

Cream of the crop?

A study of consumers in the alternative food network REKO in Oslo and sustainable transitions in the Norwegian food system



Master thesis in Development, Environment and
Cultural Change

Centre for Development and the Environment

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

August 2020

© Nora May Engeseth

August 2020

Cream of the crop? A study of consumers in the alternative food network REKO in Oslo and sustainable transitions in the Norwegian food system

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Trykk: Representeren, Universitetet i Oslo

To Bodil and Arne

For everything you were and continue to be,
for the laughter,
the moments of pure joy,
and endless love.

Thank you.

Abstract

In a food system hungry for change, every bite of food matters. Locked in a global system of unsustainable production, processing, distribution and disposal, current food consumption practices of Norwegians contribute to environmental degradation, climate change and social injustices. In response to these issues, a growing number of alternative food networks seek to transform unsustainable processes of food provisioning, simultaneously negotiating what good food is and should be. However, these initiatives raise questions about the potential of niche food systems to bring about change. Untangling the complex connections of the Norwegian food system extend beyond the scope of individual behaviour change or government awareness-raising.

This thesis analyses the sustainability transition challenges of the Norwegian food system. I apply a mixed methods approach to examine the engagement of consumers in two REKO rings of the alternative food network REKO in Oslo. REKO is a network that uses an online platform to facilitate local and direct trade between consumers and producers. Drawing on social practice theory and the multi-level perspective, the complex entanglements of the Norwegian food system were revealed. The analysis showed that REKO consumption is a niche activity *within* routinised everyday life food consumption. The *lock-in mechanisms* of the current food system make it likely that alternative food networks like REKO will remain in the margins of industrialised food supply chains. I argue that the momentum of *niches* and *landscape-level* pressures need to intersect with changes in food practices for there to be a chance of *reconfiguring* the unsustainable, oligopolistic food provisioning *regimes* of the Norwegian and global food system. Moreover, the findings showed that there is an opportunity to reframe and make the REKO network easier to use. Doing so may offer alternative ways of doing food to reconfigure unsustainable consumption practices at the level of niche innovations, if not of the food system.

Keywords: alternative food networks, sustainable consumption, social practice theory, multi-level perspective, REKO, food system, transitions, Oslo

Acknowledgements

On the 12th of March, Norway went into lockdown. Having experienced a rapid increase in confirmed cases of individuals contracting COVID-19, society, including the university, was shut down. In a few hours, life went from a bliss of normality to a chaotic state of what felt like eternal Sundays, except suddenly hugging your closed ones were frowned upon.

So, first and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to those who made writing a thesis during a global pandemic possible. Without you, this would not be possible. To my beloved classmates, who since our cabin trip during the first few weeks of our two-year degree have been both colleagues and friends – thank you.

I would like to express my gratitude to my interviewees, who took the time to share their insights and answer my questions with openness. A special thanks to my supervisor Arve Hansen. This thesis would not have been the same without your support, knowledge and inspiring words, and I am truly grateful for the supervision you have given me. And to Anne-Line and Gudrun, who with their continuous support, encouragement and joy have made life at SUM a bliss. I would also like to thank the thesis workshop group led by Kristian Bjørkdahl and the consumption research group at SUM, for taking the time to provide helpful feedback. Furthermore, I would like to extend my gratitude to Telemarksforsking and Include.

A million thanks to my friends, family and partner for your encouragement and patience. A special thanks to my mother, Grete, for her helpful feedback and assistance with quantitative methods, and the unconditional support despite herself being in the process of writing a PhD. To my friends, thank you for the endless encouraging words and support, and to Elena, Elise and Jenny, for being there when times were tough. To Bea Russell, Kylie Wrigley and Clara Reich – thank you for the love and support, and for taking the time to proofread, make edits and offer valuable feedback. Finally, a million thanks to my partner in crime, Vegard. Without your patience, encouragement and endless stream of hugs, this thesis would have been a lot harder to accomplish.

