 1: Articles per year and type of publication

The industry publication tended to publish more on animal welfare as the years went by, particularly during the last five years covered in the data collection with almost three times as many articles on animal welfare being published than in the first five years. From 2010 to 2011 there seems to have been

a drastic change in interest in the topic; articles dealt with a variety of topics, among them market-driven animal welfare.

Newspapers show no trend towards reporting more about chicken welfare. An obvious peak happened in 1998 and the last five years of the data collection only featured less than a third of the number of articles that was published in the first five years. The peak in 1998 is due to two topics that were covered intensely, one was about the consequences of a strike on animal welfare, the other one was political campaigns that included animal welfare as a campaign promise.

The number of pages in supermarket flyers devoted to broilers from alternative systems saw a decrease.

3.4.2 Discourse analysis: Discourses and the related disruptive/defensive work

As illustrated in the table below, I found three discourses, which stood out during the two decades covered, when I looked for topics that led to change and were covered intensely: In 1995, a report on animal welfare problems was issued that would inspire a new law on broiler welfare. A strike in 1998 caused suffering among farm animals; this prompted unions to reach a new agreement, and in 2011/2012 increased interest in market-driven animal welfare gained importance, documenting the market entry and success of alternative broilers. I chose to analyze all the articles on the specific discourses using the three types of consequentialism discussed earlier.

| Discourse | Who initiated change | Who aimed to disrupt status quo (in the collected data) | Problematization | Ethical stance | Who had to adapt | Defensive work by (in the collected data) | Legitimation | Ethical stance |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Report | politicians/Animal Ethics Council | Animal Ethics Council animal welfare organizations | chickens suffer producers are in difficult situation | mostly utilitarian | supply chain actors (mostly producers) | industry publication | aspects of the law are ill-conceived | ethical egoism |
| Strike | unions | politicians agriculture | industrial agriculture is harmful | mix of all three | unions | agriculture unions | someone else is to blame | ethical egoism |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| | | | to animals and the environment unions and politicians ignore animal suffering | | | | | |
| Welfare broilers | marketers of alternative broilers + supermarkets | marketers of alternative broilers + supermarkets | high price of organic broilers conventional production is flawed acceptance of innovative production systems | mix of utilitarian and self-referential altruism | supply chain actors | Journalist/newspaper | organic broilers are too expensive to be a real option | ethical egoism |

Table 2: Discourse analysis of three critical incidents in broiler production from 1995 to 2015

Figure 3 shows a timeline of the critical incidents and general developments throughout the period I analyzed. 1995/2002 and 1998/2003 refer to the same incident and therefore have the same type of box. The data collection ends at the end of 2015. The dotted arrow shows current developments in the field. In 2015, the government announced their plans for a pig welfare label and they now have plans of broadening the label to other types of meat, including broilers.³⁰ When the Ministry of Environment and Food worked on their label with several partners, a supermarket chain was so dissatisfied with the plans that they decided to promote their own label. The labels were not related to a development of new products – both are meant as a scheme for existing products. The governmental label gives one to three hearts while the supermarket label assigns products one to four hearts³¹.

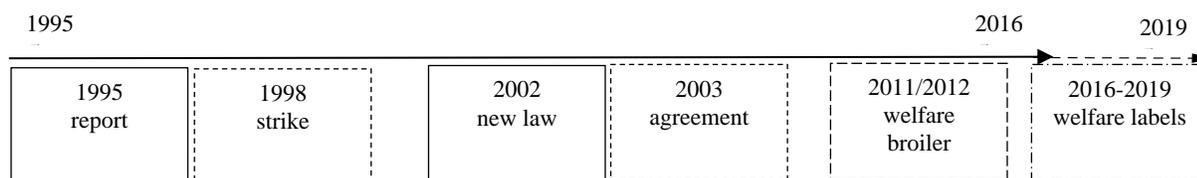


Figure 3: Critical incidents, general trends concerning the welfare of broilers from 1995 to 2016 and current developments

3.4.2.1 Report

1995 was a special year for Danish broiler production, which is why I started the data collection at that point. The Animal Ethics Council published a report that discussed the welfare problems in broiler production.³² The welfare law based on the report was passed in 2002. The report received attention in industry as well as mass media. The way in which

³⁰ https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Leksikon/Sider/Spoergsmaal_og_svar_om_Dyrevelfaerdsmaerket.aspx

³¹ <http://xn--dyrevelfrd-k6a.coop.dk/>

³² <http://detdyreetiskeraad.dk/udtalelser/udtalelse/pub/hent-fil/publication/udtalelse-vedroerende-slagtefjerkrae-1995/>

the news was treated differed considerably though. The new law forced organizations to change, mostly producers who had to assign more space per animal and allow them some hours of darkness. Using Hoffman's (1999) definition of fields, this change was caused within the field, as I perceive the Animal Ethics Council as part of the animal welfare debate. Here ethical egoistic (Rachels, 1986) problematizations would serve the Ministry or the Animal Ethics Council and self-referential altruism (Broad, 1971) would take producers into account, because they are directly affected and politicians carry responsibility to shape agriculture. Arguments based on utilitarian (Brink, 2006) thinking deal with the chickens who are, of course, affected. In this situation, the interests of producers and chickens are conflicting, because the producers would presumably rather not see stricter regulation, while improved living conditions are certainly preferable to the animals.

Discussion of ethical dimensions

1995

The article in the industry publication aims to stay close to the original report, which does not condemn conventional animal production but holds a multitude of organizations responsible for the improvement of animals' living condition, as the Animal Ethics Council finds them unacceptable. This is exemplified by stating that "*the animals experience pain, fear, and other sufferings*". It also states the motivation for this report, which was that broiler welfare had not been investigated before; that broiler production evolved during the last 30 years; and the large number of broilers. I identify this attempt to change broiler production as mostly utilitarian (Brink, 2006), because one of the motivations for the report was helping the many broilers.

The article thus mostly echoes the report's key findings without criticizing or praising them.

With quotes like “*apparently there are no limits to how animals are treated*” the newspaper articles feature clear disruptive work in the form of problematizations (Maguire & Hardy, 2009), while praising alternative production systems by stating that “*alternative poultry production is needed so that consumers have the chance to buy chicken that has been raised properly*”. Problematizations found throughout the articles criticized animal suffering.

In an interview, the perception of animal production as evil is somehow inverted, because the interviewee states that farmers are much more interested in animal welfare than the average citizen, adding that a nuanced discussion of animal welfare would be advisable. There are some self-referential altruist (Broad, 1971) defenses, for example, when the interviewee points out the importance of “*understanding the producers' reasons*” for doing what they do. No problematizations were identified as ethical egoism (Rachels, 1986).

2002

There were no newspaper articles only about the new law. However, the law was discussed as a part of the debate about whether broiler production should indeed exist in Denmark. The debate was triggered by an advertising campaign by Danish broiler producers, claiming that the taste of their chicken is the taste of “good animal welfare”. This was criticized partly because of the welfare problems in broiler production and partly because the campaign was financed with tax money. The tax money issue is not itself an animal welfare problem but can be seen as a problematization of broiler production, because it makes the industry appear unethical. The new law was not celebrated; some

articles mentioned that it is not that special, and that other countries already have stricter regulation (e.g. “*the max. stocking density will be lowered to 40 kg/m² in 2006. [...] in Sweden it is already at 36 kg/m²*”) indicating a wish for more dramatic change. Also in the industry publication, there were articles on the new law. One article lists the changes producers have to adapt to. An aspect of the new law, sanctions for producers whose broilers have infected feet, is contested heavily. The article states that “*this is a huge mistake*”. The sanction is that these producers can only keep fewer animals in their stables, and the article points out that there was no connection between the number of broilers in a stable and the health of their feet in Sweden, where inspiration for the law came from. Another article states that evaluation of broiler feet should be less strict. Pointing out that the new regulation is ill-conceived is a defense. Criticizing the new law on a feature that does not harm animals is ethical egoism (Rachels, 1986). If there were no repercussion for producers whose broilers have infected feet, the producers would be the only ones to benefit. The animals certainly do not, nor do consumers, the environment, etc. If an aspect of the law that in fact is harmful to animals was criticized, this would be self-referential altruism (Broad, 1971), because the producers own the animals and are responsible for them. If their criticism was based on the belief that the new law fools consumers into believing something about broiler production that is not true, for instance, that there are no longer any production diseases, this could count as utilitarian (Brink, 2006). Some articles also state that the law was supposed to be evaluated in 2005.

3.4.2.2 Strike

In 1998 workers went on strike to achieve an additional holiday week; among the functions that were strikebound were transportation of feedstuffs or animals to the slaughterhouse. Suddenly, producers could not get their broilers slaughtered when they were ready and many animals had to be put down

due to overcrowded stables and a rapid decline regarding the broilers' health. This was covered extensively by mass media, lamenting the suffering animals or the producers' financial losses. However, some articles indicated that neither the strike nor the loss was worthy of an outrage, but more the fact that modern farm animals are bred with a "slaughter date" (similar to an expiration date) so that their welfare deteriorates if they are not slaughtered at a specific point in time. The industry publication did not devote any attention to the situation. Instead they wrote about topics such as broilers' leg strength and the future development of the breed used. A tangible result of the crisis was an agreement dictating the course of action regarding animals in case of another strike. Five years later, in 2003, the umbrella organization of unions and the union for employers in agriculture came to an agreement. In this case the antecedent of change happened outside the issue field (Hoffman, 1999), because the unions do not usually discuss animal welfare. I find that suggestions to keep the unions from being blamed are ethical egoism (Rachels, 1986), those which attempt to help producers and workers on strike are regarded as self-referential altruists (Broad, 1971), because the unions and agricultural representatives are responsible for the workers and the producers. Solutions that are designed to help animals are utilitarian. In this case, the immediate needs of animals and producers are aligned, because it is better for the animals to be slaughtered properly than to endure long suffering and earning money from the broilers is better for the producer. However, it would be better for the animals if they did not suffer, just because their lives were extended some days.

Discussion of ethical dimensions

1998

Numerous articles – differing in length from a single paragraph to an entire page – were written about the strike, the consequences for the animals and the conflict between agriculture, the government and the unions representing the workers on strike. The articles cover all kinds of perspectives, finding a multitude of actors who are to blame, namely the workers on strike, the unions, the government and modern agriculture. They further problematize the issue using all three types of consequentialism. Examples of ethical egoism (Rachels, 1986) include when the union for industrial workers announced that they would not exempt for having the broilers slaughtered to keep them from dying in the stable, because “*they die one way or the other*” and later defended their actions by saying “*There is no doubt about who is responsible for the animals. The producers, not us.*” Or when the poultry industry declined the offer, after the union finally offered to slaughter the broilers if the producers would donate money to an NGO for every broiler slaughtered, stating that the idea was “*insane*”.

There were many self-referential altruistic (Broad, 1971) problematizations in the articles too. Most of them were about the producers and how they were struggling because of a strike that was not their concern, saying that the unions were “*kicking people that are already down*”.

