



LUND UNIVERSITY

School of Economics and Management

# The Sustainable Development of a Market Concept

- A Discourse Analysis of the Legitimation Process of Sustainable Food in Sweden

By

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May 2019

Master's Programme in International Marketing & Brand Management

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# Abstract

Market concept such as sustainability, CSR and sustainable food have influenced the way in which actors on the marketplace behave. Furthermore, previous research have shown that while some market concepts and logics succeed in becoming established among market actors other do not. This in turn has significant consequences on how the market is structured and the behavior of different actors within it. This thesis are therefore examining how the concept of sustainable food have gained legitimacy in the Swedish context in order to contribute to existing literature on how market concepts become legitimized. Newspaper articles from the three most credible newspapers were examined from the period 1995-2018 resulting in 1902 articles whereby 309 of them where coded. Through discourse analysis together with existing theories of institutional- and strategic legitimation, our findings suggest that the concept gains legitimacy by constantly adapting to bigger discourses. Furthermore, our findings indicate that goal congruence, together with a more evenly distributed sense of responsibility, between various actors, such as consumers, organizations and institutions has contributed to the legitimation of the concept. Different actors' approaches to achieve a sustainable food system together with the complexity of the issues embedded within the concept kept sustainable food relevant. Additionally, issues and critique on established methods trickled across the industry, and to nearby industries, via intertextuality. Corporations using sustainability strategically together with isomorphism further propelled the legitimation process. The findings thus indicate that the diffusion rate of a sustainability concept happens faster than previous research have shown.

Keywords: Market Concept, Sustainable Food, Institutional legitimation, Strategic Legitimation, Isomorphism, Discourse Analysis

# Acknowledgements

This thesis was written as a degree project in Global Marketing within the Master's programme International Marketing and Brand Management at Lund University School of Economics and Management. We would like to express our gratitude to the University and its academic staff for guiding us through the process of writing this thesis. We would especially like to thank our thesis supervisor Jon Bertilsson will to go beyond the requirements to aid us in conducting the best thesis possible and for his continuous feedback, constructive criticism and overall guidance in the creation of this thesis.

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Problematization.....	4
1.3	Research Question.....	5
1.4	Literature Review.....	6
1.4.1	Sustainable food.....	6
1.4.2	CSR.....	8
1.5	Positioning.....	9
1.6	Purpose.....	10
<b>2</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1	Legitimation.....	12
2.1.1	Strategic Legitimation.....	13
2.1.2	Institutional Legitimation.....	13
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1	Research Approach.....	16
3.2	Research Design.....	17
3.2.1	Empirical Material.....	17
3.2.2	Sampling of Empirical Material.....	18
3.2.3	Analysis of empirical material.....	19
3.2.4	Periodization.....	22
3.3	Methodological reflection.....	23
3.3.1	Confirmability.....	23
3.3.2	Dependability.....	24
3.3.3	Credibility.....	25
3.3.4	Transferability.....	26
<b>4</b>	<b>Empirical material and analysis.....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1	1995 - 2000 Narrow, but slowly evolving concept.....	27
4.1.1	Summary of Period.....	30
4.2	2001 - 2007: Ecology & The Integration of Food and Sustainable Development...30	
4.2.1	Summary of Period.....	35
4.3	2008-2014: Passion for nature and hipster ideals.....	36
4.3.1	Companies.....	38
4.3.2	Symbols and other actors.....	40

4.3.3	Summary of Period .....	43
4.4	2015 - 2018: The War on Meat and Increasing Levels of Complexity and Conflicts 44	
4.4.1	Anti-meat discourse and Gender Equality .....	44
4.4.2	Conflicts and Increasing levels of complexity .....	47
4.4.3	New industries and businesses .....	49
4.4.4	Summary of Period .....	51
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion &amp; Conclusion .....</b>	<b>53</b>
5.1	Recap of findings .....	53
5.1.1	1995-2000 .....	53
5.1.2	2001-2007 .....	53
5.1.3	2008-2014 .....	54
5.1.4	2015 - 2018 .....	55
5.2	Conclusion .....	56
5.3	Contribution to Prior Research and Theories.....	57
5.3.1	Sustainable food.....	57
5.3.2	CSR.....	58
5.3.3	Theoretical framework.....	58
5.4	Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research .....	59
	<b>References.....</b>	<b>61</b>
	<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>75</b>
	<b>Appendix B.....</b>	<b>76</b>
	.....	77







# 1 Introduction

This thesis attempts to better comprehend the legitimation process of a market concept by investigating the development of sustainable food as a concept in Sweden. The first chapter will give a short introduction to the development of sustainable food and idea which has evolved from the concept sustainable development. Furthermore, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), will also be presented to give a comparative perspective of how a market concept becomes established. The problematization will later emphasize why the legitimation process is important to research. The literature review will present previous research on the legitimation of the two concepts sustainable food and CSR. Finally, the positioning will emphasize how our study is positioned in comparison to prior literature streams regarding sustainable food and CSR as well as the purpose of this paper.

The definition that will be used for sustainable food in this thesis is grounded on the food system concept created by The SUSFOOD ERA-Net (Sustainable food production and consumption) project. Herewith, a sustainable food system is defined as;

*“A food system that supports food security, makes optimal use of natural and human resources and respects biodiversity and ecosystems for present and future generations, is culturally acceptable and accessible, environmentally sound and economically fair and viable, and provides the consumer with nutritionally adequate, safe, healthy and affordable food”*  
(The SUSFOOD ERA-Net, cited by Capone, Bilali, Debs, Cardone & Driouech, 2014, p.14).

## 1.1 Background

During the last couple of centuries, the idea has been that the environment was external to humanity, only to be used and exploited. The issues with the environment was according to this logic, only local, as parks and other smaller areas were an exception to this exploitation. Overall, the relationship between nature and humanity was that the latter has triumphed over the former (Dryzek, 1997). Because of modern science and capitalism, humans possessed technology and knowledge that could overcome all obstacles such as natural and environmental (Dryzek, 1997).

From an economical perspective, economic growth was the superior issue in the same era. The logic was that, through economic growth human wellbeing will be raised, and in the same time, the economy would trickle down and raise the rest out of poverty (Douthwaite, 1992). The mid-20th century shed light on the global links between environmental problems and socio economic issues such as poverty, inequality and healthy future for humanity (Hopwood, Mellor & O'Brien, 2005). The awareness of these links brought forth the notion of sustainable development. The first important mention of the term was in the world conservation strategy (IUCN, UNEP & WWF, 1980). However, the links of environmental problems and socioeconomic issues was more famously developed in the Brundtland Report, which further

developed the notion of sustainable development (WCED, 1987). The Brundtland Report's definition of sustainable development was meeting 'the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (WCED, 1987, p. 43) This definition recognizes human's dependency on the environment to meet needs and well-being in a much wider sense than merely exploiting nature (Hopwood, Mellor & O'Brien, 2005). This logic thus changed from the previous logics of mankind, via technology, ruling and exploiting nature. According to Giddings, Hopwood and O'Brien (2002) our lives, activities and society are nested within the environment rather than dominating over nature.

Following the Brundtland Report in the 80s, sustainable development has been highly mentioned and taken many different shapes in different practises (Spangenberg, 2016). In 2002 the Swedish government acknowledged sustainable development as the overall goal for Swedish politics (Nationell strategi för hållbar utveckling, 2002). This new strategy was followed by a sort of politics for global development which emphasized the need for collaboration to achieve sustainable development (Prop. 2002/03:122). Similar focus on sustainable development could also be seen in the EU, that introduced sustainable development in their strategy 2001 (European Parliament, 2018), but also within the business sector (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Although the notion of sustainable development can be seen as highly institutionalized, there are still conflicting ideas about how it should be achieved. It can be argued that there are two different traditions. These often revolve around either seeing technology as a solution (Chertow, 2000), or identify the need for a greater structural and behavioral change in, for instance, consumption practices (Bengtsson, Alfredsson, Cohen, Lorek & Schroeder, 2018; Jackson, 2005).

Subsequently, as the concept of sustainable development grew it further trickled down to different markets (Spangenberg, 2016). The social and environmental concerns of sustainability started to complicate the food industry (Pullman, Maloni & Carter, 2009), thus forming a concept of a sustainable food systems (Gorgitano & Sodano, 2014). The issues that have been discussed and criticized in regards to sustainable food have historically been ranging from migrant worker abuses, product safety and animal handling practices to the environmental impacts of soil erosion, habitat destruction, fertilizer runoffs and the use of herbicides and pesticides (Pullman, Maloni & Carter, 2009). The frame of sustainability have allowed thoughts from environmentalism to enter the mainstream discourse and widened the debate to include issues of social justice, labor fair trade, organic and genetically modified foods (Humphreys, 2014).

The main argument for the need of a more sustainable food system is global future increase in population. This growing population results in an increasing demand for food in general (Herrero & Thornton, 2013; Garnett 2014). However, if the demographic trends we see today continue with increasing wealth and urbanization among especially developing countries it is estimated that there will be a shift in diets toward more animal products (IAAST, 2009). It is estimated that the producers will be able to meet this increasing demand (Alexandratos & Bruinsma 2012), however leaving a question mark whether the demand can be met while achieving the environmental and social goals. Herewith, it is crucial to take into consideration that livestock today stands for 8-18% of the global Greenhouse Gases (GHG), and it is forecasted that the production need to be doubled in the next 30 years.

Another problem area is the unequal distribution of food among the global population. This inequality have given rise to the paradoxical situation where 1,4 billion people are overweight meanwhile 750 million suffer from undernourishment (Swinburn, Sacks, Hall, McPherson,

Finegood, Moodie & Gortmaker, 2011). This phenomenon is even further problematic because of the changing environment leaving already exposed areas with increasing difficulties with farming (Garnett, 2014). Overall, the historical and contemporary production systems undermine vital aspects of the ecosystems while at the same time exacerbate zoonotic diseases and other direct risks to people's health (Garnett, 2014).

Garnett (2014) has further identified three different logics on how to achieve a sustainable food system. The first one, which are seen as the dominant approach is the efficiency logic which infers that through constant technological development the market will become sustainable over time. The second approach is called the demand restraint perspective which has its roots in the issue of unsustainable over consumption practices on the market (Garnett, 2014). Thirdly, the food system transformation which is the least dominant approach. This approach has its roots in the social injustices on the marketplace and believes that sustainability in the food industry can only be achieved if these injustices are solved (Garnett, 2014).

In order to understand the often long process for an idea to become incorporated in mainstream, we wish to draw attention to CSR. The reason for choosing CSR, is the similarities in which an idea or logic outside the marketplace, trickles down and shape behavior in both the business and consumption sphere.

As a cluster concept, which overlaps concepts such as business ethics, corporate philanthropy, corporate citizenship, environmental responsibility and sustainability, CSR is a relatable concept to sustainable food, which has become deeply established through time (Matten & Moon, 2005). Today, CSR is widely recognized as an institutionally legitimized organizational practice (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Additionally, the business community has established its own organizations aimed at the topic, one of which is called Business for Social Responsibility (BSR). This organization provides corporations with ideas and expertise in how to excel in the field of CSR. From being regarded as primarily a domestic business practice, with its start in The United States, CSR has grown radically in the last couple of decades to be a part of the world scene. Currently, corporations in virtually all developed nations are engaged in various CSR initiatives (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

However, this has not always been the case. With its roots going back to the era of The Cold War between 1945 - 1960 (Spector, 2008), CSR was primarily philanthropic and seen as a means of businesses taking responsibility and doing good to society through donations to civic institutions and universities (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Vogel, 2005). Furthermore, the concept only existed in the United States initially (Vogel, 2005; Carroll, 1999). The rapidly changing social environment of the 60's was a significant contributor to the development of CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Parallel to the rise of social movements in the 60's, such as civil rights, women's rights, consumers' rights and environmental movements, businesses increasingly engaged in social responsibility (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Thus, these movements played an instrumental role in creating further pressure and CSR expectations on corporations (Dowling & Pfeffer 1975).

From the 70's and onward till today, the concept of CSR has become increasingly used as a strategic tool for businesses, resulting in the concept growing even more in popularity (Vogel, 2005). This development is known as The Business case of CSR (Vogel, 2005). Evidently, this CSR expansion was also a product of increasing scholarly work in the business sphere, such as Carroll (1979) and Drucker (1984), who addressed the importance of CSR as a business opportunity. As CSR gained global outreach (Carroll & Shabana, 2010), the concept became

more universal and increasingly promoted by numerous stakeholders and institutions of society, including governments, corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and consumers. Even larger international organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Labor Organization have supported the development of CSR ever since (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011).

As a consequence of various company scandals and the global recession of 2008, the 2000's was a period when corporations worked actively to regain legitimacy. Additionally, from stressing the importance of utility maximization, exchange value and product efficiency, to now encompassing a more complex socio-moral and political relationship, the consumer-corporation relationship shifted to what it currently is (Crane & Matten, 2005). Vogel (2005) adds to this notion by stating that "The emergence of 'companies with a conscience' represents a particularly vivid expression of the contemporary reconciliation of social values and the business system" (Vogel, 2005, p.28). In connection to this, other related concepts became significant forces to CSR such as ethical consumerism and consumer social responsibility (CnSR) (Crane & Matten, 2005; Vogel, 2005). Furthermore, as a result of increasing environmental awareness, companies gained interest in the concept of sustainability, which resulted in integrating sustainability to the discourse of CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). As an example of how the concept is continuously evolving, the non-profit organization CSR International was founded in 2009 to focus on what they referred to as 'New CSR' or 'CSR 2.0' (Corporate Sustainability & Responsibility) (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

To conclude, the development of, the now widely established concept, CSR is attributed to numerous influencing societal forces. A combining force of stakeholders, such as consumers, citizens, activists, NGO's, media, academic scholars, governments, corporations and institutions have all collectively contributed to its evolution (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). Another reason for its survival is the fact that the term constantly adapts and links to relevant social forces and issues in the certain periods of time (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Therefore, CSR seemingly manages to stay relevant and create value for society, but also for the companies practicing it. This is evident when comparing the early practices of CSR that aimed to benefit the local society in which the companies were situated, with contemporary practices that have incorporated various kind of social issues that affect a more global audience (Dahlsrud, 2008). The original philanthropic aspect of the concept has thus been altered as companies increasingly use the concept for commercial purposes (Vogel, 2005).

## 1.2 Problematization

Above are two examples of business oriented concepts, which through time have managed to become significantly established in society. The influential character of market concepts such as Sustainable Food and CSR exemplifies how certain concepts become widely used and gain legitimacy in the eyes of consumers, corporations and society as a whole (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). There are several reasons why it is essential to understand the legitimation of a market concept. The comprehension of consumer behavior is one of them. In order to understand the sociocultural aspects of consumer behavior, one must comprehend the reasons and ways in which certain consumption practices have become socially normalized and institutionalized (Downing & Pfeffer, 1975).

Another reason is to understand organizational behavior. Since it is important for organizations to be perceived as legitimate, they react to various constraints and changes in social norms and values. Thus, studying the process of legitimation also allows for the analysis of organizational behavior in regards to these shifts in society (Downing & Pfeffer, 1975). Therefore, the process of legitimation is a crucial factor for the understanding of both consumer and organizational behavior (Humphreys, 2010). Moreover, the concept of legitimacy is a vital tool in that it enables the linkage between the analysis of organizations and society (Downing & Pfeffer, 1975).

Further, as the state of our environment is becoming of increasing concern, it is important to understand why certain aspects regarding how to solve it become legitimized. In terms of sustainable food, Garnett (2014) argues that there are multiple logics when addressing and identifying the issues within sustainable food systems. Within these logics there is a power asymmetry, meaning that the dominant approach gets the most influential actors' attention. This power asymmetry entails that the issues and concerns of some of the logics get undermined while other issues get more legitimized. Therefore, how and why these aspects become legitimized while others do not is vital for market research to understand, as it influences how sustainable food as a concept is understood. Furthermore, this entails that the actors that are embedded in the sustainable food sector can mobilize their good intentions in the best possible way.

In this report, we thus aim to investigate how and why such concepts become deeply embedded, and thus legitimized, in mainstream society. Within the academic field of institutional legitimation, the concept of legitimation is viewed as a larger cultural construct with emphasis on the collective structurization of entire industries and sectors, such as health care, education, publishing, nuclear power, etc. (Suchman, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Therefore, researching how a sector, such as sustainable food, has been institutionalized and legitimized would evidently be an important contribution to such literature streams. However, organizations are not without agency in this matter. Both organizations and institutions are collectively involved in framing the process of legitimacy for certain ideas and practices (Swidler, 1986). These two interrelated forces are referred to as strategic and institutional legitimation (Suchman, 1995). Therefore, by researching a variety of contributing stakeholders, both in the realm of strategic and institutional legitimation, this paper attempts to understand how this process has developed in the case of sustainable food in Sweden.

Thus, it is important to research how the understanding of concepts, which is influencing and influenced by consumers, companies, governments and other institutions, is constituted and has gained a certain meaning. This contribution of knowledge has, in turn, relevance for both the academic community and practical importance for society as a whole, since it brings forth a thorough review on the legitimation practice of influential concepts.

### 1.3 Research Question

- How has the concept of sustainable food gained legitimacy in Sweden and become an established concept for consumers, companies, governments and other institutions in the country?

## 1.4 Literature Review

### 1.4.1 Sustainable food

There is a consensus within the sustainable food literature stream that the world needs a sustainable food system to tackle sustainability issues (Garnett, 2014; Swinburn et al., 2011; Herrero & Thornton, 2013; Alexandratos & Bruinsma, 2012). However, by looking at various stakeholders' definition of food safety, Lang and Barling (2012) found that many stakeholders offers their individual solutions and perspectives of how they see today's problem areas. According to the authors, the dominant solution to food safety is still the Neo-Malthusian idea of producing more. However, this view is criticized by a number of emerging ideas with different understandings of the problem. Resulting in a scattered critique to the dominant idea, but without any of the new ideas gaining legitimacy (Lang & Barling, 2012). Ultimately, the authors point at the inevitable merging of the terms food security and sustainability with the argument that the content of the terms are interlinking and should not be treated separately.

Lockie (2006), found that English speaking media is reducing the complexity of sustainable food toward an opposition between organic and conventional food. Within this discourse, organic food is described as natural, safe and nutritious whereas conventional food is depicted as artificial, untrustworthy and threatening (Lockie, 2006). The author further claims that this simplification thus disregards the efforts taken by agriculturalist to improve sustainability in their production.

Humphreys (2014) performs a quantitative and a qualitative content analysis on newspapers. She found four additional discourses that have changed over time regarding two ways of understanding the links between humans and the environment. The ways of thinking about these links have implications for how the responsibility is distributed in the sustainability sphere. Two of the discourses regard how corporate interactions with the environment has changed from accidental toxic disposals toward proactive engagement with the environment through technology (Humphreys, 2014).

The other two, protection and harm, are two separate discourses that are intertwined. The protectionist discourse regards how the environment is something sacred that should not be interfered with by human actions. It further claims that the government has the responsibility to guard the environment from corporate activities. Humphreys (2014) argues that the discourse shifted after 1992 toward the harm logic which acknowledges transgression of the boundary between nature and company action and stresses that harm should be reduced. Within the harm discourse, the focus is about reducing the harm to the environment which also means that the responsibility shifts from government toward corporations (Humphreys, 2014). This is further elaborated by Waddock (2008), who stresses that expectations and awareness has increased among consumers and institutions regarding the impact of businesses' practices and strategies on stakeholders, society and sustainability. One such institution, which has been established in

regards to sustainable food, is an initiative called Social Accountability for Sustainable Agriculture (Waddock, 2008).

Fuchs and Kalfagiani (2009) investigated the power dynamics in the food system and found that food retailers are becoming increasingly powerful actors in the food industry. By using a critical discourse analysis, the authors found that the global food retailers have gained legitimacy in the political sphere by what Scharpf (1998) labels as legitimacy output. Legitimacy output is, in contrast to legitimacy input, the process where an entity gains legitimacy on behalf of their competences and intentions. Therefore, legitimacy output is not a democratic procedure, but rather a procedure that is focusing on results (Fuchs & Kalfagani, 2009). This increased political influence has resulted in big food retailers today being in a position where they can create their own rules for food governance by framing politics and societal norms. The authors point out that retailers use an imperialist strategy regarding the definition of sustainability, which they overtake from civic society. Retailers later mold the definition to fit their interests and current business which is not in line with the general public's interest. Thus, the authors ultimately point out that retailers' discursive power can change the substance of sustainability (Fuchs & Kalfagani, 2009).

How the market is structured and in what way ethical values can be implemented in the marketplace is important to comprehend when assessing how sustainable food is gaining legitimation (Gollnhofer, 2017). Holt (2012) might agree with Humphreys (2014) that the responsibility has turned from government institutions toward corporations and consumers. Holt (2012) however, is challenging institutions' seemingly prevailing assumptions about the possibility and effectiveness of importing values from outside the capitalist society to influence consumer behavior. According to Holt (2012) one cannot undermine that the marketplace has been constructed by more than a century of different discourses, institutions and everyday choices formed by capitalism and mass media. This makes the values and ideas of a certain marketplace much more sedimented than institutions seem to believe.

The process of how a market logic is changed in the marketplace is through a dialectical change, where one idea or logic at a time is criticized from consumers or other actors, and changed by market practitioners such as companies. This process makes the ethical values from sustainable thoughts to trickle down to markets at a significantly slower pace than institutions, NGOs and scholars previously thought (Holt, 2012). This claim is reinforced by DeVinney, Auger, and Eckhardt (2010) who show that ethical beliefs have little determining effects on choices in a marketplace when put against the perceived value of a product.

Gollnhofer (2017) agrees with Holt (2012) that there are many antecedent structures on the market, and these are often in conflict with the sustainable ideas that consumers, retailers and public policy makers try to promote. Gollnhofer (2017) shows how the market structures, i.e. rules, norms, and cognitive preconceptions, changes in a dialectal way though goal congruence. In her study, Gollnhofer draws attention to how the phenomenon of Dumpstering evolved from the sustainable ideas in subcultures. The idea of reducing food waste is embraced not only by the public policy makers but also by consumers and companies (Gollnhofer, 2017). This allows for initiatives to come from outside the legal sector. In the case of Dumpstering, the legal sector was not involved at all. Dumpstering functioned as an antithesis to the wasteful behavior of

retailers and other market actors which was shaped by the traditional market antecedents. As Dumpstering was illegal the synthesis landed in Foodsharing, which is a process where retailers hand out food to consumers that otherwise goes to waste. As such, the Dumpstering phenomenon lead to Foodsharing gaining legitimacy since it reframed the normative and cultural-cognitive market antecedents through goal congruence between consumers, retailers and other market actors (Gollnhofer, 2017). The Foodsharing phenomenon is thus an example of how market antecedents changes dialectically (Gollnhofer, 2014), but also an example on how this structural reshaping is occurring within one market antecedent at a time as Holt (2012) describes.

#### 1.4.2 CSR

CSR is a similar concept which also has gone through a transformation to become a significantly legitimized practice within the field of business. One reason for this is a keen interest in the subject from the academic community (Waddock, 2008). This was also pointed out early on by Dowling and Pfeffer (1975), who claimed that “Many persons have viewed the new trend toward corporate responsibility and to corporate concern with noneconomic endeavors such as urban renewal, support for the performing arts, and support for assisting the disadvantaged as methods for business to ensure its continued legitimacy...” (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975, p.128). Cheit (1964) also stressed early on that the social landscape of the business sphere has changed by increasingly assigning corporations with various forms of responsibility.

