

Out of sight, out of mind

A Study of the absence of a consumption tax on meat from the policy-agenda

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Abstract

This paper is about policy agenda and climate policies in Sweden. It examines why the alternative of a meat tax isn't placing on the Swedish policy agenda. The study uses John W. Kingdon's theory on agenda change presented in his book *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, to analyze why a meat tax isn't seriously considered as a climate policy to reduce GHG-emissions from meat consumption. The paper examines how the issue of emissions and alternative of a meat tax are framed by media, public bureaus, interest groups, academics and political parties. Emissions from meat consumption are beginning to be defined as problematic by more and more actors, but there is still a large unawareness about the effects of meat consumption on climate. There isn't a political will to introduce a tax on meat in order to reduce emissions and there is a lack of policy entrepreneurs to connect the alternative with climate policies and to initiate a bargaining process in the political stream, for a window of opportunity to open up. The alternative seems to be going through a softening up process, but is unlikely to be realized in the short-run.

Key words: Policy-agenda, Policy changes, Environmental policies, Environmental taxation, Pigovian taxes

Words: 11 257

Abbreviations

C – Centerpartiet

EU – European Union

GHG – Green House Gases

Kd – Kristdemokraterna

L – Liberalerna, previously Folkpartiet

LRF – The Federation of Swedish Farmers

M – Moderaterna

Mp – Miljöpartiet

MP – Member of Parliament

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

S – Socialdemokraterna

SBA – The Swedish Board of Agriculture

Sd – Sverigedemokraterna

SEPA – The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

SIME – The Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment

SSNC – The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

V – Vänsterpartiet

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

It has been known for decades that the consumption of meat has significant environmental effects and that these could be reduced by a lower level of consumption (Naturvårdsverket 2011:58). The consumption of meat constitutes the food category with the highest impact on climate and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) deem the current consumption level of animalistic products as unsustainable (Naturvårdsverket 2011:18). Even in the case of large technical development, significant behavioral changes are necessary to reach the national targets, but which behaviors need to change, by whom and by what modes? Should the government rely solemnly on informational campaign or enforce behavioral change through regulation or economic incentives? Behavioral governance can be a delicate issue and is often perceived negatively by voters, either because of ideological reasons against government interference in the private sphere or simply because behavioral is deemed as abrasive (Hammars & Jägers 2003:247-248). Even so, the public in Sweden have accepted governmental inference to encourage behavioral change on a number of occasions, none the least in climate change policies. What is it that makes some alternatives possible policies whereas others seem to be completely unviable?

The Swedish consumption of meat has increased steadily since the 1990's (Nässén & Larsson 2015:239) and is viewed as problematic mainly due to three factors. First, it is responsible for large emissions of CO² gases, second, there seems to be limited opportunities for technical advancements within the near future and third, there are no existing modes of governance currently in use to decrease the levels of consumption (Nässén & Larsson 2015:239). The total emissions from meat consumption in Sweden are estimated to be higher or at least on par with the total emissions from air travel. The emissions from the Swedes' food consumption were estimated to 1.8 ton CO² per capita, with the beef consumption single handedly amounting to a third of total emissions (Nässén & Larsson 2015:239). According to surveys there seems to be an information gap where a high percentage of respondents seem unaware of the fact that the agricultural industry is responsible for a vast part of total emissions¹ and that the most emission dense produce are animalistic products (Nässén & Larsson 2015:246).

¹ The Swedish Agricultural Board estimate that the animalistic sector alone accounts for 1/5 of the world's total emissions of GHG.

In the academic community the alternative of a meat tax has been explored by several scholars² and has been analyzed through different perspectives. In spite of academic attention, the environmental effects of meat consumption and possible political modes to reach a decrease were largely absent from the public debate as well as the political agenda. During 2015 the proposition of a meat tax has been debated on the opinion sections in some Swedish newspapers but the alternative is still treated as rather radical and seem unlikely to be realized any time soon. Here is a suggested alternative that is relatively inexpensive and encouraged by academics³, why aren't any of the political parties or parliament jumping on board? What actors and interests sets the political agenda and why are some alternatives seriously considered whereas others never even come up for discussion?

1.2 Purpose and research questions

This study aims to understand and to explain why a consumption tax on meat as an alternative in climate change policies lack serious consideration in the Swedish context and it's, by and large, absence from the political agenda. The purpose of this study is divided into a primary and a secondary purpose. The primary purpose is to analyze the specific case and to provide an increased understanding as to which factors and processes that seem to be influential in keeping the alternative from serious consideration.

The secondary purpose with this study is to apply John W. Kingdon's theory on agenda change, and see if it is suitable to explain why a window of opportunity fails to open. Kingdon's theory has been largely influential in analyzing agenda setting and agenda change, and has been applied by many students as well as researchers. The theory provides a framework in which agenda setting can be analyzed in a context that take both actors as well as systemic structures and processes into consideration. By applying Kingdon's theory on a negative case, one aim is to examine the scope of his theory.

The question for this paper is:

Why isn't a consumption tax on meat higher up on the policy agenda in Sweden?

²See Wirsenius, Hedenus & Mohlin. (2011), Säll & Gren (2015) and Nordgren (2012) amongst others.

³See Wirsenius, Hedenus & Mohlin. (2011), Säll & Gren (2015) and Nordgren (2012) amongst others.

This paper is a case study that focuses on a single country, Sweden. I chose to include 'Sweden' in the research question because this shows that the study is limited to one country and thereby isolates possible cultural or historical objections to handling negative externalities by government action through taxation, given that Sweden already have consumption taxes in use as well as a culture and history of extensive government involvement⁴. The term 'consumption tax' is used because this is the type of tax on meat that has been discussed and because there are other consumption taxes currently in use on other goods with negative externalities. The motivations for formulating and interpreting the research question as mentioned above, have the positive effect of making factors such as technical details of taxation, culture and history, exogenous, and therefore lets the emphasis rely on factors important to political science.

1.3 Delimitations

This paper will not go into the specifics of the various suggestions of percentage rates or the range of a possible consumption tax on meat. There are already quite a few articles and papers on the subject, often written from an economic perspective that handles these issues in a much more gratifying way than what would be possible in this paper.

I have limited the empirics to handle one single country, Sweden, in this study. It could definitely be interesting to make future comparative studies with a cross-sectional design that investigates differences between countries. However I felt that choosing a different design that focuses on several countries and tries to isolate the effect of the various factors independently could come at the cost of not seeing the full picture and understanding the gathered processes of what determines agenda change. It should also be noted that comparative cross country studies are more meaningful when there is variation in the dependent variable and would therefore be more suitable after the introduction of a consumption tax on meat in some countries.

If the alternative of a meat tax rose on the policy agenda and were up for serious consideration it would be interesting to explore if Sweden's membership in the EU affects its' ability of introducing such a policy. Interesting as it is, the consideration of EU legislation is

⁴Relative to other democratic countries.

outside the scope of this paper, and would be more meaningful in the future if it was seriously considered.

The theoretical scope of this paper is limited to the use of one theory. It is possible that the simultaneous application of further theories would have increased the theoretical complexity of the issue, but I perceive that this would have come at cost of either not going as deeply in to each perspective or in making the whole analysis harder to navigate through.

2 Design, method and material

2.1 Design

The chosen design for this study is a case study that focuses on a single case. The purpose with this study is explanatory, but to be able to explain one must first describe and therefore the characteristics of the design are both descriptive and explanatory. The possibility of obtaining an explanation that can be generalized to other countries or cases are smaller for case studies that focuses on a single case in comparison with studies that have a comparative design, however there are still possibilities to generalize explanations generated through single case studies if the choice of case is well motivated (Teorell & Svensson 2007:82-83, 150-152). The choice to study the position of a meat tax on the policy agenda in Sweden is relevant because climate change is one of the greatest political challenges of our time. Sweden is a frontrunner when it comes to climate change policies and if I can find an explanation as to why a consumption tax on meat doesn't place higher on the policy agenda in Sweden then this is also probable to hold for other nations that are less proactive in their climate policies. There is a risk that conducting a comparative design leads to a diminished focus on significant aspects (Bryman 2004:83). Due to the wish to obtain an in-depth description and explanation in my chosen case in combination with a strategic choice of case I argue that the chosen design is relevant and suitable to my research question and purpose.