Not all, but most articles also contained utilitarian arguments as they expressed concern for animals. This was usually done without expanding on the exact issues, for example “*The animals are not starving [...] but the broilers’ welfare is more and more threatened.*” In one of the articles, the Minister of Employment said that “*Animals should not be taken hostage during a strike.*”

Some of the articles also mentioned that it is questionable to discuss the chickens' suffering when strikes have kept ambulances from operating and caused hospitals to falter, which displays the stance that concerns about animals are only legitimate when the needs of human beings have been taken care of. Some articles also mention what they perceive as the underlying problem, namely modern agriculture. This is shown in quotes such as "*If there was any doubt whether the country's good old agriculture has turned into an industry and bare-knuckle business, then the horror scenes of late [...] have removed all doubt.*"

At the end of this crisis, the fighting parties agreed that animals should be kept out of future strikes. The chairman of the Danish poultry producers defended their production form again stating that he has "*no concerns regarding the current broiler production methods*".

2003

One newspaper article briefly reports on the agreement that two unions came up with. It recaps the issues during the strike ("*It [the strike] meant that too many broilers did not receive feeding in good time and a lack of slaughter lead to unacceptable overcrowding in stables.*") and explains that a committee will be set up in the future to decide on exemptions. The industry publication did not mention the agreement.

This discourse stands out for two reasons. First of all, in 1998 the problem of broilers not being slaughtered in time was used to problematize modern agriculture as a whole; in 2003, however, only the union agreement was mentioned in brief, even though the context, i.e. modern agriculture, had not changed. The other reason is that it illustrates the difference between animal welfare and animal rights (Munro, 2012) thinking. The aim of the union agreement is to slaughter the chickens in a timely manner, which means better welfare, but from an animal rights perspective, it is a perversion

to attempt to fix the issue by making trucks to the slaughterhouse available, because this solution fails to acknowledge the underlying problem. As discussed above, finding a solution for the sake of the animals is an example for a utilitarian argument. The arguments used in the article are utilitarian, saying that the agreement is supposed to “*ensure welfare for, among others, broilers*”.

3.4.2.3 Welfare broilers

In 2011 (industry publications) and 2012 (newspapers and supermarket flyers), market-driven animal welfare received increased interest. For this discussion, I have picked articles that do not simply mention market-driven animal welfare but that deal with specific new products or production methods. I assess that the change stems from within the issue field (Hoffmann, 1999), because producers as the “guardians” of their animals, slaughterhouses as the intermediaries and supermarkets as the gatekeeper to the consumer are part of the supply chain. Aiming to promote welfare broilers when they only benefit these actors would be ethical egoism (Rachels, 1986), benefitting the chickens, who depend on these actors, is self-referential altruism (Broad, 1971). It is difficult to argue for welfare broilers from a utilitarian perspective, except if the production system was supposed to be extended to help the many broilers in conventional production or if it decreased the environmental impact of meat production. Using more resources on producing less meat is neither utilitarian regarding the broiler (because the majority is still produced in conventional production), nor regarding the human population (who depends on a somewhat healthy environment). However, one could argue that the introduction of welfare broilers in the market could eventually lead to stricter legislation, if the market share of welfare broilers grows well and then all broilers could benefit. I assess that the interests of broilers in the care of producers who market welfare broilers and the producers are somewhat aligned, unless something would go so wrong that the animals are worse off

than in conventional production.

Discussion of ethical dimensions

The industry article exemplifies how industry actors aim to solve problems regarding animal production by intensifying production even more in new systems. A system that promises reduced environmental impact, while improving animal welfare, reducing the use of antibiotics and keeping diseases at bay, sounds desirable to the industry. These issues are potentially also interesting for consumers, yet the article mentions fear that the public will not accept such facilities and write that *“there was consensus that it will mean a lot of work to reach acceptance for such a system among Western European consumers”*.

The problematizations in this article were all utilitarian, talking about possible spreading of bacteria in this new system and that consumers might find it hard to accept such a new production method, despite its advantages, so that they would have to struggle to get acknowledgement. Here consumers are depicted as the ones standing in the way of improved animal welfare, environmentally friendly production etc.

The supermarket flyer emphasizes over and over again, sometimes explicitly that the gourmet broiler they are marketing is something very special, for example when describing its golden color. Other times, the top quality is stated without directly comparing it to other broilers (“better taste” – Better than what?). Also better living conditions remain implied: a statement clarifying that these broilers have a better life is not found. The copy focuses on the broiler being gourmet food instead of on the chickens’ high welfare. A newspaper article treats the gourmet broiler in a considerably different way than the supermarket flyer did. There is no focus on the broiler being gourmet food but on the

natural lifestyle of the broilers. Even Label rouge (a French food quality label³³) is treated as an “animal welfare standard”. The only defense of conventional broilers in this article is criticism of organic broilers – “*Broilers may have the best conditions and have ever so fancy hay to scratch in, but if Danes have to pay 150 DKK for the pleasure, they [the broilers] won’t sell that well.*” The problem with this is that if supermarkets charge such high prices, they cannot expect consumers to promote animal welfare which can be seen as the journalist’s ethical egoist (Rachels, 1986) defense. Another article starts out by using a utilitarian argument, as it problematizes conventional production because of the living conditions (“*A short life that lasts 36 days. 20 broilers per square meter. No access to fresh air.*”) and because of how hard it is for the consumer to find out what they are really buying, as these broilers are sold under different names. The author goes on to discuss how welfare and organic broilers differ from the conventional standard. It is the only one to explicitly criticize conventional production, while the other articles only describe the benefits of different systems. If the welfare broilers do indeed improve broiler welfare, the actors’ focus on praising the products’ advantages is self-referential altruism (Broad, 1971). If not, then their actions might be assessed as ethical egoism (Rachels, 1986), because they are the only ones who benefit.

³³ <https://www.labelrouge.fr/>

3.5 Conclusion

This article set out to identify critical incidents and general trends for the institutional field of broiler production in Denmark, to explore the discourses around the incidents by analyzing the underlying ethical considerations and trends.

During the 21 years analyzed, I found three relevant incidents and general trends: a report about broiler welfare problems that led to a new law, a strike that led to a union agreement and the marketing of welfare broilers.

In the analysis, I first looked at who initiated the change and found that the law as well as the welfare broilers were caused by actors from within the issue field (Hoffman, 1999). The strike was caused by outside actors, but it was also in a way a coincidence regarding the discourse on animal welfare, i.e. the strike itself was not about animals.

Regarding the analysis of ethical considerations in disruptive and defensive (Maguire & Hardy, 2009) texts, I found utilitarian (Brink, 2006), ethical egoist (Rachels, 1986) and self-referential altruist (Broad, 1971) stances. When institutions were problematized, the articles drew heavily on utilitarian arguments, while ethical egoism only appeared in the discourse around the strike.

Additionally, only the discourse about the new law relied on numerous examples of animal suffering.

When actors defended an institution, they tended to do so for their own benefit, using ethical egoist phrasing. It makes sense that someone who wants something to change finds arguments indicating that there is a considerable problem, which concerns different groups or many individuals. However, one could also defend an institution arguing that it is widely beneficial, but it seems that the actors

only practice “self-defense”, i.e. they do so only when they think they would be worse off if the institution was to change.

I further found that the immediate needs of broilers and producers were aligned in two of the three incidents. During the strike, it was also in the animals’ interest to suffer less which would have happened if they had been slaughtered in time. This is based on the assumption that they experienced considerable suffering. If they simply experienced mild discomfort, being slaughtered would not be in the animals’ interest. Alternative broiler production systems, like those used when producing welfare broilers, can be beneficial because animals might have more space or even outdoor access and/or grow slower. I also found that the industry publication features a growing number of articles on welfare-related issues. Animal welfare is therefore not a simple zero-sum game where one wins and the other one has to lose. However, one has to consider the magnitude of change. None of the changes really concern the underlying problem, which has to do with the demand to supply a growing human population with unlimited amounts of meat in a consistent quality at as affordable a price as possible. The OECD³⁴ perceives poultry as the main driver in the growing meat production, so there are currently no indicators of the abolishment of poultry meat production and consumption.

This means that the incidents of change I dissect in this paper could also be referred to as institutional maintenance, meaning that they are more or less cosmetic changes that keep broiler production somewhat on par or acceptable in our society. Some indicators point towards this, namely that between 2003, when the strike agreement was made, and 2011, when there was increased talk about

³⁴ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5116021e.pdf?expires=1496223412&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=B36E1DFC7DFEF235F85757CA40EA1639>

welfare broilers, no major changes happened. Welfare products are mostly presented as unproblematic despite that being not true (Sutherland et al., 2013). In the event of the welfare report and the strike, it took seven and five years respectively before an agreement was finalized. The new animal welfare labels that were launched recently or will be launched in the near future fit the picture and follow the trend of relying on market-driven animal welfare. Nobody is forced to change their practices, a new label on existing products simply informs consumers but fails to evaluate the complexity of the animal welfare issue.

The fact that the incidents discussed in the discourse analysis did not lead to extreme changes might reflect the attitude of a majority among the general population who does enjoy to consume (affordable) meat, but is unwilling to accept animal suffering. Of course, a history of minor changes does not necessarily mean that major change cannot happen, as shocks inside or outside the institutional field are not always predictable and can lead to dramatic changes. Consider for example the introduction of in-vitro meat or more meat substitutes (e.g. vegan burgers, sausages, chicken nuggets etc.) in consumer markets.

The analysis of animal welfare in Danish broiler production indicates that minor improvements regarding an ethical problem do not depend on a detailed problematization of negative consequences (i.e. animal suffering). It would be interesting to see if this holds true for other causes, e.g. humanitarian problems or major changes. Further research could also compare some failed and successful attempts at changing an institution, to see how they differ. For instance, are ethical egoist arguments called out as egocentric and end up less successful, or are the actors who argue in this way particularly good at causing change, because they know their own needs (Rachels, 1986). There are countless ethical issues that are related to organizations, markets and marketing, such as contemporary

slavery, environmental issues, food waste, etc. Just like animal welfare, these issues tend to be too complex to be solved by a single actor in a single attempt and it is important to see how change has previously been induced so that future attempts to cause change can enjoy the benefit of hindsight.

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4 Farm animals in marketing ethics – a study of institutional entrepreneurship in Danish broiler production

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Abstract

A variety of business sectors, such as the meat industry, businesses offering animal-based experiences (i.e. zoos, circuses, riding stables etc.) or companies that develop their products with the aid of laboratory animals, need animals, i.e. sentient beings, to generate income. The question this article sets out to answer is why actors market welfare meat products that are neither conventional nor organic. Marketing these special products is interpreted here as institutional entrepreneurship, because actors had to pave the way through or around a supply chain that focuses on the heavily institutionalized production systems. Marketing ethics literature has not yet discussed the implications for the marketer, e.g. if special ethical considerations are advisable or in place. The case of broiler production in Denmark shows that the institutional entrepreneurs mostly were in business for other reasons than to change the institutional field of broiler production as such.

4.1 Introduction

A market is a setting within which plays a role in provisional processes that are important for society (Dixon, 2002). Markets often have the appearance of stability, with rules, norms and understandings outlining what is appropriate conduct on the market and what criteria products should be evaluated against (Rindova and Fombrun, 1999). Thus, markets are envisioned and generated by actors who are restricted and enabled by institutions (Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

Institutional changes in markets can then come about as a result of different kinds of shocks to the market and its participants (such as an economic crisis) or due to the effort of some actors to evoke change. These attempts can be rejected or might create a new taken-for-granted situation. Actors who aim to instigate change that fosters transformation of existing institutions or creation of new ones are called institutional entrepreneurs (DiMaggio, 1988).