Scholars helped legitimize the practice by bringing an optimistic tone to the perception of CSR as an important practice for corporations and something that can be achieved beyond profit interests (Davis, 1960; McGuire, 1963; Frederick, 1960). However, parallel to this, researchers on the critical side of CSR argued that CSR is not an activity fit for profit-making businesses (Levitt, 1958) and that it subverts its own order when it denies the very essence of capitalism, being the principle of maximizing profit (Friedman, 1970). Notwithstanding, the development of new complementary notions to CSR, such as corporate citizenship, public policy, business ethics and stakeholder theory/management helped to propel the process of legitimizing CSR (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). In addition to academic journals, popular press and magazines, such as Business Ethics, CSRWire and Ethical Corporations Magazine, have also helped legitimize CSR (Waddock, 2008).

Other large contributors to the establishment and legitimation of the concept are various institutions and NGO's, making the institutionalization of CSR a widely researched subject (Waddock, 2008; Shabana, Buchholtz & Carroll, 2017; Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera & Williams, 2006; Campbell, 2007; Marquis, Glynn, & Davis, 2007; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011; Shamir, 2004). Since corporations today are one of the world's largest and powerful institutions with, in some cases, larger financial capabilities and influence than small governments, much more institutional pressure is being put on them regarding social responsibility (Anderson & Cavanagh, 2000).

Additionally, the lack of trust in companies and increasing expectations of them to act responsibly has also lead to an increase in institutional pressure on corporations to commit to CSR initiatives (Waddock, 2008). This is partly a consequence of numerous company scandals, the global recession of 2008 and an increase in socially conscious consumers (Crane & Matten,



2005; Vogel, 2005; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Thus, Waddock (2008) argues that there is an institutional infrastructure for corporate responsibility. The collective force of changing expectations from the general public as well as governments and institutions has resulted in the evolution of several initiatives with emphasis on corporate responsibility, accountability, transparency and sustainability. This infrastructure uses its resources to affect change through various ways, such as peer pressure, visibility, rankings and activism (Waddock, 2008).

Furthermore, as a consequence to the profit making and strategic interest in CSR, businesses spur each other to engage in it (Waddock, 2008; Vogel, 2005). Shamir (2004) continues on this notion by claiming that this has resulted in the forming of an entire commercial market dedicated to shaping, assessing and consulting corporations in attaining the desired level of CSR. For instance, certain consultancy agencies specialize in selling strategic CSR models to companies of how to create CSR campaigns and monitor them (Shamir, 2004; Waddock, 2008). Shamir (2004) further states that “The emergence of vibrant commercial activities as a major constitutive feature of the CSR field is one element in a general process leading to the de-radicalization of the idea that corporations bear social duties” (Shamir, 2004, p. 680)

## 1.5 Positioning

Earlier scholars within the sustainable food literature stream have focused on somewhat scattered parts of the concept. Lang and Barling (2012), identified some reasons for why the critique against the contemporary Neo-Malthusian fails to gain full institutional legitimacy. Humphreys (2014) looked on mass media and showed two discourses within sustainable food and how the public understanding of these discourses have changed over time. Lockie (2006) used similar data to describe mass media's role in shaping the public opinion on ecological and conventional food. These authors have successfully described how the discourse of sustainable food has changed and what actors are driving this change. However, by primarily focusing on the discursive element, these authors are missing the more important question of how the concept at hand has become established, survived and eventually legitimate via discourses throughout time. Thus, by studying the legitimation of the concept through discourse analysis, rather than studying the actual discourse, this study distinguishes itself from the above mentioned prior research.

Holt (2012) and Gollnhofer (2017) have further investigated how ethical consumption ideals are influencing the market place, and the fact that these changes are not happening as fast as other stakeholders might think. Gollnhofer (2017) however, shows an interesting case where consumer power and retailers, through goal congruence, manage to change a wasteful behavior without interference from the policy makers. Fuchs and Kalfagiani (2009) via a critical standpoint explores the big global food retailers and their increased political power which they gain from sources outside democratic elections. These perspectives are in line with this study, however just as above, the authors fail to answer the question of how the concept of sustainable food is evolving and gaining increased legitimacy. Furthermore, what all these authors have in common is that they have narrowly researched a specific phenomenon within sustainable food, which distinguishes their work from our study. We have instead positioned our study to holistically research the legitimation process of the whole concept.

This is however something that has been researched in regards to the concept CSR. Waddock (2008), for instance, has researched the institutionalization of the concept and claims that there is an entire institutional infrastructure behind the legitimation of CSR. Many scholars have also researched the strategic forces which have contributed to the development of the concept (Vogel, 2004; Carroll, 1979; Drucker, 1984; Lee, 2008).

Although CSR encapsulates sustainability as a part of its concept, researching the process of legitimation in regards to the specific unit of analysis sustainable food has not yet been done. Especially not within the specific context of sustainable food as a market idea in Sweden. This positioning becomes particularly relevant within a study of legitimation, since norms and cultures vary in regards to countries and are significant forces in creating legitimacy (Scott, 1995). Therefore, this paper aims at researching how this specific process has developed in the country of Sweden. Furthermore, since the topic of sustainability is increasingly integrated and emphasized within CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010), researching the legitimation of sustainable food may contribute to the literature stream of CSR as well.

Moreover, as mentioned further down in the theoretical framework, scholars within the field of legitimation tend to belong to one of two research traditions or trains of thought; Institutional legitimacy (Scott, 1995; Waddock, 2008; Humphreys, 2010; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991) and strategic legitimacy (Suchman, 1995; Vogel, 2004; Coupland 2005; Fournier 1998; Clark, 1956). Subsequently, prior research of the process has been done with emphasis one perspective over the other. Following Swidler (1986), we maintain that both forms are interrelated and codependent in the process of legitimation. Thus, this paper attempts to understand this process by researching a variety of contributing stakeholders, both in the realm of strategic and institutional legitimation.

Although, theories of legitimation have developed throughout the years, certain important research areas are yet to be explored. For instance, the way in which legitimacy differs from one industry to another is a gap in the literature which is important to consider (Suchman, 1995). Thus, we are attempting to understand legitimacy through the specific perspective of the sustainable food industry in Sweden. Additionally, the understanding of legitimacy can be further developed by researching the use of various legitimacy management strategies through time, thus contributing to the literature stream regarding legitimation progression (Suchman, 1995).

## 1.6 Purpose

Evidently, the growing concerns regarding social issues from various stakeholders of society, such as consumers, organizations, media and institutions, arguably makes the process of legitimation more relevant today than in the past. Thus, the aim of this paper is to better comprehend how certain concepts gain legitimacy and consolidate with other contemporary discourses. Furthermore, our empirical source, namely newspapers, will provide us with a broad view of all actors contributing to the legitimation of sustainable food. Therefore, we wish to combine and contribute to theories within institutional and strategic legitimation. Moreover, this study aims to create an understanding about how the prevailing discourse of certain periods influence the process of legitimizing a concept such as sustainable food in

Sweden. Subsequently, by answering the research question as stated above, we aim at fulfilling our purpose.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will be presented by first introduce the theory of legitimation in broad terms. Following this, the theory will be divided into its two separate research traditions; strategic and institutional legitimation. The former research tradition is chosen to get a more in depth view of the organization's role and relationship to society in the process of legitimation. The later, further presents how institutional theory and theories of legitimation are intertwined resulting in a theoretical framework of institutional legitimation. Moreover, a typology within institutional theory, institutional isomorphism, will also be introduced. Finally, this section will end by describing how the two schools of thought, strategic and institutional, are interrelated in creating legitimacy of a concept, thereby stressing the importance of researching legitimation with a holistic point of view. .

### 2.1 Legitimation

The concept of legitimation is broad with various subcategories. Legitimation can be seen as a social process of creating congruence between a practice, or an organization, and the configuration of other values, institutions and social norms (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Johnson, Dowd, & Ridgeway, 2006; Suchman, 1995). Rather than viewing legitimation as simply a process of self-justification, this description emphasizes the role of cultural conformity (Suchman, 1995). Meanwhile, other perspectives of legitimation are more focused on the hierarchical and evaluative nature of the concept. Herewith, Maurer (1971, p. 361) defines legitimation as: "...the process whereby an organization justifies to a peer of superordinate systems its right to exist". Within previous consumer research, certain mechanisms in the process of legitimation have been theorized. Among those, general themes such as explicit and implicit forms of legitimation are mentioned (Humphreys, 2010). While the explicit form explains the consumer resistance or acceptance of a company or brand (Kates, 2004), implicit legitimation focuses rather on the more mundane and trivial attempts by organizations such as legitimizing their brand images by placing ads in the daily lives of consumers (Coupland 2005; Fournier 1998).

The concept of Legitimacy has evolved through time, resulting in scholars changing its meanings as well as their approaches in researching it. Early studies by Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) emphasized the moral dimension of legitimacy. The moral dimension, also referred to as Normative Legitimation in institutional literature (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991), focuses on the relationship between legitimacy and social norms and values (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). While certain societal morals can inhibit organizations to conduct a sort of business, scholars like Clark (1956) have stressed that organizational action for the purpose of legitimation has the capacity to alter these values and norms.

Furthermore, within legitimation literature, there tends to be two different camps of thought, namely Strategic and Institutional Legitimation. While the former focuses on an outward perspective of what the organization can do to create a legitimate practice, the latter has an inward point of view in researching how external forces in society influence legitimacy (Elsbach, 1994).

### 2.1.1 Strategic Legitimation

Within the strategic approach, the organizational creation of legitimacy is viewed upon as an operational resource (Suchman, 1995). Hereby, organizations obtain legitimacy from their cultural surroundings and later use it as competitive advantages in reaching organizational goals (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). Herewith, advocates for this train of thought view legitimation as a strategic purposive and calculated process over which organizations have managerial control by manipulating it through symbols and rituals (Suchman, 1995).

In the mid-90s, scholars broadened the understanding of legitimacy by adding cognitive and evaluative dimensions of the concept (Suchman, 1995). Suchman (1995) claims that, authors in social science, such as Dowling and Pfeffer (1975), focused more on the cognitive perspective in the past, as opposed to an evaluative perspective, in regards to organizational legitimation. The distinction here is that in the cognitive dimension, organizations are legitimate when they are understandable by people, rather than when they are desirable, which is the case of the evaluative dimension (Suchman, 1995). Furthermore, Suchman (1995) contributed to the literature regarding organizational and strategic legitimation by breaking down the concept into three behavioral dimensions; *pragmatic*, *moral* and *cognitive*. Although, all three forms of legitimacy are based on the assumption that organizational activities become desirable, proper or appropriate in relation to a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions, a distinction between the three has been made (Suchman, 1995).

Pragmatic legitimacy is the process of legitimation through the direct exchange between an organization's most immediate audience and itself. Additionally, it occurs as a result of the audience's self-interested calculations of the organization at hand. In this sense, audiences can become constituencies, critically evaluating organizations as an attempt to detect practical consequences for themselves in regards to the behavior and actions of the organization (Wood, 1991). As opposed to pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy focuses more on if the action is 'the right thing to do'. It often takes into account whether an organization promotes societal welfare in accordance to the audiences set of values and beliefs, making it more sociotropic in nature (Suchman, 1995). Cognitive legitimacy is a process where the audience attempts to understand the action and, thus, legitimation occurs by contextualizing it into relatable experiences and cultural codes. Additionally, one can view the process of organizational legitimation through three challenging stages; gaining legitimacy, maintaining legitimacy and repairing legitimacy (Suchman, 1995).

### 2.1.2 Institutional Legitimation

On the other side of the spectrum, researchers of institutional legitimation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), refrain from the idea of legitimation as an operational resource. Instead, institutional literature views legitimation as a set of constitutive beliefs (Suchman, 1995). With this aspect, organizations possess less managerial agency, and thus legitimation occurs as a product of external institutions and cultural models. These, in turn, determine how organizations operate parallel with how they are understood and evaluated by the public. Therefore, institutionalization and legitimacy are codependent and similar phenomena enhancing the legitimacy of organizations by adding a meaningful and natural sense to them. Institutionalists thus view the concept of legitimation as a larger cultural construct with emphasis on the collective structurization of entire industries and sectors, such as health care, education, publishing, nuclear power, etc. (Suchman, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The concept of legitimation can be further elaborated and illuminated by applying institutional theory. It is a broader theoretical framework which can be necessary when researching how an idea has evolved and attained legitimacy (Humphrey, 2010). As defined by Scott (1995, p. 33), institutions are “social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. [They] are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life”. These three elements all help create legitimacy (Ruef & Scott, 1998), and are necessary to use when analyzing legitimation (Scott, 1995).

The cultural-cognitive element refers to the degree to which a certain idea is taken for granted, which, in turn, is constructed by existing cognitive schemas and cultural codes of what meanings are associated with the idea (Suchman, 1995; Ruef & Scott, 1998). Normative legitimation is “normative rules that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative, and obligatory dimension into social life” (Scott, 1995, p. 37). Thus, it can be described as the degree to which an idea functions in harmony with dominant norms and values, regardless of its legality (Humphreys, 2010). Finally, the regulative element refers to the presence of “explicit regulative processes: rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities” (Scott, 1995, p. 35). This sort of legitimation is often formally submitted by regulating entities, such as state agencies (Ruef & Scott, 1998).

In recent years, the legal dimension of legitimation has gained focus and thus become incorporated into research (Humphreys, 2010). This dimension, which is based on regulative legitimacy (Scott, 1995), describes organizations’ actions in conforming to regulatory standards and laws (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). Laws created by institutions and governments have thus the capability of limiting or allowing the legitimation of certain practices (Humphreys, 2010). This is further elaborated by Ruef and Scott (1998), who claim that the legal essence of legitimacy has its roots in early scholarly work by Weber (1978). Herewith, Weber (1978) distinguished the concept of legitimation between general social norms and what he referred to as guaranteed law. He described the term guaranteed law as a “coercive apparatus, that is, that there are one or more persons whose special task it is to hold themselves ready to apply specially provided means of coercion (legal coercion) for the purpose of norm enforcement” (Weber, 1978, p. 313). In regards to this, Weber evidently viewed regulatory institutions as a distinctive force compared to normative elements (Ruef & Scott, 1998).

Another significant analytical typology within institutional theory is the notion of institutional isomorphism, brought to light by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). This process occurs when organizations become increasingly similar as they change in regards to a socially changing landscape (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which in turn improves their legitimacy (Deephouse &

Carter, 2005). As a result, organizations become more homogeneous as they conform to the standards of which are considered correct according to society (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Within this typology there are three isomorphic processes; *coercive*, *mimetic* and *normative* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Coercive isomorphism occurs as a result from both formal and informal pressures from other dependent organizations and cultural expectations from society. Herewith, organizational change may in some cases be directly caused by governmental mandate. Such pressures can, for instance, involve environmental laws passed on pollution control, resulting in corporations conforming to these governmental regulations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Mimetic processes involves organizations modeling themselves after other admired organizations which they identify as possessing legitimacy. This process of emulation stems from uncertainty in industries, such as disruptive innovation, ambiguity regarding organizational goals or industries facing changes in the opinions of the public (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Finally, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe normative pressures as a sort of organizational isomorphism which is a result of professionalization. This occurs as companies and organizations increasingly hire professionals with similar backgrounds in e.g. education and occupation. Subsequently, this leads to organizations perceiving and approaching problems, policies, procedures and decisions in a similar manner, thus creating norms of what is regarded legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Although the distinguishing characteristics of strategic and institutional approaches to legitimacy are crucial to take into account, one must bear in mind that both perspectives contribute to the creation of legitimacy. For instance, organizations work extensively in attempt to obtain and create legitimacy, while external institutional forces influence organizations and the way they are perceived by the general public. Therefore, it is vital to address this co-creation as a part of a holistic view of legitimation by researching its strategic manipulation as well as cultural construction (Swidler, 1986).

## 3 Methodology

The following section is a description of the methodological choices and the method that this thesis has applied. The first part of the chapter revolves around the abductive research approach that this study resembles. Following this, the research design will be elaborated, containing what empirical material the study relies upon and how the sampling process has been conducted. In the analysis of empirical material we start by describing discourse analysis as a method and continues by accounting for how the sorting and reducing process has been structured. Additionally, the reasoning for how the periodization of the empirical material was conducted will be presented. Lastly, we conclude the chapter by reflecting on the methodological choices and thereby account for the trustworthiness of our findings.

### 3.1 Research Approach

Within social science, the research approach, in other words the relationship between theory and data, has historically been inductive or deductive (Bryman, 2011; Reichertz, 2014). A deductive approach usually tests if a general concept or phenomenon, drawn from prior knowledge or logic, holds in a sample drawn from a population (Bamberger, 2018; Bryman, 2011). The inductive approach instead infers the probable prevalence of general laws using insights drawn from a sample (Bamberger, 2018). The research approach used in this study instead resembles another approach, namely the abduction. This philosophy of reasoning proposes a solution to how one develops new theories and rests on a more pragmatic theory of science (Reichertz, 2014).

When we are saying that our approach resembles the abductive one, the word resemble is chosen with care. The reason being that the approach of abduction is usually seen as a middle way between induction and deduction and thus, it can also be viewed as a spectrum between the two (Bryman, 2011). Herewith, the abductive approach goes back and forth between the empirical data and the existing theory. It is further stated by Reichertz (2014), although a bit controversially, that the abductive approach is the only approach capable of creating new theory. However, because of its pragmatic character, the knowledge produced by this approach usually has the weakest validity of the three (Bamberger, 2018).

The reason for choosing an abductive approach in this study is to take advantage of existing theory of legitimation and institutionalization and apply it on the concept at hand, namely sustainable food. Meanwhile, the rich data of the study should speak for itself and should not be limited as a theory governed approach would entail (Bryman, 2011). The choice of abduction thus, on the premise of the above mentioned requirements, came naturally to our study.

For this study, we started off by conducting a pilot-study without looking at earlier theory on the subject. This can be classified as having an inductive entry to the study. It further made it



possible for us to get familiar with the empirical material and start to see connections without the interference of existing theory. The conclusions from the pilot-study allowed for us to adjust the research question and guided our choice of theory. When gathering empirical material, the chosen theory and research question was in mind and guided the analysis. Therefore, if viewing abduction as a spectrum, the abductive approach used in this study has clear elements of induction, and is thus closer to induction than deduction

## 3.2 Research Design

### 3.2.1 Empirical Material

This study is examining newspaper articles. A normal view in regards to primary versus secondary data is that primary data is created for the specific research, whereas secondary data is usually produced for another purpose than the given research (Alvehus, 2013). However, as the newspaper articles are gathered for the specific purpose of this study they should be treated as primary data (Bryman, 2016). Further newspaper articles are a form of documents. A benefit of documents as empirical material is that it allows for a historical perspective (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson & Jaspersen, 2018), which goes well in hand with the character of this study, namely to review the development of a concept in regards to legitimation.

Newspaper articles were chosen as they have been used as markers for public opinion within sustainability (Lockie, 2006), and to integrate corporate perspectives in a topic (Humphreys, 2014; Fiss & Hirsch, 2005). Previously, scholars (Gamson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), have used newspaper articles as data to reflect the general public's collective understanding of a certain topic (Humphreys, 2010). This is further due to the fact that newspapers are targeted at a wider public audience (Touchman, 1978), as opposed to e.g. magazine publications which have a more narrow set of readers (Thompson & Tian, 2008). Therefore, due to a mixture of perspectives, newspaper articles reflect a broad spectrum of opinions held by regulators, managers, customers, and environmental action groups (Humphreys, 2014) who are considered valuable to this study as they together form the game board or structure for sustainable food.

However, readers of newspaper articles are active and interpretative readers nonetheless (Lockie, 2006). By this we mean that the very existence of a newspaper article does not incline that the audience interpret the text in the intended way or that the text influences all readers' attitude or behavior. However, this does not mean that the texts are indeterminate or insignificant for understanding the discourse regarding a phenomenon either (Corner & Richardson, 1993). On the contrary, mass media articles both reflect and contribute to "discourses that extend beyond the immediate textual content of the newspaper or broadcast" (Lockie, 2006 p.314), an idea shared by Humphreys (2010).

Although scholars have long claimed that journalists are not entirely objective (Bennet, 1990; Fishman, 1980; Humphreys, 2010; Etma & Glasser, 1988; Humphreys & Latour, 2013), they remain less partisan for the public than e.g. advertisements or corporate reports nonetheless (Humphreys, 2010; Humphreys, 2014). Subsequently, readers are more inclined to view the content of newspapers as credible, and thus, this source of information plays an instrumental role in shaping the process of legitimation for a more general audience (Humphreys, 2010).

### 3.2.2 Sampling of Empirical Material

Research within qualitative studies often times revolve around the notion of purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016). Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability samples, which indicates that the probability of each entity being part of the sample is unknown (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). This also entails that the results of the research cannot be generalized to the whole population of the study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; Bryman, 2016). The goal of purposive sampling is to sample, in this case media documents, in a strategic way that is relevant to the research question (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Oftentimes, the researcher aims at sampling the units of study in various ways to gain multiple perspectives of the research phenomenon (Bryman, 2016).

The first purposive sampling process in this reports aimed to reduce the time scope. Within studies of concepts, such as sustainable food, many scholars structure there data interval around major events or turning points (Hollander, Rassuli, Jones & Dix, 2005; Holt, 2012). Herewith, legal changes (Humphreys, 2014), consumption changes (Gollnhofer, 2017) or corporate changes that alter the meaning of a concept (Vogel, 2004) have previously been done. The time scope of this paper is structured around the concept of sustainable food in Swedish newspapers. Prior to 1995 there were only two or less articles per year in the Swedish media that contained the two words sustainable and food (translated from Swedish “hållbar” and “mat”). Evidently, the notion had not entered the public opinion before this date, and therefore the concept had not yet gained legitimacy discursively. Thus, our research initiated from this time period and ended on the last day of 2018.

Within the newspapers, there were several levels of sampling given the populations of media articles in a 24 year time span (1995-2018). Firstly, as there are several different newspapers available within Swedish media, a sampling process was conducted. As a purpose of collecting data from trustworthy sources, the two most trustworthy newspapers in Sweden were selected; Svenska Dagbladet and Dagens Nyheter (Svenskt kvalitetsindex, 2012), these were therefore included in the study. Furthermore, as a means of adding perspectives, Sweden's most read business newspaper, Dagens Industri (Kantar SIFO, 2017), was also included in the study.

Finally, to find all articles relevant within the timeframe the database Business Retriever, which enables search functions, was used. The search word “hållbar\* mat” (Sustainable\* food) was further used to find articles that were relevant to the research question. However, as “hållbar mat” translates to both sustainable food and durable food, all articles that revolved around durable food without any connection to the sustainable dimension were disregarded.