List of Acronyms

AFN	Alternative Food Networks
BM	Bondens Marked (Norwegian farmers' markets organisation)
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FM	Farmers' Markets
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GMO	Genetically Modified Foods
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MLP	Multi-level Perspective
NBS	Norsk Bonde og Småbrukarlag (Norwegian Farmers' and Smallholders' Association)
REKO	RE jäl KO nsumption (Fair Consumption)
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chains
SPT	Social Practice Theory
TNC	Transnational Corporation
WTO	World Trade Organization

Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1 Number of people in the household of consumers in REKO Oslo (n=269)

Table 2 Percentage of consumers in REKO Oslo (n=203) making sustainable food choices at home

Table 3 Motivations to participate in REKO Oslo

Table 4 Barriers to participation in REKO Oslo

Figures

Figure 1 Combining MLP and SPT (based on Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013, adapted from Shove 2003, 193)

Figure 2 Gender of participants in REKO divided by active consumers (n=203) and dormant consumers (n=66) in REKO Oslo, and consumers in REKO nationally (n=1534)

Figure 3 Age groups of participating (n=203) and dormant consumers (n=66) in REKO Oslo

Figure 4 Frequency of purchase in REKO Oslo by consumers (n=203)

Figure 5 Average of weekly household food consumption purchased through REKO (n=203)

Figure 6 Overview of products normally purchased by each respondent in REKO (n=203), in each product category, multiple answers

Figure 7 Highest obtained level of education amongst consumers in REKO Oslo

Figure 8 Percentage of the population with higher education. Data on education levels of the Norwegian and Oslo general population from the Norwegian Statistical Bureau (SSB 2019).

Figure 9 Perception of sustainable choices and options by consumers in REKO Oslo (n=269)

Figure 10 Perceptions on sustainable options and choices by active (n=203) and dormant (n=66) consumers in REKO Oslo

Figure 11 Relationship between sustainable food habits at home and purchasing organic and local food amongst active consumers in REKO Oslo (n=203)

Figure 12 Frequency of consuming low-emission food amongst participants in REKO Oslo (n=269)

Figure 13 Frequency of sustainable behaviours of energy consumption and transport amongst consumers in REKO Oslo (n=269)

Figure 14 Frequency of regulating energy consumption through different practices at home for REKO participants (n=269)

Figure 15 Frequency of regular sustainable commuting amongst REKO participants (n=269)

Figure 16 Frequency of regulating energy amongst dormant (n=66) and active (n=203) consumers in REKO Oslo

Figure 17 Frequency of sustainable commuting amongst dormant (n=66) and active (n=203) consumers in REKO Oslo

Figure 18 Ecological sustainability as a reason for consumer participation in REKO Oslo (n=203)

Figure 19 Access as a reason for consumer participation in REKO Oslo (n=203)

Figure 20 Agency and support as a reason for consumer participation in REKO Oslo (n=203)

Figure 21 Origin of the majority of purchased food in the household by active consumers (n=203) in REKO Oslo

Table of contents

Abstract	V
Acknowledgements	VI
List of Acronyms.....	VII
Tables and Figures	VIII
Table of contents	X
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	2
1.2 Rationale, scope and key questions	7
1.2.1 Research questions	8
1.3 Outline	9
2 “Growing food, knowing food”: agriculture and food consumption in Norway and beyond	10
2.1 Norwegian agriculture: a contextual framework	10
2.2 The Norwegian Foodscape and Supermarket regime.....	12
2.2.1 The Norwegian consumer	13
2.3 Alternative food networks: doing food differently?	14
2.3.1 Theoretical perspectives in AFN literature	18
2.4 From farm to table: growing an alternative food community	21
2.4.1 To Jakobstad and beyond: REKO in Norway	21
2.4.2 The case study: REKO Oslo.....	24
3 Theoretical framework	27
3.1 Social practice theory	27
3.1.1 The elements of social practice	29
3.1.2 The transition of practice.....	30
3.2 Multi-level perspective	34
3.2.1 Transition pathways	35
3.2.2 Path dependence and the challenge of transition	37
3.3 Bridging the multi-level perspective and social practice theory	38
4 Methodology and research design	41
4.1 Research design	41
4.2 The case study	42

4.3	The mixed method approach	42
4.4	Sampling.....	44
4.5	Online Survey.....	46
4.6	The semi-structured interview.....	47
4.7	Challenges and limitations	49
4.7.1	Positionality	51
4.8	Ethical considerations.....	50
5	Mapping engagement with ‘alternative’ food: REKO Oslo and its consumers.	52
5.1	Presenting participating consumers.....	53
5.2	Patterns of REKO consumption	55
5.3	The socioeconomic status of consumers in REKO	57
5.4	Patterns of sustainable consumption	60
5.4.1	Consuming food.....	62
5.4.2	Sustainable transport and regulating energy	66
5.5	Findings, discussion and limitations	70
6	Sowing the seeds of change: Shifting practice and growing a niche community	73
6.1	Consumer engagements in REKO Oslo	74
6.1.1	Engagement and meaning-making: Making sense of REKO consumption.....	75
6.1.2	Collective agency and communities of practice.....	80
6.1.3	A new way of doing things? The dominating practice of grocery retail shopping.....	86
6.2	Growing a niche and negotiating boundaries: Network practices of inclusion and exclusion.....	88
6.3	Shifting practice and building niche communities:.....	94
6.4	Chapter summary	96
7	From farm to fork or fork to farm? Regime transitions and the challenges of food systems change	98
7.1	A system of complex connections and tangled weeds: Food systems transformation and its challenges.....	99
7.1	Resistance at play: barriers to REKO participation.....	105
7.1.1	Cost and affordability.....	106
7.1.2	Convenience, availability and accessibility	108