The market for broilers in Denmark is characterized by the dominance of conventional broilers. Additionally, organic broilers are available for triple the price, leading to a somewhat binary market. Both production forms are institutionalized, conventional production as the dominant production method and organic production as an option that is often perceived as better for the consumer's health, the environment and production animals. The production and consumption of organic food is well-established, in fact Denmark is the country with the highest market share of organic foods,³⁵ even though only a small amount of broilers sold in Denmark were reared in an organic system. Because of this, a discussion of organic broilers might benefit from being embedded in a discussion of how it relates to organic production overall. We excluded organic broilers from this article as this would take up a disproportionate amount of space in this article and because of the wide acceptance of organic foods among Danish consumers.

Through recent years, some actors have tried to market “welfare broilers”, an in-between solution that mixes and adapts elements of the two institutionalized production forms e.g. by lowering the number of animals raised per m² of stable space. Because of the challenges these marketers faced we see them as institutional entrepreneurs. Institutional entrepreneurs are the actors discussed in institutional entrepreneurship literature, which is grounded on institutional theory. It is intriguing to investigate why

the actors who are trying to market welfare products are taking on this struggle rather than simply marketing conventional or organic products. Therefore, the research question is “Why do actors in Danish broiler production market welfare broilers rather than institutionalized ones?” Conceivable motivations are e.g. that they are simply trying to tap into an interesting market, that they disagree with the institutionalized conventional production methods and thus do not want to be part of the conventional practices or that they are against the perception of animals as mere means. The first motivation is not driven by a concern for animals, while the other two are.

Initially, we aimed to embed this study into marketing ethics literature. Broiler production is a compelling case, because it is so intense that the animals are often reified (Bock et al., 2007).

However, we found that this aspect of marketing ethics is underexplored. For many decades, marketing scholars have theorized marketing ethics and commented that marketing “must respect and care about the welfare of those affected by marketing decisions” (Smith, 1995, p. 88). However, marketing ethics scholars have ignored the ethical challenge that arises when the product sold stems from a sentient being, i.e. beings that are aware of themselves and their environment. We searched SCOPUS and Web of Science using the terms “marketing ethics” and “animal welfare” or “animal” in title or topic (Web of Science) and article title, abstract, keywords (SCOPUS). No articles with these search terms could be found. Therefore we searched for literature reviews (e.g. Schlegelmilch and Oeberseder, 2010, Tsalikis and Fritzsche, 1989, Nill and Schibrowski, 2007) on “marketing ethics” and read these articles to see, if any of them mention the role of animals; also here we found nothing. However, we found some contributions on ethics and animal welfare that do not use the term “marketing ethics”. No information on why animals are excluded from marketing ethics was found. One possible reason is that marketing scholars believed that animal ethics belong to the realm of agricultural sciences, veterinary sciences, biology or philosophy and not to marketing. However, we do not believe this omission is

entirely justified. One reason for this is that market-driven animal welfare is often stated as the prime tool to improve animal welfare, e.g. by the European Commission saying that “everyone is responsible”³⁶ for animal welfare. Analyzing how or if the market does indeed deal with animal welfare issues is then also interesting for marketing scholars. An alternative reason for the absence of animal issues in marketing ethics literature is that animal welfare is a rather new topic in social sciences (Carenzi and Verga, 2007).

Besides from animals used for entertainment or research, this concerns production animals who are sold routinely, while they are alive and after slaughter. Contrasting the criticism that conventional production methods have received since the 60s (Harrison, 1964) and the lack of attention to this issue in marketing ethics, it seems as if animals had simply been perceived as regular products. Broiler production specifically is interesting because it is such an intense production method. The data collection covered the institutional field in Denmark, starting with chicks raised in the hatchery. When chicks turn into hens and roosters, they lay eggs that are hatched on site and shipped to farmers, commonly referred to as producers. The chicks grow for about 38 days and are subsequently transported to a slaughterhouse. In 2013, 107 million broilers were produced. Danish consumers often buy chicken breast³⁷, but processed foods make up half of what is exported.³⁸

The purpose of this case study is to point out why actors choose to market welfare products and if there are any traces of a removal of the perception of animals as simple means of production or products. The article contributes to the discussion of marketing ethics by appending the consideration

³⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/aw_brochure_strategy_en.pdf

³⁷ Fødevareanalysen, 2015

³⁸ Dansk årlig fjerkræksport, markedsanalyse, 2014

for production animals as sentient beings.

4.2 Theoretical Background

Marketing a new welfare broiler is not a simple change, it requires multiple adaptations to the production method, and the marketer might experience various barriers regarding other actors in the field. This is because the vast majority of broilers produced in Denmark is conventional³⁹, so the supply chain has adapted to this production system, which is perceived as the norm. In line with Prothero (2008), we see marketing as a social institution and breaking with such norms or institutions is a difficult venture. In order to examine this undertaking, this article draws on institutional entrepreneurship, which is part of the literature on institutional theory that focuses on actors' attempts to influence institutions. Institutional entrepreneurship as such is not about ethics, it does not investigate if it is morally right or wrong to sustain or attack a certain institution; neither does it insinuate that actors are motivated by ethical considerations. As this article sheds light on the ethical considerations that marketers of welfare broilers may have, it combines institutional entrepreneurship with marketing ethics.

4.2.1 Marketing Ethics and Animal Welfare

According to Laczniak and Murphy (1993), marketing ethics is about how moral principles are involved in marketing decisions, behaviors, and institutions. A number of reviews (e.g. Schlegelmilch and Oeberseder, 2010; Tsalikis and Fritzsche, 1989; Nill and Schibrowski, 2007) have summarized and analyzed marketing scholars' insights regarding this subject. Nill and Schibrowski (2007) find a dichotomy of normative and positivist research regarding marketing ethics, meaning that literature on the topic either deals with what organizations should be doing, or

³⁹ <http://www.dyrenesbeskyttelse.dk/dyrevelv%C3%A6rden-i-kyllingeproduktion-er-yderst-kritisk>

what they actually are doing – usually by applying quantitative methods. However, the aim of this article is to increase the general understanding of a situation, the situation being the marketing of welfare intense broilers. The article at hand takes a critical realist perspective as it is a matching fit with qualitative research and follows the understanding that there is a real world that exists independent of our observations but that there are different views of this world (e.g. Maxwell, 2012). Critical realism has been used in institutional entrepreneurship literature before and has been said to possibly increase the relevance of empirical management studies (Van Bockhaven et al., 2013).

Further, Nill and Schibrowski (2007) talk about the micro- vs. macromarketing dichotomy, where a micromarketing approach focuses on single units and a macromarketing approach, on the other hand, on a higher level of aggregation, for example on marketing systems or society. By perceiving marketing as a social institution, the article at hand applies a macromarketing perspective (Prothero, 2008). This is not an unprecedented choice, as indicated by the Journal of Macromarketing's history of contributions to marketing ethics (e.g. Hunt and Vitell, 1986).

Marketing ethics is all about human beings and their welfare. For example, Laczniak and Murphy (2006) present a summary of the basic outlook for ethical marketing that features at its center the statement “ethical marketing puts people first” and Abela and Murphy (2008) state that consumers should be protected from abuse. Also marketing ethics scholars such as Smith (1995) write that “the marketing manager must respect and care about the welfare of those affected by marketing decision”, without stating, however, if animals are to be considered as a group that can be affected. Davis (1992) talks about “society as a whole” and includes the environment in his considerations.

Furthermore, literature deals with the various functional aspects of marketing, such as the 4Ps, but scholars also explore sub-topics, e.g. ethics regarding green marketing (Nill and Schibrowski, 2007). However, the position of domesticated animals in this stream of literature remains unclear as it seems to have been overlooked. Animals are conventionally not classed with humans and domesticated animals are not primarily part of the natural environment. Farm animals, for example, are used as means of production and parts of their bodies or products of their bodies (e.g. dairy products) are sold for consumption, just like other goods. When Gaski (1999) mentions examples of unethical marketing, he lists a car that was sold despite its gas tank exploding or tampons that led to toxic shock. In these cases, it is obvious that we have to be concerned about the consumers' welfare, while welfare regarding a car or a tampon is not an issue. The case of animals is different, because they can suffer and have long been proven to be sentient beings (Sandøe and Christiansen, 2008). There are different definitions for sentience. Broom (2014) writes that sentience implies a variety of abilities rather than simply having feelings. These abilities are e.g. that the animal should have some kind of awareness, remember some of its own actions and the consequences of these actions, or to assess risks and benefits. The animal kingdom comprises so many different species that we cannot simply assume that all animals have the same type of sentience. There has been research on chickens' cognitive skills and emotion and the findings show that these animals have complex emotions, that they have individual personalities and that they can anticipate future events. In other words, they are as complex as some mammals that are commonly perceived as highly developed (Marino, 2017). Other production animals, such as cows, pigs, etc. are mammals and have thus been considered sentient for a longer time (Broom, 2014). In past practices (Harrison, 1964) production animals have most certainly been seen only as means, and thus it makes sense that they need not be considered by marketing ethics and are not found in this stream of literature, because of the implicit

assumption that they are products, much like a car or a tampon.

Two dominant perspectives on animal ethics, utilitarianism and animal rights (Sandøe and Christiansen, 2008) are relevant for the assessment of institutional entrepreneurs' actions and generally speaking for the discussion of if and how farm animals' welfare should be considered in marketing decision-making. Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism. Broadly speaking, consequentialists believe that the consequences of an action are the only morally relevant property (Brink, 2006). An action or rule is good when it brings about the best overall consequences. What characterizes utilitarianism is that all individuals who are affected by a situation should be considered. For example, keeping farm animals under improved conditions is good, regardless of the motivation behind treating the animals better. It would only be wrong to treat the animals better if other beings would suffer more as a consequence of the improved conditions. Proponents of the animal rights view believe that animals have rights and that these rights cannot just be violated to optimize some overall wellbeing. Within the animal rights view, there are abolitionists who are against all uses of animals, but also softer approaches that simply have as a goal to protect animals from suffering (Sandøe and Christiansen, 2008). Relating these theories to animals only makes sense when a) animals are seen as being able to gain pleasure or face suffering by the actions of others as opposed to inanimate objects, and b) speciesism (the belief in human exceptionalism) is limited. If human needs always come first and animals are only there to serve them, then improving animal welfare most often contradicts ethical behavior, because most measures would have negative consequences for some humans, such as higher workload and increased meat prices. If speciesism is moderate, it is also compatible with considering animals' needs. This would mean that human needs are as such more important than animals' needs, but that the latter should be considered where possible.

However, a certain minimum of animal welfare in the sense of animal health is also in the non-moderate speciesist's interest, because the animals should not, for instance, spread diseases to humans.

As stated in the outset of the article, literature dealing with marketing ethics does not explore how animals, specifically farm animals, often sold alive or in parts, should be conceptualized.

This means that scholars do not clarify if animals are really supposed to be treated just like cars or tampons or as a group whose welfare should be taken into consideration. However, some marketing and agricultural journals do feature contributions regarding farm animal welfare.