Additionally, articles that contained the word “hållbar” and “mat” (“sustainable” and “food”) but without any connection between the two were also disregarded. However, some articles contained one or more dimensions of what we today classify as sustainable food, but without the article used that wording, those articles were considered as relevant because they potentially could bring insights about how the time period framed the issues. This sampling procedure was conducted by reading through all 1902 articles within the given time period containing the search words. However, as many articles did not revolved around the concept of sustainable food, but instead only included the words, those articles were read and noticed but not included in the coding scheme. Moreover, as the coding process progressed toward the last years, the amount of articles increased for each year. Herewith, certain themes in our coding scheme

regarding sustainable food were mentioned repeatedly, thus entailing a sense of saturation. Therefore, those articles were not included in the coding scheme. Within the coding scheme, which will be elaborated further below, 309 articles were processed.

### 3.2.3 Analysis of empirical material

#### **Theoretical Approach**

Contributions have been made in the academic sphere regarding the understanding of legitimation. Scholars, such as Humphreys (2010), have demonstrated that the process develops through a combination of discursive shifts and alterations in regulatory structures. Humphreys (2010) found that legitimation is not merely something which establishes itself through socialization among people, but also a product of structural change which, in turn, allows the transformation of discourse over time. In general, they are both a part of a bidirectional process of legitimation. For instance, newspapers as social mediators report structural changes already made, however in doing so, they can also alter the way in which the subject later is perceived by the general public (Humphreys, 2010). Therefore, conducting a discourse analysis of the legitimation of sustainable food was utmost appropriate for this study.

Discourse analysis is a widely used concept with multiple meanings and ways to use (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). As there are many perceptions of the notion of discourse analysis, we will only briefly elaborate on how it can be used and what it entails to use a discourse analysis as a method. The definition of discourse as a concept also varies. According to Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), the use of discourse as a concept derives from the increasing understanding of language as the most important phenomenon accessible for empirical investigation. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) define the word discourse as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.1).

Another more accurate definition of the word discourse is found in Watson (1994, p. 113), who claims that discourse is “a connected set of statements, concepts, terms and expressions which constitutes a way of talking and writing about a particular issue, thus framing the way people understand and act with respect to that issue”. This implies that it is possible to understand the discourse and its constituting effects by analyzing how people are writing about a certain phenomenon. Furthermore, Fairclough (1992) argues that, not only does discourses have constitutive effects, it is also constituted by text. This means that the texts are constituted by the prevalent discourse, and simultaneously, the texts have constituting effects on the general discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). This idea may be even more relevant in this case as media articles oftentimes can change people's opinion, which presumably makes them even more constitutive on the general discourse than many other documents (Bennet, 1990; Humphreys, 2010).

According to Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), there are two widely used and conflicting approaches to discourse analysis. The study of the social text and the study of social reality, as discursively constructed and maintained (the shape of social reality through language). The latter approach, which we are adopting in this study, focuses on how social reality is conditioned through historically situated discursive happenings. This entails that we view discourses as comprehensive and prevalent systems for the creation and articulation of concepts and ideas in

a particular era. Alvesson and Karreman (2002) further state that a common methodological issue in this kind of discourse analysis is how to move beyond the data and address the bigger discourses that function as a powerful ordering force.

Norman Fairclough is normally referred to when authors try to understand bigger discourses by analyzing texts on a micro level (Boolsen, 2007; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). He claims that by looking at a text (speech, writing, visual image or a combination of these) and the discursive practices, which involves the production and consumption of texts that they are embedded in, it is possible to access the social practice. The reason being that the text and discursive practices are situated in the overarching social practice. Alvesson and Karreman (2000) however suggest that to assess both the micro and macro level (text and social practice) in one study can be difficult.

Instead Alvesson and Karreman suggest a spectrum where the interest in the bigger discourse and the interest in the specific text are in an inverted relation to each other. This entails that the more interest the study has in the bigger discourse, the less attention should be on the small variations in the text. These bigger discourses with a capital D, as Alvesson and Karreman (2000) calls it, are possible to access through summaries and synthesis. As this study focuses on how a concept becomes legitimized in the public's perception, the discursive level is rather grand. The reason being that through looking at bigger discourses such as mega discourses, it is possible to see what other forces are shaping the popularity of the concept at hand. This goes in hand with Humphreys (2010) who claims that searching for discourses in the analysis allow to draw conclusions about what forces influence, and are influenced by, the legitimation process (Humphreys, 2010). Thus, this study aims to contextualize smaller local discourses with larger discourses with a capital D.

Intertextuality is a term that is linked to discourse analysis. Kristeva (1986) first explained that the usage of words and texts derives from other words and texts. Thus, texts are not self-contained structures, but shaped by repetitive reading and writing as well as the development of other textual structures. Intertextuality as a concept therefore helps to understand the way in which texts relate to, and are linked to, one another (Alfaro, 1996; Kristeva, 1986). The concept also involves understanding how discourses and texts influence and contextualize one another (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough (1992) has researched how discourses are reproduced and changed through the processes interdiscursivity as a form of intertextuality. These processes are intertwined and together display and shape social and cultural change (Fairclough, 1992). Furthermore, assumptions and presumptions that are embedded in discourses are also examples of intertextuality. For instance, what is explicitly conveyed is always based on something being left implicit (Fairclough, 2003). Hereby, in terms of intertextuality, this study aims at analyzing the empirical material by applying this interpretative method as a part of the discourse analysis.

### **Practical Approach**

In terms of sorting and analyzing the newspaper articles in practice, a method with resemblance to discourse analysis was appropriate for this study. Evidently, discourse analysis is not a uniform concept, instead Gill claims that she knows about at least 57 different ways of conducting a discourse analysis (Gill, 2000). The practical way of conducting a discourse analysis, which Gill suggests, is according to Boolsen (2007) inseparable from content analysis. The fact that these methods sometimes are overlapping is reinforced by Schreier (2014) who

claims that scholars historically have equated qualitative content analysis with discourse analysis. Therefore, the skimming, sorting and coding processes of the analysis have a clear resemblance to qualitative content analysis.

While content analysis can traditionally be viewed as primarily a quantitative method, it is also used for qualitative studies such as this one. One of the difference between the two is the degree of flexibility in the categorization of the content. Thus, instead of using the same set of categories throughout the entire coding process, as would a quantitative content analysis, our qualitative content analysis was more recursive and flexible by nature (Bryman, 2016). Subsequently, during the process of our content analysis, continuous code-editing occurred between the initial coding frame and the data analysis, resulting in our data analysis including an open coding approach (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Additionally, it is important to mention that this study followed a smaller pilot study containing the same sort of empirical material of newspaper articles, and thus, the whole character of the study, such as research question and choice of theory, has evolved from this empirical data. This data-driven approach is thus similar to Riis-Hansen and Simonsen (2014) approach to qualitative content analysis where they started off by skimming the data and then, at a later stage, developed their research question and coding frame.

The reason for having an open coding approach was due to the fact that we were aware of the possibility that new categories could be introduced during the process of data gathering. Thus, being flexible and data-driven in the sorting, reducing and coding process allowed for a coding frame that matched the material, which in turn, resulted in a more valid description of the material (Schreier, 2014). Furthermore, our data analysis method was systematic in nature as the process of research was iterative involving modifications of the coding frame continuously (Schreier, 2014). Additionally, it involved an orientation of constant discovery and comparison of crucial findings in the data (Schreier, 2014; Bryman, 2016).

Qualitative research, especially within methods such as discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis, put emphasis on meaning and interpretation of symbolic material (Schreier, 2014). In order to determine meaning, the context of the material is essential to understand (Schreier, 2014). Thus, the externalities that the newspaper articles draw upon, as well as the discourse that they are embedded in, were taken into consideration when analyzing the content in of the data. In practice, this entails not only examining what is said about sustainable food, but also contextualizing it to underlying events leading up to relevant issues throughout the time span. This, in turn, offers a historical perspective of the reasons why the concept becomes legitimized through time. Additionally, this allowed us to understand the underlying perception of the media regarding what is important within sustainable food and their understanding of who the experts are. Subsequently, these types of questions allow for a better understanding of what the dominant logic entails and what actors are allowed room in the public space influencing and shaping the discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

In practice, our data analysis began by first skimming through documents and transcriptions. This was a necessary preliminary process, since we needed to become familiar with the data content before initiating the coding process (Gill, 2000). In terms of the newspaper articles, this process had previously been made in a smaller sample of articles to a pilot study. However, since this study was larger and involved more articles through a longer time span (1995-2019), we continued to skim through more articles from the rest of the years. This initial skimming of the data was done as inclusive as possible (Gill, 2000) allowing us to create themes for the later coding process (Boolsen, 2007).

For the later coding process, seven questions of interest were formulated in order to identify relevant themes in the data set (Gill, 2000). Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe the linkage between themes and expressions in the data set as themes being conceptual labels of expressions, events and other instances of phenomena. Thus, a theme or category is an abstraction of the oftentimes discrete ideas expressed in the data. These questions were stated in regards to the newspaper articles and the answers were coded with the assumed answer to the question. As mentioned above in regards to our open coding approach, the themes within each category were modified throughout the coding process. Thus, below is an illustration of our initial categories and themes. These questions are further based on a number of different factors. Herewith, strategic and institutional legitimation theory, intertextuality, the methodological theory of discourse, prior literature streams, knowledge from the previously conducted pilot study and the fact that we wanted to contextualize and periodize our findings to analyze the development of a concept, were all factors taken into consideration. Our seven questions of interest and the pre-identified themes in regards to the newspaper articles were:

- (1) Whose voice is expressed in the text? (Author himself, politician, corporate officials, researcher, consumer).
  - (2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to? (Pollution, overpopulation, economic issues, social injustice, unhealthy production methods, unhealthy consumption methods).
  - (3) What are the underlying reasons (externalities) for the texts being written/published? (Political happenings, new research, environmental crisis, policy changes).
  - (4) What dimension of legitimation is emphasized regarding sustainable food? (Normative, regulative, cultural-cognitive, pragmatic).
  - (5) What other concepts, and or stakeholders, are linked to sustainable food, if any? (CSR, ethical consumerism, customer orientation, anti-consumerism, vegetarianism, Downshifting, local fishing industry, hotels/eco-tourism).
  - (6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text? (Organizations, institutions, consumers, governments, society at large)
  - (7) In what way is this text creating legitimization to the concept of sustainable food? (Mundane sustainability, spreading awareness, criticize existing practices, spread ethical values).
- (For an overlook of the coding results and the emerged codes, please refer to appendix)

As a means of remembering the specifics of each year and the relationships between the discourse and larger significant events, summaries were also conducted for every year in the study. The material that is shown in the empirical material and analysis section is thus formed on the basis of the coding scheme and the summaries of each year.

### 3.2.4 Periodization

The empirical material and analysis is presented in four time periods which all have rather distinct differences in terms of what issues are framed, the proposed solutions, the different stages in the legitimation process of the concept and the world view of the authors. Periodization is the process of dividing a chronological narrative into fairly distinct periods with separate labels. History is a rather complex phenomenon to depict, as it consist of series of events. These events consist of responses by actors that have different opinions which are, in turn, formed under the specific context (Stanley, Hollander, Rassuli, Jones & Dix, 2005). Since the mind of all actors, and the context within which they operate, cannot be completely specified, their

responses cannot be seen as deterministic. As the study of history involves both continuity and change, it goes beyond mere chronology (Stanley et al., 2005). According to Stanley et al. (2005) the best way of conducting a periodization is to mark turning points in time, which is considered the most logic and acceptable approach to periodization.

There are two approaches to periodization, deductive or inductive. This thesis adopts an inductive approach, which allows for the data to speak for itself (Stanley et al., 2005). This was done by arranging the data in chronological order and analyzing the summaries that we wrote. While doing so a pattern emerged, or in this case several patterns, which corresponded with the flow of time. These turning points in turn corresponded with the change of the issues that were framed in the articles, the view of what was being problematic, the linking concepts and ultimately the different stage in the legitimation process that sustainable food was embedded in. Our periodization resulted in four different time eras, which are presented in the following empirical material and analysis section.

### 3.3 Methodological reflection

This section aims at addressing the credibility on the approach and conclusions of this report. As in many cases of qualitative research, there is no uniform method of assessing the quality of qualitative studies. While some argue for quantitative equivalents, others use a more postmodern and interpretive lens (Creswell, 2018). For this study, Lincoln and Guba's alternatives are applied (Lincoln & Guba in Miles & Huberman, 1994). Lincoln and Guba's idea of validity and reliability is that those criteria are created to suit the quantitative researchers. As a result, they instead offer a framework suitable for assessing all types of studies (Lincoln & Guba in Creswell, 2018). However, other authors have suggested alternative ways of assessing the criteria that Lincoln and Guba have created. These criteria have thus additionally been applied, since they are considered fruitful to the quality assessment of this study.

#### 3.3.1 Confirmability

The confirmability criterion revolves around the question of neutrality (Miles & Huberman, 1994). An important question to ask is whether the conclusions depend on the data and the research question rather than the researchers (Lincoln & Guba in Miles & Huberman, 1994). Things to consider are also the overall replicability and the transparency in the method section.

In order to address the issue of confirmability in this paper, several steps have been taken. First, a comprehensive description of the general procedure has been given in the sampling and data analysis section. This description hopefully allows for the reader to, in the most transparent manner possible, take the perspective as the author and understand the general methods of this study. Secondly, and linked to the first, the data is presented in an as rich as possible manner. We have presented the data in multiple ways: lifted quotes that support our arguments in the empirical material and analysis section, and the coded material which is presented in the appendix. This entails for the critical reader that it is possible to backtrack the analysis and even analyze the coded material to come up with his or her own conclusions if wanted. Furthermore,

as most of the arguments that we are lifting are presented with quotes, the reader can see where the argument comes from.

Thirdly, negative cases have been discussed among the researchers. This entails both empirical findings that do not only fit into one time period and findings that are not represented in the empirical material and analysis section. As the total time span of our empirical data is rather short for including four different eras, there are findings that do not explicitly occur in the time period that they are in. In most cases however, these findings mark a starting point for an idea that is more prevalent in the following era where the finding better fits the description of the period. The second negative case involves data from newspapers which is not explicitly represented as our empirical findings. Herewith, these findings were documented in our coding scheme and analytical document. However, as a means of only presenting findings that were representable for the eras, a rational trade-off was made to emphasize only the most illustrative findings in the empirical data section. Therefore, these cases are not seen as anomalies.

### 3.3.2 Dependability

The dependability criterion assesses whether the research is consistent over time and across methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The dependability thus entails how well the research question, data, sampling and analysis correspond, as well as the quality in the rigid analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

This study's dependability is of mixed character due to the authors will to cover all data available from the chosen newspapers. The research question implies that we wish to cover the legitimation process of sustainable food in regards to multiple actors. Newspaper articles arguably capture the essence of these actors, but they could be more comprehensively studied with complementary data such as legal documents and interviews. It was also our initial intention to complement the data set with legal documents and interviews with organizations that have influence over the discourse of sustainable food, such as the Swedish National Food Agency. However, due to the complexity and richness of the gathered newspaper articles, we instead saw this as an additional study to further analyze such data in a way that would provide additional perspectives.

Another aspect linked to the dependability of the study is the coding scheme. The questions, or categories and themes, that were set in relation to the text, and thus formed the codes that emerged, were created on the basis of the theoretical framework, method of analysis, from important aspects found in the pilot-study and for the purpose of analyzing the historical development of a concept. Therefore, the coding process was grounded in both theory and the data itself. This entailed that the data could speak for itself, but also that the chosen theory aided us in what to look for.

Several steps in the coding procedure could be taken to enhance the dependability. Herewith, as we applied an open coding process that only was conducted once, the emerging codes were first noted when they appeared in a rather explicit form. Thus, there was a risk that a phenomenon was represented in prior texts in a more implicit form and therefore not noted by the researchers. This risk could have been handled by redoing the coding procedure once the coding was done. By doing so, the second coding procedure would have had more codes that could be used in prior texts that missed these codes. Instead we conducted summaries after skimming through all articles from each year. This allowed for a more rich description of the



articles than from the coding. Additionally, quotes that were representative of the articles were highlighted so that the researcher quickly could remember the articles.

Finally, mostly because of the apparent time restraints, we were two researchers, but we only coded the data once. This entails that the researchers did not skim through all the data individually, but only collectively. This fact could obviously have a negative impact on the dependability. To address this issue, the researchers sat together during the whole coding process so that interesting aspects of the data, new codes and help with interpretation could be discussed. Therefore, when uncertainties regarding the data occurred, the researchers discussed internally if similar findings were identified prior and how they were coded.

### 3.3.3 Credibility

The credibility aspect involves the overall value that the research brings. This involves questions such as whether the findings make sense or if they suggest an authentic portrait of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

One aspect of credibility is the context-richness, or meaningful descriptions, which makes the researchers' arguments more credible (Denzin, 1989). Here, context-richness is of course a relative term. When conducting for instance ethnographic studies, there are more possibilities to provide a thick description than for this study that reviews 1902 articles. With that said, all excerpts are explained first in an overall context so that the reader can understand what debate and time that the excerpt belongs to. Further, the person whose voice is highlighted in the quote is being explained in terms of their position, and oftentimes what they further argue in the article, so that the quote is not taken out of context. This entails that the quote should make sense in the context that we, as researchers, are placing it in.

Miles & Huberman (1994) suggest that triangulation is a way to achieve higher credibility. He further explains triangulation as the matter of seeing things from different perspectives. Triangulation can occur in different parts, such as the data or methods. As aforementioned, our initial thoughts were to study not only newspaper articles but also legal documents and experts within the subject, which would provide additional perspectives and thus greater data triangulation. With that said, the benefit with newspaper articles is that different actors get to express their concerns. Thus, our data set contains the voice of politicians, consumers, company representatives, NGOs, activists, journalists etc. This suggests that, although our data origin from one source namely newspaper articles, multiple perspectives on sustainable food are still achieved which indicate a form of triangulation. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this study contains multiple perspectives of both legitimation and institutional theory, but also the methodological theory discourse analysis. Combining discursive and non-discursive theory, thus also, enables the researchers to see the concept development from multiple perspectives, which again is a form of triangulation.

Another noteworthy aspect of this study's credibility is the pilot-study that was conducted prior to this one. The pilot-study was conducted on partly the same data as this thesis (the pilot-study contained three shorter time intervals within the 24 year period) which allow for the results to be compared. When this comparison was done, the results of the two studies resembled each other beside the obvious difference that this thesis was more comprehensive and additional perspectives were provided. Furthermore, the empirical findings of the study are compared with previous literature on sustainable food and the similar concept of CSR as well as existing theory

on legitimation. The comparisons allow for our findings to be contextualized into previous knowledge which strengthens the credibility of the findings (Bryman, 2016).

### 3.3.4 Transferability

This criterion revolves around if the conclusions of the study can be imported to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba in Huberman, 1994). Other authors such as Maxwell (1992) interpret transferability also as “theoretical validity”, which is somewhat close to credibility. Theoretical validity means that the transferability of the study increases if it is connected to networks of theory that are beyond the immediate study (Maxwell, 1992).

Before assessing the studies transferability it is important to understand the purpose and research question of this study as they are somewhat different in terms of level of abstraction. The research questions involves the specific concept of sustainable food, and how its legitimation process has developed, whereas the purpose of this study is to investigate how market concepts, such as sustainable food, gain legitimacy. The transferability claim that we would like to stress is thus outside the scope of the research question but within the aim of the purpose. Herewith, theories of legitimation and institutionalization are applied on the concept of sustainable food in order to draw generalizing conclusions on similar governing concepts. Thus, we aim at transferring our findings to general research about how market concepts become legitimized.

## 4 Empirical material and analysis

The following chapter is a presentation of our empirical material. The material is further analyzed by applying the theoretical framework as well as discourse analysis and intertextuality. The empirical findings are also periodized into four eras which mark significant discursive shifts, important externalities and overall developments in the legitimation progression.

### 4.1 1995 - 2000 Narrow, but slowly evolving concept

This period was stuck in the aftermath of the Swedish enrollment in the EU. One of the arguments and hopes for the enrollment was that the prices on food would decrease as a result of free trade among the EU-countries. One should also bear in mind that the food prices had been all time high as a result of the economic recession in 1994 which was therefore increasingly problematic for the Swedish population. In 1995 the prices were unchanged and profit-hunting companies were blamed for not sharing the fruits of the new opportunities with the consumers. The minister for consumer affair, Marita Ulvskog, says it like this:

*“It would have been much better if I was wrong. But economic theory is one thing and reality another. The profits from deregulations and free competition tend to stop halfway in the shape of increased profits for companies”*

(Translated from Ennart, 1995, p.8).

Marita Ulvskog thus implied two things; first, that there is still skepticism in regards to the Swedish enrollment and second, that political actions need to be taken in order for consumers to also benefit from the free market. Another issue in connection to the increasing free trade between EU countries was the health concerns in regards to the food content in foreign products. As a result, The Swedish Consumer Agency thus proposed reforms to protect the consumer from hazardous products. The same proposition also, for the first time, included environmental goals to promote consumption- and production practices that decreases the strains on the environment and contribute to sustainable development. This is thus an early example of regulative legitimation made by a political institution. It is furthermore the first occurrence in the empirical material where the concepts food and sustainable development are interlinked.

Much content in regards to the enrollment in the EU revolved around skepticism toward the safety standard and other techniques used for food in other countries. Multiple worried consumers called the Consumer Agency with reports of apples that did not decompose as fast as they used to. Subsequently, a debate regarding irradiation sparked with a skepticism toward foreign actors. Irradiation is a production method to prolong the expiration date of food. Here is an excerpt from a debate article regarding the Swedish National Food Agency's lack of action in the question of irradiation.

*“Kardell [president for the Swedish National Food Agency] denies the fact that unserious European businessmen have used irradiation to refresh unsuitable food... According to, among others, IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] big quantities of irradiated food is circulating on the European market where Sweden is a member and the borders are open”*  
(Translated from: Gulbrandsen & Brunnberg, 1996, p.2)

Here, the author is indicating that irradiation is a highly inappropriate method, which at this point also is illegal to import to Sweden, and at the same time reinforcing negative connotations toward foreign actors in the Swedish food system as they cannot be trusted. Therefore, according to Swedish standards, the practice of irradiation seemingly is considered immoral. This is further indicated by the authors who describes the businessmen as ‘unserious’ in regards to irradiation. Subsequently, the discussion faded after a couple of years and ended in 1997 with an EU-enforced revision of the Swedish law to approve irradiation on some food items that formerly had been banned.

Irradiation was not the only foreign production method that was under critique in the Swedish newspapers. GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) was also highly controversial at this point. The arguments against GMO varied from less proximity to the food we eat, meaning that people cannot grasp how the food that they consume is produced, to more controversial statements such as:

*“-The truth is that there is no safe forms [of GMO]. The Biological diversity is threatened. The genetical art of engineering, often characterized by profit hungry agrochemical industries that do not want to provide transparency, can cause genetic contamination with devastating consequences”*  
(Translated from Humphries in Mortensen, 1996, p.5)

This excerpt argues for more severe consequences if the GMO laws are not revised in a stricter fashion. The skepticism toward producers and companies both in regards to GMO and companies in general is further evident in this period with more than 50% of swedes agreeing to the statement *“The people that research genetical techniques think most about their own careers and disregard the risks that they expose mankind for”* (Translated from Anna Lagerblad, 2000, p.81). The anti-GMO agenda is substantial in Sweden, and culturally, Swedes tend to be against GMO. Thus, GMO can be viewed as a somewhat delegitimized practice cultural-cognitively. At least according to the opinion of the majority of Swedes.