2.2 Method

The chosen method for this paper is qualitative content analysis. The method has been divided into two steps; a thorough reading of John W. Kingdon's *Agendas, alternatives and public policies* (2014) and an operationalization of this theory to suit a Swedish context and to fit the issue at hand, and a content analysis where the coding schedule is the operationalized version of Kingdon's theory created in the first step. Focus will be upon the manifest content in the chosen material. Text analysis in the shape of content analysis is a commonly used method and advantages of being transparent and highly replicable, which are two desirable characteristics for academic work. A risk with content analysis as a method is that the researcher chooses his/her question based on what is measurable rather than on the merits of theoretical significance (Bryman 2004:197). I find that my subject is interesting and well worth studying, and have presented my arguments for this in chapter 1.2.

There are two possible issues with my choice to focus on manifest content that could have implications for my thesis and these will be addressed now. The first issue is the risk that the

role of actors is overly emphasized at the cost of a failure to recognize the impact of variables such as history and culture, due to their inert nature. This could pose a threat to the validity of the study if the proposed explanation neglects to explain the studied phenomenon. The second issue is the risk that a focus on manifest content neglects to measure the actual reasons as to why a consumption tax on meat doesn't place higher on the political agenda, but rather the reasons actors want to visibly highlight. In regards to the second issue I would like to argue that it is possible that the discrepancy between manifest reasons and actual reasons is negligible and by focusing on manifest rather than latent content the replicability increases at the same time as the importance of my subjective interpretation decreases. I also think that the possibility of generalization increases by trying to find correlations through manifest content analysis than what would be the case for latent content analysis.

A possible alternative method would be to use discourse analysis with a focus on ideas or core terms and analyze how a consumption tax on meat has been described in public texts, for example on whether they are described positively or negatively or if the description changes over time. Such a method could explain the relative absence of a meat tax from the political agenda, but in my opinion the replicability would be lower than with my chosen method.

2.3 Material

The empirical material used in this study consists of secondary data. All data is made up of published official documents, for example by parties, mass media, reports and academic articles. Pros with using secondary data is that the material has high transparency and exists objective of my interpretation, and that it saves time and resources that can be spent on analysis rather than collection of data. Cons with the use of secondary data can be that material have been altered or processed in ways unknown to the reader, and it can also be difficult finding data that is relevant in regards to the research questions. One transparency issue can be that a majority of the empirical material is written in Swedish, making it hard to access for non-Swedish speakers, however I felt that if I would have chosen only to base this study on material published in English the study would not have been possible to do.

2.4 Disposition

This study starts of with an introduction to Kingdon's theory on policy agenda change. Thereafter it is divided in to three chapters that present empirical data and an analysis for each stream independently. Following the three streams is a discussion of what I perceived as vital components for lack of a policy window and lastly a concluding chapter.

3 Theory

In this study John W. Kingdon's theory on why issues rise on the governmental agenda, presented in *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (1984), is applied. The theory were developed by a using a dual method to explain why some issues score a high status on the policy agenda whereas others might never make it on to the agenda at all. Kingdon's framework has been widely used and is dramatically different to previous theories of policy change such as *the rational choice-theory* or the *incremental change-theory*. This chapter will summarize the essential ideas of the multiple stream theory and present some critique against the theory.

3.1 Kingdon's multiple stream theory

Kingdon differentiates between the governmental agenda, which are the issues government pay attention to, and the decision agenda which are issues lined up for decision, for an issue to secure a spot on the decision agenda there generally need to be an alternative ready so that legislators have something to vote on. There are a number of actors, inside as well as outside of government, that influence the governmental and decision agenda. Some actors have more influence than others, but in essence there is no single actor that single-handedly can push issues on to the governmental and the decision agenda, and get them to pass against the will of all other actors. Kingdon has divided the policy process in to three streams that operate simultaneously, with their own characteristics. These are the problem stream, the policy stream and the political stream. When an issue manages to arise in all three streams simultaneously a window of opportunity to secure a place on the governmental and decision agenda can open up. Windows of opportunities doesn't open up solemnly at random; rather they are often affected by policy entrepreneurs that try to make this couplings of the streams to promote agenda change.

3.2 The Problem Stream

A problem is defined as a condition that should be addressed, and this definition is important, containing its' own political stakes. Which conditions that should be considered problems are often closely intertwined with political and personal values. The attention paid to a problem will depend upon how the problem is framed, and attention and means available to address it will vary depending on how it is categorized.

One way that a problem can get highlighted is through *indicators*. Indicators are mainly used in two ways, firstly to asses the scope of a problem and secondly to become aware of changes

in the problem (Kingdon 2014:91). A problem might get increased attention is due to *focusing events*. A focusing event is something that causes extra attention to the problem area. However a focusing event alone is seldom, according to Kingdon, enough to move a problem up the policy agenda ladder, there needs to be some already existent perception of a condition as problematic (Kingdon 2014:98). *Feedback* from civil servants in national bodies, departments or bureaus about how existing programs and policies are working can highlight faults or issues within current systems. In some cases the recognition of a problem will be enough to place an issue on the agenda, but Kingdon also points out that in some cases important factors as to why problems receive significant attention can be politicians willingness to leave a mark or civil servants and bureaucrats eagerness to keep their jobs and perhaps increase their turf (Kingdon 2014:114-115).

So far factors that highlight problem awareness have been addressed, but what makes problems disappear from the agenda? Sometimes problems are dropped because they have been solved or at least addressed and sometimes they are dropped because they are too costly too address or solve, or because previous action has failed (Kingdon 2014:103-104).

3.2.1 The Policy Stream

The policy stream is described as a “primeval soup” where ideas are generated and float around in a way that resembles some kind of natural selection (Kingdon 2014:116-117). The ideas are turned in to alternatives and are generated by so called policy communities. These are communities that consist of specialists and are independent of political events such as government turnover or pressure from voters (Kingdon 2014:117). There are many different policy communities, categorized after policy areas. Specialists within a community are made up of people both inside and outside of government in various roles. Some policy communities are very closed whereas others are more fragmented. In the policy communities that are less fragmented there is more diversity in the characteristics and interest fields of members whereas fragmented communities are more divided in to sub-communities. The communities’ ability to speak with one voice and to demand attention is greater for less fragmented communities. For an alternative to be seriously considered and raise to the top of the short-list of ideas it must meet the community's internal criteria. Deliberation is an important factor within policy communities and specialists often become convinced on the merit of ideas.

3.2.2 The Political Stream

In the political stream the main mode of reaching support for an issue is through bargaining. Changes in public opinion, by Kingdon described as the *national mood*, elections or change of or within government can open up space for new issues to rise on the government agenda. The national mood can sometime lead to issues climbing higher up on the agenda, but more often serves as a constraint to what is politically viable. Politicians take national mood into account because if they implement unpopular policies they risk being punished in the next election. In the political stream intensity is important, and how often a message is being communicated or an issue discussed, is used as a proxy for intensity. Politicians take the support and opposition for an issue in to account, and if both sides are strong a *balance of forces* that mitigates any change can come in to place.

3.2.3 Window of Opportunity

When an issue raise to the top within each stream simultaneously a window of opportunity open up where an issue can climb on the governmental and decision agenda. Sometime theses windows are anticipated and regular for example due to election and sometime they appear more randomly. Kingdon describe one type of actor as specifically vital for the opening if a policy window, namely policy entrepreneurs. Policy entrepreneurs soften up policy communities as well as the public or politicians and try to further couplings of the streams, for example by attaching a given alternative to a problem all ready high on the governmental agenda.

3.3 Criticism against Kingdon's Theory

No theory is without its' flaws, if it was a perfect depiction of reality, it would cease to be a theory. However knowing that there is a discrepancy between our simplified idea of a mechanism, our theory, and reality is not the same as uncritically accepting a theory without considering its limitations and flaws. In this section I will address some possible issues with Kingdon's theory that might pose a challenge to my study.