Consumers' willingness to pay (e.g. Lagerkvist and Hess, 2011) or determinants of attitudes about farm animal welfare have been explored (e.g. Cembalo et al., 2016), creating a framework to connect individual enduring beliefs and animal welfare attributes in food choices. Other publications investigate animal welfare labels; Heerwagen et al. (2015), for instance, explore the role of quality labels for medium animal welfare products and find them relevant for promoting higher welfare standards, as long as they offer clear improvements in animal welfare. The supply chain's responsibility, on the other hand, has been discussed by Harvey and Hubbard (2013a), who explain that the government must provide verification of standards and education to the general public and the supply chain along with definitions of animal welfare and research on animal-friendly production systems. Given that, they expect animal welfare standards to improve over time. Animal welfare as an example of market failure (e.g. Harvey and Hubbard, 2013b) is elaborated on by the same authors.

Also a broader search using the term "business ethics" instead of marketing ethics leads to some results. Pompe (2013) writes about resource-based ethics in veal production, and Manning et al.

(2006) discuss animal welfare as a part of evaluating CSR in food supply chains. The publications mostly in line with this article are those regarding market-driven animal welfare, e.g. Heerwagen et al. (2015). Yet, this article differs from the others in its purpose, the investigation of why actors choose to deviate from the norm of producing conventional products. By investigating this, we explore to which extent the perception of animals as simple goods is reflected or rejected in the thinking of even those actors who are marketing welfare products in a specific empirical setting.

4.2.2 Institutional Entrepreneurship

Institutional entrepreneurship literature belongs to the stream of publications on institutional theory. Institutional theory itself is a highly relevant theory in organizational analysis.

Traditionally, institutional theory is about how organizations comply with norms (Meyer and Rowan, 1991; Scott, 2007) in order to gain legitimacy and ensure their position in an institutional environment (Bruton et al., 2010). The term “institution” is one of the core concepts of the theory. Institutions are rules or taken for granted assumptions that shape what is appropriate in a particular environment.

Institutions can be so strong that alternative actions appear unacceptable or even unthinkable (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

Lusch and Vargo (2014) call markets institutionalized solutions and later Vargo and Lusch (2016) emphasize that markets – depicted from an institutional perspective – are not static, but changeable through the activities of the actors that populate the market.

Institutional fields are another pivotal concept. There are multiple definitions of this term. Hoffman (1999) states that fields can be formed around issues which unite a number of actors, such as e.g. the government, the supply chain, trade associations etc. These actors interact more fatefully with each other than with actors outside of the field (Scott, 1991). Institutional entrepreneurship is about change

in institutional fields and more precisely about the manner in which actors bring about change as institutional entrepreneurs. Change can be sparked by technological, economic or political developments and disruptions. While these antecedents of change are also discussed in institutional theory (e.g. Fligstein, 1991), they are not the main focus of Institutional Entrepreneurship literature. De Leeuw and Goessling (2016) analyzed previously published case studies to find the antecedents of institutional change. In their analysis, they find that the antecedents to change can come from inside or outside the field and that they can be political, functional or social.

| Inside/outside of field | Political | Functional | Social |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inside | Internationalization (resource) conflicts with partners | Technological innovations Innovations in management systems | Pressure from within industry Changes in staff and firm norms |
| Outside | Changes in laws/standards Political/financial crises | Technological changes New competitors | Market changes Cultural shifts |

Table 3: Antecedents of change in institutional fields according to De Leeuw & Goessling (2016)

Concerning antecedents from inside the institutional field, political antecedents are often conflicts of interests that the field did not respond to accordingly, or globalization. De Leeuw and Goessling (2016) perceive internationalization and (resource) conflicts as the same type of antecedent. Functional sources from the inside are often technological (e.g. new software) or management

innovations. Inside/social antecedents arise from pressure to conform to industry standards or new perspectives on norms.

Examples of political antecedents from outside the field are new national policies, financial crises or political opportunities. The emergence of the Internet or new competitors are examples of functional antecedents from outside the field. Outside social antecedents can be pressure from pro-environment movements, market demands for a broader product range, cultural shifts or change in macro-cultural discourses.

After one or some of these antecedents have occurred, institutional entrepreneurs might emerge and disrupt the field with new ideas that challenge existing institutions (De Leeuw and Goessling, 2016). DiMaggio (1988) coined the term 'institutional entrepreneur' about an actor who instigates changes that foster transformation of existing institutions or the creation of new ones. A single person can be an institutional entrepreneur as much as a whole group of organizations. Garud et al. (2007) note that literature on institutional entrepreneurship reintroduces ideas about agency, interest and power into institutional analysis.

Battilana et al. (2009) argue that not every change agent is necessarily an institutional entrepreneur. In order to qualify, the actor has to take actively part in the changes and depart from the framework for organizing in their specific institutional context. Taking active part means that they have to work on mobilizing resources. Interestingly, Battilana et al. (2009) consider actors who mobilize resources but fail to cause change as institutional entrepreneurs. Even if there are factors that encourage institutional entrepreneurship across the field, not all actors will turn into institutional entrepreneurs. This indicates that some characteristics of particular actors can influence their ability to contest

institutions (Battilana et al., 2009). An actor's social position in the field is relevant in this context, because it influences the way the actor perceives the field and his access to resources (Lawrence, 1999). Sometimes it can be easier for actors who are involved in multiple fields to undertake institutional entrepreneurial work (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Sewell, 1992). Greenwood and Suddaby (2006) note that multiple studies (e.g. Haveman and Rao, 1997; Palmer and Barber, 2001) have found that novel ideas tend to occur on the margins of a given field, because the actors there are, for instance, less embedded or less privileged as compared to central actors who tend to resist change because they are constantly socialized. Central actors could also have more to lose, as organizations that, for instance, have used a certain production system for many years having invested in the equipment needed, are presumably knowledgeable about all the processes this system entails and might even have defended their production methods when they were criticized by others. Additionally, the degree of institutional heterogeneity can play a role in facilitating institutional entrepreneurship as a high level of heterogeneity potentially leads to institutional incompatibility. This permits actors to distance themselves from existing institutions (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Seo and Creed, 2002; Sewell, 1992). From a marketing perspective, a certain homogeneity can be beneficial, so that the new solution can easily stand out. However, the initial institution must at that time already have been problematized to some extent. Otherwise, there might be little interest in the alternative. If nobody ever criticized conventional production as cruel, resulting in unhealthy food for humans or being hazardous to the environment, why try to position a new product that improves these dimensions?

Carrying through change that builds on existing institutions or breaks them is a complex matter. Institutional entrepreneurs must find support from allies while facing institutional defenders, as

dominant actors tend to prefer maintaining institutions over adapting them (DiMaggio, 1988).

An institutional entrepreneur must design a vision for the actors whose support he or she needs. This is difficult because institutional entrepreneurial work is in conflict with practices or ideas that might have been taken for granted for a long time. Lawrence (1999) writes that strategies can either work towards the stabilization of existing practices through institutionalization (e.g. Slack and Hinings 1994) or towards the mitigation of an institution (Oliver, 1992). This typically involves actions that impact legislation, cultural norms, structures or processes. Lawrence (1999) differentiates between the following two types of institutional strategies. A strategy aimed at causing institutional change can come about in an intentional or an unintentional way. In the first case, the actor would consciously try to influence an institution in a way that benefits him or her. An unintended institutional strategy evokes institutional change as a byproduct. Lawrence (1999) states the example of a company developing a product with specific features to meet their customers' needs, which later turns into an industry standard. It is often challenging to implement divergent changes; also they require more resources than other changes (Misangyi et al., 2008). For example, financial assets can be important during a transitional period when the newly implemented concepts tend to be unpopular (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). They can also be used to circumvent sanctions imposed by challengers to the proposed change.

Additionally, formal authority can help actors legitimize divergent ideas.

Institutional entrepreneurs in the setting of broiler production could either face conflict with the institution of conventional production or with both the practices of conventional production and the perception of farm animals as regular goods.

4.3 The research setting and methods

As one of the most intense production systems, broiler production is an intriguing case to explore. Moreover, conventional broilers are usually raised in closed stables, which increases the risk of abuse and neglect because passersby cannot see them (Broom, 2014). The intensity of broiler production also leads to the de-animalization of broilers, which are perceived as not being “real animals” (Bock et al., 2007). Denmark, specifically, is interesting, because a number of welfare products have been marketed over the last years.

Dyer & Wilkins (1991) believe in classic case studies that stand out because of a detailed understanding of the case and a compelling story. We use their approach as they approve of embedded mini- case studies and stress the value of choosing cases from the same context as opposed to picking cases from different contexts. Mini-cases within the same context can help the scholar to reach a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon, in this case the marketing of welfare broilers in Denmark. Further, the classic approach outlined by Dyer & Wilkins (1991) lends itself to scholars conducting non-positivist research.

Animal welfare is not only discussed within and between organizations that actually produce broiler meat, but across an institutional field. Therefore, the data collection had to include a multitude of actors. Animal welfare organizations, the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, consultants, educational facilities for prospective producers, suppliers to the focal supply chain and the media were also interviewed. To find out why actors set up an alternative production instead of conforming with conventional production, organizations who did so were included.

The 22 interviews conducted covering the entire supply chain and other relevant actors, were semi-structured, to collect extensive empirical data (Qu and Dumay, 2011). We take a critical

realist perspective in this article, which is a good match with conducting interviews that are based on an interview guide (Healy and Perry, 2000). In critical realist interviews, the interviewer has an informed role (Smith and Elger, 2014).

To limit bias and lower the risk for one-sided findings, several knowledgeable interviewees with different perspectives on welfare broilers were identified.

After choosing which organizations should be included, relevant interviewees within these organizations were identified. Interviewees had to have the power to affect the conceptualization of broiler welfare within and/or outside of their organizations. Hence managers, experts as well as journalists were recruited for the interviews.

The influence of a category manager (e.g. deciding whether or not to give a new product a chance) differs from that of an expert employed in an animal welfare organization (e.g. deciding if a product should be supported by them for being animal friendly), and a journalist who produced a documentary on broiler production, but they are all influencing the conceptualization of animal welfare.

This article features four mini-cases, which were identified in the analysis of the collected data. There are several reasons for focusing on these cases. First of all, they are all examples of broilers that were introduced as alternatives to the two dominant product categories. Furthermore, they were each seen as having significance to the field by several informants. Third, they were marketed by different types of actors (slaughterhouse, producer, importer). Finally, the mini-cases were chosen because they collectively demonstrate how the marketing of welfare broilers has become more normal over time. These reasons are relevant from an institutional entrepreneurship perspective for the following reasons: If multiple actors mention a product as significant it is more likely that this product actually

played a role in changing a market. In addition, the centrality of an actor in their respective institutional field influences his ability to cause change (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). Finally, the normalization of a new process/product etc. would be the expected result of successful institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009).

A total of 22 interviewees were recruited. In the following interviewees are equipped with a pseudonym, and only the type of organization they are working for (e.g. animal welfare organization) is reported.