However, as in usual debates, oftentimes there are two sides of the coin and the same went for the debate around GMO. The side that advocated for the practice highlighted that GMO can achieve cheaper food for consumers as GMO products need less pesticides and can thus be harvested more cheaply. This is shown in this article, where the journalist advocates for GMO:

*“The crops that we use today differ greatly from those that were used 50 or 100 years ago. Through research, we have found better, more enduring and faster growing crops. Livestock has, through precise methods of breeding, improved in terms producing more milk and more meat. To ban the whole process of GMO out of fear for something to go wrong is the wrong way to go.”*  
(Translated from Svenska Dagbladet, 1996, p.2)

As seen in the quote, the author highlights the fact that with this kind of technological evolution, more people can be provided with, and afford, food. Thus, this argument can be seen as being linked with the social or economic part of sustainability. Furthermore, as the author focus on the potential negative aspect of GMO, the environmental concerns, the author does so by only claiming that there are potential environmental risks without going into them specifically: *“The critique against GMO is not about the products eventual danger for humans to consume, but about the risks for the environment”* (Translated from Svenska Dagbladet, 1996, p.2). These negative aspects are never explained in the article which indicates that the environment is of less concern to the author than the social values such as affordability.

The eventual environmental hazards are thus less of a concern as the argument that the products are safe for humans weigh heavier. This quote therefore represents much of the discourse around sustainable food in this point of time, where the environmental part of sustainability, even if it have started to be spoken of, is oftentimes neglected in favor of the social or economic aspects. Perhaps the most representative quote for this view is a book review article entitled *“En miljöbok hämtat från domedagsprofeterna”* (An environmental book gathered from the prophets of doom). The book review is made by professor Vannerberg. The author of the book under review is the biologist Stefan Edman who have acted as environmental counselor for the Prime Minister Göran Persson. Vannerberg claims that:

*“The commodity reserves are not an absolute quantity. The size of the reserves are dependent on knowledge and technology know-hows. The oil reserves are increasing in contrast to decreasing [As Edman say]. What I am saying is not that one should not save energy and that saving energy is not possible. But it is a financial question, not a moral one. [...] The bothersome thing with Edman is that he knows what is the best for the environment when it comes to both energy production and material such as packaging. That is more than I know, but I can state that the solutions we have right now are sustainable for a foreseeable future, and they will constantly improve, be more effective and sustainable.”*

(Translated from Vannerberg & Hansson, 1998, p.2)

What is noteworthy in this quote is a number of things. Firstly, the incommensurability factor. These people are both from the academic sphere, but it seems from the article that they do not talk the same language. When Edman is proposing environmental arguments for why we should save on the planet’s resources, Vannerberg met these arguments with claiming that Edman has a worldview influenced by the “prophets of doom” and that there is no problem with the way that people are producing and consuming. Thus as the authors cannot agree with how the world looks like and the problems we face, it seems like it is impossible to have a constructive argumentation of the solutions. Secondly, by claiming that ‘the size of the oil reserves are only bound by our knowledge and usage of technology’, this assumption makes it harder from a business perspective to justify investments in alternative energy sources or savings that does not affect the economy, as the problem is less urgent than if the opposite were to be true. Thirdly, saving energy is an activity that can be justified with economic arguments, not moral ones about the future of the environment. These assumptions, especially when they come from legitimate sources such as researchers from academia, tend to obstruct the reasons to implement sustainable practices at least from a business perspective.

Thus, discussions such as this one is one reason for the legitimation process of sustainable food to go slower in this period compared to later eras. It is a sort of clash between pragmatic and normative legitimation where one side only perceives the pragmatic financial benefits of businesses, while the other side tries to convey the moral aspect of committing to business

practices that foster the environment. In addition to it hindering the legitimation of sustainable food, this excerpt exemplifies the fact that sustainability as a concept has not yet gained much legitimacy generally. The statement ‘The commodity reserves are not an absolute quantity’ is one which shows the lack of environmental concern and knowledge.

#### 4.1.1 Summary of Period

In short, although the interlinkage between food and the environment had not yet fully occurred during this period, it showed signs of the discourse beginning to emerge. This happened through, for instance, regulative legitimation as the Swedish Consumer Agency proposed a new reform to protect consumers from hazardous products and to promote food consumption- and production methods that contribute to sustainable development. Apart from this, the discourse of sustainable food was more focused on health and social aspects of sustainability. Herewith, the majority of the Swedish population seemingly were against GMO food, which indicates a move toward cultural-cognitive legitimation of sustainable, and non-GMO produced, food.

## 4.2 2001 - 2007: Ecology & The Integration of Food and Sustainable Development

As a contrast to the previous period, which mostly revolved around social sustainability, this period started to incorporate sustainable food with the full spectrum of sustainable development. Therefore, the economic, social and, perhaps most evident, the environmental factor of sustainable food was increasingly prevalent in the media discourse. One significant underlying reason for this shift in discourse can be attributed to a certain political policy change made by the, then ruling political party, The Social Democrats together with the prime minister Göran Persson. In cooperation with the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, this policy involved a large government investment into ecological agriculture. Additionally, it contained a new goal that 20% of Sweden’s agriculture would produce ecological food by 2005. As this policy was fairly progressive at the time, it was met with much criticism by journalists and researchers:

*“My fellow citizens are more than welcome to eat ecological food until they drop. However, when they stick their spoon in the Finance Minister's tray and scream for new portions of taxpayers’ money there is reason to protest. When the ‘Ecofanatics’ furthermore try to foist their own habits on everyone else it has definitely gone too far.”*

(Translated from Svenska Dagbladet, 2001, p.2)

This quote demonstrates how some people felt that this policy was fairly radical and not in every citizen’s best interest, particularly as the journalist claims that ecofanatics ‘scream form taxpayers’ money’. Therefore, it demonstrates that the concept of ecological food had not yet gained pragmatic legitimation. Furthermore, by using the term ‘Ecofanatics’, it indicates a sense of ‘us versus them’, which in turn shows the fact that ecological agriculture has not yet received a very high degree of cultural-cognitive legitimation in Swedish society.

Despite the fact that the policy was said to be for the greater good of the country and environment as a whole, scholars and oppositional politicians were also skeptical to its benefits.

Furthermore, it fueled the debate between ecological and conventional farming, which turned out to be reoccurring during this era. On one side of the spectrum, ecological food was seen as the sustainable choice. By not using pesticides and other artificial substances, it was said to be healthier for humans and the biodiversity of animals. However, on the other side, critics saw ecological agriculture as less sustainable, both economically and environmentally, as it was characterized as a less efficient production method that demanded more farmland and cost more. Subsequently, the debate regarding ecological and conventional food led to consumers being ambiguous to what is actually the correct alternative.

*“I want long term sustainable development...But the question is: what team should I cheer for? Should I spend my money on ecological food, produced according to the criteria of KRAV? Perhaps solely on biodynamic food, cultivated in accordance to the anthroposophic movement’s doctrine? Or should I rather listen to the lobbyists of Biotechnology? The fact is that I don’t want to choose. I would prefer an agriculture that is not governed by ideology, religion or by some rosy-cheeked technological optimism. I would prefer an evidence-based conservation.”* (Translated from Bojs, 2003, p.16)

This excerpt shows the frustration among Swedish consumers in choosing what food alternative is morally correct for the environment. Moreover, it describes the vast amounts of opinions and ideologies that were beginning to surface in connection to the ecological versus conventional food debate. Although there was a sense of confusion among consumers, the rhetoric in favor of ecological food was increasingly being enforced by the media, academic and political sphere. Furthermore, the EU passed a new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 2004, which was a restructure enforcing more regulation on agriculture in favor of sustainability.

*“The current restructuring of EU’s agriculture politics in Sweden has gained unusually large media attention. And it has every right to, since the result of this reconstruction will have great consequences, not only for Swedish farmers and food production, but also for the country’s consumers... The Swedish agriculture needs to reform; here, politicians and researchers are for once in agreement. Politicians are now taking the chance, once and for all, to shift the development toward a long term sustainable agriculture.”* (Translated from Belfrage & Englund 2004, p.5)

As illustrated by this quote, this EU regulation further propelled the establishment of sustainable agriculture in Sweden. It is thus an example of how political policies on a macro level, even higher up politically than Swedish politics, can create regulative legitimation, which in turn affects organizations, producers and consumers in the country. Furthermore, as this excerpt shows, the regulation led to Swedish politicians and researchers to want to reform the domestic agriculture policies, which further indicates the great effect of regulative legitimation.

Another significantly influential source of legitimation during this era was Stefan Edman, the above mentioned researcher of sustainability and former environmental advisor for the Swedish government. In 2005, as the government's researcher for sustainable consumption, he released a new book entitled “Bilen, Biffen, Bostaden - Hållbara laster, smartare konsumtion” (The Car, The Beef, The House - Sustainable Shipments, Smarter Consumption). This book greatly contributed to an increase in a more complex discourse about sustainable food for a number of reasons. Firstly, it depicted food within a broader sustainability context together with the factors transport (the car) and living (the house). Secondly, it introduced the sense of consumers having the opportunity to contribute through consumption choices. Something that has not, prior to this period, been emphasized. Thirdly, it conveyed a message of sustainable food being good for

people's health, the environment, and perhaps most noteworthy, consumers' personal economy. In this article, the journalist explains what Edman's book is about:

*"It's about how we can eat, live and transport without wearing out too much of the planet's resources. The sustainable consumption he is advocating for will give value for our money, will be healthy and have a global perspective"*

(Translated from Lyregård 2005, p.34)

By adding the financial argument to the debate sustainable food gained legitimacy among a broader audience, many of whom had previously associated that type of food with higher and unnecessary expenses. Therefore, the arguments conveyed by Edman and his book added pragmatic legitimation to sustainable food as more people could identify the practical benefit of it. In light of this, researchers in the field of ecology started to incline that ecological production is in fact not only better for the environment and people's' health, but also can be as efficient as conventional farming, further reinforcing the financial argument. This was a strong counter argument against the fundamental critique toward ecological food production being its inefficiency and high demand for energy and landmasses. Another peculiar part to Stefan Edman's book and overall viewpoints is the way in which he talked about meat production.

*"Another strategy is to focus on extensive free range treatment of meat animals with a high percentage of grass feeding. - I want a Swedish 'Pampas Beef'! It both preserves open landscapes and provides a healthier meat."*

(Translated from Edman in Kempe & Falk, 2005, p.49)

This quote represents the, then prevalent, way of perceiving the issue of meat in terms of sustainability. Instead of viewing the meat industry as one of the bigger villains for climate change, which is much the case in the end of this period and onward in later time periods, the focus here is more on the fair treatment of meat animals and the fact that Sweden should focus on domestic meat production rather than import. In other words, the meat discourse in this period had not yet identified the more intricate issues that the meat industry brings to climate change.

The growing responsibility put on consumers as contributors to sustainability in this period lead to various articles where journalists and researchers informed about how to eat more sustainably, ecological and sometimes more vegetarian alternatives. It was a sort of mundane way of influencing consumers by spreading moral values about sustainable food, which in turn contributes to normative legitimation. Occasionally, these dietary tips were mentioned in connection to holidays or other culturally established Swedish phenomenon, such as Christmas dinner, Midsummer feast or "Tallriksmodellen" (plate model), which is a trusted Swedish cultural frame for how to eat a healthy meal. Here, it is presented by Andrea Friedl, nutritionist at the county of Stockholm's Center for public Health:

*"The easiest way is to eat according to "Tallriksmodellen", she says. It is both environmentally friendly and healthier. It entails having one fourth protein, like meat, fish, eggs, lentils or beans, the rest of the plate is divided by potatoes, pasta or rice + bread and vegetables and root vegetables + fruits and berries."*

(Translated from Lyregård, 2007, p.30)

Since the plate model is a highly established cultural phenomenon in Sweden, this was a way of conveying the agenda of sustainable food so that it appears as relatable to the cultural norms



of the Swedish people, thus creating cultural-cognitive legitimation. Other ways of introducing the concept to the lives of Swedish consumers was by running tests of how sustainable their households were. This was first introduced in 2005 by the city of Stockholm in cooperation with The Royal Technological University (KTH), as part of a project called “Konsumera smartare och minska växthuseffekten” (Consume smarter and decrease the Greenhouse Effect) and entailed that 65 households in the region would be monitored on their carbon footprint during a three month period. Harriet Mårtensson, the mother of one family who is involved in the project says:

*“Everybody is talking about The Greenhouse Effect today, now we get to know for ourselves how we live. I think that everybody can feel a sense of unease for what is going on, she says.”*  
(Translated from Mårtensson in Falk, 2005, p.64)

What is particularly interesting about this statement is the specific use of the term ‘The Greenhouse Effect’ and the fact that ‘everybody is talking about it now’. It shows the beginning of the discourse emphasizing carbon emissions and pollution as the main problem linked to food, as opposed to the previous period where health and economy were the issues of most concern. Furthermore, this quote displays the fact that people are increasingly getting worried about climate change. Thus the new knowledge of The Greenhouse Effect as a phenomenon was a substantial externality in this period resulting in the discourse of sustainable food shifting toward the topic of climate change.

*“During the past few years the media’s spotlights have been directed on climate change, and many [journalists] have also mentioned the food sector’s significant contribution to The Greenhouse Effect.”*  
(Translated from Person & Söderberg, 2007, p.4)

As this excerpt from two years later demonstrates, knowledge of food production’s effect on the climate was increasing. Additionally, more research was done in the area of food’s effect on climate change. As such, new statistics emerged in Swedish media, such as the fact that 30% of the carbon emissions leading to climate change is caused by food. Additionally, as mentioned in the quote, the topic has been widely covered by media. This indicates the effect that media has within itself and the fact that this topic was spread through intertextuality.

Meanwhile, the issue of trans-fat was highly discussed during this period. This had much to do with recent laws being passed in Denmark banning trans-fat in industrially produced food. What is more is that this law was passed solely because scholars managed to persuade the Danish government about the health threats of trans-fat. This, in turn captured the attention of Swedish institutions and media resulting in a policy changes in Sweden as well. The Swedish National Food Agency ended up changing the criteria for “Nyckelhålsmärkning” (Keyhole Labeling), which is their patented certification for certain food products meeting a high standard in health and sustainability.

*“The Swedish National Food Agency is now changing the rules for Keyhole Labeling after DN’s [Dagens Nyheter] report. Products that contain industrially produced trans-fat will in the future not be allowed to be labeled with the certification.”*  
(Translated from Bojs, 2006, p.8)

What is specifically noteworthy about both the Swedish and Danish process of changing regulation in this case is that it was not enforced by consumers, even though it is the consumers

that are most affected by trans-fat. Furthermore, the fact that The Swedish National Food Agency changed their certification criteria based on a Swedish newspaper article is noteworthy. This displays the influential capacity of the media and the fact that media can be involved in creating regulative legitimation.

Toward the end of this period consumers gained interest in sustainable food and began to demand more responsibility from governments and corporations. As an answer to this, companies, restaurants, hotels and other organizations started to spread moral values and there was a sense of businesses becoming more strategic toward the concept. Furthermore, this was also evident as the concept of CSR was progressively connected to the discourse of sustainable food. The strategic element is evident in this article about the environmental strategy of the Swedish hotel chain Scandic. Here, Jan Peter Bergkvist who is responsible for Scandic's sustainability work is interviewed:

- “[...] The Nordic Ecolabel is seen by him as a competitive advantage.*
- It becomes a differentiating factor for guests who choose hotels or restaurants. The environmental work has always been about being able to streamline our processes long term, both in terms of resources and costs. We are a profit based corporation, so naturally this is done for the sake of the money. The long term effect is a stronger brand, says Jan Peter Bergkvist.”*

(Translated from Bergkvist in Dunér, 2006, p.23)

This article was about the fact that the restaurant industry in Sweden has started to demand a certain label of their food called Svanenmärkningen (The Nordic Swan, also referred to as, The Nordic Ecolabel) which is a governmental non-profit organization and the official sustainability ecolabel for the Nordic countries. As the quote clearly indicates, this was a strategic move by the hotel and its restaurants. What is perhaps more interesting is that the labeling idea was the restaurant industry's initiative, which shows that the will and responsibility is beginning to reveal itself among businesses in addition to governments. It also displays the potential for how businesses can, through strategic legitimation, spread moral values and as a result create moral legitimation of sustainable food.

Furthermore, the strategic move from Scandic's part had its competitive effect on other Hotel Chains. Herewith, the competitor, Choice Hotels, also initiated a sustainable food project which entailed serving ecological wine and beer as well as using ecological ingredients in their restaurants. When asked about the initiative, Katalin Paldeak, Nordic regional chief of Clarion Hotels within the Choice Hotels Group replies: *“This is nothing that we foist on our guests, but we give them the opportunity to choose...”* (Translated from Paldeak in Kiepels, 2006, p.18, p.18)

The fact that Choice Hotels implemented sustainable food to their business as an effect of their competitor Scandic's action is an example of how isomorphism, more specifically mimetic isomorphism, can contribute the process of legitimation. Moreover, by claiming that they only 'give them the opportunity to choose', this quote exemplifies the business approach to sustainable food in this era quite accurately. There is a demand from consumers and companies are trying to meet these, however in moderate ways nonetheless. This is grounded in the fact that the concept of sustainable food has not yet gained enough legitimacy for it to be implemented entirely. Furthermore, within the discourse of sustainable food, ecological in particular, there is a sense of the concept being an alternative norm or ideology which people are afraid of being imposed by or 'foisted' on. The word 'foist' in particular is also used in an

earlier excerpt above, which demonstrates the intertextuality of this specific undertone toward sustainable food. The fear of sustainability indoctrination is something that organizations are aware of as well. It is further shown in an interview with the professional chefs Carina and Ulrika Brydning where they are asked about their new restaurant:

*“One thing will at least not be served by them: You don’t want to be served a ‘moral cookie’ when you go to the restaurant, says Carina Brydning on the subject of sustainable development and climate issues.”*

(Translated from Brydning in Dagens Industri, 2007, p.62)

What is further noteworthy here is the fact that these chefs have a clear sustainability focus both in their restaurants and when they compete in chefs competitions. Nonetheless, they claim that they do not want to serve a ‘moral cookie’. The phrase ‘moral cookie’ is a Swedish expression for a moral lesson, thus, indicating that they do not want to foist their own moral values on their customers. As organizations are spreading more morals, they are simultaneously taking a step back and doing it in a conservative manner in fear of being labeled as a morality police, or perhaps pretentious. This moderate approach would, however, in later periods be seen as changing toward a more daring approach where the moral values of a company even can be seen as a competitive advantage.

#### 4.2.1 Summary of Period

In short, this time period marked the beginning of the discourse of sustainable food to encapsulate the full definition of sustainable development, including the environment, social and economic factors. Thus, moving toward the meaning of sustainable food as we view it today. Furthermore, the concept of ecological food grew instrumentally due to a new policy made by the Swedish government. Another vital reason for sustainable food gaining legitimacy was the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 2004. These two policies were large contributors to the regulative legitimation of the concept in this era.

This era also began to emphasize the responsibility and opportunity for consumers to contribute to sustainability through food consumption and habits. With mundane tips of how to live sustainably, new publications by journalists and scholars contributed to the normative and cultural-cognitive legitimation. Furthermore, the potential for media to create intertextuality and affect regulative legitimation was shown as newspapers publications created a policy change in trans-fat regulations and widely reported The Greenhouse Effect. New knowledge of climate change and The Greenhouse Effect was also a significant reason for an overall increase in climate concern.

This time period also demonstrated how corporations started to strategically implement sustainable food into their businesses, which caused strategic legitimation on a moral level. Furthermore, as companies engaged in the concept, competitors followed indicating the occurrence of mimetic isomorphism. However, since sustainable food was a quite new concept during this era, this was done in a moderate fashion, as companies did not want to appear as forceful against customers.

### 4.3 2008-2014: Passion for nature and hipster ideals

A continuum from past years yet a marker for this period is the movement of responsibility. In past years much of the problems were seen as something the government or responsible institutions were obligated to solve with regulations and controls of food. Within the health aspect of sustainability, this has previously been prevalent in questions such as GMO (even though this discussion still occurred in this period), Irradiation or trans-fat. All these issues were solved by scholars giving advice to decision makers that oftentimes constituted new laws or regulations, thus, this process did not involve the consumers.

The shift in responsibility went more toward the consumers with even more articles than the previous era describing various sustainable food tips and recipes. A large contributor to those articles was the fact that one of the newspapers, Svenska Dagbladet, started a column called “Mat & Klimat” (Food & Climate) which focused on the causality and relationship between food and the climate change. Furthermore, many articles in the column described ways for consumers to participate in sustainable food consumption.

An eloquent example of how consumers in this period were getting more conscious and empowered is the discourse of additives in food. However, as a means of understanding where this change came from, the contemporary consumer of this era will first be presented. The critique toward additives from the consumer perspective is believed to originate from new ideals and a new perspectives of nature. Stenson express it as: *“What is it that engages people in good and additive free food? - A desire for safety, authenticity and real products.”* (Translated from Axelsson & Pehrson, 2008, p.8)

Other articles revolved around sustainable consumer practises such as social farming, city farming, eco-tourism, microbreweries and nature wines all indicating that consumers take more responsibility for the environment. Furthermore, the increasing consumer responsibility and interest in nature also resulted in consumers wanting to discover more of it. This was evident as a radical increase in environmental, and sometimes regressing, activities such as farming, fishing, cow-release and berry picking took place. In connection to this, a reverence for the old and old way of doing things was unfolding among consumers. As a reaction to this, the marketplace followed. This is perhaps best illustrated by the example of bakeries using sourdough and an old yet upgraded interior. This is an inspirational interview with a bakery in Stockholm with a sustainability concept of being green and fast called *Green Rabbit*:

*“The sustainable thoughts are also seen in the room.*

*Much of the interior is kept. The old clinker floor and the antique glass counter that has real patina.*

- *To keep the old is interrelated with the whole Green rabbit-thingy. We have only done a resurfacing. Many of the dough mixers are also old, just look at that one.”*

(Dunér, 2014, p.14)

With the statement ‘the sustainable thoughts are also seen in the room’, this excerpt shows how the new consumer subculture that favors nature and authenticity is linked to sustainability. This movement, or new consumer preference, thus shows that cultural-cognitive legitimation is occurring for sustainable food as it is seen as correct according to the norms of the subculture.

A number of new consumer concepts that are related to sustainability were also prevalent in this period, such as increased popularity in vegetarianism and veganism, down-shifting, Dumpstering and minimalism. These concepts or lifestyles all had their anchorage in different issues but took shape as a consumer activity. Vegetarianism and veganism were expressions of an increasing dissatisfaction, usually on either animal welfare or environmental pollution. Downshifting as a trend was anchored in the social acceleration but as a result it revolved around being in nature and farm your own land. Minimalism was a critique to the capitalistic society and buying more than you need. In terms of food, minimalism was related to the waste issue that was gaining attention around this time.