3.3.1 Developed for an American context

Kingdon's theory is, at least partially, dependent on and drawn from its' political settings, which are American. The impacts of these differences are likely to be higher in some cases than others. The Swedish and the American political system differ on a number of factors. In Sweden MPs seem to vote along the party lines to a higher extent and are not directly elected by a geographical constituency and therefore strategic geographical considerations are likely to be of less importance. It is probable that the country specific settings are more influential in

the decision process, as they determine the formal criteria for political decision. In my study I focus on how the alternative of a meat tax is understood and described in the various streams and because there has not yet been a seriously considered proposition of introducing such a tax.

3.3.2 Under emphasizes the importance of institutional structure

In *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (2014) the importance of institutions is often secondary to the one of actors. Knaggård says that it is a flaw within the theory that it focuses on actors without recognizing the significance of institutional settings (Knaggård 2009:100). Brunner criticizes the theory for a lack of a multi-level governance perspective, which is important for understanding public policy in the member countries of the European Union (Brunner 2008:506), where a supranational institutional level exists and that further constrains decision-making on the national level. A lack of institutional importance seem to be one of the more common points of criticism and Kingdon chooses to address this in the last chapter of his book and concludes that institutions imposes limits on policy-making and affects what is politically possible (Kingdon 2014:229-230). I think that the role of institutions is greater in the considerations of new policies than in reforms of existing ones. In regards to my theme, a consumption tax on meat, I think institutional limits are present, but I don't consider them as one of the main factors that prevents the alternative from rising on the agenda because of the societal acceptance of other comparable governing modes currently in place.

3.3.3 Under emphasizes social structures

After reading Kingdon's work, it struck me that the impact of social structures was largely unmentioned. If one perceives structures such as class, ethnicity, gender as systemic, they will inflict constraints on which issues that make it onto the agenda, what receives adequate attention and which values that are safeguarded. These structures are always in place, but their significance varies between different types of policies and over time. Kingdon states that "Some groups and socio-economic classes have more political resources at their disposal than others, which introduces class and group biases into the system and which limits the possible alternatives and agenda items" (Kingdon 2014:223), but this is a rather vague formulation that fails to highlight who are privileged and the importance of such power imbalances in the actual considerations of public policies. I understand that a theory that tries to consider all perspectives on all levels can end up being unclear and messy, but I do think that by adding a dimension of social structure the view of knowledge become more complex and accurate. I think that by adding a gender perspective and a class perspective to the issue of meat

consumption, environmentalism and governing modes a better understanding of the public mood can be attained. Even though I see theoretical advantages to including social perspectives on power this would be hard to incorporate in a satisfying way with my chosen method and material, with a focus on manifest statements and would be better combined with a more complex definition of power and through a method that also considers latent statements.

4 The Problem Stream

4.1 Problem awareness in the reports of national bureaus

During the last few years there have been a number of reports and documents, published by national bureaus and departments that connects the consumption and production of meat to its' effects on the climate and problematizes this. In this chapter some statements that problematize the consumption and production of meat in publicly published reports will be summarized.

4.1.1 Problem awareness and definition

In a report from 2011 SEPA states that the consumption of meat is one of the five activities in Sweden that generate the most emissions and that consumption levels of meat have increased by 50 percent between 1990 and 2005 (Naturvårdsverket 2011:7). In a report from 2015 they wrote that it will be difficult to reach the target of limited climate impact and the next generation target if the present trend of increasing emissions from meat doesn't turn around (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:18). SEPA also add that the potential of reducing emissions are greater with a decrease in consumption compared to productivity advancements within the Swedish meat production, because a significant part of the meat, which is consumed in Sweden, is imported from other countries (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:18). The agricultural industry has become more efficient which has resulted in significant decreases in emissions, however not enough to offset the increased emissions due to increased consumption (Naturvårdsverket 2011:25).

SEPA describe half of the Swedish population as positive towards a reduced meat consumption but states that behavioral consumption changes are hard and timely to achieve, especially by relying only in informative governing tools (Naturvårdsverket 2011:8). To reach a decrease in meat consumption it is likely that a significant increase in price is necessary (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:18). They also state that the responsibility to decrease meat consumption should not be placed solemnly on the consumers and that efficient governing tools are needed (Naturvårdsverket 2011:22).

There is an implementation deficit in the Swedish climate policies, and many of the policy tools currently in use fail to reach their intended effects on behavior (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:38). SEPA sees it as problematic that the incentives for correct behavior are too weak, and that the principle that the polluter pays should be guiding in policies (Naturvårdsverket 1

2015:39). A study from the OECD shows that stricter environmental policies does not lead to decreased economic growth and hinders productivity, on the opposite it tends to lead to incentives for firms to invest in clean technologies which wouldn't have happened in the absence of the policies (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:43). SEPA also writes that an ambitious climate policy can provide Sweden with political leverage (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:44).

The Swedish Board of Agriculture (SBA) has also addressed the meat consumption climate and environmental effects. In a report from 2013 they described the meat consumption in depth, comparing Sweden's levels with those of other countries and over time as well as discussing a range of different environmental aspects and social aspects (Jordbruksverket 2013). SBA views the increasing quantities of consumed meat as problematic and discuss some of the alternatives that have been suggested by previous research and by other national bureaus such as SEPA. SBA conclude that a tax imposed on the consumer side might be an efficient tool to decrease the consumption of meat and by definition the emissions from meat consumption and also that it is a viable mode but with low accuracy. The SBA would rather see a tax or any financial tools imposed simultaneously on the EU-level or on a global level than on the national level (Jordbruksverket 2013:46,53).

4.1.2 The alternative of a tax on meat

SEPA suggests that when it comes to transactions that incur negative externalities to the society a typical governing mode could be to impose a tax or fee equal to the environmental costs of the externality (Naturvårdsverket 1 2015:40). In a report from 2012 SEPA suggested that the design and effects of a differentiated tax on meat should be investigated (Naturvårdsverket 2012:13).

4.2 Depiction of meat consumption in the media

During the last few years media's interest in meat consumption and its' effects on the climate have increased. *SVT Nyheter*⁵ has published a number of articles that examines the climate effects of meat consumption and the lack of governing modes in place to offset negative externalities (SVT Nyheter 2015-06-27). Reports by SEPA and SBA are referred to and the researcher Sara Säll is quoted on efficiency of economic governing modes (SVT Nyheter 2015-06-27). The perspective in the two mentioned articles is not on the radicalness of

⁵ The news department of Sveriges Television (SVT) which is the Swedish public service broadcaster

political interference with meat consumption but rather on the large environmental impact and the absence of action. It is not solely *SVT Nyheter* that has taken an interest in the issue, in an editorial from 2015 Lotta Engzell-Larsson from *Dagens Industri* state that the time for a meat tax has come (Engzell-Larsson 2015-10-26).

The media outlets owned by the Federation of Swedish Farmers' (LRF) has also taken a keen interest in the issue but with a significantly different perspective. In one article published in *Land Lanbruk & Skogsland* the Swedish journalist Johan Sedenius writes a new report from the Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment (SIME) states that meat consumption is adding to the eutrophication of Swedish waters and that they suggest a meat tax as a possible mode to minimize the impact (Sedenius 2015-10-19). A few weeks later another article by the Sedenius is published in *Land Lanbruk & Skogsland* which summarizes the key aspects of the ongoing debate on meat consumption and its' climate effects. LRF, *Land Lanbruk & Skogsland* and Sedenius address the issues without trying to hide scientific findings that are pointing out negative effects of meat consumption, however the Director of Energy and Environment at LRF, Isabel Moretti, is quoted saying that alarming reports are always coming and going in a continuous stream and that the attention paid towards the issue soon will blow over. Moretti is also quoted stating that Swedish politicians should stand up for the sustainability work already undertaken by Swedish farmers and that Sweden should increase their agricultural production since it is environmentally superior to that of other countries (Sedenius 2015-11-09).