7.2	Growing in a garden of tangled weeds: Opportunities for reconfiguration in the Norwegian food system.....	111
7.2.1	Regime technologies and niche innovation: Reimagining materials and reframing competences for alternative consumption	112
7.3	Chapter summary and closing remarks	114
8	Conclusion.....	116
8.1	Research summary and findings	117
8.1	Research implications and directions for future research.....	121
	Bibliography.....	123
	Appendix 1 Overview interview participants.....	137
	Appendix 2 Sample interview guide	138
	Appendix 3 Survey consumers.....	140
	Appendix 4 Information and consent form, interviews.....	148
	Appendix 5 Information and consent, survey	150

1 Introduction

To meet the demands of feeding a growing population while staying within planetary boundaries (Steffen et al. 2015), moving towards a food system wherein the social and environmental dimensions of production and consumption are considered, is crucial. The global food system is a complex network of activities involving the production, processing, trade, distribution, consumption and disposal of food. Climate change, drought and flooding have dramatic consequences for agricultural practice globally, and the economic, environmental and social consequences of these events have repercussions beyond the crop or individual farmer (Sternberg 2012). On a global scale, food is responsible for between 22-37 per cent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, contributing to climate change and the increase of extreme weather events, as well as resource depletion and degradation of soil, land and water through production processes (Klimakur 2030, 2012). Similarly, the availability and access to food or rather, lack thereof, have consequences extending beyond borders, leading to market disruptions, rising global inequality, hunger, malnutrition, obesity, increased migration and conflict (Thompson et al. 2012; Veninga and Ihle 2018; Sadiddin 2019).

Recognising the problems of the way we do food today, a growing body of initiatives attempt to challenge and transform the current food system (Goodman and DuPuis 2002; Sage 2003; Michel-Villarreal et al. 2019). Alternative food networks (AFN)¹ seek to ‘re-spatialize and re-socialize’ (see Jarosz 2008) the production, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food. Through a myriad of activities; from transforming production to a community practice of influencing how households dispose of food waste, AFNs seek to build sustainable practices of food provisioning for people and the planet (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). According to geographer Lucy Jarosz (2008), alternative food initiatives “emerge from political, cultural and historical processes” (231), and as such, are not ‘objects’ or ‘things’ to be described, but a process of negotiating *what food is* and *what food should be*.

Founded from a disdain towards the current food system and its challenges for “alternative” farmers, and inspired by the French AMAP model *association pour le maintien d'une agriculture de proximité* (association for the maintenance of local

¹ Define what is meant by a network here.

agriculture), farmer Thomas Snellman founded REKO in Finland in 2013. “REjäl KOnsumtion” or its English translation, ‘fair consumption’, operates on a set of principles around how food should be produced and distributed, favouring direct trade and interaction between producer and consumer. It is a distribution model for food and foodstuffs engaging consumers with local producers and farmers, with 100 per cent of the profits from sales going directly to the producer (Bond 2019). Since its creation, this grassroots initiative has grown into a transnational movement connecting its participants at a local level. The first Norwegian REKO network was established in 2017, and since then it has grown to encompass over 80 local chapters, including more than 700 producers and 350,000 consumers at the time of writing.²

Current research about AFNs raises questions about whom alternative food networks are for, why consumers engage, how their participation influence sustainable transitions, and why the shift towards a sustainable food system is challenging (Watts, Ilbery and Maye 2005; Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). There is an ongoing debate concerned with “the extent to which AFNs facilitate social, economic and environmental change” (Michel-Villarreal et al. 2019, 1). Although most AFNs are founded on *values and principles* of sustainability³ and social embeddedness, Wilson (2012, 722) notes that it is ‘becoming increasingly difficult’ to distinguish so-called alternatives with ‘mainstream or conventional agro-food networks’. Indeed, the numerous academic works on AFNs demonstrate the limitations of these alternatives in contributing to long-lasting and impactful sustainable transitions of the food system. As such, there is a need for research that investigates how these AFNs attempt to challenge the conventional food system and why these attempts are futile.