These consumer concepts were evident in articles either from scholars or experts that wrote about them or as interviews with the people who practiced the lifestyles and their stories about how they lived. The increasing sustainable consumer practices and lifestyles with oftentimes a reverence to the old have similarities with the Hipster consumer which was frequently mentioned in this era. Sofia Ulver, a consumer researcher at Lund University described as follows:

*“- In the globally trend driving consumer culture it has been the highest status to consume after the values authenticity, neo-green and sharing. The status symbol become how well you succeed to signal and communicate that you are living after these values. And that you do that through your consumption... What should the companies do to be updated? - They must have another purpose then to solely sell goods. The companies have to turn to customers who see something bigger. Perhaps they should not only be financial mechanisms.*

*So what is your advice? [to customers in order to achieve status]*

*-To educate yourself and take an interest in other things than only money”*

(Translated from Ulver in Mitelman, 2013, p.24)

Thus, Ulver argues for a shift in status expressions in the marketplace. Prior to this point, the brat has been the consumer ideal with luxury purchases such as lobster and champagne. Within this period, the status symbols are more complex and expresses other values than purely monetary ones. Thus, sustainable food is linked not only to other values but also to status and identity on the marketplace. This is a situation where sustainable food is gaining both normative and cultural-cognitive legitimacy, and furthermore a situation where the legitimation process is created by the consumer.

In order to return to the discussion about additives, consumers in general wanted natural and authentic food as shown above. The usage of additives and long ingredient lists with oftentimes chemical names did not resonate well with consumer demands. This took expression as a consumer wrote a book about additives and criticized many producers for using too many additives. The book sold over 75 000 copies. The critique and the consumers increasing awareness caused the industry to change.

*“Sometimes you need a kick in the back. I think that the whole branch has been blinded because of the focus on pressing the prices. Now we realize that it is wrong. We have decided to sanitize our products from all unnecessary additives, to start with we removed all artificial flavor enhancers”*

(Translated from Dafgård in Axelsson & Pehrson, 2008, p.8)

This quote by the president for one of Sweden's biggest food producers clearly indicate that focusing solely on price has changed and other values, in this case less additives but also more

authentic products, starts to emerge. This is thus a clear example of consumers and companies taking responsibility for a healthier marketplace without interference from regulatory authorities which was evident in the discussions regarding Irradiation, GMO and trans-fats in previous periods. Furthermore, as demonstrated in this quote and the two former, the increasing responsibility taken by consumers causes a need for companies to conform to their values as well as meet new public expectations, thus enforcing coercive isomorphism.

### 4.3.1 Companies

As already stated in the 2001-2007 period, companies started to use the concept of sustainable food in their CSR-work. In the earlier examples, however, companies did not want to force moral values with their sustainable ideas, but instead consumers could use their sustainable practices if they wanted to. In the premises of this time, these examples were still recurrent, but with a seemingly higher focus on the consumers. An eloquent example of consumer empowerment on the marketplace is the GMO-debate. Although numerous scholars claimed that GMO is a tool for providing a more sustainable food system as crops can be more efficient and tougher, GMO had, after all the negative media coverage during the last decade, received a bad reputation among consumers. Therefore, retailers, starting with City Gross, all excluded GMO fed pork in their products. The reasoning for this is described by Mikael Lagerwall, head of public relations at Bergendahls Food, the business group who owns City Gross, as:

*“We have chosen to solely offer fresh pork from pigs raised on GMO-free feed. We have chosen that because consumers feel worried about GMO... We as food retailer welcome a serious debate regarding GMO because we think that it is needed to help hesitant consumers to make conscious decisions.”*

(Translated from Lagerwall, 2010, p.5)

As this quote inclines, the company answers to the consumers' wants, since 'consumers feel worried about GMO'. Taking the consumers' side in this debate further legitimizes the anti-GMO agenda, now so even more as multiple stakeholders such as food retailers, the media and consumers are against it. This collective force of against GMO further resulted in a loss for the pro-GMO agenda that the researchers tried to convey. Additionally, it changed the public perception of what types of food one should value further creating normative legitimation of sustainable food. Another industry that was praised in media for being proactive was the festival industry, which shows that the concept of sustainable food continuously grows and becomes incorporated into more industries. In connection to this, the music festival Way Out West gained much attention for only serving vegetarian food on its festivals, which is in strict contrast to the aforementioned period where moralizing was frowned upon as an imposing behavior. This progression shows how the process of moral, or normative, legitimation of sustainable food during this period has intensified.

Furthermore, besides consumers and companies increasing a sense of responsibility for the sustainability issue, companies were also starting to see the economic benefits of sustainability, or at least tied the concept to economic benefits. An example of this is Axfood's (one of the biggest food retailers in Sweden) president, Anders Strålmán who, in this interview, claims that sustainability is integrated in their business model:

*“For me sustainability is also about making an as small environmental footprint in the future as possible. But it is also a question of costs - because energy is one of our biggest costs. Further, we shall have safe food, not use child-labor, be ecological etc.”*  
(Translated from Strålman in Svensson, 2013, p.8)

Sustainability is used here as a means of attracting consumers, and further in this article the president of the company also talks about climate compensation by planting trees in Africa, indicating that the company is involved in CSR initiatives. However, perhaps what is most noteworthy is the statement ‘but it is also a question of costs’. The rationale of being economic and cost efficient by implementing sustainability is a dimension that has not been mentioned previously in business context and moreover shows a potential for sustainable food to gain pragmatic legitimacy among organizations. The same goes for big companies such as Nestlé who ties the concept of sustainability to costs- and resource efficiency:

*“Here the company has managed to decrease water usage by 30% since 2002. Then, 2.2 L of water was used to produce a 1 L water bottle. Today they use just over 1.8 L, which saves 8 billion liters per year...  
- Collaborations with farmers are important for us. We are helping 600 000 farmers to use less water.”*  
(Translated from Lopez in Bolander, 2008, p.19)

Even if this example is a bit paradoxical, in the sense that they use more water than they provide in their water bottles, it is evident that they use the concept of sustainability for cost savings. Sustainability, in that sense, is a win-win as it has less effects on the environment and makes the production more efficient. Besides that, they also have programs to help farmers achieve similar results in their businesses. This is therefore an example of a corporation creating moral legitimation around sustainable behavior with, for instance, the statement ‘Collaborations with farmers are important for us’.

As economic benefits started to be intertwined with the concept of sustainability, more and more companies emerged with their ground in sustainable food. Starting with small scale farmers living the idyllic eco-farming life to more established companies like Plantagon, whose business idea was to create more arable land and less transportations. This was achieved through building vertical farm areas in cities. The reason for their existence is expressed by their founder:

*“We are getting more and more people on the planet, but above all in the cities. Within a near future it will be hard to support the world's cities with food. The areal scale of cities demands long transportation, which soon will not work because of both environmental and economic reasons. Furthermore, many researchers agree to the fact that the arable lands in the world will be insufficient to feed everyone, Says Hans Hassle”*  
(Translated from Hassle in Sjöström, 2012, p.24)

Thus, the reasons for the business existence is rooted in environmental issues, namely food safety, but also in pollution from transporting food. This is a contrast to the above examples such as Axfood and Nestlé, whose business idea rather are altered to fit into the contemporary discourse of sustainability. Another business example that is rooted in the sustainability issue and was gaining attention in media was Allwin.

Allwin is a company placed in the food waste issue, which has gotten much attention from scholars, politicians, authors and NGOs. The company's concept is to buy left over food from the food industry and later donate it to people in need. The business concept as such can be seen as a social benefit, but with positive synergies for the retailers. Here are comments from Eva Berglie, head of communications at Abba Seafood, who is using Allwin's services: *"We are collaborating with Allwin because we want to support a good cause. Meanwhile, it contributes to a positive PR for us, both internally and externally"* (Translated from Berglie in Hedström. 2011, p.28). Thus, the company name 'Allwin' sums up the perception of the concept, at least from a business perspective. Social benefits occur in the sense of either farmers getting more information or poor people getting left over food. Economic benefits fall into place in terms of positive PR or cost savings. Environmental benefits are achieved from the longer product lifecycle or less harm to nature in terms of less water or energy usage. Therefore the business synergies caused by Allwin creates pragmatic legitimation of sustainable food initiatives among organizations.

#### 4.3.2 Symbols and other actors

As aforementioned, the issues that are linked to sustainable food are continuously increasing in this period as an effect of more actors getting involved. The most evident issue in this period was food waste. It was the number one issue on politicians' environmental agenda prior to the 2010 election. As a result, inspirational consumer stories were diffused in media revolving around how to plan your purchases and trust your senses when assessing food that is out of date.

In this period much critique regarding food waste was also put on the businesses sector. Among other things, businesses were criticized for their use of the expiration date which was seen as a big contributor to individual's wasteful behavior.

*"But the question is if the biggest villain is the expiration mark. The Swedish adherence to this marker, which is produced by the industry, is so extreme that the Swedish National Food Agency is considering to create a nationwide campaign to inform us that the food can be excellent even if the date has past"*  
(Translated from Ennart, 2008, p.7)

As shown in this excerpt, the villain in this drama is portrayed as the food industry. This is also evidently conveyed by the title of the article; 'The industry is tricking us into wasting food'. What is more is that the Swedish National Food Agency wants to change the public perception of the expiration date marking. Therefore, this is an example of an institution attempting to create normative legitimation to an anti-waste and sustainable food agenda.

The discussion around the expiration date seemed to come from all directions. The politicians claimed that it is something that needs to be changed, whereas the industry and consumer organizations blamed The EU for having strict regulations regarding the mark. In the food waste debate politicians, corporations and scholars were constantly ventilating their visions and suggestions on how to make the climate better. However, this issues also involved other actors such as public affairs, schools and students. Stories about how students at schools have engaged the school in activities to decrease the food waste were diffused in media. Similar stories were told at residential homes where the inspiration came from progressive chefs. Simultaneously, the more conscious thinking also trickled down to chefs who, toward the end of this period, started



to take more responsibility for food waste. This quote is from a reportage of a newly started restaurant in Stockholm:

*“- Usually approximately 40% of the food in restaurants is going to waste in buffet lunches. Here we barely throw anything... The guest takes as much food as he or she wants, and then the food gets weighted. This naturally contributes to a situation where you do not take more than you can eat, says Jens Dolk.” (Translated from Dolk in Stawreberg, 2014, p.4)*

This indicates that the restaurant is aware of how much other restaurants of reference are wasting, and places itself in the forefront of restaurants in regards to waste. By showing that they are aware of the waste problem the restaurant displays its moral values toward a sustainable food practice, but at the same time distinguishes itself from its competitors. Thus, this is an example of an organization strategically creating moral legitimation around sustainable food.

Within the food debate, even the Swedish church was criticized for not being a sustainable food actor. This, again, implies that the sustainable food concept was gaining legitimacy. The Swedish church are big land owners, and these lands are in turn leased to civil people. These lands are used for different purposes, some as homes and other as farmland. During this time period, the churches did not interfere with the farmers businesses with, for instance, guidelines for eco-farming, or that the farmland should be used for educational purposes. Instead the churches focused mostly on attaining money from the farmers through leasing fees. In recent years, the church came to believe that the way for them to increase the profit from their lands was through big scale rationalization, meaning that the farmers leasing their land should conduct larger scale productions, advocating for conventional rather than ecological agriculture.

*“The Swedish church is Sweden's biggest landowner of farmlands. How the diocese property boards act will have consequences for the rural development, in regards to the landscape and environment. Of the church's 13 diocese, only three have formulated environmental ambitions in regards to farming...the church' agriculture and forestry could be much better and act as 'creative workshops' for sustainable development... In regards to the [the church'] agriculture one should assess that agriculture can be developed in other ways than through big scale rationalizing (eco-tourism, education, landscape creation, small scale food processing for local market).”*  
(Translated from Jewert, 2014, p.5)

Thus, this article argues not only that it could be a possibility to think sustainably for the church, but also implying that it should be natural for the church to think in such directions. That the church should not only believe in hard numbers and instead act also on other softer moral values that benefit the people. The fact that such criticism is aimed at institutions that are not in direct association with farming or the food sector further indicate that the concept of sustainable food is becoming institutionalized. Moreover, this examples displays how public expectations of institutions to act in agreement to sustainable food is increasing, thus indicating more coercive isomorphism.

Sustainable food was also linked to activities such as fishing during this era. Cod- and salmon fishermen were being criticized for not fishing in a sustainable way. The arguments presented for this are not only in regards to overfishing which are bad for the environment and biodiversity, but also more pragmatic and economical.

*“The Swedish commercial fishing of salmon has a turnover of less than 10 million SEK per year, and the Baltic Sea salmon is questionable as a commercial food fish from a health perspective. The Salmon has a much greater value as a basis for fishing tourism and angling, both in the sea and in our rivers.”*

(Translated from Svenson, 2012, p.3)

Thus, the author is linking sustainable food, and in this case fish, to also involve tourism and anglers as well as people interested in spending time in the Swedish nature. Therefore, the concept of sustainable food is broadened to involve more actors and activities, which increases its legitimacy. Moreover, this article depicts the fishing industry as something negative which the relationship between mankind and nature, inclining that natural sustainable fishing is morally correct and commercial fishing immoral.

A similar example follows the depiction of the palm oil industry. During this era, articles were framing the problem more tangibly so that consumers could more easily relate to the problem. As people had the idea of rainforests as ancient overgrown forest with multiple benefits for the planet, such as carbon dioxide converters or as a biodiverse library, the public perception was that it is worth keeping. Acting as a symbol, the orangutan was often the first animal people thought of when hearing the word rainforest.

*“Another air-photo shows a growing plantation where the palm stands in endless rows, like wooden soldiers on a battlefield, identical as in a computer animated army. Here is the big danger; the monoculture, the curse of the single crop. Researchers are now in consensus that cautions logging and sustainable forestry is the salvation for Borneo and its unique biological diversity”*

(Translated from Berg, 2008, p.22)

Thus, through stories like these, the word palm oil is receiving negative connotations to the deforestation of beautiful and ancient places. This, in turn, simplifies the process for consumers not to buy products as they have tangible arguments not to do so. These arguments are, again, of moral character, contributing to moral legitimation. Furthermore, by claiming that ‘researchers are now in consensus’ the anti-palm oil agenda attains even more legitimacy and credibility. Subsequently, the boycotting of palm oil ingredients resulted in an industry led organization called The Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) starting a label for traceable palm oil. This initiative was done so that the palm oil can be traced to the mill, which was believed to decrease unsustainable harvesting.

The labels that are evident on the Swedish market have quite a significance for the sustainable food, and they work as symbols that create both identity and trust. To purchase ecological products are in many cases linked to personal identity for consumers. This was evident in how some people used these food label to express their lifestyle. Young consumers in urban areas, often with hipster ideals, tended to show great awareness on the marketplace when consuming. In the fashion sector this was linked with second-hand items, but on the food market it tended to be ecological or in some cases also fair trade.

An increasingly popular marker for consumers’ ethical values was the concern about the source of the food. Conscious consumers did, for instance, not want to buy products from countries with bad political reputation as they had associations with poor working conditions or bad animal welfare. This tendency also related to how the contemporary consumer of this time

craved more authenticity and transparency. The labels thus allowed for consumers to express their attitudes on the marketplace in regards to food.

The sense of trust towards the labels was evident as they provided controls over producers which indicated that what you are promised is also what you get. The arguments for why that was needed was the overuse of words such as ‘natural’, which was a marketing technique that the contemporary consumers saw through. The symbolic value and trust for the labels in the food sector influenced other businesses as well to use the same kind of markers for products. An interview with the scholar Jonas Nilsson suggested a similar labeling scheme for social responsible funds:

*“That the customer himself needs to evaluate how it works is a unique situation relative to other social responsible products, he says. He mention one special label which is a thinkable solution for the insufficiency, like a sort of KRAV-labelling of funds. He compares with the existing KRAV-label which is available for ecologically farmed food with a third party control that operated the labelling.”*

(Translated from Nilsson in Eriksson, 2010, p.54)

This excerpt indicates that the labeling process stands for trust and a rigid process, but also the fact that people recognize it. Moreover, when clarifying how another similar process should be done, the object of reference is the KRAV-labeling. The KRAV label is also visible in other contexts.

*“The environmental party have released their new poster prior to the election. On one of them there is a fork which tines are pressed into a tomato, labeled with a KRAV-decal. The text on the poster says that the environmental party wants a ‘tastier’ Sweden with ‘pure’ and ‘authentic’ food.”*

(Translated from Brynolf, 2010, p.2)

This quote shows that not only is sustainable food an important issues for the politicians, but also that KRAV has obvious connotations to taste, purity and authenticity. The labels thus, express more values than solely for products to be ecological. Important to notice in the context is that the Environmental party did not ask for permission to use the label and thus a brief interview with KRAV’s president, Lars Nellmer, followed in the article saying: *“It is fully understandable that the environmental party wants to be perceived as KRAV-labeled - what party wouldn’t?”* (Translated from Nellmer in Brynolf, 2010, p.2). This indicates the obvious positive connotations that the label has to voters and people in general, as it is used as a tool for politicians to gain voters.

### 4.3.3 Summary of Period

To summarize, this time period illustrated a shift in consumer behavior toward sustainable food. A new consumer culture grew, which valued the old ways of doing things. This was evident in their increasing desire for natural, authentic food and transparent products in terms of knowing the origin of the food. This movement created cultural-cognitive legitimation to sustainable food as these values affected organizations and companies. Additionally, other concepts related to sustainable food with the same values of nature and authenticity grew, such as city farming, eco-tourism and microbreweries, veganism, vegetarianism and minimalism. This phenomenon

was expressed by researchers as a new era of the hipster consumer. A consumer culture where status is no longer materialistic, but rather based on one's moral values.

Moreover, the responsibility and engagement among consumers in regards to sustainable food progressed during this period. This resulted in companies removing additives from their products. The fact that more companies changed to the preferences of the consumers is a sign of increasing coercive isomorphism and thus a progression in the legitimation of sustainable food. This is also shown in the case of the GMO debate, where City Gross followed the wants of consumers to sell less GMO products. Companies during this period did not only identify the strategy of gaining moral legitimacy by advocating for sustainable food. They also saw the financial benefits of sustainable practices being cost efficient, which is a new motive thus far in our empirical material. This further progressed the pragmatic legitimacy of sustainable food production. Another distinguishable fact to this era was the fact that companies were formed on the basis of sustainability as opposed to prior periods where this was a factor in conventional companies CSR work.

The issue of food waste was evident during this period. This led to politicians emphasizing the issue and new companies to emerge. Allwin, a company focusing on food waste, created a new business strategy which positively influenced the environment and economy. A pragmatic solution to say the least, which involved other companies as well, thus spreading the legitimacy of sustainable food. The Swedish Food Agency tried to change the public perception of the expiration date, indicating the institutional force towards legitimacy. Politicians also wanted the EU regulations of the expiry mark to be less strict. In addition, restaurants advocated for less food waste and furthermore saw a strategic opportunity of doing so.

Expectations of sustainable food practices were put on new institutions and industries such as the Swedish church, the fishing and palm oil industry. This indicates an increase in coercive isomorphism. The fact that the agenda of sustainable food is spreading out to more industries is also a sign of its progression of legitimation.

In connection to the emergence of the new consumer culture which values transparency, nature and authenticity, sustainable food labels were considered as more important to consumers. They carried a symbolic value which was in tune with the values of the consumers. As a result, companies and even politicians used the labels to gain moral legitimacy. This shows the level of moral legitimacy that sustainable food has thus far attained. So much that politicians use it to gain followers.

## 4.4 2015 - 2018: The War on Meat and Increasing Levels of Complexity and Conflicts

### 4.4.1 Anti-meat discourse and Gender Equality

Following the development of the more ethically aware hipster consumer-subculture, this era expanded the concept of sustainable food to be incorporated by a broader, more mainstream, audience. Herewith, professional chefs and celebrities were advocating the practice of eating sustainably. Furthermore, the anti-meat agenda was greatly gaining publicity. For instance, chefs began to create new menus and dishes substituting meat with other protein alternatives.

In an article about professional chefs cooking sustainable food, one of the chefs says: *“We have to find other sources of protein. Too much meat is not healthy and there’s a risk that the fish in the sea will be gone, says Andreas Hedlund.”* (Translated from Hedlund in Kihlberg, 2015, p.13).

This article continues to portray the increasing threat of meat consumption by including the fact that meat animals eat 40% of all cultivated food and that the methane gases they produce are a threat to the climate. Compared to prior periods, this way of viewing the environmental threat of the meat industry has evolved as more research has led to more knowledge of the problem. Another interesting fact about this article is that it introduces a new class in the 2016 national championship in charcuterie where the most climate efficient product receives the winning price. This shows sustainable food increasing cultural-cognitive legitimacy as the contest highly values climate efficient products.

In connection to the growing concern and debate about the environmental consequences of meat, much was said about what type of meat one should consume and for what reasons, e.g health or climate reasons. This, in turn, resulted in consumers becoming confused. However, The Swedish National Food Agency was a significant actor in clearly informing the Swedish public about how to consume meat during the period. This is evident in this article discussing the environmental effect of the meat industry:

*“The issue is complex and there are many opinions, but in regards to some general questions most people are in agreement: Eat less meat. Our meat consumption in Sweden has increased by 40% since 1990... According to The Swedish Food Agency we should not eat more than 500 grams of red meat and charcuterie per week, which entails a maximum of four meat meals. Meat is also the type of food that affects the environment the most.”*  
(Translated from Svenska Dagbladet, 2016, p.14)

This excerpt also shows an act of moral legitimation by the institution The Swedish National Food Agency as they advocate for less meat consumption. The tone of certainty in this quote also indicates that the discourse revolving around meat has intensified. Moreover, there seems to be a consensus regarding the implications of consuming red meat and an objective to reduce the complexity for consumers. This also identified in this article as researchers and organizations distinguish the effect of various sorts of animal meat, such as chicken, pork and beef.

Beef was considered the largest contributor to climate change out of all the types of meat, and thus the anti-meat discourse had its effect on consumers and institutions. This is further illustrated in an article about schools in the Stockholm region that have gone from meat-free days to the implementation of completely meat-free school cafeterias:

*“The term ‘Meat-Free Day’ has in record time gone through a journey from being a questionable environmental figment to a climate-smart mainstream concept in only a couple of years. An increasing awareness of beef’s high price in terms of Greenhouse emissions in addition to The Swedish Food Agency’s recommendation of limiting one’s meat consumption to 500 grams per week has given vegetarian food an unsuspected lift.”*  
(Translated from Ritzén, 2016, p.4)

As this excerpt explains, the environmental consciousness of eating less meat has grown to become more mainstream. Furthermore, the article goes on to describe that the meat-free day

has become a standard in the majority of the region's schools, making it a mainstream concept and thus indicating its cultural-cognitive legitimacy. Subsequently, this has led to several schools ruling out meat from their lunch plan altogether. Additionally, the recommendation from The Swedish Food Agency seemed to have an effect on media and society at large, since it was widely reported. This is shown in the intertextuality of the quote above and this one, as the limit of 500 grams meat per week is conveyed in both texts. This is also an example of normative institutional legitimation of Swedish schools. The fact that schools as institution convert to the anti-meat norms of society is furthermore a sign of coercive isomorphism.