4.3 Analysis of the problem stream

4.3.1 Indicators

Climate change is definitely seen as a problem, and meat consumption is beginning to be seen as problematic, from a climate and environmental perspective. A problem can be defined as a condition that should be addressed (Kingdon 2014:109). Kingdon describes indicators and changes in indicators as important in assessing the magnitude of a problem and become aware of changes in the problem (Kingdon 2014:90-96). SEPA is using indicators to estimate levels of consumption and emissions and to monitor changes in these. Indicators seem to play a large role in creating awareness about meat consumption and prioritizing this issue high enough to conduct specific studies and reports about it. Depending on the values and interests of the interpreter of indicators, the same information can be perceived as a problem by one interpreter and as a condition by another (Kingdon 2014:110-111). The LRF reports about the environmental impacts of meat consumption and production together with summaries of

actors problematizing this and suggesting alternatives to reduce these impacts. The representative interviewed in the article presented in **4.2. section two** doesn't necessarily contradict or oppose the information brought forward by indicators, but seem to disagree that further action should be taken to do something about it, such as imposing stricter policies. This is likely to be due to a difference in values and interests of LRF on one side and actors mainly prioritizing values of the environment and sustainability on the other side. In this issue indicators were probably leading in opening up for a discussion of alternatives, which results in both SEPA and SBA stating that a consumption tax on meat should at least be further investigated.

4.3.2 Focusing events

Focusing events, for example in the shape of crisis can help to push a problem higher up on the policy agenda (Kingdon 2014:96-97). No particular focusing events have been mentioned in the empirical material used here, which perhaps isn't very strange considering the relative slow changes in indicators. Focusing events are often less important when it comes to issues that aggregate slowly over time in comparison with issues where a single event directly creates large impacts (Kingdon 2014:95-96). The climate meeting in Paris in November 2015 could have been used as a focusing event on reductions of emissions and how to come up with new strategies for further reductions, but this wasn't really pushed by the media or by national bureaus. It is possible that because Sweden is already perceived as a strong actor when it comes to climate policies, the Paris meeting didn't have a lot of leverage as to adding new areas of climate policies and reductions on the policy agenda. The impact definitely hasn't been that of a focusing event but it can be noted that SEPA has stressed in a report that policies are needed now to be efficient and reach set targets by 2050 (Naturvårdsverket 2012:50).

4.3.3 Symbols

Kingdon says that symbols are important because they capture the essence of something that people are already sensing (Kingdon 2014:97-98). In the problem stream the consumption of meat and the emissions stemming from it can be seen as a symbol for a current unsustainable consumerism that also impacts people and the environment in countries and places far away. By interpreting the issue of meat consumption and its climate effects as symbolic it could cast light on why mainstream media have chosen to report on the issue, but it might also be an important factor in understanding why people are against it, and why many of the opponents are keeping quiet rather than attacking the arguments that protagonists bring forward. If meat

consumption is perceived as a symbol of one's lifestyle or cultural identity, any attempt to reduce meat consumption could be perceived as an attack on one's lifestyle or personal freedom. If one's beliefs are contradicted, it might be easier to ignore the contradicting information rather than to process it as this might conflict with other values one has or demand changes in behavior, this is the phenomenon that psychologists refer to as cognitive dissonance.

4.3.4 Feedback

One of the civil servants' most significant impacts in agenda setting are their awareness of problems that stems from their experience in implementing and administering policies (Kingdon 2014:100-103). When the mainstream media reports on the issue it seems like they take their starting-point in information first brought forward by reports conducted by national bureaus and academics. SEPA says that existing policies are not causing enough effects and that there is an implementation deficit when it comes to climate and environmental policies. They have been urging the parliament, and government to examine additional governing tools that will adjust these errors.

4.3.5 Financial constraints

Kingdon points out budget constraints and officials' perception of the economic climate as two factors that often keep issues from rising on the agenda (Kingdon 2014:105-108). These two factors don't seem to be among the most influential when analyzing the obstacles of defining the condition as a problem and starting to look at viable alternatives. Opponents do argue that farmers already have low profitability and that defining meat consumption as problematic and adopting policies that will reduce consumed quantities will strike hard against an already vulnerable group.

5 The Policy Stream

5.1 Problem awareness and alternatives in the academic sphere

There is a number of academic articles that examines GHG emissions from meat consumption and argue that these emissions should be reduced. There are also a number of academic articles that investigates the alternative of a meat tax from different perspectives. The main focus here is on Swedish academics because these are likely to be the most influential in the Swedish policy community. In 2010 an article by Stefan Wirsenius, Fredrik Hedenus and Kristina Mohlin conclude that a consumption tax on meat can be a cost-efficient climate policy and suggests such a tax, which is differentiated by food groups based on their emissions (Wirsenius et al. 2010:164, 180). A year later Anders Nordgren wrote an article recognizing the high amount of GHG emissions stemming from animalistic products and stating that he thought that emissions should mitigated, and that this could be done by introducing a tax on meat, even though this would have to be further investigated (Nordgren 2011: 571, 581). Nordgren also says that it is vital to take the problem seriously and that stricter governing tools are likely to be necessary in order to achieve mitigation results (Nordgren 2011:581). In 2012 an article states that if Sweden would continue to consume the same level of animalistic products as in 2005 this could solemnly jeopardize EU's mitigation targets and express support for such a tax that was suggested by Wirsenius et al. (2010) (Cederberg et al. 2012:338). Hedenus, Wirsenius Daniel J. A. Johansson wrote an article in 2014 concluding that to reach climate targets implies reducing emissions from meat and dairy consumption (Hedenus et al. 2014:89). Sarah Säll and Ing-Marie Gren wrote an article in 2015 where they begin to summarize some previous research stating that a pigovian tax could, at least theoretically, be used to reduce emissions from the meat consumption and that such a tax should be placed on the output side so that it taxes both imported and locally produced meat (Säll & Gren 2015:41-42). The writers conclude that in the past decision makers have opposed introducing such a tax regardless of whether the recommendations for such a tax were stemming from health arguments, climate reasons or for food security (Säll & Gren 2015:49).

The writers of the above mentioned articles seem to largely agree with another both in terms of problem perception and view on alternatives. Wirsenius and Hedenus have written three of the articles and could possibly be interpreted as vital members of the policy community. The first article that was mentioned, (Wirsenius et al. (2010)), which suggested a tax on meat is referred to in the SEPA report from 2011 and the SBA report from 2013 (both mentioned in

4.1.1) and is also referenced by Nässén and Larsson in their article investigating the attitudes towards a tax on beef (Nässén & Larsson (2015), see 6.3.1).

5.2 Interest groups

5.2.1 The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) are a non-profit organization and are Sweden's largest environmental organization with 221 000 members 2014 (Natuskyddsföreningen 2014:37). SSNC have published several reports that problematize the environmental and climate effects of meat consumption and have suggested a climate fee on meat. They describe their work as multi-leveled: an interest group trying to affect politicians, consumer advocates, by international collaborations and publishing reports and articles about environmental issues. SSNC are mainly concerned with five areas of interest and agriculture and food is one of these and climate, energy and transport another one.

5.2.2 The Federation of Swedish Farmers

LRF is the largest interest organization of farmers and agricultural enterprises in Sweden. On their website they state that Swedish beef has significantly lower emission levels than both the EU and the global averages (LRF *om mat och klimat*). They thoroughly address the issue of meat and its' climate impact on their website and takes a strong stance. The key message from LRF seem to be that consumers should choose Swedish produced meat rather than decreasing consumption levels (LRF *om kött och klimat*). LRF don't believe that the global meat consumption is increasing and they are opposing the alternative of a meat tax (LRF *om kött och klimat*). They bring up two arguments against a tax on meat, the first argument is that a tax that was based on the meat type would hit hard against Swedish environmentally friendly meat and benefit imported unsustainably produced meat and the second argument is that a tax that did differentiate on climate impact haven't been suggested and is not technically possible (LRF *om kött och klimat*).

LRF have invested significant time and resources to address the issues of meat and climate and to comment on proposed alternatives such as a meat tax. They have also been active in commenting in mass media and on social media when proponents of a meat tax have expressed their arguments. The material on their website keep bringing up the same key arguments and they do not contradict the fact that the consumption of meat is generating climate emissions. Their media strategy seems to be well thought through and consistent.