The interview guide was crafted with the help of philosophers' (e.g. Sandøe and Christiansen, 2008) and biologists' (e.g. Broom, 2014) perspectives on animal welfare on the one hand and information published by organizations in the field of broiler production on the other hand (e.g. animal welfare organizations, industry associations). This was done to warrant sufficient background knowledge on the institutional field of broiler production in Denmark specifically and farm animal welfare generally speaking. The interview guide was structured in two parts. The first one deals with the interviewee's position in the organization and the organization's position in the field. The second section is about their own perception of animal welfare, the stance of their organization, the interviewee's perception of how animal welfare is treated in the field, who is responsible, the market potential for welfare broilers, etc. The interviews lasted between 20 and 80 minutes and were conducted in Danish, three of them via telephone, one via skype, the other ones face to face either at the author's office or at the interview partner's office, and, in one case, at a library. Audiotapes of all interviews are available and the dialogues have later been transcribed verbatim in N*vivo. The codes used in N*vivo come from the interview guide and are labelled,

e.g. "What would I change, if I could" and also have sub-nodes to structure the findings, in this example e.g. "breed" or "transportation". It is important to note that first we analyze why the institutional entrepreneurs market alternative broilers, and here we are really focusing on their statements. For example, the French broiler is labelled as 'Label Rouge'. Whether Label Rouge is based on ethical regard for animals or for food quality is not answered here, only the considerations of the actor who markets the product in Denmark. Similarly, when we analyze if the welfare broilers improve welfare, we compare them to the welfare problems stated by the actors in the field as the most pressing ones.

4.4 Welfare broilers in Denmark

To categorize welfare broilers, we draw on DeLeeuw and Goessling (2016) who analyzed six different types of antecedents by differentiating between antecedents from the inside and the outside of the field and further between political, functional and social antecedents. In addition, we distinguish between unintentional and intentional strategies (Lawrence, 1999). At first sight, some of the changes the marketers of welfare broilers made in broiler production might appear too small to count as institutional entrepreneurship. However, conventional production is so institutionalized, producers are tied to former investments (e.g. investing in new stables when old ones have not been paid off) and even small adaptations might change processes along the supply chain (e.g. providing broilers with hay increases the risk of campylobacter infections) so that even relatively plain changes can be a hard win.

4.4.1 Institutional Entrepreneurship

| Product/ Interviewee at the organization | Antecedent | Conflicting Institution | Institutional strategy |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Special broiler/ manager of animal production and communications | Cultural shift (accusations) | Conventional production | Unintentional |
| Regional broiler/ marketing manager | Changes in firm norms (ethics) | Conventional production | Intentional |
| Gourmet broiler/ import manager | Market change | Conventional production | Unintentional |
| Grain broiler plus/ CEO/marketing manager | Market change | - | Unintentional |

Table 4: Institutional entrepreneurs' strategies regarding welfare broilers in DK

4.4.1.1 The special broiler

In 2001, the special broiler was withdrawn from the market because the quantities sold underwhelmed the slaughterhouse behind this welfare concept. However, because Battilana et al. (2009) consider actors who mobilize resources as institutional entrepreneurs, even if they do not cause the intended change, we include this case. The product, which was labelled with a

recommendation from the largest animal welfare organization in Denmark, was positioned against conventional broilers, i.e., it was communicated that the special broiler (compared to the conventional ones) enjoyed about twice the space, lived close to 20 days longer, had some hours of darkness and only received GMO-free feed. However, the broiler was based on a fast growing conventional breed which according to a manager who was responsible for the special chicken “was a challenge, because this breed is not designed to live a longer life”. Because none of the supermarkets wanted to commit to sourcing a fixed amount of special broilers, “there was no special agreement with any of the supermarket chains, so the product was broadly available across chains”. Consumers could find them in all major supermarkets at about double the price of a conventional broiler. According to the interviewee, the special broiler was meant as an image enhancer, because broiler production had been under attack due to the animals’ dire living conditions, which shows in the following quote: “The strategy was that whenever there was a discussion about animal welfare, then one could say, well, we offer the special broiler” It enabled the slaughterhouse to communicate that they were in fact offering an alternative, so that genuinely caring consumers had the option of buying a welfare product. The antecedent that motivated them to market this welfare broiler was criticism from outside of the field. We assess this as a cultural change (De Leeuw and Goessling, 2016), because the general public seemed to be increasingly dissatisfied with conventional production methods. In an interesting twist, the slaughterhouse behind the special broiler could also be seen as an institutional defender and not an institutional entrepreneur, because they wanted to appear legitimate to the public in order to be allowed to keep doing what they were doing (DiMaggio, 1988). As a central player in the field, they are prompted to hold on to existing practices (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). We classify their strategy as unintended (Lawrence, 1999) regarding the institution of conventional broiler production, because the slaughterhouse did not aim

to, e.g., improve the welfare for all their broilers, make welfare broilers a wide-spread phenomenon. Changing the perception of broilers from goods to animals does not seem to have been on their mind at all – they did not act on ethical considerations regarding animals as sentient beings.

The manager responsible for producing the special broiler explained that he thinks that the product did not differentiate itself well enough from conventional broilers, which he sees as the reason for its failure in the market. Examples for the lack of differentiation are that “in the beginning, the packaging resembled the one of conventional broilers and the special broiler was almost hidden in the supermarkets” and that the same breed as for conventional broilers was used. Additionally, he doubts that the special broiler would sell better today, because the conditions for conventional broilers have improved resulting in the de facto difference between the special broiler and the conventional broiler being negligible. Moreover, he claims that the organization was not wholeheartedly behind the product. According to the journalist interviewee, the failure of the special broiler functioned as a reason to refrain from marketing further welfare broilers “They [the broiler industry] tried to produce a welfare broiler some years back. And then the consumers didn’t buy it. And then they dropped it again. [...] Anyway, my critical question to them was about if they did not see that there is a development [improved market potential for welfare broilers].” The special broiler thus both failed and succeeded. If perceived as a novel option for animal-friendly consumers and trendsetters, it failed, but if identified as a tool to institutionalize conventional production even more, it succeeded.

4.4.1.2 The regional broiler

Since 2011, consumers have been able to buy another type of welfare broiler in one supermarket chain. The broiler, named after the area where it is raised, resembles the special broiler in one

important aspect –these broilers are also based on a fast growing, conventional breed. The marketing manager of the producer explains that they “use the conventional breed, but give them improved living conditions”. They have more space than conventional broilers, bales of hay for entertainment, adapted feed, and a short distance to the slaughterhouse. Nevertheless, they do not live noticeably longer. The selling point for these broilers is not only that they have different living conditions, the producer also claims that they are particularly environmentally friendly by saying “We want to be a green company, sustainable. We want to respect the environment.” Therefore, buyers of this product might choose it because of either or both of these ethical dimensions (Crane, 1997). This producer’s marketing manager explained that they would like to raise the conditions for conventional broilers, for example, by explaining that they would like to change things step by step and arguing “The conventional broiler will always exist, so we have to improve it. It is important that we raise the standards – the conventional broiler should also have a better life [as compared to organic or free range]”. The farm does not only produce welfare broilers but also conventional ones and is currently expanding to produce organic broilers. While the conventional broilers are sold via the regular supply chain, meaning that the slaughterhouse buys them from the producer, the welfare broilers belong to the producer. As a consequence, he pays the slaughterhouse for slaughtering the animals and has to sell them to supermarkets. The marketing manager elucidated that this poses a barrier, as skirting the regular supply chain requires financial strength and knowledge – “We have to market them and pay for slaughter and the broilers have 100 % traceability, which means they need to be slaughtered separately. That’s a high expenditure.” In addition, the project was sneered at in the beginning as other actors did not believe in its potential. This producer pursued an intended strategy (Lawrence, 1999) regarding improving production. The antecedent to the wish for the development of this broiler was to make meat consumption more sustainable, for the animals to have an enriched life and for the

environment, because of the wind energy. Therefore, we conclude that a change in firm norms (De Leeuw and Goessling, 2016) regarding animal welfare causes them to try to adjust the production system. However, there was no criticism of animal production as such, a lack of respect for animals, etc., which means that they are not contesting the way production animals are used.

4.4.1.3 *The gourmet broiler*

The best-known welfare broiler in Denmark is actually produced in and imported from France. The broilers are produced under the Red Label (Label Rouge), which is a French quality assurance label covering various foods and produce. The Danish importer has set their sight on improving the tastiness of foods available to Danish consumers. They produce some food domestically, for example dairy products, but they also import, mainly from France, products such as their gourmet broiler and wine. In this case, the actor was not part of the field to begin with but benefitted from experience (Battilana et al., 2009) producing and importing gourmet foods. The gourmet broiler with their brand is only sold via one specific, major supermarket chain that has the exclusive rights on the product. However, the parent company is a retail multiple that holds various supermarket chains and one of them sells the same product under a different name, as a category manager of the parent company explained.

Numerous factors make the gourmet broiler stand out. It is based on an old, slow growing French breed, has almost three times the lifespan of conventional broilers, runs completely loose in a pine forest and has a characteristic yellow skin. Of the products analyzed in this article, it is by far the one that differs most from conventional broilers. This is in line with Greenwood and Suddaby's (2006) notion that novel ideas often arise at the outskirts of fields, because the actors are less embedded.

First, the importer tried to become part of Danish broiler production by asking them to produce the superior broilers he had in mind. According to the import manager we interviewed, they “did not see enough potential in gourmet broilers” and so, he sourced the product from another country, thereby evading the Danish industry. Solely the last link of the supply chain, the supermarket stays the same. In the beginning, the idea was to find a broiler with the best taste, not with the highest welfare possible; the interviewee states “if they [the consumers] can’t taste the difference, well, then they shouldn’t buy it”. Therefore, we perceive this actor’s strategy as unintended (Lawrence, 1999) when it comes to improving animal welfare in broiler production. However, the individual who initiated the import sees a clear connection between the active, outdoor lifestyle of the broilers and their premium quality meat and explains that he “searched for good broilers and did not explicitly consider animal welfare, because it is self-evident that a good broiler is one that has been outdoors”. The supermarket where the gourmet broiler is sold had to believe in a product that was not an immediate success. The category manager from the retailer parent company that offers the gourmet broiler pointed out that “In the beginning it was not a success...it was a fiasco. [...] Copenhagen, Northern Zealand, Gentofte, no problem, there you could easily sell them, that’s obvious, but there were places in Denmark where it was hard for us to sell them.” and later adds that “it is interesting to see how we can offer even more interesting products to consumers...a better selection, innovations and exciting products. [...] Innovation and food quality is what we want”. The gourmet broiler fits the bill for this category manager, because it even won a gourmet prize. The institutional entrepreneur’s intention was to find and market a gourmet broiler. This happens to go hand in hand with a very rich life for the animals, but nevertheless it was not the actor’s motivation to market the broiler with the highest welfare. Therefore the antecedent was an assumption about market potential (De Leeuw and Goessling, 2016) for exclusive meat as opposed to ethical concerns related to

conventional production or the trading of animals as regular goods. In fact, the broiler is sought for its tasty meat, the freedom it enjoys is only a necessary condition to maximize consumers' enjoyment. Thus, no specific ethical concerns about broilers could be identified and no attempts to reposition broilers as sentient beings were made.