Other entities that greatly influenced the meat discourse were The UN and The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The Paris Agreement was a major contributor to this. It was an agreement with The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) signed in 2016. In connection to this, food, and particularly meat, was connected to the overall goal of the agreement:

*“According to the Paris Agreement, the global average temperature should be limited to under 2 degrees Celsius, preferably 1,5 degrees and in order to achieve this we all need to play our part. Politicians, companies, us as consumers - everybody can do something...Much is connected to air shipments and meat consumption. Here, the individual has a big opportunity to contribute. The role of the individual is very important, but politicians and corporate executives need to help us by facilitating and stimulating the transformation we need to undergo, states Gunilla Elsässer, head of department for food, climate and energy at WWF.”*

(Translated from Elsässer in Johnsson, 2018a, p.8)

This quote shows the high forces that advocate for sustainable food. Although the WWF is a NGO with a partisan agenda, it is an influential actor in the matter nonetheless. The UN is evidently also influential as it, through regulations and agreements such as this one, affects how countries and thus people are governed. Therefore, this is an example of the regulative legitimation of sustainable food. Furthermore, by using the words ‘everybody can do something’ there is also a sense of solidarity conveyed in this statement. Therefore it represents this era's focus on how society at large, with all its contributing stakeholders, collectively have the responsibility to make a change, displaying a sense of cultural-cognitive and normative institutional legitimation.

Furthermore, The UN had crafted another global sustainability plan during this period called Agenda 30. This consisted of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) whereby food was, again, connected, further increasing the regulative legitimation of sustainable food. The fundamental goal of this agenda was to halve Greenhouse emissions by 2030. In this article, a group of researchers had submitted a report with strategies of achieving the goals called Exponential Climate Action Roadmap:

*“A 50% reduction of emissions before 2030 entails that people will need to change the way they eat. More plant-based and less meat is the way forward, since meat production demands much more resources and land than plant-based production.”*

(Translated from Johnsson, 2018b, p.18)

Again, meat production and consumption is placed in the spotlight of the sustainable food discourse as something controversial. What is more is that plant-based food is positioned as the substitute and solution to this problem, which is a recurring theme. Although comparisons

between meat and vegetarian food already occurred in prior periods, this era took the debate to a new level. For instance, it intersected with another prevalent discourse during the time which was gender equality. New research at The Swedish University of Agricultural Science (SLU) conducted by the associate professor Elin Rööös showed a difference in dietary habits between men and women:

*“There is interesting research showing that meat consumption is associated with masculinity and status. Vegetarian food is somewhat associated with only eating salad and ‘rabbit food’, or that it is more feminine, she says....I think that it can be rooted in that women are generally more interested in the environment and ethical issues, why that is the case I do not know, but it will be interesting to see if there’s going to be a change in the future, says Elin Rööös.”*

(Translated from Rööös in Solander, 2018, p.8)

As conveyed in this quote, the discussion of consumers’ responsibility has become even more specific involving comparison among consumers in terms of gender. It has also become more of an identity issue concerning how people view themselves and others sociologically with associations to social constructions of what constitutes masculinity and femininity. This type of discussion was, during the time, widely reported in media as a result of current feminist and women’s rights movements such as “Me Too”. As such, much like the establishment of CSR, the gender equality movements affected the concept of sustainable food. This is evident in another article where sustainable food and gardening initiatives are taken by a feminist online forum:

*“About a year ago Växtgäris was formed, a Facebook group where girls and non-binary people share their gardening tips. Agnes Stuber took the initiative in February 2016 after she got fed up by lecturing and ‘mansplaining’ in various gardening forums... In just a few months the amount of members exploded in numbers and today, with 12000 joined Växtgäris, the group has been forced to temporarily close the doors for more members.”*

(Translated from Lenas, 2017, p.4)

With the popularity of the forum, this example shows the increasing will to cultivate your own food and plants. Moreover, it displays the connection to the then contemporary gender discourse with words such as ‘mansplaining’ and ‘non-binary’, which became more widely used during this period of time. Additionally, the fact that the discourse of sustainable food has spread into another prevalent discourse during the time exemplifies the growth of the concept.

#### 4.4.2 Conflicts and Increasing levels of complexity

Much like intersecting with other societal and social issues such as gender equality, this time period introduced a more complex relationship between food and other humanitarian crisis in the world. Poverty, social injustice and extremism were some of the issues linked to food, again showing the substantial growth of the concept sustainable food. This larger perspective of the problem was introduced partly as a result of two significant journalists and researchers, namely Gunhild Stordalen and Johan Rockström. In this article, Stordalen brings the complex issues to light:

*“Today, one tenth of the world’s population lives on less than 2 dollars per day and according to Oxfam, eight of the world’s richest men own more than the world’s 3,6 billion*

*poorest people combined. 60% of these poorest people work in agriculture where child labor and forced labor is widely practiced. According to The UN's sustainability goals, poverty and famine is to be exterminated by 2030. Furthermore, we need to create a more inclusive economy with sustainable ecology... I met a delegation of African leaders in Davos. To them, food is the most important aspect."*  
(Translated from Stordalen, 2017, p.11)

This excerpt clearly links food and ecology to a much larger humanitarian crisis, namely poverty and famine, with the backing of information from Oxfam International, a nonprofit organization working against poverty. This article explains that the issue of poverty related to food is not only about famine, but also about the need for inhabitants of third world countries to have jobs, since agriculture is such a substantial sector in those countries. Therefore, emphasis is put on large food corporations from the private sector to take responsibility in their production methods. This article, as well as the nonprofit organization Oxfam, thus contributes to coercive isomorphism of these corporations.

This way of viewing sustainable food in a broader perspective is also done by the researcher and columnist Johan Rockström:

*"But food is also a matter of safety. In an increasingly turbulent world where oil and commercial fertilizer is controlled by instable nations, where climate change causes a rollercoaster of fluctuating food prices, food becomes a pillar for nations' stability."*  
(Translated from Rockström, 2017, p.15)

This quote shows that the causality of food has grown to involve more safety aspects. It goes on to criticize the amount of unsafe food Sweden imports and the fact that the country needs to be self-sufficient on food production in order to financially survive a turbulent global economy. Thus, Sweden needs to focus on domestic production and lower the price of locally produced food while adding taxes to imported food. This also overlaps with the discourse of sustainable food being more expensive than conventional, often times imported, food.

The discourse of sustainable food and climate change was further elevated to an even higher level of complexity as it was connected to extremism in this article:

*"Shorter and less predictable rain seasons has led to increasing competition of decreasing amounts of resources... Peoples' livelihood and food safety is threatened which makes them more vulnerable. In countries where the resilience against crises is weak and where the social and economic security is limited, we see that more people are recruited by extremist groups who entice them with money and food... these are just some examples of how climate and conflict are related. We must be better at understanding how climate coexists with, and sometimes strengthens, patterns of conflict."*  
(Translated from Lövin & Wallström, 2018, p.5)

This article was about The UN Safety Council going to Chad in Africa in connection to their growing work in regards to issue of climate and safety. It further describes the complex consequences of climate change. Global warming creates unpredictable climate shifts in these regions which leads to less food being produced and thus famine and extremism increases. Herewith, food is also seen as a starting point in a long chain reaction leading to these issues. Unsustainable food leads to climate change, which leads to climate shifts and so on. What is more is that this particular UN Safety Council initiative was started by Sweden. The article goes



on to explain that ‘Sweden is doing its part’ in the matter. This sense of patriotism and pride is a recurring phenomenon within recent discourse of sustainable food and sustainability in general. Sweden is seen by The UN, and not to mention by Gunhild Stordalen and Johan Rockström, as a leading country in sustainability, which may be a contributing factor to the concept of sustainable food gaining even more legitimacy by Swedes. Nonetheless, it displays the process and result of cultural-cognitive legitimation of the concept in Sweden.

#### 4.4.3 New industries and businesses

On a different note of the sustainable food discourse, several new industries got increasingly engaged in the concept. As mentioned in the previous period, various festivals in Sweden embraced the concept. Even more so, what started as an initiative by only a few festivals grew and in this era all festivals have embraced sustainable food into their business plan, which shows the process of mimetic isomorphism. Furthermore, other new business concepts building on sustainable food developed. Insects as a sustainable source of protein was a topic which grew in interest in the sustainable food debate. Herewith, the Swedish company Extremefood was looking to become more established. In this article, the Secretary-general of the sustainability institution Axfoundation, Carolina Sachs, supports this industry:

*“One of many solutions of an alternative form of protein can in fact be insects.... There are many aspects to insect consumption. In some areas of the world it functions as a necessary source of protein.”*

(Translated from Mårtensson, 2015, p.36)

This quote insinuates that insects is an established diet in many cultures. This seems to further be a common argument within the debate about insect food during this period. Other articles also attempt to destigmatize the practice of eating insects by claiming that it is simply a question of cultural norms and that it is a healthy food choice. Since insects contain much protein which also is the case for meat, the discussion tends to be centered around comparing the two types of food.

In connection to this, insects are seen as more sustainable for environmental reasons, such as the fact that they demand much less energy and farmland to produce. Additionally, they are argued to be more sustainable for health reasons as well, as they do not have as high degrees of cholesterol and antibiotics are not used in farming insects. By often pairing these two sustainability arguments, scholars, institutions and organizations attempt to attain both normative and pragmatic legitimacy around the consumption of insects, as it is positive for consumers’ health and the environment. The latter argument is furthermore a new health concern of this time period, with much research showing that human beings are becoming more resistant to antibiotics because of the consumption of meat. This has led to Non-profit organizations, such as Axfoundation, to add the agenda of reducing the amount of antibiotics in animal meat production in Sweden as one of their main priorities.

Another new industry that started to embrace the concept of sustainable food was the airline industry. Herewith, the airline SAS were pioneers in the Swedish market:

*“One of the signs of our current time is that SAS has latched onto the meat-free trend and during two weeks served a vegan menu for frequent flyers.... The vegan initiative is a test, and if it turns out well it will become a permanent matter.”*

(Translated from Svenska Dagbladet, 2018, p.19)

By claiming that it is a ‘sign of our current time’ and that there is a ‘meat-free trend’, this quote shows the immense effect that the anti-meat discourse had during this era. Moreover, the mere fact that sustainable food has entered industries such as this one is an indication that the concept has become more widely legitimized. Additionally as more businesses in a larger variation of industries engage in the concept, one cannot help but surmise their being a strategic essence to it. For instance, this article further described that other airlines in the US are doing the same thing, which shows signs of mimetic isomorphism.

However, all companies are not only engaged in sustainable food because of the meat-free trend. As a part of the sustainable food discourse, food packaging and waste gained more attention during this time period. As a result, new business concepts such as package free shops emerged. Herewith, the food store Gram was the first package free food store to open in Sweden:

*“I appreciate this initiative that you can buy food and at the same time be environmentally conscious. It is interesting that such a store has opened here, says Maher Al Jannan [A customer].... Rowan Drury sees the opportunity to gradually open more stores in other parts of the country. Because the behavior of consuming loose foodstuffs is something that Swedes have in them, she says. Just look at how we buy candy.”*

(Translated from Åkerlund, 2017, p.30)

Apart from the store seemingly receiving a positive review from one of its customers, this quote shows the strategic mindset of the store’s owner and founder Rowan Drury. The fact that she explains the behavior of consuming loose foodstuffs as a cultural phenomenon is also noteworthy. This may well be a reason for the success of the business, and perhaps more so, another way of increasing cultural-cognitive legitimation of sustainable food in Sweden.

The issue of food packaging and the overuse of plastic in particular became even more widely reported about in connection to a new EU proposition. This law was introduced in 2018 and entailed banning single-use plastic items in consumer products, such as plastic straws, cutleries and ear swabs. As a result, much responsibility was put on the large Swedish food retailers Axfood and ICA. This is, for instance, shown in this article about Axfood’s sustainability work where the CEO of Axfood, Klas Balkow is interviewed:

*“[...] in terms of plastic use, focus is being put on the food retailers. During last Wednesday, the European Parliament had a vote about prohibiting single-use plastic items... The large competitor ICA has already publicly announced that these types of items will be phased out. - Plastic is an area which we all see as a challenge. We were one of the first to implement deposit fees on recycling plastic juice bottles. We have also implemented fruit bags made from sugar cane as a means of reducing the influence of plastic, he says.”*

(Translated from Balkov in Yttergren, 2018a, p.25)

As shown in this excerpt, the food retailer has been affected by the discourse about plastic waste and the EU law is further influencing this. Another important detail is the fact that the article positions the retailer Axfood and ICA in comparison to each other. The highly competitive landscape among food retailers is another reason for why their environmental work is constantly increasing. This is also shown in this article where the CEO of the competitor ICA, Per Strömberg, is interviewed about their sustainability work:

*“On the first of October, the food retailer initiated a phasing-out of single-use items made of plastic. In the year 2020, products such as mugs, plates, cutleries, straws and ear swabs will be made by material that does not cause plastic waste in the seas. - The plastic issue is one of today’s big environmental problems which we have worked with during a long time. This was a natural step to take.”*

(Translated from Strömberg in Yttergren, 2018b, p.18)

As shown in both quotes above, the competitors are reacting to this increasing issue and EU policy. Furthermore, in the articles both retailers claim that they want to be in the lead in terms of sustainability which indicates the strategic motives for their sustainability initiatives. Thus, this is an example of how laws can affect organizations who, in turn, see the strategic opportunity of the new regulation to act morally correct. Herewith, the idea of sustainable food is legitimized through a combination of regulative institutional legitimation as well as moral strategic legitimation via the action taken by the food corporations. The highly competitive situation between the two large food retailers also leads to mimetic isomorphism. In other words, they act in similar manners in regards to the issue.

#### 4.4.4 Summary of Period

In conclusion, as a result of more knowledge about meat and its contribution to climate change, the discourse of this are focused much on criticizing meat, in particular beef. Furthermore, meat was often compared to food such as plant-based food, meaning vegan and vegetarian food, which was considered a more sustainable food alternative. In light of this, the culture in Sweden seemed to embrace sustainable food on a higher level, with national cooking championships having sustainable food as a class for itself and Swedish schools are adhering to meat-free days in school cafeterias. The Swedish National Food Agency was a large contributor in creating normative legitimacy around sustainable food. This was done by spreading new research about the fact that Swedes eat too much meat and it would be better to eat less of it. This information was then widely spread by media leading to more changes in food consumption, which shows the effect of intertextuality.

Other institutions, NGO’s, researchers and politicians were also criticizing meat and normatively legitimizing sustainable food as something positive both for health and environmental reasons. Furthermore politicians legitimized sustainable food through regulative legitimation. This was done through new policies by The UN, such as the Paris Agreement and Agenda 30. WWF was also involved in creating normative legitimation by claiming that people must eat sustainably to help the environment and do right. In regards to the increasing concern for the environment and the process of these policies, there was a sense of solidarity as every stakeholder in society was urged to make a change. This collective force showed signs of an increase in cultural-cognitive legitimation in terms of sustainable food and sustainability in general.

This era also introduced a more complex way of viewing sustainable food, as it was connected to gender equality, famine, social inequality, poverty, global conflicts and extremism. The journalist and activist Gunhild Stordalen and the columnist and sustainability researcher Johan Rockström were both large contributors to connecting sustainable food to a larger and more complex perspective. In connection to the issue of poverty, food retailers were criticized for not treating their producers well. Thus higher expectations were put on these companies, indicating

coercive isomorphism. Johan Rockström connected sustainable food and the need for domestic production to the increasingly turbulent world of nations in conflicts and climate change.

New business concepts and industries were formed around sustainable food. Herewith, insects were seen as a potential new sustainable industry and substitute for meat. It was conveyed as better for your health and the environment, thus creating pragmatic legitimation around sustainable food. Sustainable food was also introduced to the Swedish airline industry indicating its progression in legitimacy. Also, this can be seen as moral strategic legitimation by the airline company SAS. This also occurred in other airline industries which arguable indicates mimetic isomorphism.

The new sustainable food concept of package free food stores emerged during this period. Herewith, it was believed by the store owner that the concept will grow as purchasing loose foodstuffs is in the cultural code of Swedes. This can be seen as a potential sign of cultural-cognitive legitimation. In connection to the issue of food packaging, a new EU law was introduced banning plastic items. This law led to both ICA and Axfood changing their sustainability policies and describing their sustainability goals. Thus, policy created regulative legitimation as the companies conformed to the policy. The retailers also showed moral strategic legitimation as they spread awareness about their sustainable work. Furthermore, the highly competitive situation between the two companies exemplifies mimetic isomorphism as they are urged by each other to engage in sustainability practices.

## 5 Discussion & Conclusion

This final chapter intend to summarize the findings of the thesis as well as conclude the findings in relations to the purpose of the thesis. Furthermore, the findings of the thesis are discussed in relation to the identified literature streams and theoretical choices. Finally, a critical reflection on the limitations and thereby suggestions for future research is presented.

### 5.1 Recap of findings

#### 5.1.1 1995-2000

The beginning of the study period marked how food and sustainable development merged into a common concept, namely sustainable food. At that point, sustainable food as a concept only contained discussions regarding food safety and food price, mirroring the contemporary discourses regarding insecurities toward the free trades within EU and the economic insecurities following the economic recession. This entailed that the concept of sustainable food was rather narrow.

Within the discourse of the environment, there was no consensus regarding whether there was an environmental issue or not. This incommensurability regarding the environment thus hindered the development and legitimation of sustainable food, because it entailed less focus on solutions and more attention toward whether there was a problem. Further, this incommensurability affected the economic part of sustainability as there was no clear linkage between profit and sustainable food, nor any clear ethical values that were brought to the marketplace for companies to capitalize on. This period also introduced the aspect of food needing to be safe and healthy. Thus, the connection of sustainability and food grew. Simultaneously, much critique was raised against unsustainable production methods such as irradiation and GMO. Herewith, the majority of Swedes seemed to be against it, which indicates a beginning of the legitimation process of sustainable food, normatively and cultural-cognitively.

#### 5.1.2 2001-2007

The next era marked a clear evolution of the concept sustainable food. This is due to the fact that the whole spectrum of sustainable development, meaning social, economic and environmental sustainability became connected to food. The integration of the environmental factor to food discourse was due to an increasing concern for the environment and the emergence of terms like ‘climate change’ and ‘The Greenhouse effect’. The emergence of these terms was partly due to extensive media coverage. Therefore, intertextuality within newspapers had its effect on the normative legitimation of sustainable food. Meanwhile, various policy

changes followed the growing consensus of climate change and environmental consciousness. This signifies in a clear way how normative legitimation of a concept can lead to regulative legitimation, which in turn causes even more normative legitimacy around a concept.

These policies occurred on both national and international political levels and involved agricultural restructuring toward more ecological and sustainable food. Although met with critique by some, the fundamental goal toward sustainability was congruent within the debate nonetheless. This was a contrast to the prior period where not all actors understood the purpose of sustainability. For instance, there was a debate between ecological food and conventional food, but the argument on both sides was that the method of food production was more sustainable.

Another reason for the concept gaining legitimacy was because researchers and journalists found new arguments for why sustainable food was something positive. Herewith, it was claimed to not only be beneficial for one's health and the environment, but it was also conveyed as affordable and something that gives good value for money. This new argument thus created pragmatic legitimation of sustainable food, as more consumers could identify their individual benefit of purchasing it.

On a more organizational level, sustainable food started to go through moral strategic legitimation as more corporations adapted to the concept partly as a means of competitive advantage. Ironically enough, an important part of the companies' messages, however, was that they did not want to be perceived as too moralizing or foist their values on consumers. Following the act of strategically implementing the concept, competitors followed the trend, which indicates a beginning of sustainable food undergoing a type of legitimation called mimetic isomorphism.

### 5.1.3 2008-2014

Following the fact that the involved actors had, more or less, coherent goals for the environment, the sense of responsibility was an important aspect during the third period. Herewith, consumers, companies, institutions etc. started to embrace the fact that things must change in order to save the planet, which was a part of a bigger discourse. This entailed tips on a routine level, but also inspirational stories about citizens that had changed their lifestyles because of their environmental concerns. Meanwhile, activities that involved spending time in nature, which in recent history was not valued, became retro. These tips, lifestyles and activities were all seen as expressions of a bigger discourse which valued respecting the environment while simultaneously giving reverence to past ways of doing things. This discourse was rather substantial and seemingly changed both the expressions and perceptions of the public regarding sustainable food. Therefore, cultural-cognitive legitimation was molded and strengthened around the concept.

The internalization of responsibility in the consumer sphere seemingly led to a sense of empowerment which was particularly evident in the example of additives. Additives were not part of the authentic and natural ideal during the time and consumers started to revolt against it. Companies listened to the consumers and changed the products to include less additives, which is an expression of how industry norms could change without involving the authorities. This marks a clear distinction from earlier periods, as the normative legitimation process of an industry is enforced by solely consumers.

Through a wide distribution of texts concerning sustainable food, the understanding of the texts started to emerge in other contexts than meat and crops. Herewith, the wine industry, the fishing industry, breweries, tourism and restaurants started to be viewed upon through a similar lens as the meat and crops industry. This highlights a form of intertextuality where critique from one industry trickled across to another, which significantly increased the pace and diffusion rate of the concept.

Organizations started to form selling arguments that did not only involve price and quality but also other values, such as socially and environmentally sustainable food. This change of arguments also mirrored the consumers, who were more moralizing with their sustainable food choices with arguments that it is uncool to act wastefully. Further, labels were seen as important symbols for the consumers as a way of expressing the ethical values on the marketplace. The relevance of the symbolic value of food labels was further evident as parties from the political sphere as well as fund management tried to bring the symbolic value into their specific context. These extensions of the concept suggests a legitimation process where the concept adopts more stakeholders and are gaining in relevance through particularly normative and cultural-cognitive legitimation.

#### 5.1.4 2015 - 2018

Onto the last time period, the knowledge of meat as a type of food which threatens the climate was increasing. This insight lead to the discourse around sustainable food putting emphasis on criticizing meat. Thus, a new anti-meat agenda very much formed the discourse, leading to articles where researchers, institutions and NGO's, journalists and politicians all advocated for less meat and more plant-based food. The effect of this was clear as more people embraced vegetarianism and veganism into their lives. Evidently, this shows how multiple stakeholders in society collectively created normative legitimation of the concept.

Regulative legitimation also occurred as The UN created two large sustainability plans, namely The Paris Agreement and Agenda 30. These political happenings further propelled the sustainable food discourse as their respective sustainability goals were seen to be solved partly by countries increasingly embracing sustainable food.

Moreover, this era showed the concept being embedded in larger discourses, such as gender equality, poverty, famine, social injustice, global conflicts and extremism. This, in turn gave a broader picture of the relevance of sustainable food and furthermore confirmed that the concept had become even more legitimized. It also increased the perceived moral value of sustainable food, which created even more normative legitimation. Additionally, Sweden was often perceived by media and institutions as a nation in the forefront of sustainable development and sustainable food. Thus, this period showed an increase in cultural-cognitive legitimation within Sweden, as the cultural norm grew toward embracing sustainable food as a moral value.

This was also an era where new industries and businesses started to grow because of the concept. These businesses showed their moral concern for sustainability, but also demonstrated the strategic element of engaging in the concept. Therefore, this indicated a further creation of moral strategic legitimation. As more companies engaged in the concept, competitors followed, again indicating the existence of mimetic isomorphism. A reason for businesses getting more involved in the concept was the growing anti-plastic discourse and a new EU regulation on

plastic food items. This fueled the sustainability issue of food packaging and retailers began to follow this by using less plastic. This is thus exemplifies the effect of regulative legitimation and coercive isomorphism of organizations.