5.2.3 Policy entrepreneurs

During the work this study I have tried to find any key persons that can be described as policy entrepreneurs investing their resources to the issue. One person that has stood out is the MP Jens Holm from V. He has consistently tried to bring attention to the issue by writing numerous debate articles, two propositions in parliament, being a member of the Committee of Environment and Agriculture, co-written a book on the issue⁶. Jens Holm is probably perceived as knowledgeable and seriously devoted, but being active in the party furthest left on the political scale, he lacks bargaining power. The issue of meat consumption is not one of his parties top-priority issues further weakening bargaining power.

5.3 Analysis of the policy stream

5.3.1 Fragmentation within the academic community

Based on the articles in 5.1 I perceive the academic community as relatively tightly knit. Kingdon describes a tightly knit policy community as one where the specialists know each other, exchange information and develop common ground in problem analysis (Kingdon 2014:118). In the articles that I read, the problem definition seemed agreed upon and the authors' argumentation relied on similar values. They often referred to each other's work and they worked together in multi-disciplinary constellations, which often mixed economic or scientific estimates with new perspectives, grounded in their range of disciplines, which was therefore able to build on previous work. Kingdon says that close policy communities tend to come up with a common outlook (Kingdon 2014:119), and this well describes the academic community. However Kingdon also says that consensus in the policy community often occur through deliberation and become convinced based the strength of arguments (Kingdon 2014:125-126). Considering that the academic community consist of specialist that approach issues in a scientific way, the degree of consensus could also be driven by scientific agreement of the interpretation of data and alternatives.

5.3.2 Fragmentation within the wider policy community

I define the wider policy community as the people with special knowledge and interests in the issues of meat consumption and a meat tax and here one can find a mix of people such as representatives from interest groups, academics, journalists, politicians and staff from SEPA

⁶Djurindustrin och klimatet – EU blundar och förvärrar co-written with Toivo Jokkala, translated to several EU languages. www.meatclimate.org

and SBA. The wider policy community is more fragmented and less able to “speak with one voice”, which isn't very surprising considering that there are many more interests at stake here. I think there are some interesting differences in the attitudes towards a tax on meat when comparing the views communicated by LRF, SSNC versus the one communicated in academic articles and by SEPA. LRF is opposing a tax on meat and tries to direct the issue to problematize the imported meat rather than the consumption of meat. SSNC is positive towards what they call a fee on meat and state that it is important to reduce consumption levels. SEPA's objective seem to be a watered down and more politically feasible version of what the academic community suggests. The academics seem to be interested in introducing a tax mainly based on efficiency. The tone in media and amongst specialists is civilized and they are not attacking each other's arguments or problem descriptions. I think this is positive as sending out a strongly divided message make political action less likely, but they do not negotiate and come up with a common alternative, even though there are some points that all of the specialist could agree upon. The failure to do so does in my perception boil down to the absence of policy entrepreneur with vital resources to unite the different modes within the community.

5.3.3 Does the alternative meet the policy community's criteria?

For an idea to become a seriously considered alternative it must live up to some criteria, some of which are internal to the policy community (Kingdon 2014:131). If the alternative holds up specialists tend to anticipate the possible reaction and consequences if they alternative were to be advanced in to the political stream (Kingdon 2014:138). One of these criteria is technical feasibility, which is often related to implementation of the alternative and another criteria is that alternative is consistent with the values of the policy community (Kingdon 2014:132-133). It seem like technical feasibility is important in the academic community and the alternative specification. There is a lot of material covering design aspects of a meat tax so that it fulfills the important criteria of being efficient in mitigating emissions and is cost efficient in terms of monitoring and implementation costs. It isn't completely clear cut which tax design that would be best but it seem like the academic community is leaning more towards a tax based on category whereas SSNC wants a tax that is based on emission levels.

When it comes to value acceptability it seem like equity⁷ and effectiveness⁸ have been the two most important values. The equity principle seems to be prioritized over the equality principle in this issue.

My perception is that a pigovian meat tax, which is what usually has been suggested, holds up well to the equity principle and the first part of the effectiveness principle, about being able to achieve mitigations, but it can be questioned how politically viable it is. The alternative of a meat tax has been discussed by academics for years, and pigovian taxes are standard in other areas such as for alcohol and tobacco, but politicians in Sweden haven't really jumped on the meat tax band wagon, even if V and Mp have expressed their support for further examining possible governing modes for mitigation. This does not necessarily mean that the meat tax is politically impossible to introduce but can be a sign of the 'softening up' process where an idea need to float around for a while and get people used to it, this will be further addressed in next section.

5.3.4 The softening up process

The first of the articles I mentioned was published in 2010 and one could definitely argue that the idea of a tax on meat seem to have gained a lot more acceptability now than in comparison to when scholars first brought it up. Kingdon says that it often takes 2-6 years to create the right climate to focus on an issue (Kingdon 2014:129). It definitely seem like the alternative of a meat tax is going through a softening up process, even if it is taking significantly longer than the time frame suggested by Kingdon's respondents. I perceive the intensity with whom LRF is addressing the issue with to be an indicator that they are feeling that their interests might be threatened and that a meat tax might be possible. Time has definitely increased support or acceptance for a meat tax in order to mitigate emissions within the policy community at large but there is still some strong opposition against the idea.

5.3.5 Is a meat tax an available alternative?

The idea of a meat tax seem to have made it's way through the primeval soup and to have made it up on the shortlist of ideas. It has now been suggested by governmental bodies, interest groups, academics and political parties and the alternative has been getting more

⁷Here interpreted in the sense that the people causing negative externalities should also bear the costs for them and that social costs should be internalized so that consumer prices reflect the total costs.

⁸Here interpreted in the sense that a policy is likely to achieve the intended effects and is politically possible.

attention in the media during the last few years. On the other hand most specialists limit themselves to saying that the alternative should be investigated, which indicates that it could take some years before such a tax could actually be introduced.

6 The Political Stream

6.1 The views of political parties

There is none of the parties in parliament that specifically mention a demand for a tax on meat in their party program. This mustn't necessarily be interpreted as resistance of such an alternative, since the party programs often bring up the views of the party in a broader sense. The introduction of taxes are likely to be perceived negatively by voters and therefore party programs are probably more likely to include a general outline of ideas and reforms that a party wishes to see rather than financing strategies or taxes. All parties except for Kd and Sd have expressed support for green tax shifting, either in their own material or in interviews in mass media. SVT interviewed the environmental spokespersons for each of the eight parties in parliament and asked them on their outlook on meat consumption and possible governing modes (Ottander 22-02-2016). Four out of the eight parties, Kd, M, SD and C says that they don't think that Sweden should reduce their consumption of meat (Ottander 22-02-2016). Four out of the eight parties, V, Mp, S and L says that they think that Sweden should reduce the consumption levels (Ottander 22-02-2016). These four parties that are pro-reduction together hold 178 seats in parliament, since the election of 2014 and would hold a majority if they could agree on how such a reduction should be reached. V says that they would like to see an official strategy for how Sweden can reduce their consumption of meat and that it could contain specific governing modes (Ottander 22-02-2016). MPs from V, Mp and S have handed in propositions about reducing the consumption of meat during the parliament's general proposition time that occur every fall. The propositions have varied but all include a government set goal of a reduced meat consumption as well as examining possible governing modes to achieve such a goal. Below is a table that summarizes the views of the eight parties in the national parliament in regards to a reduced consumption of meat, governing modes, attitudes towards green tax shifts and whether they have written propositions in favor of a reduced meat consumption.

	V	S	Mp	C	L	M	Kd	Sd
For reduced meat consumption	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Against reduced meat consumption						✓	✓	✓
Proposition in parliament for reduced meat consumption	✓	✓	✓					
For governing modes	✓	✓	✓		(✓)	(✓)		
Against financial governing				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
For green tax shifting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Table 1: Views of political parties

Reference: Own work

6.2 The national mood

6.2.1 Approximating the national mood through debate articles

During the year of 2015 there have been a number of debate articles in mainstream media discussing the climate effects of meat consumption as well as arguments for and against a tax on meat⁹. The proponents for a meat tax are arguing for a reduction of meat consumption and the efficiency of a tax and the opponents are arguing for the inefficiency of such a tax and the superiority of Swedish produced meat in comparison with emissions from global averages. The opponents usually represent, or are active within, LRF. Below is a table that summarizes the amount of articles written by each side and whether the article was an initiating debate article or a response¹⁰.