4.4.1.4 *The grain broiler plus*

A year after the launch of the gourmet broiler, another welfare broiler was introduced. The actor behind this grain-fed broiler is one of the two main slaughterhouses. The grain-fed broiler resembles the regional broiler so much that the only difference is the factor providing the name – the share of corn that the broilers are fed. The slaughterhouse has even produced grain-fed broilers before, but the living conditions of the previously marketed grain-fed broilers did not differ from those of conventional broilers. One can argue that this broiler is not a case of institutional entrepreneurship due to its similarity to existing products. Consequently, there was not the same turbulence that the other actors had to navigate through. Raising grain-fed broilers does not require different stables, and the slaughterhouse reported that the producers that were asked to supply grain-fed instead of conventional broilers were eager to do so. The marketing manager said that “farmers are highly interested in being part of developing these concepts, so we do not have problems to find farmers who want to be part of this [welfare broiler production]”.

One of the producers of grain-fed broilers was interviewed and also stated feeling excited when he heard about the new idea for producing a welfare broiler. He reported that he takes pride in the broilers' improved living conditions but that he “earns slightly more per broiler, but less overall” because he has fewer animals since he started to supply the new product instead of conventional broilers, indicating that there is no financial incentive for producers to commit to welfare products

that focus on other values than low prices. The producer approves of the broilers' enrichment, as they "definitely use it". The slaughterhouse marketing grain-fed broilers already had conventional and organic broilers in their offering. As they described during an interview, the immense difference between conventional and organic production systems leads to a massive price difference.

Consequently, they assessed that offering a third product would be beneficial in order to address different types of consumers; thus they introduced the grain-broiler. The marketing manager of the slaughterhouse explains that "there is no doubt that there is space for more differentiated concepts in the category [of broiler meat], because there is a gap between conventional and organic broilers [...]. That middle segment is where we are looking to fill different positions in." As a result the introduction of the product is based on changed market conditions (De Leeuw and Goessling, 2016). They do not show any consideration of ethical concerns regarding their business involving live animals, and as they waited until similar products enjoyed success, this actor did not face the same conflict with conventional broiler production. However, that the slaughterhouse markets this product indicates that welfare broilers are becoming commonplace and from the interviews conducted, we cannot exclude that the producers have ethical considerations when changing from conventional to welfare broiler production.

4.4.2 How much welfare is there in welfare broilers?

The following table shows the welfare problems that the interviewees perceived as most relevant and if they were addressed by the welfare broilers. To provide a better overview we differentiate between actors along the supply chain (supply chain + suppliers) and those beyond the supply chain (e.g. NGOs).

| Animal Welfare Issue | Mentioned by | Exemplary Quote | Improved by |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fast growing breed | <p>Along the supply chain: CEO – Hatchery CEO – Producer</p> <p>Beyond the supply chain: Head Consultant/Campaign Manager– animal welfare organization Researchers - University</p> | <p>“I just think it could be more differentiated, so that one keeps different breeds.” (CEO – Producer)</p> <p>“To change the breed [...] to stop breeding such extreme animals. This is where the relevant problems are.” (Professor – Danish University)</p> | Gourmet broiler |
| Lack of space | <p>Along the Supply Chain: CEO – Provider of technical equipment Head Veterinarian – Veterinary practice Category Managers – Supermarket chain</p> <p>Beyond the Supply Chain: Campaign Manager – Animal welfare organization</p> | <p>”I would look at the stocking density.” “Ok, does that mean you would like to see fewer broilers in the barns?” [question asked by interviewer for clarification] “Yes, that’s what I mean. Yes.” (Head Veterinarian – veterinary practice)</p> <p>“If you just breed them differently [...], but they lived under the same conditions, [...] then it would be a far too small step to start talking about animal welfare, but I</p> | <p>Special broiler Regional broiler Gourmet broiler Grain broiler plus</p> |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| | | think these two things [breed and space] belong together.” (Campaign Manager – Animal welfare organization) | |
| Lack of access to outdoor area | <p>Along the supply chain: Marketing Manager - Producer Import Manager – Gourmet food producer</p> <p>Beyond the supply chain: Teacher – School for agricultural educations Communications Manager - Slaughterhouse</p> | <p>“If I could change it then I’d like us to produce free range, organic I don’t think we can do, I believe that is irresponsible, but I’d like to see free range, simply also because one would get better meat.” (Communications Manager – Slaughterhouse)</p> <p>Describes a kind of production she approves of: “It is cozy. They [the broilers] run around in an apple plantation and have a good time.” And later “I disapprove of the [conventional] broiler housing.” (Teacher – Agricultural School)</p> | Gourmet broiler |
| Transportation | Along the supply chain: | ”Well, where we could improve is regarding | Regional broiler Gourmet broiler Grain broiler plus |

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Head Consultant – consultancy</p> <p>Beyond the supply chain: Associate Professor (Ethology) - University</p> | <p>transportation to the slaughterhouse.” (Head Consultant - Consultancy)</p> <p>“Those two winters where it was extremely cold, when was that? 2013 to 2014, 2012 to 2013, something like that? There were simply so many...when they opened [the trucks], I heard from a vet who was inspector at a poultry slaughterhouse, when they opened the trucks, all those [broilers] who stood at the edges of the trucks had frozen to death and it was quite many per truck. [...] There was some talk about temperature-controlled trucks, but that is quite an expenditure, so again, cost-benefit and from a financial perspective it is apparently better if some die.” (Associate Professor – University)</p> | |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Stunning method | Sector Manager – Industry Association | ”There are some things we could do better, for example that in we hang broilers in DK [electric water pool stunning method where the chickens hang upside down] and it would be nice to find an alternative for that, because of animal welfare and work environment reasons.” (Sector Manager – Industry association) | - |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

Table 5: How different welfare broilers address pivotal issues regarding broiler production

Part of the interviews was a discussion of welfare problems in broiler production and the question of what the interviewees would change if they could improve one of these elements. Among the problems that were deemed most pressing was the breed which grows fast and has a disproportionately large breast. The CEO of the hatchery we interviewed did not wish to change to another breed; he would instead like to see an improvement in robustness, but added that it has already improved during the last years. Of the products analyzed in this article, only the gourmet broiler uses a different breed that does not have the issues that are typical for broilers used in conventional production. The space available per animal, on the other hand, is adapted in all the welfare systems described in this article, but to different extents. The special broiler had more space than a conventional broiler of its time, but since then new legislation features a maximum stocking density for conventional broilers, so that by today’s standards, the special broiler would not be

considered much better than a conventional broiler. The grain broiler plus and the regional broiler both have a bit more space than conventional broilers and the gourmet broiler runs completely loose in forests. Thereby it is also the only production system analyzed in this article that grants the animals access to the outdoors. Transportation is criticized because it is stressful and because the trucks lack temperature control. An ethologist mentioned that broilers freeze to death when they are transported during winter. Except from the special broiler, welfare broilers deal with the issue by implementing a maximum transportation time, but the trucks remain the same. The stunning method, where broilers hang head down and are dragged through an electrical water pool is the same for conventional and welfare products.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

In the outset of this article, we posed the question why some actors took on the battle to market alternative meat products instead of just following the well-established conventional supply chain. Welfare products are often celebrated, indicating to the consumer that they can now enjoy meat without feeling guilty. To answer this question, we interviewed actors throughout the field of broiler production in Denmark and identified welfare products for scrutiny. We distinguished between unintended and intended (Lawrence, 1999) strategies and the antecedents to change (De Leeuw and Goessling, 2016). Only one of the four actors whose products we analyzed follows an intentional strategy to improve the living conditions for broilers, sees animal welfare as worthwhile for its own sake and can thus be said to see animals as more than a simple good. This is also the only marketer that raises broilers, the others buy the animals from producers. The others accepted the conflict with the field's focus on conventional production either because they wanted to improve their image, or serve additional target groups (mid-price segment and consumers interested in gourmet food). The low heterogeneity of the broilers that were available in supermarkets makes it easier to position welfare broilers as something really different. None of these actors appeared to aim to change the perception of animals as means. The gourmet broiler differs strongly from conventional production, yet marketing it was not initiated by a wish to improve the animals' lives. The antecedents to change regarding the welfare broilers analyzed here were all social. The "change in firm norms" regarding the regional broiler (which also followed the intentional strategy) came from inside the field, while all other antecedents are located outside the field of broiler production. As the other actors were merely reacting to outside pressures, this reinforces the finding that the reason for marketing welfare broilers is not primarily a concern for the animals' welfare on the marketer's side.

After conducting interviews throughout the field, we compiled a list of the most pivotal welfare problems in conventional production. Each of the four products addressed at least one of these issues. The gourmet broiler addressed four out of five issues, while the regional broiler, the only one featuring an intentional strategy, only addressed two. This means that an entrepreneur, who intends to change the institutional field of broiler production for the sake of improved conditions for the animals, may improve the conditions less than entrepreneurs with unintentional strategies (Lawrence, 1999). Meanwhile, the significant improvements in gourmet broilers' living conditions compared to those of conventional broilers only help a comparably small number of animals, while steady advancement of the intense, conventional system entails the potential to improve many animal lives.

In the case we analyzed, a proponent of animal rights would probably argue that the Gourmet broiler is the only one that makes a significant difference in the animals' but that it is unethical anyway, because the importer does not consider the animals' rights. Utilitarians do not care about the underlying motivation that leads to an action, but in the case at hand, they would see that the attempt to rear the majority of broilers under slightly improved conditions is better than the attempt to rear a limited amount of animals under extremely good conditions. Speciesists who believe that animals' needs are irrelevant compared to those of humans would think that it is wrong to improve animal welfare for the sake of the animals. Improved animal welfare is a measure to be taken in order to make human nutrition healthier or tastier, the animals are means to achieve this. However, moderate speciesists could still claim that advancing animal welfare is a good thing, as long as there are no severe conflicts with human welfare. We would like to point out that concluding that most of these actors did not market welfare broilers because of ethical concern does not mean that the broilers they sell are neglected or abused.

As discussed before, marketing ethics research tends to be either normative or positivist (Nill and Schibrowski, 2007). From a positivist point of view, this study indicates that marketing ethics scholars might still be right to not discuss the matter of animals, if the aim is to depict what is going on in the real world where marketers, at least in the case study at hand, do not work towards improvements regarding animal welfare because of ethical concerns for the animals, but primarily because of other reasons. However, the comparably weak connection that broiler producers feel towards their animals might have influenced these findings. Bock et al. (2007) found that farmers are much more attached to cows and some perceived them as friends or family members. The stronger relationship producers have with these animals could affect the considerations when marketing non-conventional meat and dairy products.

From a normative point of view, one feels inclined to say that the special consideration for animals should be included into marketing ethics literature, as it is nowadays accepted knowledge that animals can suffer. Merritt (1991) argues that business schools should increase their graduates' sensitivity regarding ethical issues so that certain ethical principles will be integrated into professional environments. As the concern for animal welfare is legitimate, this subject might just as well be included in marketing ethics education. Further research on marketing ethics and animals could investigate different contexts, for example it would be interesting to see if those marketers who own/raise animals are more concerned about them than those who only market the meat also in other agricultural contexts. In addition, laboratory animals used in research for new products, or circumstances in which animals are part of an experience, such as zoo visits, horse racing etc. are other environments that offer scholars the opportunity to connect animal welfare and marketing ethics. Historical analyses of these animal-related marketing ethics phenomena would serve to answer

the question if or how ethical concerns regarding animals have changed over time. Some might argue that the practical relevance of an analysis of the motivation behind welfare products is neglectable. After all, a chicken probably does not know the motivation of the marketer and does not care about it. It only cares about the situation it finds itself in. However, the motivation of the marketer can have consequences. What if consumer tastes change and animal welfare is less important? Marketers who do not have ethical considerations regarding the animals might just abandon their attempts to improve animal welfare and jump on the next trend. Further, if there is a conflict between animal welfare and other goals, e.g. amount of work, animal welfare would potentially be dismissed. Finally, what if an organization produces and markets broiler meat in different countries, of which one has animal-friendly consumers and the other one does not (yet) have a market for these products and maybe not even animal welfare legislation? If these marketers lack ethical commitment to animals, they might set the animal welfare standard as low as possible without ruining productivity (there are limits above which mortality would increase). This is not a theoretical scenario as global investments in agriculture and hence poultry production are developing.⁴⁰For the reasons outlined above, the motivation behind the marketing of welfare products are interesting and of relevance.