## 5.2 Conclusion

*The purpose of this study was to better understand how concepts gain legitimacy by affecting, and being affected by, discourses throughout time. The aim was additionally to contribute to theories within both institutional and strategic legitimation. The following chapter is a conclusion of our findings, and thus a presentation of how we fulfilled our purpose.*

One of the reasons why sustainable food has become, and remained, a legitimate concept throughout the periods of this study is the fact that societies' stakeholders have all had a congruent goal to achieve sustainability. This societal consensus grew as a result of convincing research and evidence of climate change during the beginning of the second period. Therefore, even though there have been disagreements on how to achieve sustainable development within food, the goal of doing so has remained consistent nonetheless.

Interestingly enough, the fact that there have been disagreements has further increased the discussions about it and thus lead to its growth in the media. This entails that actors have advocated for their perspective of the solutions, which in turn, has sparked an everlasting but constantly changing debate. Through a form of intertextuality, this constant debate has allowed for texts to be produced and understood in other, but somewhat similar, contexts, which in turn has created relevance for the concept of sustainable food in that specific context and with the actors that are embedded in it.

Furthermore, the concept has come to involve numerous stakeholders and ideas that were not present in the beginning of this study period. This is due to the fact that the concept has continuously succeeded in evolving as it has been intersected into other larger discourses through time. Thus, by relating the concept to contemporarily significant discourses, sustainable food has remained to be perceived as a relevant concept in every period. Additionally, as time has progressed, sustainable food has become interlinked with more complex and serious discourses. Subsequently, this has increased the concept's level of relevance and broadened the appearance of the concept in media, which is an example of how intertextuality of an idea can lead to increasing legitimacy. This evolutionary character very much resembles the way in which the concept CSR has remained legitimate and relevant throughout history. For instance, by forming sustainable food and CSR to encapsulate more societal issues such as women's rights, social inequality and global crises, they have remained vital concepts.

Another aspect that has severely changed the legitimation process is the movement of responsibility and empowerment. This has allowed for multiple actors to get involved and drive change. Our empirical findings suggests that when only scholars and authorities, at some point also mass media, were engaged in the concept they only focused on one issue at the time. In contrast, when multiple actors felt responsible and empowered to act, their individual perspectives and biases opened up for a wider debate on multiple issues at the same time. Furthermore, the sense responsibility allowed actors to engage with a new level of commitment



that was previously missing. The commitment was expressed in new consumer lifestyles or corporate strategies. This has led to the concept becoming common sense for stakeholders other than legislative authorities, which is an indication of sustainable food becoming increasingly legitimized on a cultural-cognitive level.

The increasing engagement in the business sphere is further a large contribution to the legitimation process. Herewith, both institutional and societal pressures on corporations, as well as strategic means from within the company to practice sustainable food, has contributed to its legitimacy. This interplay between society and organizations has been recurring throughout the whole time span. As sustainable food has gained normative legitimacy, certain expectations on how to conduct one's business has unfolded. Organizations such as food retailers, restaurants, hotels food producers etc. have answered to those expectations, which indicates the essence of coercive isomorphism.

Furthermore, these businesses have identified strategic opportunities to spread their moral values in favor of sustainable food, which has in turn increased the presence of it and further created moral legitimation regarding the concept. This phenomenon of organizations progressively embracing sustainable food with a strategic motive is similar to what happened in the evolution of CSR. Within CSR, this phenomenon is called 'The business case of CSR' and is said to be a reason for the increasing legitimation of the concept. Thus, the strategic element could be viewed as a common denominator within the legitimation process of concepts. Another possible contributor to the strategic legitimation process was how entrepreneurs started businesses that were rooted in the concept of sustainable food. These entrepreneurs thus acted as inspirational forces fueling the popularity and relevance of the concept.

## 5.3 Contribution to Prior Research and Theories

### 5.3.1 Sustainable food

Holt (2012) and Gollnhofer (2017) both focused on market antecedents. Herewith, they emphasize that the market antecedents of each market have been sedimented through a long period of time and that they therefore are slowly changing and when change occurs it is within one market antecedent at a time. Our finding instead suggest that when the values, or in this case concept, becomes normatively and cultural-cognitively legitimized, intertextuality allows for critique within one market to trickle across to other markets as well. Thus, when new values are established in connection to food it rather quickly transfer to nearby markets such as fishing, tourism, wine and beer breweries.

Further Gollnhofer (2017) shows how the regulative forces sometimes can be bypassed through goal congruence between consumers and retailers. Our findings suggest similar conclusions in term of goal congruence is an important tool for mobilizing and empowering actors. In our findings, the legitimation process rapidly increased soon after the influencing actors agreed to the goal of reaching sustainable food. After the goals was agreed upon, the complexity of how to achieve the goal instead fueled the legitimation process. Even though our material showed no examples of how two actors bypassed legal authorities, there was evidence on how consumers and organizations collaborated and acted against the will of scholars, as in the case

with GMO. Which suggest that these forces have been increasingly powerful in creating the discourse of sustainable food.

Fuchs and Kalfagiani (2009) suggest that the big food retailers become increasingly powerful political actors and gains political power through their expertise and thus not democratically. This empowerment of retailers allow them to shape the meaning of the concept sustainable in a way that suits their wants and needs. However, our empirical findings suggest that many actors embedded in the sustainable food discourse are enforcing their arguments with claims of sustainability, and that the concept is constantly changing to the contemporary powerful discourse. This constant adaptation to other issues is also an important part of how the concept succeeds in staying relevant and legitimized. It is however less evident in our findings that retailers are especially powerful actors in shaping the concept of sustainable food.

### 5.3.2 CSR

As CSR is a wider concept which overlaps with, among other concepts, sustainability and environmental responsibility (Matten & Moon, 2005), this study found many similarities in the legitimation of sustainable food and CSR. For instance, the development of linking concepts, such as corporate citizenship, business ethics etc. further progressed CSR's legitimacy (Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011). This was also the case for sustainable food as downshifting, urban farming, vegetarianism, etc. aided its legitimation process. Moreover, sustainable food has managed to stay legitimate and relevant throughout time by continuously adapting to relevant discourses and social issues. This is also the case for CSR (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

Moreover, as sustainable food, and sustainability in general, have increasingly become integrated into the concept of CSR (Matten & Moon, 2005), we thus contribute to the literature stream of the legitimation of CSR by in depth studying this overlapping concept. Perhaps even more so, as the specific unit of analysis, sustainable food, has not yet been studied from a legitimation point of view. Furthermore, since both scholars and businesses engaged in CSR have progressively gained interest in the factor sustainability, we believe that our study has contributed both theoretically and practically.

### 5.3.3 Theoretical framework

According to the institutionalist's perspective of legitimation, it is a process involving the collective structuralization of entire industries and sectors (Suchman, 1995; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This statement is, to a certain extent, in line with what this study found. Our findings indicate that the entire food industry indeed was structured by legitimation. However, a contribution to this literature stream can be found in our study, as we identified that the legitimation also occurs across industries. For instance, as the concept became increasingly legitimized other industries such as the airline industry and tourism embraced the concept. Additionally, it was also embraced across various institutions such as The Swedish Church, hospitals, schools, etc. Therefore the cross-industry and cross-institution effect found in our study can be a contribution to theories of legitimation.

Prior research within legitimation theory has traditionally focused on one of two perspectives of the process, namely strategic (Suchman, 1995; Vogel, 2004; Coupland 2005; Fournier 1998; Clark, 1956) or institutional (Scott, 1995; Waddock, 2008; Humphreys, 2010; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991) legitimacy. This has thus led to the research being focused on one perspective. However, by researching the process of legitimation through discourses in media, our study has provided both strategic and institutional perspectives. This holistic perspective of legitimation thus contributes to theories of legitimation. Furthermore, Suchman (1995) puts emphasis on the importance of researching how the process of legitimation differs from industries. Thus, as this study specifically researches the legitimation of sustainable food, the Swedish Food industry was thoroughly studied. As such, our study contributes with the unique perspective of this industry and thus may be used as a research tool for further research distinguishing the legitimation process in the food industry contra another one.

Within institutional theory, Scott (1995) claim that the three institutional elements cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative create legitimacy. This is true to the case in our study. However, we also found that expert knowledge, consisting of researchers, scholars and other experts within the field of food (e.g. chefs and producers), were substantial contributors to creating legitimacy through compelling knowledge. We are aware of the fact that new knowledge has an effect on the normative element. However, since this legitimizing force was so significant in our study, we suggest that *informative* should be an element of its own. Therefore, a possible contribution can be made to this institutional theory by adding this new element.

## 5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

As discussed in the methodological reflection, this study and its empirical material contains multiple actor's perspectives of the legitimation of sustainable food and thus is broad in nature. This resulted in a study which showed how a network of important events and discourses can fuel the legitimation process. Naturally, details of individual actors' contributions to the legitimation process could, as a consequence, be left out as we attempted to draw a rather broad picture. Therefore, more comprehensive studies on specific actors could function as an important addition to this study. Herewith, we suggest, for instance, studies on legal documents and the legitimizing effect that regulations have on the concept. Further, as our empirical findings suggest, corporations have acted as an increasingly powerful institution in contributing to shaping and legitimizing the concept. Therefore, an important study would be to investigate how different companies understand the concept today and see if there are any potential differences in their perception of the rather complex concept of sustainable food.

Furthermore, this study offers a rather comprehensive understanding of how the legitimation process have developed in the context of Sweden. This limitation suggest a weakness as the cultural-cognitive frames of Sweden differs from other countries. Thus, how events are perceived by Swedes might differ from how the populations from other countries perceive similar events.

Therefore, an intriguing addition to this study could be a comparative study with Sweden and a similar socio-economic country. Such a study could investigate the effect of the cultural-cognitive legitimation process in regards to sustainable food and provide additional perspective on the legitimation theory.

With discourse analysis this study portrays a bigger picture of the ways in which sustainable food as a concept has been legitimized over time. Furthermore, through discourse analysis we can see depictions of actions and argumentations that have shifted over time, thus catching the overarching discourses that produces these actions. However, a limitation is this study's reliance on archival data. Although we can examine shifts in norms over time, we cannot examine actions or intentions the way that observations could. Therefore, for an extended interpretation of the actions we suggest studies that can capture the more micro-level interactions that produces these shifts.

Finally, our findings suggest that goal congruence have happened between the actors which has fueled the discussion on how to achieve the goal of sustainable food. This finding is based solely on the empirical material, but could be extended with another study. We therefore suggest a comprehensive study with theory such as Actor Network Theory which might be able to identify the exact process of how this happened and a more detailed description of the implications of such goal congruence in this context.

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# Appendix A

Appendix A shows the final categories and themes of the coding scheme.

Themes:			
<b>(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?</b>			
1. Author/journalist	7. Institutions/authorities/government agencies		
2. politician	8. Activist		
3. corporate officials	9. Chef/restaurant owner		
4. Scholars/researchers	10. producers		
5. consumer	11. Small scale business owners		
6. NGO			
<b>(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to (in order to stay relevant)?</b>			
1. pollution	7. Unhealthy consumption practices	14. Resurrection of rural areas	
2. overpopulation	8. Animal welfare	15. conflicts	
3. economic issues	9. Distribution issues	11. hunger/famine	16. Feminism
4. social injustice	10. Authenticity	12. After consumption	17. Integration
5. unhealthy production methods		13. Loss of biodiversity	
6. Public health issue			
<b>(3) What are the underlying reasons for the texts being written/published?</b>			
1. political happenings	7. controversial food related activity	13. institutional statement/report	
2. new research	8. media creating more media (interactively)	14. sustainability events (non-political)	
3. environmental crisis	9. New food or production/consumption/distribution trends	15. Need for new laws or regulations	
4. policy changes	10. Critique on established methods	16. Inspirational consumer activity	
5. activists	11. Inspirational business activities	17. Need for new farming regulations	
6. societal scepticism	12. Sceptic to sustainable ideas	18. Hard to understand what products are good	
		19. Need to eas laws and regulations in production/Swedish farmer should have same laws as EU	
<b>(4) What dimension of legitimization is emphasized regarding sustainable food?</b>			
1. normative			
2. regulative			
3. cultural-cognitive			
4. strategic			
5. Pragmatic			
<b>(5) What other concepts and/or stakeholders are linked to sustainable food, if any?</b>			
1. CSR	6. Nature protectionism	11. local fishing industry	17. naturin
2. ethical consumerism,	7. Less harm to nature	12. "Grön Vågar"	18. Eco-farming
3. customer orientation	8. "DOWNSHIFING" slow life "Voluntary simplicity"	13. noise/elec-tourism	19. Durnsterng
4. anti consumerism	9. Staged/doling urban farming	14. Slowfood	20. stevala
5. vegetarian/animal rights	10. Moral marketing	15. microtyggeri	21. Authenticity
		16. "Eat Nature"	22. veganism
			23. Minimalism
			24. Anti-packaging
			25. "De gröna folkhemmet (S)"
			26. "Halbart Nylände"
			27. "Köp och såg samhälle"
			28. "vegovänner"
			29. fixeltanar
			30. Culture/regjion
			31. Airline-food
			32. pescetarian
			33. klimatatan
			34. econmissionär
			35. "Pry/svinn"
			36. "Foodie"
			37. Sustainable Wine
			38. e-commerce
			39. Zero waste - movement
			40. Integration
			41. sharing economy/collaborative economy
			42. Clean food
			43. Ugly Food
<b>(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?</b>			
	1. Organisations	7. Restaurants	
	2. Institutions		
	4. consumers		
	5. Governments		
	6. Society at large		
<b>(7) In what way is this text creating legitimisation to the concept of sustainable food?</b>			
	1. mundane sustainability		
	2. spreading awareness		
	3. criticize existing practises		
	4. spread ethical values		

Figure 1

# Appendix B

Appendix B shows the finalized coding of the empirical material. The numbers correspond with the codes from the picture in Appendix A.

Year	Title	(1) What is water represented as in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concern linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the water being written/published?	(4) What dimension of regulation is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text creating legislation to regulate the concept of sustainable food?	QUOTES	
1991	Silvberger ska ha sin vilja för Nærsk	4	3	3	4	2	4	4	2	
1991	Regeringen vill pressa ner matpriset	2	3	3	1	2	4	4	3	”Regeringen konsumentpolitiska propositioner tog ett beslut om att, för första gången, en miljöpolitisk mål. Syftet är att främja användningen av ”konsumtions- och produktionsmetoder som minskar påverkanen på miljön och bidrar till en hållbar utveckling.”
1991	Undersökningen följde lämpo//webbströ	2	5	1	1	1	4	4	3	
1996	TOPPMÖTET: RONA Kalk med Sver	2	4	4	1	2	5	5	3	”Men Sverige är mest EU som kan inte göra något. Det gäller höllbarhet och måla EU-mellanvarvok.”
1996	Farmhouse stiftas höst med godsoj	6	5	2	1	1	5	2	2	
1996	Livsmedelsverket stödjer främst fä	1	6	6	3	3	2	3	3	Argue for why regulation and GMO is good with the argument. Kritiken mot genmodificerad mat handlar inte om produktens eventuella hälsofar för människor av Firdia, utan om riskerna för miljön.”
1996	Den modifierade maten - ämne/veb	1	5	6	3	3	6	6	2	”Det här råkar ut för stort del av Europas reserver vägs svensk har rätt till om alla ny jordbruk på öst kold ha samma möjlighet till en bra produktivitet utan att miljön förstörs. Det är det som politiska styrande ska ta till för en hållbar utveckling.”
1996	Isabell och koncernens till den pr	1	2	4	-	-	2	3	3	”Det vore skönt om det blev vore frågan om att sätta om miljöer till ekologiskt produkt. Men snarare är det frågan om hållbarhet och ekologiska vilken typ av odlning som självkonsumeras”
1996	Lambert och tank höst Östsvens	4	1	4	2	2	6	6	3	”Var skärpare handlar om en utmaning gentemotare justerade nyger en hållbarhet eller inte, säger Isabell Kalk, kritiker- och miljökonung vid Livsmedelsverket AB. - Vi resonerar mer det sätt som framförallt de genmodificerade sojprodukterna från USA godkändes av EU föregående år. Det är ett steg mot att införa i Europa. Det har skett i sörg och fram till exempel en särskilda kvalitetsmärken såg från ”vändig” sig. ”Absolut skandinav” - Handeln har försatt i en absolut situation där vi får ta ansvar för matlag som egentligen görs av EU, och vi ser stora amerikanska kemiföretag Monsanto som inleder den genmodificerade sojan.
1997	Mångpartiet med stöd B. maktning. M	3	5	6	1	1	2, 1, & 5	3	3	
1997	Vad ska vi ha som hjälp miljöström. web	6	2	1	1	1	5	5	3	
1997	Tilldelat stöd för klimat. http://webbstr	4	6	4	3	3	6	6	2	
1997	Konsumtions- och utvecklings- och miljö	7	5	6	1	1	1	1	3	
1997	När åter i landet spara på energin. h	7	1	2	1	1	5	5	3	
1998	EN MILJÖPOLITIK Utmaning från skolvärd	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	The author are often against sustainability. ”En politikskiss Det jag säger betyder inte att man inte skall spara energi och att man inte ska spara energi. Men speciellt är en politikskiss, inte en miljöskiss. ”Högst” och en engagemang i kampen mot skolorna i skolorna Det är en skola. Om man är som man blir, kommer detta att vara det som miljöpolitiken i Sverige
1998	Väl Skövde och B. maktning. H. maktning	2	1	1	2	2	5	5	2	Under bösen har jag förtroende. Också i skolorna sänder miljö och ”produktionsmetoder” och frågan. Vad du väl som finns i den mat? Livsmedelsverket ska utveckla för att vara en av de viktigaste utgångarna i den saken
1999	Kalk med godsoj. väst. USA. h	7	6	1	2	2	1	1	3	
1999	Måttens främst i det lämpo. web	2	2	7	3	3	5	5	3	
1999	INDUSTRIELL DURERPRODUKTIV	2	4	6	1	1	5	1	3	

Figure 2

Year	Title	(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimacy is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text creating legitimization to the concept of sustainable food?
1999	Estimanser för Kvar i linjen: <a href="#">http://</a>				6	1		5
1999	Mellanlag: Självklart med ekologisk h				2	3		1
1999	Hälsa och miljö av profil: Ört-KET: <a href="#">http://</a>				6	3		6
2000	Bakaren frodas i lak med för lång lak				7	2		1
2000	FAKTA I GENMODIFIKERINGS SA				5	3		1
2000	"WTO en besvärslös" - <a href="#">http://web.se</a>				4	2		5
2000	"Bygg en allians mellan EU och i lak				4	2		5
2000	"Thailand är det där att byta med lagret"				8	3		6
2000	De kaliforniska kökets droppning - <a href="#">http://</a>				5	3		6
2001	Jane Hilliard <a href="#">http://web.se/venner.info</a> .				2	2		1
2001	Med miljö och <a href="#">http://web.se/venner.info</a>				3	4		6
2001	Kolmannskiel-Ölaf Fridolf: Ekologisk i				3	4		1
2001	Ekologisk odling gynnar grönla och a				5 442	1		1
2001	Med och bättre snabbmat med för Mar				5	1		5
2002	Ekologisk - mer miljövänligt än kon - <a href="#">http://</a>				5	1		2
2002	Fiske - <a href="#">http://web.se/venner.info.com</a>				5	2		5
2002	Omgivet om från med trafik - <a href="#">http://</a>				6	2		2
2003	Skapat om marker börjar i köket: <a href="#">http://</a>				6, 7	2		1, 4

**QUOTES**  
 Att pågågen handla miljöfriendly är inte en nödvändig bygd på behovet att göra ett dåligt samvete, utan en högt nationell handling av smidningsmål konsumenter som vill njuta av god mat. Vetskapen om jordens ändliga resorser och 3. frågan om att ta val vad man stoppar i sig är inget PR-typpo.

God nyttig produkt hjälper ska man inte panna Köttet vara svensk. Mellanlagerna har en sammanfattning. De nycker konsumenter som tillhålls om sin handling till ekologiskt pro- ducerade livsmedel. Bland mellanlag 20 och 30 procent av dem som svarade på frågan om vilka köttprodukter de skulle köpa ekologiskt producerat.

1. dag handlar det inte längre om mat för delarna, det har vi i Sverige, utan i stället om människors engagemang i och oro för hälsa och miljö - roland svensson, KF. Hållbara konsumtionsmönster är en så viktig profilfråga för KF än man nu får följa

2. pågågen måste vara 100-letiga livsmedel skävar om sådana.

3. "De som föreskr i genetiskt färdig mat är sin egen kärna och botten"

2. lära de rissar de utsläpp marknadsföringen för"

En annan stort problem är de starkt växande subventionerna till jordbruket i EU och USA. När EU och USA släpper sina rövare på exportmarknader till konkurrens låga priser konsumens miljön och hälsan i tredje världen, tillade 3. delo.

Det är många byråer miljö- och handelsorganisationer och lokala riksförster mat om i världen som inte bara varit aktivt i Sverige och Prag, utan sedan länge fört en sådan kritik diskussion, i en om hur WTO-regulering påverkar möjligheterna till en hållbar och rikare utveckling världen. Och i den kritiska diskussionen delar också forskare och FN-organ, ja även världens regeringar då de inte är på WTO, utan på FN-konferenser.

3. "Måttansamballare ekologiskt hållbar samhällelemniskor överhuvudtaget är resultatet om byråer nu gör 4. alla ska följa."

4. "Mat är inte längre bara en praxis, utan också politik. Regeringen måll är att 20 procent av länsstaterna ska odla ekologiskt 2005. Maten och maten är gjord av gamla ekologiska mat till de spricker. Men när de rikare i svensk finansmarknadsring och nypråkliga portföljstaktiska finns det också utproppna. Närkonsumtionsmönstren förbrukar påstås att vara ena varandra definierat 3. gåll för lärd."

3. "Dagens forskning ger starkt stöd för att ekologiskt hållbar livlar med en hållbar utveckling."

2. "Svensson har en engagemang för jordbrukets resorser som är inte helt fel. Det är även miljöfriendlyt att veta ekologiskt 4. jordbruk som ett helt stöd för en miljöfriendly"

3. "Då blir svårast att hitta miljöfriendlyt parter i närheten av miljöfriendlyt råttigheter nämligen de råttigheter som går ut på att handla 3. generationer kan ta ut lika mycket fisk som pågågen"

2. "Men vi är vi ett helt land i det som EU. Här kan vi göra vår röd hand"

3. "Tillsammans med Finland och Danmark och snart även de baltiska länderna kan vi bilda en stark opinion, säger Allan Robersten. Det går att påverka om man går samman."