	Proponents of a meat tax	Opponents of a meat tax
Initiating articles	II	
Responses	I	II
Total	III	II

Table 2: Debate articles in mainstream media

Reference: Own work

6.2.2 Approximating the national mood through surveys

In an article from 2015 Nässén and Larsson explore Swedes' attitudes towards climate related policy in regards to air travel and meat consumption based on data from the 2014 SOM-Institute survey. The key findings were that Swede's were the most negative towards a tax on meat out of the given alternatives, but that this negative attitude did not differ greatly from the general attitude towards tax raises (Nässén & Larsson 2015:242). Below is a table showing the percentages of respondents that were positive, negative or neutral towards the introduction of tax on beef and towards raising the general tax pressure. The balance measure, which is the percentage point difference between positive and negative responses, is also included.

⁹Amongst others see: Schyman & Paulsson *Aftonbladet* 2015-06-26, Jonsson *Aftonbladet* 2015-06-26, Jande *Göteborgs Posten* 2015-07-17 & 2015-07-26, Hammar & Johansson *Göteborgs Posten* 2015-07-21.

¹⁰ The table is compiled based on debate articles in mainstream media, for more details see Appendix 1.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Balance measure
Introducing a tax on beef	24%	30%	46%	-22
Raising the general tax pressure	26%	29%	45%	-19

Table 3: Attitudes towards a climate tax on beef

Reference: The SOM-institutes annual survey 2014

There were visible gender differences in respondents' answers, where men were more negative towards a tax on beef than women (Nässén & Larsson 2015:243). Below is a figure showing the balance measure for men and women separately as well as the average from Table 3. There is a difference of 20 percentage points between women and men, indicating that men are significantly more negative towards a tax on beef than women.

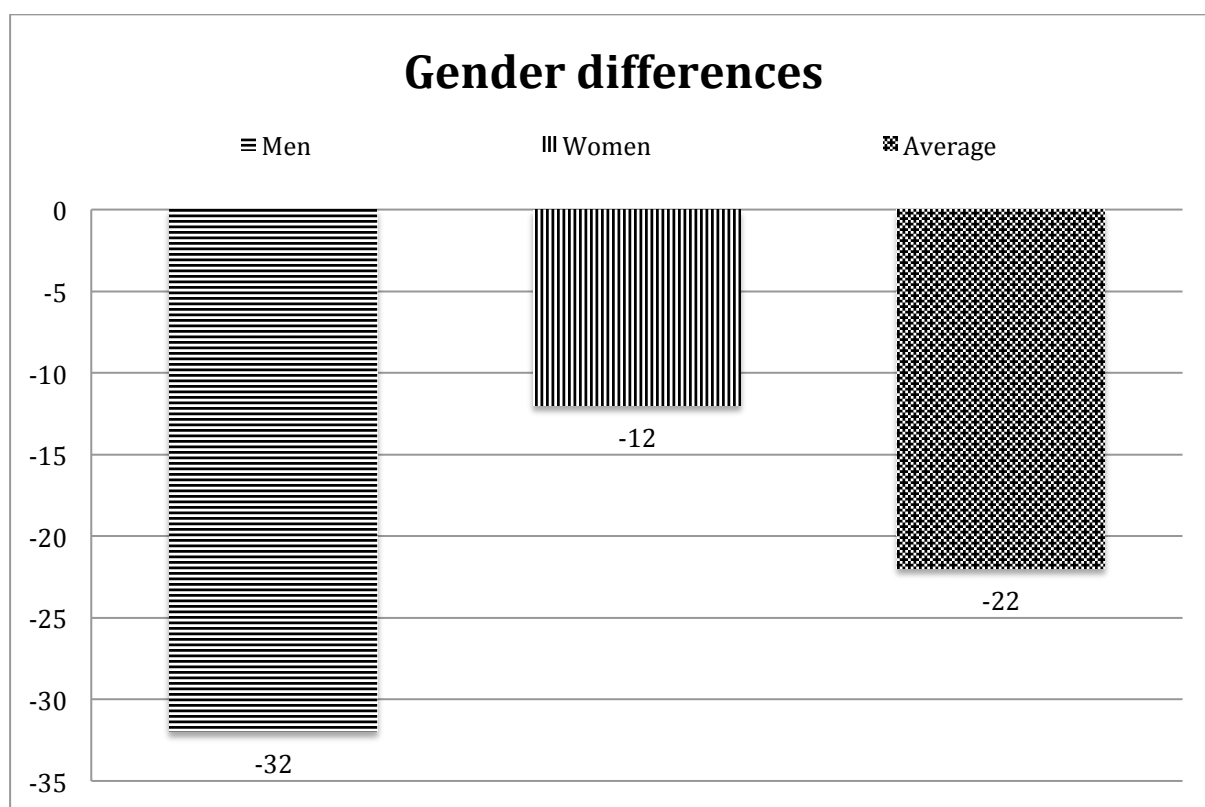


Figure 1: Gender differences in balance measure

Reference: The SOM-institutes annual survey 2014

There were also residential differences. Residents in rural areas were more negative towards a tax and residents in cities more positive (Nässén & Larsson 2015:243). Below is a figure that shows the balance measures for different residential categories. The respondents in rural areas

were on average 14 percentage points more negative towards a tax on beef than the national average and respondents in central city areas were 31 percentage points more positively oriented.

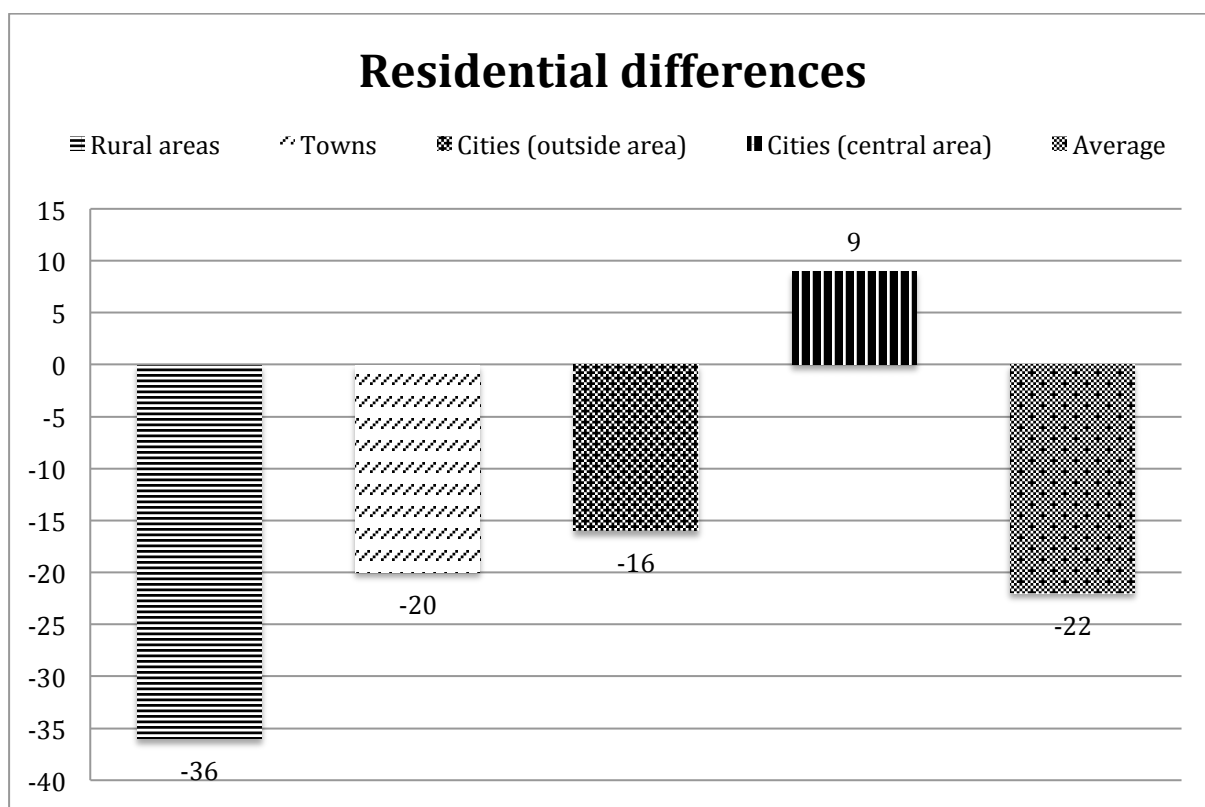


Figure 2: Residential differences in balance measure
Reference: The SOM-institutes annual survey 2014