1.1 Background

Why is the current food system problematic?

Food is essential to human survival, and next to water, it is arguably the most influential commodity throughout history. It is the basis of all that we are and all that we do. According to Tansley and Worsley (1995: 2), “[t]he food system reflects the

² Data from REKO administrators shared on Facebook: “REKO-ringen Norge”

³ Sustainability throughout this thesis considers all three dimensions as important, and thus as considers ecological, economical and social sustainability.

prevailing social and economic influences around the world and is a system largely developed, run and promoted worldwide by economic institutions in the rich and powerful industrial nations.” This prevailing system driving demand is rooted in neoliberal ideology and policy; it has been argued to favour overconsumption, mass-production and economic growth, which has resulted in environmentally hostile production processes and environmental degradation (Reinert 2007; Mares and Alkon 2011; Parr 2013; Holt-Giménez 2017; Otero et al. 2018). Indeed, as Bernstein argues: “hunger and its distribution – who goes hungry, where and why – is an effect of the extreme inequality of income distribution in contemporary capitalism (that is, of class relations), as well as of volatility in the prices of staple foods” (Bernstein 2016, 628).

As humans developed from small groups of hunter-gatherers to large societies built on agriculture, food became more sophisticated, and society has advanced to secure food for its people. Since then, food has been at the forefront of multiple conflicts and wars: From the French Revolution, Boston Tea Party, the Salt Wars, and the Cod Wars on fishing rights between Iceland and the UK, to the use of tactical famine to control an enemy, as with the Siege of Leningrad during the Second World War. The contemporary global trade system can be argued to have its roots in the distribution and access to food, as food security expanded to encompass the global supply of food, rather than food as an issue of national security (Clapp 2015, 3). As a commodity, it has been used to control and dominate states and peoples throughout history and still does to this day. For example, a driving cause of colonialism was access to cheap produce, labour and new export markets, which led to the exploitation and domination of African nations, and the abuse and deaths of hundreds of thousands of people at the hands of Western states. Indeed, as Clark asserts: “Food marks ideological moments: eating is a cauldron for the domination of states, races, genders, ideologies, and the practice through which these discourses are resisted” (Clark 2004, 19).

However, the problematic features of the global food system are not issues of merely historical character nor concern. Today, the production of food has led to land grabbing by international corporations at the expense of the rights of indigenous peoples (Bernstein 2010; McMichael 2013), and increased criminal activity and conflict (O’Reilly 2018; Dehghan 2019), driving people away from their homes and thus increasing global migration (Stapleton et al. 2017). The exploitation of labour in the food sector continues to persist, with workers involved in the production and

processing of food around the world working in slave-like conditions (Meldrum-Hanna and Russell 2015). Furthermore, the unsustainability of the food system has gained increasing attention in the past years with regards to social, economic and ecological aspects. The food sector is responsible for significant GHG emissions worldwide from the production, processing, and distribution, to the consumption and disposal of food. The use of chemicals in agriculture has global repercussions, including the death of bees and degradation of soil, waters and human life (Ongley 1996). Indeed, the ecological footprint of the food system extends beyond its counted emissions, to the destruction of environment and nature (FAO 2011; Bar-On, Phillips and Milo 2018; Poore and Nemecek 2018).

Current consumption practices contribute to unsustainable processes of production, distribution, consumption and disposal at the expense of both people and planet (Poore and Nemecek 2018; Béné et al. 2019b). For instance, to keep the millions of livestock that feed the growing demand for affordable meat amongst the global middle-class, developing countries, particularly in South America, export maize, wheat and soy (Jakobsen and Hansen 2019). The production of soy in South America, where three-quarters of total production goes towards livestock feed, leads to emission of greenhouse gases, deforestation, environmental pollution, loss of irreplaceable species, and bloody conflicts (Regnskogfondet n.a.). 10 per cent of Norwegian livestock feed is made of soy imported from Brazil, the Netherlands, the US and Canada (Lundeberg 2018), thus making Norwegian meat consumption a contributing factor to ecological destruction elsewhere. Moreover, the global “neoliberal diet” extends beyond the sphere of production. Global hunger, affecting 690 million people, exists alongside issues of malnutrition and obesity, both of which are linked to limited access to healthy and affordable foods (Otero et al. 2018). Insufficient eating is tied to social exclusion, poverty and inequality (Ibid.), demonstrating the vast consequences of the contemporary global food system.