⁴⁰ <https://research.rabobank.com/far/en/sectors/animal-protein/Time-for-Africa-Report.html>

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5 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have analyzed different aspects of farm animal welfare in Danish broiler production. I conducted two major rounds of data collection in order to gain insight into relevant actors' thoughts on the topic as well as how animal welfare has developed over the last twenty years. This conclusion unites the findings I discussed in the individual articles and outlines the theoretical and practical implications of my work.

5.1 Answering the research questions

The research question of the first article' is "How do actors in Danish broiler production make sense of farm animal welfare?"

In the outset of the article, I identified three issues that could make it hard to improve animal welfare in this institutional field. The first one is the fact that there is not a single clear definition of animal welfare, the second one consists of conflicting goals in agriculture (e.g. animal welfare versus feeding the human population) and the third regards different goals in society. I found that animal welfare is defined differently by actors along the supply chain than by those beyond the supply chain. The supply chain actors focus on animal health and believe that human needs are more important than broiler needs. Hence, animal welfare should be considered, but only if it does not interfere with issues such as the aim to feed a growing human population. The actors from beyond the supply chain, e.g., animal welfare researchers and teachers, think the other way round: humans are allowed to eat animals, but only if the animals are treated well. Conflicting goals in society are not discussed much, but it was mentioned multiple times that animal friendly products have to be affordably priced.

The research question for the second article “How did institutionalized practices in Danish broiler production change during the last decades?” is split into two sub-questions of which the first one is “Who was involved in critical incidents?”

I found three critical incidents: a new law resulting from a report in 1995; a strike in 1998 that led to a union agreement in 2003; and the marketing of welfare broilers that was communicated more intensely in 2011/2012. The report and the marketing of welfare broilers were instigated by actors from within the issue field (Hoffman, 1999). In the case of the report/law, a ministry and the animal ethics council initiated the change, while there were some concerns by broiler producers. In 1998, the unions had a conflict with broiler producers, but they resolved the issue later so they would not face similar problems in the future. In this discourse, everyone involved blamed everyone else for everything that went wrong. The welfare broilers were marketed by the supply chain and there was not much opposition to non-conventional broilers; however, the high price of organic broilers and that some welfare broilers are not much different from conventional broilers were mentioned in a negative way.

As a next step, I analyzed how those who promoted change versus those who defended an institutionalized practice used ethical arguments.

I analyzed the discourses for disruptive and defensive (Maguire & Hardy, 2009) statements and found all three types of consequentialist thinking that I had previously outlined. These were utilitarian (Brink, 2006), ethical egoist (Rachels, 1986) and self-referential altruist (Broad, 1971) notions. When institutionalized practices were problematized, most statements were utilitarian and ethical egoist phrases only appeared in the discourse about the strike in 1998. However, when actors

defended an institution, they used ethical-egoistic phrasing and thereby acted in “self-defense”.

An overall finding is that the changes can be perceived as institutional maintenance, because they keep broiler production socially acceptable, without having path breaking consequences. This is in line with my findings in the third article.

In the last article, I wondered why actors in Danish broiler production market welfare broilers rather than institutionalized ones. Only one of the four broilers I analyzed is explicitly marketed with the goal to improve animal welfare. The others were supposed to improve the marketer’s image, or appeal to a new target group. None of the institutional entrepreneurs attempted to change the perception of animals as means. The broiler that was marketed with the wish to improve animal welfare did not improve as many welfare issues as the gourmet broiler. However, the long-term objective was to improve the conditions for conventional broilers. This raises the question whether it is important if someone actually wants to improve animal welfare or is motivated by a different aim that happens to lead to improved animal welfare. I have assessed that in this case, from a utilitarian (because of the potential number of broilers who could benefit from improved conditions) view, the broiler that was supposed to improve animal welfare is ethically preferable. From an animal rights’ perspective, the gourmet broiler is most likely preferable, as it is the only one that grants the birds an outdoor lifestyle.

5.2 Theoretical implications

The following reflections relate to the overall purpose of this thesis – which is to explore how partisan actors make sense of conflicts in the marketing of broilers and work to change or maintain institutionalized practices related to animal welfare.

Earlier I outlined the existing literature about animal welfare in marketing, differentiating between articles that focus on the consumer and those that focus on something other than the consumer, such as the supply chain. The thesis in its entirety contributes to the latter by depicting the empirical setting, broiler production in Denmark, in an extensive way. Interviewing on relevant actors throughout the field allows for detailed understanding of how welfare is defined and where actors see barriers to its improvement. The discourse analysis adds a temporal dimension to enable interpretations of how the field reached its current state. Against this backdrop, I analyze the intensified interest in market-driven animal welfare, particularly welfare broilers, and to what extent this development can be expected to improve welfare issues. As a result the thesis is of value to scholars and others who seek to understand the complexity of potential changes in conventional production. Lincoln and Guba (1985) write that such rich descriptions lead to transferability, meaning that others can transfer the conclusions to alternative situations. In that way, transferability is to qualitative studies what generalizability is to quantitative studies. For example, issues regarding the definition of animal welfare and conflicting goals can be transferred to other situations when animals are kept in captivity and there are other, e.g. economic, goals. There are plenty of examples such as other forms of animal production, laboratory animals, zoos, aquariums, keeping companion animals, training sports and race horses etc. The focus on institutional maintenance instead of more considerable change that I found in my second article might be transferable to attempts to fight discrimination against women, homosexuals or minorities. Some minor steps might be taken to improve the group's standing in society, without really aiming for equal opportunities. The third article finds that welfare products are not necessarily produced because the marketer has a strong wish to improve animal welfare, but because there is market potential or because the marketer wants an improved reputation. This might apply to other forms of animal production as well as situations when working conditions

for humans are improved. If this behavior should be promoted, to get as many organisations as possible to improve the conditions for humans or animals, even if they do not really care about the respective group, or if it is perceived as distasteful, depends on an evaluation of what is ethically relevant. It should be questioned, if these actors would dial back on animal or human welfare, when the conditions change, i.e. if they believe that animal welfare is not so important to consumers anymore or if there is a high unemployment rate causing people not to quit, even if they are abused. Such issues are conceivable, but it is also possible that certain standards would have become institutionalized by then, so that these organizations cannot simply change back.

By analyzing farm animal welfare as an ethical issue, I highlight how humans' sensemaking and institutionalized practices regarding farm animals increase the complexity of animal welfare problems. This type of complexity does not stem from the animal itself but from the human-animal relationship, which is at the core of what social sciences can contribute to the understanding of animal welfare. Some scholars, such as Franz et al. (2010), when they write about barriers to the implementation of animal welfare labels along the supply chain, or Heerwagen et al. (2013) who suggest that in order to increase the consumption of welfare products, barriers for the consumer should be as low as possible hint at this complexity.

However, a field level-study that draws on the past and present situation is perhaps too wide for a single article and has so far been overlooked. The overall contribution of this thesis is therefore to provide an in-depth analysis of broiler welfare as a complex issue of societal relevance.

5.3 Practical implications

The practical implications of analyzing farm animal welfare are directed towards those who seek to improve farm animal welfare and/or have a business interest in broiler production. The practical value of this research therefore lies in policy making and the marketing of conventional and alternative broilers.

Currently, notable European NGOs, such as Dyrenes Beskyttelse in Denmark⁴¹, Dyrevernalliansen in Norway⁴², Djurskyddet in Sweden⁴³, Vier Pfoten in Austria and Germany⁴⁴, Compassion in world farming⁴⁵ and the RSPCA⁴⁶ in Great Britain recommend that consumers consume welfare or organic animal products.

Only few of these NGOs state that these types of animal production also have issues and that consumers should seek to reduce their consumption of animal products as such. It is interesting that NGOs that aim to improve the general welfare of production animals, communicate in such an undifferentiated way. A quick view at a Danish animal welfare label promoted by a supermarket shows the same positive communication of alternative products⁴⁷ and so does the label the Ministry of Environment and Food has developed⁴⁸. This is misleading because alternative products from, for example, free range or organic production cannot fully replace conventional production, which is

⁴¹ <https://www.dyrenesbeskyttelse.dk/anbefalet-af-dyrenes-beskyttelse>

⁴² https://www.dyrevern.no/bedre_dyrevelferd/forbruker-faq/hvilken-kylling-bor-jeg-kjope-for-best-dyrevelferd

⁴³ <http://www.djurskyddet.se/tips/konsumera-ratt/kyckling/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.vier-pfoten.at/themen/nutztiere/ernaehrung/tierschutz-und-ernaehrung/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/your-food/meat-poultry/>

⁴⁶ https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/farm/-/articleName/FAD_AllAboutAnimalsFarmAnimals

⁴⁷ <http://xn--dyrevelfrd-k6a.coop.dk/saadan-maerker-dyrene-det/kyllinger/>

⁴⁸ <https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Leksikon/Sider/Fakta-om-dyrevelfaerdsmaerket.aspx>

due to the amount of animal products that humans consume. Also, alternative production methods are not free from animal welfare problems, particularly animal health problems (Sutherland et al., 2013). Portraying alternative animal products as being problem free together with the attitude that it is the consumers' duty to improve animal welfare, is problematic. Certainly, consumers' choices are important, but they cannot solve all issues, particularly if consumers are not knowledgeable regarding issues with different forms of production. During the twenty years that were covered in the discourse analysis about chicken welfare, the establishment of welfare broilers is only one of the changes that occurred; but the other ones, a new law and a union agreement are not directly related to consumers.

Therefore, the responsibility of those organizations involved with animal production as well as national governments and the EU subsidizing and regulating agriculture should be emphasized. This can take multiple forms such as educational initiatives about animals' needs and proper handling, reviewed industry standards or legislation.

Here the complexity of animal welfare once again unveils itself. Stricter laws and increasingly high expectations as regards animal welfare can make animal production unprofitable in a country or region, making companies move their production to other countries where production costs or animal welfare and environmental protection standards might be lower, probably also causing a loss of work places in the abandoned countries. Therefore, genuine attempts to solve animal welfare problems should consider such tradeoffs.