In a report from 2015 SEPA examine Swedes' attitudes towards a climate friendlier lifestyle. 49 percent of respondents reported that they had changed their consumption of meat due to climate reasons ((Naturvårdsverket 2015-05-22:26). A high proportion of respondents said that difficulties in changing ones behavior are an obstacle in living greener (Naturvårdsverket 2015-05-22:7). There were categorical differences in respondents' answers. Women were generally more positive towards changing their behavior in favor of a greener lifestyle as well as being more positive towards climate policies than men (Naturvårdsverket 2015-05-22:16-18, 26). The same pattern was visible between residents in urban respectively rural areas where urban residents were more positively orientated towards reduced meat consumption, climate policies and a greener lifestyle (Naturvårdsverket 2015-05-22:16-18, 26). These categorical differences coincide with those previously mentioned in Nässén and Larsson article.

6.3 Analysis of the political stream

6.3.1 The national mood

The national mood, or government participants' sense of a national mood, helps some issues to rise and restrain others from rising on the policy-agenda. Kingdon says that the national mood can influence the government to do something but more often it is contributing in constraining the government from action rather than the other way around (Kingdon 2014:28). The fact that the media choose to publish debate articles on the subjects either indicates that the media has an interest in the subject or more likely that they perceive the subject as potentially interesting to the public. Therefore the presence of a debate in media shows that the issue is seen as at least somewhat important, both by the writers of the debate articles as well as the editors that pick them. The writers of the debate article are likely to have invested more time and energy into this issue, than the average reader, and therefore the arguments brought forward are likely to be more defined, thought through and also more extreme than the opinion of the average person. However the arguments brought up in debate articles are likely to influence readers in their perception of the issue.

The national mood is also estimated in surveys, and here some interesting points can be made. First, the acceptance of taxation as a climate policy has increased. Second, 49 percent of respondents already claim to have reduced their meat consumption due to climate reasons, but looking at indicators this is not yet having much impact on reducing emissions. Third, the public is quite divided in their attitudes towards a tax on meat, women, people with higher levels of schooling and those living in urban areas are more optimistic. Fourth, the general attitude expressed in regards to introducing a tax on meat is negative, but this also holds for raising and/or introducing new taxes in general. I perceive the increased percentage of respondents that have reduced their meat consumption and/or express positive views towards a tax on meat as partial evidence that the problem recognition are deepening and getting roots outside of the policy community.

In a lot of the material it said that tax on meat was a controversial alternative and that it would be hard to do, due to public opposition. My interpretation after reading the surveys is that the controversy of the alternative has more to do with values and symbolism than with actual opposition. Hammar and Jagers says that meat might be perceived as a basic good, which make it more sensitive to tax compared to taxing goods perceived as luxury goods, such as air travel. I think this type of thinking is a good example of how meat becomes a symbol, rather

than just another policy reform. When considering the amount of opposition against a meat tax expressed in the SOM-institute survey it can be noted that there is a parliamentary situation where none of the two blocks holds majority, and that for many reforms there is a majority of people opposing them. Unless the support of men is considered as more valuable than the support of women the numbers presented do not seem that extreme. People are likely to express negative opinions toward reforms that affect their personal interests, but the public has accepted similar types of policies before, such as taxes on tobacco and alcohol. Kingdon says that the national mood isn't necessarily representing a cross section of the population, but can also be made up of some activists or organized groups (Kingdon 2014:148). When the opposition sensed in the national mood is estimated in reports and surveys, it seems like the opposition of some groups such as men, people working in the food industry and people living in rural areas weigh heavier than other groups.

6.3.2 The prevalence of propositions

Kingdon says that entrepreneurs have different ways to try to soften up the community, decision makers or the public, and these are often used simultaneously (Kingdon 2014:128-129). Most of the propositions that are handed in during the general proposition time are voted down (Sveriges Riksdag *Allmänna motionstiden*). It is quite likely that the authors of propositions suggesting a reduced meat consumption knew that the propositions would not be approved. To introduce a proposition can be a way to get people talking about the issue and alternatives, and the issue receive some attention (Kingdon 2014:129-130). It seems likely that the MPs that wrote the propositions did so to bring attention to the issue and get people to discuss alternatives. Talking about an issue and keeping it alive are also vital parts of the *softening up* process. Another factor in writing the propositions could be to communicate intensity to other actors, such as other politicians as well as interest groups, and underline that one is serious and willing to invest ones resources, in this case time, into the issue. Kingdon says that when politicians try to estimate the organized political forces intensity and communication are factors (Kingdon 2014:151) and this seems like a probable incentive.

6.3.3 The attitudes of parties – is there a political will?

Bargaining is a key in the political stream, and it is likely that some parties could come to around accept the alternative of a meat tax in exchange for something they want. To be able to introduce new policies or legislation active support is not necessarily needed, acceptance and an agreement to vote for it, perhaps in exchange for something else, is enough. Kingdon describes how bargaining often can take place between individuals, but due to Sweden's

constitutional design I perceive the bargaining process to be more likely to take place within parties, to decide on a stance, between parties or between governments and outside actors putting pressure on the government. I think that the most important level here is the bargaining process between parties. No party single handedly have enough mandates to impose policies that all other parties disagree with. Another reason why I perceive this bargaining process between parties as the most important is due to it being more visible to the media and thus the public.

The larger parties have higher leverage in the bargaining process, due to having more mandates, so it is probable that bargaining for a small party like V would be very difficult as they have little leverage on the other parties since they have few mandates and are positioned the furthest to the left. The issue of meat consumption and alternative of a meat tax definitely isn't a key question for any of the parties, even if some MPs such as Jens Holm has been very engaged in the issue.

6.3.4 Overcoming public resistance

According to Jagers and Hammar the public's opposition towards environmental taxes often is due to the framing of the issue, where proponents fail to communicate the effectiveness, both in outcome and costs, of taxation compared to other modes (Jagers & Hammar 2009:224, 229-232). The opposition from the public seems probable to reduce through informational campaigns about the issue and the effectiveness of proposed alternatives. The campaigns wouldn't have to be effective in changing the public's behavior, merely in increasing the acceptance of introducing a meat tax. All of this would take a lot of will and resources, and this seems to be lacking.

7 Discussion

In the three previous chapters I have presented empirical data and analyzed the three streams separately by using Kingdon's framework. In this chapter I will discuss vital factors for a future coupling of the streams, as well as an important aspect that is underemphasized by Kingdon, namely the institutionalization of acceptance. Lastly I will touch base on how a future study that incorporates a feminist analysis can provide a new perspective on the issue.

7.1 Policy entrepreneurs

In the empirical material I have researched for this study a lack of policy entrepreneurs seem to be important. There is, some, agreement on the interpretation of indicators and most political parties, as well as the public agree on that emissions need to be reduced and that lifestyle changes are necessary to do so. To get more parties to jump aboard on the meat tax train, policy entrepreneurs could for example connect the alternative of a meat tax with the parties already existent positive attitudes towards green tax shifting. Several of the parties have expressed that the principle of that the polluter pays should be guiding in climate policies, and this opinion was also expressed by the public in an article by Jagers and Hammar (Jagers & Hammar 2009:230). By coupling green tax shifting with the principle that the polluter should pay (equity principle) and arguing for the effectiveness, in outcome as well as cost, of a meat tax compared to other modes, the acceptance are likely to rise amongst parties as well as the public. Kingdon says that it isn't only the public and the national mood that influence politicians and guide them in their perception of what is politically doable, but that popular politicians can also plant ideas in the public (Kingdon 2014:25, 149). Jens Holm has been trying to push for a decreased meat consumption for years but seem to be fighting more or less alone, if a high-profile politician, maybe even a minister, from one of the bigger parties chose to do the same it is probable that it would have more effect.