Why study sustainable food consumption in Oslo, Norway?

Over half the world’s population reside in cities, a number expected to rise to 60 per cent by 2030 (United Nations 2019). Accounting for more than 70 per cent of global emissions, urban settlements and increasing urbanisation drive environmental degradation and unsustainable consumption (United Nations 2019), with increasing

urban meat consumption by the growing middle-class or continued international imports to feed the residents being examples of this. In fact, three-quarters of resources depleted annually are consumed by those living in urban areas (Vojnovic 2014). Additionally, urbanisation and urban wealth accumulation drive rural depopulation, reduce the agricultural labour force and increase the number of food consumers in cities; problematic as cities generally do not produce the food they consume themselves and thus are reliant on local rural food, or imported food. As such, urbanisation is an important, albeit unintended, driver of a food system's change (Béné et al. 2019a).

As the capital of Norway, Oslo is an important centre for food consumption. Over 600,000 people reside in the city, making up 12 per cent of the Norwegian population (SSBa n.d, retrieved 2020). In 2018, the city had 378 grocery stores with a turnover of 182 million NOK (Dagligvarefasiten 2019). In recent years, the city has seen an increase in sustainable food initiatives, such as the farmers' market, the CSA box scheme Oslo Kooperativet, and independent food shops focusing on organic and sustainable foods. The initiatives aim to make sustainable, local and seasonal produce readily available for the population. Moreover, many local grassroots initiatives like Nabolagshager; parcel gardens; Gruuten, a mushroom growing business utilising the city's coffee ground waste; and multiple food businesses focusing on increasing employment of minority groups, have appeared in recent years. These developments exemplify the shift towards food as a tool of sustainable development in Oslo and the concern for the moral and ethical underpinnings of the food system. Indeed, AFNs, although oftentimes built on principles of sustainable food production and *rural* development, also often originate in urban spaces and contexts, where "non-agricultural populations are increasingly redefining rural space in terms of opportunities for consumption" (Lockie and Kitto 2000).

Until recently, the Norwegian food system was recognised as unique for its political consensus around the management of food production and a protectionist market that preserves national agricultural and fishery products (Bjørkhaug, Almås and Vik 2015). In the past few years, this has changed. The number of farms with active production has decreased from 47,688 in 2009 to 38,938 in 2019 (SSBb, n.d, accessed 2020). Nevertheless, the volume of production has remained stable in the same period, and the reported Norwegian self-sufficiency rate has remained at between 40-50 per cent

since the 1960s. With a decreasing number of farms in production and a self-sufficiency rate at this level, imports remain a central part of the Norwegian food system, with Norwegian food consumption, therefore, having repercussions extending beyond its borders.

Recognising the consequences of the global dynamics of the food system, both on Norwegian imports and by extension, the food market, as a driver of global inequality, hunger and malnutrition, the Norwegian government put forth an action plan on sustainable food systems in 2019. The action plan highlighted Norway's responsibility for ensuring the transition towards a new food system that safeguards people, ensuring the availability of food for all, and the environment (Regjeringen 2019b). The government has stated that "the action plan means that we will strengthen the efforts for increased sustainable food production, good nutrition, job and value creation as well as capacity building and good governance" (Regjeringen 2019b, 5, translated)⁴.

However, despite the stated intentions, both the report and the government have received criticisms regarding actions taken within Norway on agriculture. Recently proposed measures have the potential to result in the reduction of 5000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the agricultural industry by 2030, predominantly affecting farmers with small to medium production (Klimakur 2030 2020, 211). This reduction, although motivated by reducing emissions, is another measure marked by centralisation trends and policy by the government in recent years (Thorgrimsen 2014). Indeed, in recent years, depopulation in the district and rural areas has been an issue, with the out-migration of young people potentially leading to a lack of farmers and others working in the food industry in the future (Leknes et al. 2018). Although a result of Norwegian policy, this goes against two of the four overarching goals for Norwegian agriculture; food security as well as agriculture across the country (Regjeringen 2019).

⁴ All translations by Nora May Engeseth, unless otherwise noted.

1.2 Rationale, scope and key questions

Transforming the food system in the face of climate change, urbanisation, unsustainable food provisioning and rising global inequality is urgent, and increasing attention is given to alternatives attempting to do so. A growing number of alternative food networks (AFN) connect people concerned with the ethics of consumption and food production, with farmers and producers who want a fair price for their products or who wishes to produce food in a way that somehow differs from standard market practices (Maye and Kirwan 2010). These networks establish relationships between producers and consumers characterised by direct trade, and as a result, these initiatives are often regarded as being an ‘alternative’ to the ‘conventional’ food system.