Figure 3

Year	Title	(1) Whose note is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimisation is sustainable food?	(5) What other concerns are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) To what end is this text creating legitimisation to the concept of sustainable food?	
2003	Malare ideologi mer forskning! http://	4		6	6	1	1	5	2
2003	Världspri ordbruk är också bra http://w-4-6	3	1,5,8	4 & 8	4	3	3	5	2
2003	Konstnad ska ge bättre miljö! http://ve			1	4	1	1	1,1,5	2
2003	Urbanska miljö framtid! http://web/ve	1		5	6	1	1	6	5
2003	Skal! Önska eller valen? Målska! http://	6		1	7	1		4	
2004	Låt jordbruket blomstra - https://web/	1		5	9	3	3	7	5
2004	Nyttigt! Målska! - https://web/ve/ret	4,5,7		10	10	3-		1	1
2004	En djur! god mat! - https://web/ve/	9-		9	9	3	3	5	4
2004	Konsumera ska bli ett "nytt"!	7		6	8	3-		2	4
2004	VÄKARBOKOR: Miljöns värde!	8		7,9	8	3	3	6	2
2005	En svensk länderoppgång! http://web/	4		5	7	3		1	1
2005	Värdnad vill du oss är bra snart dit!	4		1,5	2	1	1	2	6
2005	Itens värden ska mörka värden! http://	4		1	9	1	1	1	1
2005	Svensk vedare modell för Mars! http://	4		5	2	1	1	6	6
2005	Så konsumera du snart! Transparen	4		1,6	2	1,2		1,5	
2005	Värden ska vi bli ännu rikare! http://w	1		4,7	10	1		5	
2005	De lever miljösamt! http://web/ve/ve	7		1	4	3		4	4
2006	Finns det det här om du vill vara miljö	4		1	10	1	2	4	4

Figure 4

Year	Title	(1) Where water is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimacy is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text contributing to legitimization of the concept of sustainable food?
2006	Att vi till ekologiskt handlar om etik - <a href="http://www.ekologiskt.se/etik/">http://www.ekologiskt.se/etik/</a>		6	8	10	1	5	4
2006	Dubbar upp ekologiskt - <a href="http://www.dubbarupp.se/">http://www.dubbarupp.se/</a>		3	5	10	1	1	1
2006	Märkskema till en 40-år - <a href="http://www.markschema.se/">http://www.markschema.se/</a>		4	5	2	2	6	6
2006	Farliga fetter stoppas i svenskliberal - <a href="http://www.sve.se/">http://www.sve.se/</a>		1	6	8	2	4	4
2006	Fetter som är en ickeändligt kemik - <a href="http://www.fetter.se/">http://www.fetter.se/</a>		4	6	2	2	2	3
2006	Svensk förtäring stoppas med Sveriged - <a href="http://www.sve.se/">http://www.sve.se/</a>		3	5	8	4	3	1
2006	Öppen närhet tillgänglig - <a href="http://www.oppennarhet.se/">http://www.oppennarhet.se/</a>		6	3	9	2	2	4
2006	Ekologiskt har blivit mer MAINSTREAM - <a href="http://www.ekologiskt.se/">http://www.ekologiskt.se/</a>		10	5	9	3	2	4
2006	Självklar, Livsmedelsverket - <a href="http://www.livsmedelsverket.se/">http://www.livsmedelsverket.se/</a>		1	6	2	2	3	3
2007	Mat trea på trean - <a href="http://www.mat-trea.se/">http://www.mat-trea.se/</a>		3	6	9	1	1	1
2007	Vissa vägar för EU - <a href="http://www.vissavagar.eu/">http://www.vissavagar.eu/</a>		7	6	4	2	5	3
2007	Intera odlingsmark spelar stor roll - <a href="http://www.intera.se/">http://www.intera.se/</a>		4	6	2	1	6	5
2007	Hållbara tips för miljö och hälsa - <a href="http://www.hallbara.se/">http://www.hallbara.se/</a>		7	1,6	8	3	5	4
2007	Käla och smårädd mat - <a href="http://www.kela.se/">http://www.kela.se/</a>		4	7	7	1	4	3
2007	OS tvivelsfullt för miljön - <a href="http://www.os.se/">http://www.os.se/</a>		9	5	9	4	2	1
2007	Klimatmetri - <a href="http://www.klimatmetri.se/">http://www.klimatmetri.se/</a>		7	1,5	1	1	2,1,2,4	4
2007	Sats på klimatet - <a href="http://www.sve.se/">http://www.sve.se/</a>		7	1	8	1	1	1
2008	Märkskema till ekologiskt - <a href="http://www.markschema.se/">http://www.markschema.se/</a>		2,2,3	1	1	-	6	2
2008	Öppna för mat - <a href="http://www.oppenfor.se/">http://www.oppenfor.se/</a>		6	5	7	2	4	4
2008	Mat på nätet - <a href="http://www.matpaa.net/">http://www.matpaa.net/</a>		8	6	10	1	3	4
2008	Thomass visioner för i program - <a href="http://www.thomass.se/">http://www.thomass.se/</a>		8	7	5	6	6	6

Figure 5







Year	Title	(1) Where was it expressed in this report?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimization is sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text creating legitimization to the concept of sustainable food?
2000	Line electronic - <a href="http://webbrevier.se">http://webbrevier.se</a>				1	3	10	
2000	Ylvan Kallén de Saa & the Brevolite		6, 7, 4, 5, 6 & 7		1	1	2	4
2000	Möte och mat - <a href="http://webbrevier.se">http://webbrevier.se</a>			10	11	1	1	1
2000	Vad accepterar du egentligen i din mat?		1, 5, 6 & 8		10	1	2, 1, 4 & 5	
2000	Viljörger tankarna - <a href="http://webbrevier.se">http://webbrevier.se</a>		3, 5 & 7		9	1	1	4
2000	Skapa underlag för etiska föredrag Det			3	2	2	2	2
2000	Handen biter sig i GMO-fågeln - 1			3	6	11	1	3, 1 & 4
2000	GMO-livsmedel är precis lika odärliga			4	6	2	4	1
2001	Nya tiller för 100 Milj - <a href="http://webbrevier.se">http://webbrevier.se</a>		6, 5, 1		11	2	1	1
2001	Osvettens mat skänks till hemlösa o			3	5	11, 1, 4		3
2001	Miljöpartiet kompletter utmaning <a href="http://www.miljopartiet.se">http://www.miljopartiet.se</a>		3, 7, 1		2	2	2	4
2001	Sverige gör bristat till mat <a href="http://www.sve.se">http://www.sve.se</a>			7	4	3	2	5
2001	Pallar för massvård <a href="http://webbrevier.se">http://webbrevier.se</a>			3	5	11, 1, 4		1
2001	Färdigt franset blir färdigt <a href="http://www.fardigtfranset.se">http://www.fardigtfranset.se</a>			7	6	4	2	5
2001	Modelleras som mest miljösvårliga		3, 5, 1		13	4	10	1
2001	Ngr till GMO-ändlar om en psysgar			4	2	4	10	1
2001	Närhopad fisk svår att hitta i skan lin			3	9	4	2	11
2001	Gott om godskott i svenska matreth			8, 5, 1	11	1	6	6
2001	Kälskas älskas älskas <a href="http://webbrevier.se">http://webbrevier.se</a>		3, 5, 1		7	1	1	3

Figure 8

Year	Title	(1) Where/when is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimization is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for achieving sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text creating legitimization to the concept of sustainable food?	QUOTES
2011	Alt har ett pris. Miljösvenskarna Målar		1, 7, 8	10	1	2	6, 2, 3	6, 2, 3	Sverige framstår i den här boken som ett land som inte har tagit tillräckligt hänsyn till miljöns betydelse för människans hälsa. Det är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2011	Svenska står ett steg för tryggt mat!		3, 5, 1	10	3			1	3 och inte mindre äppel, frammanför, betingar Rensar Lunden, vi för hälsosammare.
2011	Svensk mjölk snart ett minne blott bli		1, 5, 1	7	1			1	3
2011	Vad är så utmaningsfullt med att äta ekologisk mat?		4, 5, 1	2	1			6	Redan har allt för ynkliga produktionsmetoder utvecklat sig och i många fall har de blivit mer ekonomiska än de ekologiska. Detta innebär att ekologisk mat inte alltid är mer kostbar än konventionell mat. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2011	Vad är så utmaningsfullt med att äta ekologisk mat?		8, 7, 1	5	1	12	4	4	3. Hållbar konsumtion är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2011	Är det verkligen ekologisk mat?		3, 5, 1	11	1	13	1	1	2
2011	Är det verkligen ekologisk mat?		3, 5, 1	11	4			1	Franssamtillgångar behövs som stöd för att kunna leva på ett hållbart sätt. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2011	Är det verkligen ekologisk mat?		4, 5, 1	4	2	6	5	5	3. Många av de ekologiska produkterna som säljs i Sverige är inte ekologiska. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Svenska livsmedelsföretag är de bästa		3	6, 10	1	3			2. Om det inte är det bästa, är det nästan säkert att det är ett bra val. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Klimatpolitik går ut över frästa - åttio		6	4	7	2	6	6	Med hjälp av klimatpolitiken kan vi skapa ett hållbart samhälle. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Minimera frökonsumtion - åttio		2	7	10	2	4	4	4. Att minska frökonsumtionen är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Lite ärtor ger mycket smaker - åttio		11	5	11	2, 13	4, 1, 4	4, 1, 4	1. En av de viktigaste delarna av att leva på ett hållbart sätt är att minska sin köttkonsumtion. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Önsklig skapad med gemenskap - åttio		4, 5, 2	13	2	7	5	5	3. Det är viktigt att ha en gemenskap som stödjer varandra. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Gemenskapen ger ett uttryck		2	5	10	6			2. Uttrycket för gemenskapen är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Vad är så utmaningsfullt med att äta ekologisk mat?		6	4	13	2	4	4	1. Vår roll är att vara med och skapa ett hållbart samhälle. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	EU-regel för oss att äta ekologisk mat		6, 7, 8, 4	5, 7	10, 8, 2	2	6, 8, 3	6, 8, 3	1. Vår roll är att vara med och skapa ett hållbart samhälle. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Har vi nått till Söder?		1	7	14	2	7, 1, 8, 3	7, 1, 8, 3	2. Det är viktigt att ha en gemenskap som stödjer varandra. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.
2012	Är det verkligen ekologisk mat?		1	6	15	2, 5, 8, 2	3, 8, 4	3, 8, 4	3. Att minska sin köttkonsumtion är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt. Detta är en viktig del av att leva på ett hållbart sätt.

Figure 9

Year	Title	(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the content linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimization is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way/s does text create legitimization to sustainable food?
2012	Beslutarna gör det så var men blev	5	5	5	16	1	9	4
2012	Framtidens värdus bygs på bilden	3	3,7,9	11	11	1	9	6
2012	Bakslags plöcker för valet - http://www.svea.se	1	1	4	10	1	1	1
2012	Skerten för rågsgräset är fäst	4	12	10	2	2	7	5
2012	Byt för i jordbrukspolitik - http://www.svea.se	10	2	17	1	2	2	5
2012	Debut av dokument av Ar - http://www.svea.se	4	3	2	2	1	2	6
2012	Laga på turisterna sista - http://www.svea.se	6	5	15	1	1	1	5
2012	Det nya ordet rågsgräs - http://www.svea.se	1	13	15	1	1	7	5
2012	Svenska bakare damper när för att 8		5	15	1	1	7	5
2013	Kunder kan vägas belata när för 60	7	1	2	2	2	2	6
2013	Kallare ska komma http://www.svea.se	1	3	4	1	1	4	4
2013	Tillhör mat i sin http://www.svea.se	4	14	14	1	1	9	6
2013	Om påsar för kopla belata direkt från	3	5	11	4	4	6	2
2013	18 årets miljösamt på jobbet http://www.svea.se	3	1	2	3	3	1	1
2013	Ta det där med god samvete	1	1	9	1	1	1	4
2013	Nu på morgonen från http://www.svea.se	10	1	11	1	1	1	4
2013	Festival sätter ekologiskt http://www.svea.se	3	1	11	1	1	5	1
2013	Centern vill bidra lagen om offentlig	2	5	4	2	2	5	5
2013	Favoriternas pris: sista vilkor för 6	3	4	13	2	2	1	2

Figure 10

Year	Title	(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of capitalism is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting the concept of sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text contributing to the development of the concept of sustainable food?	QUOTES
2013	Hänsel i läser: vejenærskel: hmsp/wen/a 3,9		71,8	9	3,51,4,5,16		6		Däremot vänder konstgjord ljus begreppet uppträdet i närliggande språk. Deras åtgärder i den offentliga världen verkar inte vara enbart för att se ut bra. Förutom sin skärm på det släta, rena rummet. Kankeveröppningar "sitt sin" "nyttigt på en stor marknad. Enas New York-första ledare för att fånga världen med nya tankar. 4. ingår i handlar om. Eller på den svenska "2. målet". - "hansens" Chris-ina Cheng på konstnärligheten Cheng Awei. 7. den globala trafikvårdens kommissioner har deltagit i många av världens mest avancerade tekniska utvecklingar och delat. Särskilt i den globala livsmedels- och konsumtionspolitikerna. Det är ett viktigt steg. Och det är ett stort steg i den globala konsumtionen. "Vad är den globala livsmedels- och konsumtionspolitiken? Det är en global politik som handlar om att ge alla sig till världen som ett stort steg. De kanske inte bara ska vara "hansens" 2. "Vad är det?" "Bild" är uttryckt av ett enda ordet är "hansens". 2. "Vad är det?" "Bild" är uttryckt av ett enda ordet är "hansens".
2013	Pa sanning eller status: hmsp/wen/a 4,51,8,71,8			2,3,4			2	6	
2013	ENS SNAKSBUT AV NÄTTORENS hmsp/		1,51,8	16	11,13,15		4	4	
2013	Vill kampa välj med top hmsp/web		4	2	3		2	2	
2013	Därför kan klimatfrågan inte lösas ut		4,51	1	2		4,15	2	
2013	Aktiebock vid salter nya världa national		3,51	11	4		1	1	
2013	Insiderkonsten som vill råda världen		4,51	2	1		6	6	
2013	Stockholm för öppnare för hmsp/wen		7,51,8	4,5,4			1,2,5		
2014	Klimatpolitiken åter väljer hmsp/wen/		1,51,8	10	1		2	2	
2014	Fran John Coda till ekologisk finans h		3,71,8	11	4		2	1	
2014	Ekologisk etik källa till omgiva 3 hmsp/		4	2	5		6	6	
2014	Framtiden gör oss blindas för världet		1,51,8	15	2		18	5	
2014	Lyx i den handlar om att ha koll hmsp/		1,71	8	3		2	4	
2014	Ekot AV EN SIKTILLT hmsp/		1	9	1		17	6	
2014	21 års för att få med dina klimatsida		7,71	1,5			2	4	
2014	Sådana sätter en skadlig påverkan		6,51,8	7	1		6	1	
2014	Den enda i världen hmsp/wen/		1,51	9	4		7,1,7		
2014	Svenska konsumenter vill se mer rätt		6,10,8,4	2	2		4	4	
2014	INSIKTERNA HAR LANDAT hmsp/		7,51	2	3		6	6	
2014	Sveita sätter sockerlocken hmsp/wen		3,51,6	2	4		20	1	

Figure 11



Year	Title	(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimization is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting the concept of sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text creating legitimization to the concept of sustainable food?
2015	Mattresen gör global matväxt - https://www.kockar.se/2015/04/01/mattresen-gor-global-matvaxt/		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1	5	7	5	1
2015	KOCKAR JAKT PÅ DET GENUINA		9	10	11	4	3	7
2015	Med fjället som skåfer - https://webbplats.se/2015/04/01/med-fjallet-som-skafers/		9	10	11	4	21	7
2015	Ännu mer mat riddas - https://webbplats.se/2015/04/01/annu-mer-mat-riddas/		3	7	11	2, 14	5	1
2016	Om mat, femtio nummer av grön - https://www.gron.se/2016/04/01/om-mat-femtio-nummer-av-gron/		1	5	18	2	6	1
2016	Nyhet om mat i ny tidning - https://www.nytt.se/2016/04/01/nyhet-om-mat-i-ny-tidning/		1	5	18	5	4	1
2016	Stycket för miljö och djur på väg att bli en del av mat - https://www.svea.se/2016/04/01/stycket-for-miljo-och-djur-pa-veg-att-bli-en-del-av-mat/		6	5	4, 8, 5	18	5	1
2016	Äntligen! ekologiska recept till grön - https://www.gron.se/2016/04/01/antligen-ekologiska-recept-till-gron/		3, 7, 8, 3		11, 5, 8, 1	2	2	1
2016								
2016								
2016	Mattresen kan tycka handböcker - https://www.kockar.se/2016/04/01/mattresen-kan-tycka-handboker/		4	14	2	5	1, 2, 8, 3	4
2016	Vill du äta ekologisk mat? - https://www.kockar.se/2016/04/01/vill-du-ata-ekologisk-mat/		10	4	19	5	5	1
2016	Var mat är ekologisk? - https://www.kockar.se/2016/04/01/var-mat-ar-ekologisk/		6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	1	5	6	6	1
2016	De sålda våra produkter - https://www.kockar.se/2016/04/01/de-salda-va-ura-produkter/		3, 3, 4, 5	11	4	1	4	1
2016	Var är 23 år eller äldre? - https://www.kockar.se/2016/04/01/var-ar-23-ar-eller-ardre/		4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1	1	7	5	1
2016	Omna planörer av Sverige		10	5	11	4, 18, 8, 21	4	1

Figure 13





Year	Title	(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimacy is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting the concept of sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text contributing to the concept of sustainable food?	QUOTES
2018	Frysta grönsaker kan vara bättre		1, 71, 6	2	5	2	4	4	De bästa råden för miljön och för värtangetivitet är skatta arbeta skogsskötsel, gräskatt och jordbruk. Men realiteten är att få finansierat ut skötsel av våra gröna jordbruks under det senaste åren. De är många och omissupplagda. Frysta grönsaker är därför ett smartt komplement som kan finnas i alla butiker.
2018	Idé blir partnerna vinna eller vaka		1, 51, 8, 6	1	2	2	5	3	Vår partner utmanar oss genom att vara ärliga. De ber oss om hjälp. Men vi vill inte ge oss upp och sluta arbeta för ett bättre värld. Vi vill inte ge upp och sluta arbeta för ett bättre värld. Vi vill inte ge upp och sluta arbeta för ett bättre värld.
2018	de som odlar vad mat har frid		6	4	2	2	4	1, 4	3. O av att bli en del av den ekologiska rörelsen och arbeta ut i länder som gör att det inte är samma. Svenska myndigheter gör inte samma. Mycket sommar och väl för att sammanfattas något. Det som på grund av transporterna.
2018	smygod gör stor skillnad mt		1, 71	9	3	3	4	4	2. Ett av de största problemen är att det inte finns någon kontroll. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	en metod utan kött är den först		6, 71	1	1, 5, 2, 2		4	4	2. till skolan. För att kunna få en god mat som inte är en del av problemet.
2018	WP vill öka Sveriges självförbr		2, 51, 8	1	2, 5, 2	5, 4	5	4	Vår egen mat är inte bra. Vi vill ha en god mat som inte är en del av problemet. Vi vill ha en god mat som inte är en del av problemet.
2018	Klimatförändringen står mot skä		2, 51, 8, 6, 71	1	2	5, 4	5	4	3. Klimatet och om den blir värre än vad som har varit tidigare. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	Har vi maten från vi planerar h		4, 51, 8, 71, 8	2	1, 5	5, 2	6	6	3. Säger i alla fall att det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	Det är dags för EU att prioritera skit		2, 51, 71	1	2	2, 5, 2, 4, 5	3	3	3. Säger i alla fall att det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	Tinaeua lever på friska och oljebruk		10, 51, 8	11	4		1	1	1. Men det är att vara ärlig till det. För att i själva mittet. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	SK vill prioritera klimatets ut		2, 51, 6	31	2		5	5	3. Sommarerna är sommarerna och det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	Georg Cederskjöld Kockert Paul Sven		9, 51, 8	11	4, 5, 2, 6		1, 3	1, 3	De är de mest avancerade och de mest avancerade. De är de mest avancerade och de mest avancerade. De är de mest avancerade och de mest avancerade.
2018	Klimatutskottet i Sverige har fått förslag		2, 51, 8, 71	21	2, 5, 2, 7		5, 4	5, 4	3. Klimatutskottet i Sverige har fått förslag. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	Förutom miljöarbetet per sista fem b		6, 71, 8	16	1, 5, 2, 8, 2, 9		4	4	2. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.
2018	Har vi Dörfr kan förändra bli svare		3, 51	31	4		1	1	4. Dörfr kan förändra bli svare. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem. Det är ett stort problem.

Figure 15

Year	Text	(1) Whose voice is expressed in this text?	(2) What specific current social issue is the concept linked to?	(3) What are the underlying reasons for the text being written/published?	(4) What dimension of legitimization is emphasized regarding sustainable food?	(5) What other concepts are linked to sustainable food?	(6) Who are considered the responsible parties for adopting sustainable food in the text?	(7) In what way is this text creating legitimization to sustainable food?	QUOTES
2018	Länningen: Så kan miljöpartiet av vänt	4	51, 71	1	1	1	5	4	Måskat köttbiffande En halvvecka av utsläppet före 2030 innebär att människor kommer att behöva förtäda hur de äter. Mer växter och mindre kött är vägen framåt, eftersom köttproduktionen kräver mycket mer resurser och mer än två tredjedelen av jordens yta för klimatpåverkan. Men det är inte nödvändigt att äta vegetariskt för att minska klimatpåverkan. Det handlar om att äta smartare. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för miljön och klimatet. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för djuren. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för dig själv. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för världen.
2018	Miljöpartiet: Så kan miljöpartiet av vänt	4	51, 91	12	1	1	6	6	3. Mer växter och mindre kött är vägen framåt, eftersom köttproduktionen kräver mycket mer resurser och mer än två tredjedelen av jordens yta för klimatpåverkan. Men det är inte nödvändigt att äta vegetariskt för att minska klimatpåverkan. Det handlar om att äta smartare. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för miljön och klimatet. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för djuren. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för dig själv. Det handlar om att välja kött som är bra för världen.
2018	Konkret: Lästidningen: Så kan miljöpartiet av vänt	4	51, 6	11	4	4	31	1	1. Öppna samtal om på väg att bli tydligare. Ett sådant tecken är att SNS inleder på den köttfria trenden och under två veckor serverar vegetariska måltider på restauranger. 2. Vegetariska måltider på restauranger. 3. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 4. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Så ska miljöpartiet av vänt	3	51, 91	3	4	4	1	1	4. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 5. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Löjan: Så kan miljöpartiet av vänt	4	71, 84	1	3	522, 29, 33	4	4	1. Sådan som miljöpartiet av vänt. 2. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 3. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Mer om miljöpartiet av vänt	1	51, 71	8	2	524	2	2	3. Det handlar om att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 4. Det handlar om att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Mer om miljöpartiet av vänt	4	51	11	4	4	1	1	4. Det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 5. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Mer om miljöpartiet av vänt	1	51, 71	13	2	35	6	6	2. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 3. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Mer om miljöpartiet av vänt	3	71, 8	9	3	36	4	4	1. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 2. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Mer om miljöpartiet av vänt	8	51, 8, 71, 8	1	2	21	6	6	3. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 4. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.
2018	Mer om miljöpartiet av vänt	1	51	9	34	37	1	1	3. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter. 4. Att det är viktigt att tänka på miljön och klimatet när man väljer vad man äter.

Figure 16