7.2 Acceptance of existing policies

There are several examples where policies, once in place, went from being largely unpopular amongst the public to being supported by the majority. Examples of this is the inside smoking-ban (Naturvårdsverket 2011:9), and the introduction of transport fees in Stockholm. People often oppose change but once a program or reform is in place they get use to it, and if it works efficiently even start to support it. One alternative for policy entrepreneurs could be to try and influence parties to introduce the tax on a trial period, similar to what was done with the congestion charges in Stockholm. According to Jagers and Hammars the public support for a reform that faces a lot of opposition is likely to increase if the reform proves

efficient (Jagers & Hammar 2009:229). It might be easier to convince policy-makers or the public to accept a meat tax that is introduced on a one year basis, and then evaluating it's effectiveness then to simply introduce a new tax.

7.3 Alternative approaches

If analyzing proponents and opponents of a meat tax from a socio-economic perspective and looking at the resources available to different interest groups patterns appear. Women are more positive towards reducing their consumption of meat due to climate impact and also more positive towards a meat tax. In order to obtain new and deeper explanations as to why a meat tax is politically unlikely to be introduced in the near future a feminist perspective could be helpful. The lack of will to process new information and to make behavioral changes seem to be more influential than a class perspective where one income group is more positive or negative than the other, therefore a psychological perspective might also prove useful.

8 Conclusions

Kingdon's multiple stream theory describes some of the aspects well whereas others are neglected. Kingdon notes that while an issue might be high up on a specialized agenda it can fail to ever climb up on the main policy agenda or, even if on the policy agenda, to reach the decision agenda. I think that this is the case with the issue of a tax on meat. This is an issue that is relatively high up on specialized agenda, but hasn't been able to climb on the governmental agenda, even if it has been discussed more and more during the last year.

8.1 Governmental vs. decision agenda

Is it necessary that an issue place on the governmental agenda in order to place on the decision agenda? No, the parliament and government makes hundreds or thousands of decisions every year, many of these have a technical character with low or non-existent political interest to the public. Other issues might be of political interest to the public but are not reported on by the media and therefore go under the radar. In the analysis of the problem stream I argue that problematizing the consumption of meat and to bring up the alternative of tax on meat can be interpreted as a symbolic attack on the lifestyle and rights of many people, which would be likely to make such an issue relatively high-profile, and a decision to introduce a tax on meat is unlikely to be seen as a technical question of reducing emissions that would go under the radar. If a meat tax need to place on the governmental agenda in order to move to the decision agenda, the political stream and the actors within become more important since they, to a larger extent than other actors, have influence on what issues are prioritized on the policy agenda.

8.2 Framing is the key

Through the analysis of the three streams as well as the discussion it has become clear that how an issue and/or an alternative is framed has significant consequences for how the level of acceptance or support that it receives. In this case advocates have failed to frame the issue in a way that have created enough problem recognition and political will to make the alternative viable. This is probably influenced by a number of factors: there is a lack of policy-entrepreneurs to make couplings of the streams, the available information haven't reached or convinced the public and political parties, politic opportunities such as the change in government, tax reform and Paris meeting were not seized. It is possible the alternative of a meat tax is still going through a softening up period and that the time for it to rise on the governmental and decision agendas will come but in order to do so stronger political will and policy-entrepreneurs to develop an alternative ready to go and make couplings are crucial.

Raising the public's acceptance of a meat tax is probably of importance but not crucial. NGO's, federal departments and academics from the SOM-institute evaluate that the public's resistance against economic modes of governance might not be so widespread as politicians seem to think.

8.3 Could a policy window open up in the future?

It seems like the alternative of a meat tax is spreading outside of the academic community and the public awareness of emissions stemming from meat consumption are increasing. The probability of climate policies that include emissions from meat are growing but there are still significant opposition from interest groups as well as the public. The probability that a policy window might open up at some point exists, but it is not likely to happen within a close timeline.

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10 Appendix 1: Debate articles in media

Aftonbladet June 2015

In a debate article in *Aftonbladet* from June 2015 Gudrun Schyman, the party leader of Feministiskt Initiativ¹¹, and Jonas Paulsson, founder of the campaign “Meat free Monday”, argued that the meat consumption is one of Sweden's biggest obstacles in reducing their emissions (Paulsson & Schyman 2015-06-26). Schyman and Paulsson said that a tax on meat in combination with increased information and meat free days in public instances are well needed steps on the way to a sustainable and healthy society (Paulsson & Schyman 2015-06-26). *Aftonbladet* is Sweden's largest newspaper (*Aftonbladet I siffror*), the fact that they chose to publish the debate article indicates that the issue have become more visible and that the public might be more adaptive to the arguments presented in the article than previously thought. The fact that one of the authors, Gudrun Schyman, is a famous politician known for her rhetorical skills might have been an important factor in getting the article published.

Helena Jonsson, the chairwoman of LRF, replied to Paulsson and Schymans article, and argued that the focus of the debate is misguided. Jonsson stated that focus is often upon emissions from the Swedish production even though the meat produced in Sweden has the lowest levels of emissions per kg in the EU and that the problem for the climate is the imported meat (Jonsson 2015-06-26). She further argues that a tax on meat will increase demand for imported meat further at the same time as decreasing the demand for Swedish meat, thereby a tax on meat would have negative effects on the environment (Jonsson 2015-06-26).

Göteborgs Posten July 2015

In a debate article in *Göteborgs Posten* (GP) from July 2015 Per-Anders Jande from Svensk mat- och miljöinformation (SMMI) claimed that an efficient tax on meat will affect the consumption of meat products that causes large emissions more than animalistic products that have been produced in a sustainable way (Jande 1 2015-07-17). Jande argued that a tax on meat on the consumption side would be a good governance mode to decrease the meat consumption and to offset some negative environmental effects (Jande 1 2015-07-17). He also

¹¹A Swedish feminist party that was founded in 2005. The party has never made it into the Swedish parliament but has one mandate in the EU parliament.

said that a tax on meat should be designed with total environmental effects in mind so that other environmental issues with meat production and consumption are also incorporated (Jande 1 2015-07-17). The headline for the debate article stated that a meat tax would increase competitiveness (Jande 1 2015-07-17).

A few days later Sven Erik Hammar and Ronny Johansson from LRF reply to Jande's debate article and state that he is wrong about a meat tax being an efficient policy tool (Hammar & Johansson 2015-07-21). The authors wrote that because Swedish meat industry is more efficient and more climate friendly in comparison with other countries, a tax on meat would be a bad policy (Hammar & Johansson 2015-07-21). According to Hammar and Johansson several reports have suggested a meat tax and that Denmark did introduce a tax on meat that was removed after two years and this in combination with the Swedish meat industry's efficiency make a meat tax a bad idea. The climate policies should not constrain the emissions from the agricultural industry, and specifically the methane emission from cows that Jande described as problematic, but instead focus should be on the burning of fossil fuels (Hammar & Johansson 2015-07-21). The headline for the debate article stated that a tax on meat would not be saving the climate but rather the other way around (Hammar & Johansson 2015-07-21).

Jande replied to the critique a few days after Hammars and Johanssons contribution, and this was the last debate article on the issue. Jande said that Hammar and Johansson's argumentation is built on a misconception, and that an efficiently designed tax would tax more polluting meat harder than the less polluting meat and would therefore not incur such a heavy burden on Swedish meat producers as Hammars and Johansson argued (Jande 2 2015-07-26). He further stated that meat production has a number of negative environmental effects in addition to its' climate effect and therefore tackling the issue solemnly by increasing productivity in terms of energy efficiency and emissions will lead to suboptimal solutions (Jande 2 2015-07-26). The headline for the debate article was that a meat tax benefits Swedish farmers (Jande 2 2015-07-26).

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