Conventional production on a global and probably not even Danish level is not threatened by organic

or welfare broilers, because the growing demand for poultry meat⁴⁹ can likely only be met using intensive production methods. As a result, conventional broilers could actually be marketed using positive ethical statements. These arguments could center around humans, for instance, by stressing that the intensity of the production helps make affordable protein available also to people with low purchasing power, or around the animals, by explaining that the health of the animals can be controlled better when the broilers live in a closed environment, or that honest attempts to improve animal welfare should be targeted at developing conventional production, further, because the majority of broilers are produced in that way. However, further research would have to investigate how such statements resonate with consumers. Maintaining conventional production is certainly in the interest of all the actors who make a living based on conventional broilers. Therefore, further improvements in line with those I found during the last two decades might be advisable from their perspective. Such maintenance work can indicate to the public that the supply chain wants to steadily improve animal welfare, therefore keeping broiler production socially acceptable. If consumers were to minimize their meat intake or if in vitro meat or vegan/vegetarian meat alternatives gain major market shares in the future, then the remaining broilers might very well be kept in extensive systems. In this case, further improvements to these systems could be a game-changer for broiler welfare.

5.4 Limitations and future research

Naturally, there are other aspects of farm animal welfare or theoretical lenses that I could have applied in my thesis. For example, my data does not cover the consumers' perspective, investigating questions such as whether they are aware of the complexity of farm animal welfare

⁴⁹ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5116021ec010.pdf?expires=1496738160&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9150864DD65442D85AFC594F85D4AC78>

and how they evaluate conflicting goals such as increased animal welfare and feeding a growing human population. If animal welfare research from a social science perspective should be used as a basis for political decision making, it is interesting if consumers understand the complexity of this issue and if their opinion shifts once they are informed. In my data collections, I included supermarkets as the gatekeeper to the consumer, their flyers and the Danish newspapers with the highest circulation. I have thus considered how animal welfare is communicated to consumers, without explicitly including them. An appropriate investigation in consumers' knowledge and attitudes could not easily be integrated in the methods I chose.

Further, farm animal welfare could have been framed as a sustainability issue. The Oxford dictionary defines sustainability as "Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance."⁵⁰ Considering the environmental impact of livestock (United Nations, 2006), I am not entirely convinced that large-scale animal production, whether conventional or not, can be truly sustainable. If animal production can ever be sustainable with regard to the animals is a matter of one's point of view as elaborated on in the section about the difference between animal welfare and animal rights. Animal welfare is only one aspect of sustainability, others are e.g. resource use, effect on biodiversity or food safety (Schmitt et al., 2017). Most sustainability studies do not attempt to cover all aspects of sustainability and it is also not clear if organic or conventional production systems are overall more sustainable (Van Wagenberg et al., 2017). In line with this thought, suitable subjects for research on meat production and sustainability could be the potential for and barriers to the marketing of meat substitutes or in vitro meat products.

⁵⁰ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sustainability>

Regarding the theoretical lenses I apply in this thesis, an alternative path for future research could be macrosocial marketing. The aim of macrosocial marketing is to cause system-wide change by tackling the institutional norms that perpetuate a problem (Domegan 2008, Kennedy & Parsons, 2012). In that way, macrosocial marketing goes one step further than institutional theory, sensemaking and marketing ethics. Neither of them is normative, their aim is not to cause change, but to understand a phenomenon. Macrosocial marketing on the other hand seeks to understand and suggest how a certain issue could be improved. It tends to deal with what Kennedy (2016) calls wicked problems which are related to legitimate, yet problematic norms and concepts, such as “value for money”. This translates well to broiler production, where conventional production is preoccupied with providing meat at the lowest price possible.

Other than institutional theory, macrosocial marketing is based on social marketing and systems thinking (Kennedy, 2016). Social marketing proposes that individuals can change their behavior. For several reasons, for example, that not everyone has full information or that some behaviors are habituated, social marketing does not suffice when it comes to wicked problems. Promising measures must therefore take a holistic view to include the environment and the context (Hoek and Jones, 2011), which explains the need for systems thinking. Marketing systems are networks of actors, that are either directly or indirectly linked and make available ranges of products in response to customer demand (Layton, 2007). Rules of exchange in these systems are institutionalized and begin to exist outside of the individual’s actions, when they turn into norms (Dixon, 1984). Therefore, the social institutions that govern marketing systems have to be affected in order to alter the outcomes of and the organizations within a system (Kennedy, 2016). She prompts scholars to conduct empirical investigations regarding macrosocial marketing and pinpoints the potential of

historical research for this endeavor. This focus on wicked problems, social institutions and ethics appear to predestine macrosocial marketing for marketing or organizational scholars who have a keen interest in policy making on different levels.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of interviewees

| Pseudonym | Job | Organisation |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Along the supply chain | | |
| Morten | CEO | hatchery |
| Peter | CEO | provider of technological equipment |
| Dennis | Regional Sales Manager | provider of feed stuffs |
| Lars | Import Manager | gourmet food producer/importer |
| Brian | Marketing Manager | an independent producer of moderate welfare chicken |
| Maria | CEO | producer of moderate welfare chicken |
| Sara | Category Manager | Danish supermarket chain |
| Julie | Category Manager | Danish supermarket chain |
| Michael | Sector Manager | industry association |
| John | Head Consultant | consultancy |
| Tina | Head Veterinarian | vet |
| Marianne | Category Manager | Danish supermarket chain |

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anna | Communications Manager | slaughterhouse |
| Kim | CEO/Marketing Manager | slaughterhouse |
| Per | Manager for animal production and communications | slaughterhouse (This interviewee was only interviewed for the article about welfare broilers, because he is not part of the field anymore, but was needed for insights regarding welfare broilers.) |
| Beyond the supply chain | | |
| Martin | Journalist | mass media |
| Christian | Campaign Manager | animal welfare organization |
| Daniel | Associate Professor (Ethology) | Danish university |
| Mia | Teacher | school for agricultural educations |
| Camilla | Head Consultant | Danish animal welfare organization |
| Heidi | Professor (Philosophy) | Danish university |
| Thomas | Consultant and Farmer | group consulting the Ministry |

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Before starting the interview, the interviewees were informed about the research project and terms that might be confusing, e.g. “welfare broiler”. The interviews were semi-structured and depending on the job and expertise of the interviewee, some questions were discussed in depth and others briefly or left out.

PART 1

Company

What is your job at company XY?

- What are the main tasks you are responsible for?
- What has prepared you for your current position?
- How long have you been in the company?
- Have you been hired for this specific position or have you held different positions at XY?
- Have you worked for other companies in this industry (either direct competition or up- or down the supply chain)

Identity of XY

- How would you characterize XY?
- How does XY’s identity differ from other companies’ identities in the same industry?
- What does XY compete on? (e.g. price)

The position of company XY in the field

Please draw the broiler sector, including your suppliers, customers and other organizations that are relevant for the field, even if you are not directly doing business with them. (e.g. politics, media, NGOs)

- Explain your position in the field and the responsibility that comes with the position. (e.g. slaughterhouse = slaughters chickens, makes sure that animals die as quickly as possible and that they are delivered to supermarkets on time)
- Are there organizations/actors (e.g. the state) that is dependent of? Who are they?
- How does this dependency manifest at XY?
- Are there organizations/actors that are dependent of XY? Who are they?
- What changes have there been in the field during the last 10 years?
- Who/What initiated these changes?
- What changes do you foresee for the next 10 years?
- What indicates these changes to you?

PART 2

Animal welfare at XY

- What is your personal stance on animal welfare?
 - o Which values are more important than welfare? (e.g. food safety)
 - o If you could improve one thing about how chickens are raised and slaughtered, what would you change?

- Has XY tried to make that change? (why not?)
- Who has the power to make that change?
- Why has there not been an improvement in this field?
- Does your opinion on animal welfare correspond to or conflict with XY's views?
- What role does animal welfare play in the everyday activities/in the strategic thinking of XY?
- Are there conflicting opinions on the relevance of animal welfare at XY? How/when do these conflicts show?
- What can XY do to promote animal welfare?

Animal welfare in the field

- Does XY have agreements with suppliers/customers on animal welfare standards?
 - What animal welfare standard does XY follow?
 - Who was the driving force behind using specifically this standard?
 - How does XY/how do the partners make sure that these agreements are met?
 - How are such standards agreed upon? (discussion vs. imposition)
 - Is animal welfare frequently discussed or do the previously agreed on standards remain unquestioned?
- Who do you think is mainly responsible for advocating animal welfare in the supply chain and generally speaking? (politics, media, science/research, NGOs,...)
- How does XY argue for the legitimacy of its view on animal welfare? (e.g. to convince NGOs, media, consumers)

- Are animal welfare standards perceived as a burden, a marketing opportunity or something else?

The market for broilers

- Please describe the market for chicken meat: organic/regular, whole chickens/chicken parts, fresh/frozen/processed (e.g. ready made chicken cordon bleu or cold cuts = pålæg)
- Where do you get information about the market from?

Marketing potential for welfare chicken (a compromise between organic and regular chicken)

- Have there been attempts at XY to produce/sell welfare chicken?
- Why/why not?
- If there has been an attempt, was it perceived as a success or failure at XY?
- Do you believe in the potential of such a product?
- What are the barriers to marketing this product
 - o At XY
 - o In the supply chain
 - o In society
- What organization/s does it mainly depend on, if welfare chicken turns out a success? (e.g. supermarkets, media, politics,...)
- If the welfare chicken turned out to be a success, do you think it would be a win for all the organizations along the supply chain?
- If yes, why, if no, who would lose out and why?

The broiler industry in general media (not industry publications)

- Has XY been covered in newspapers, in tv or on the radio?
- Did these reports ever deal with animal welfare?
- If yes: Was it a positive or negative report?
- If yes: What was praised/criticized?
- Do you think that the media coverage the broiler industry receives is fair?
- If yes, how, if no, should it be more/less more/less critical?
- Have reports on the media ever sparked a discussion on animal welfare standards within the field?

The broiler industry in industry publications

*also online publications and fora count

- Please name an industry publication that you follow at least yearly.
- Is animal welfare covered in these publications?
- If not, why not if yes how: Suggestions for improvement? Affirmation of legitimacy of dominant business models? Results from research/science? Articles on specific companies or the industry?

Appendix C: Declaration of co-authorship



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Declaration of co-authorship*

Full name of the PhD student: Martina Therese Kiehas

This declaration concerns the following article/manuscript:

| | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title: | Farm animals in marketing ethics – a study of institutional entrepreneurship in Danish broiler production |
| Authors: | Kiehas, M. T., Esbjerg, L., Bech-Larsen, T. |

The article/manuscript is: Published Accepted Submitted In preparation

If published, state full reference: -

If accepted or submitted, state journal: Journal of Macromarketing

Has the article/manuscript previously been used in other PhD or doctoral dissertations?

No Yes If yes, give details:

The PhD student has contributed to the elements of this article/manuscript as follows:

- A. Has essentially done all the work
- B. Major contribution
- C. Equal contribution
- D. Minor contribution
- E. Not relevant

| Element | Extent (A-E) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Formulation/identification of the scientific problem | A |
| 2. Planning of the experiments/methodology design and development | A |
| 3. Involvement in the experimental work/clinical studies/data collection | A |
| 4. Interpretation of the results | B |
| 5. Writing of the first draft of the manuscript | A |
| 6. Finalization of the manuscript and submission | B |

Signatures of the co-authors

| Date | Name | Signature |
|---------|------------------|-----------|
| 10/8/17 | TINO BECH-LARSEN | |
| 16/8/17 | LARS ESBJERG | |
| | | |
| | | |

In case of further co-authors please attach appendix

Date: August 16th 2017

Signature of the PhD student

*As per policy the co-author statement will be published with the dissertation.