In this thesis, I seek to turn an analytical lens towards the practices, landscape pressures, regimes and niche innovations that reproduce and reconfigure the Norwegian food system. The purpose of this thesis is to explore how consumers are recruited to the communities of alternative food networks and interact with agents and structures of food within the Norwegian food system and supply chain. Thus, I aim to demonstrate the barriers niche food initiatives and their consumers encounter in the food system and the challenges of sustainable transition in Norway.

This is done by exploring the alternative food network REKO in Oslo, Norway. REKO is a network for local direct trade between consumers and producers using Facebook as an online platform for interaction. As such, it creates new pathways for the consumption and distribution of food, thus raising questions concerning the potential of digital networks in facilitating sustainable consumption and alternative food networks. Moreover, it has grown significantly since the first ring was created in Norway and in Oslo, engaging thousands of consumers and producers across the country. Considering the number of members (consumers and producers) the network engage across the entire country, the network is arguably the “most successful” alternative food network in Norway. In light of issues such as climate change, access to sustainable, nutritious and affordable foods, and the effects of agriculture on environment and nature, the attention is given to sustainable consumption, the power of grocery retailers, and the role of niche food networks as done in this thesis, making this research a timely and interesting topic.

1.2.1 Research questions

This thesis places itself in the discussion about transitions to a sustainable food system, with a special emphasis on the role of sustainable consumption and alternative food networks. By examining how consumers in REKO Oslo describe and legitimise their experience of participating in the network, I investigate how such initiatives contribute to reshaping what and how we think about food, and how such initiatives work to transform the Norwegian food system. This thesis asks the following questions and sub-questions:

- I. Who is REKO Oslo for and why do participants engage?
- II. Why are sustainable transformations in the Norwegian food system challenging to bring about?

To explore these questions, this study takes a dual approach in framing the theory, combining social practice theory and the multi-level perspective. By enriching social practice theory with the viewpoints of the multi-level perspective, the aim is to contribute to the discussion about what AFNs are, for whom they exist and to what extent their existence *challenge* structures in the food system *or merely reproduce them*. To further illuminate the issues, the following sub-questions are addressed:

- i. *Who are the consumers in REKO Oslo? What role do socioeconomic factors play for participation in an urban AFN, and is there a relationship between participation in REKO and other patterns of sustainable consumption?*
- ii. *How does REKO Oslo explain and negotiate its boundaries for participation and by extension what the network is not (and whom it is not for)?*
- iii. *What are the barriers to consumption in REKO Oslo? In what ways does REKO challenge the Norwegian food system, and how can REKO consumption aid our understanding of why Norwegian food systems transformation is challenging?*

1.3 Outline

The thesis is organised as follows: Chapter 2 provides necessary background information about the agriculture, consumption and the structures of grocery retailing in Norway, as well as a brief discussion about alternative food networks and the emergence of REKO. Chapter 3 elucidates the two theoretical frameworks that are used throughout this thesis to analyse and explain the emergence of REKO consumers and the challenges of sustainable food systems transformation. Chapter 4 discusses the chosen methods and methodology, reflecting upon the limitations and ethical considerations of this thesis. In chapter 5, the findings from the quantitative survey are presented and analysed. Through a mapping of consumer engagement with the network, I seek to offer a backdrop from which further analysis can take place. In chapter 6, I turn towards the becoming of a REKO consumer, building on the findings from the previous chapter and illuminating these with the data from my interviews, to answer the first research question of this thesis. Chapter 7 returns to the question of food systems transformation and explores the barriers, opportunities, potentials and challenges for transforming the Norwegian food system. The chapter ends with a brief discussion on the way forward for food consumption (and production) in Norway. Finally, chapter 8 concludes and brings together the aforementioned research in a summary of the most important findings. After this, I return to answer the main questions of this thesis. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the potential pitfalls of current approaches to alternative food provision, and what REKO, politicians and others must consider in the transition towards a more sustainable food system. Finally, I identify key issues in need of further research.

2 “Growing food, knowing food”: agriculture and food consumption in Norway and beyond

2.1 Norwegian agriculture: a contextual framework

Situated in the Northern hemisphere with long, cold winters and short summers, doing agriculture in Norway requires a specific set of skills and knowledge, perseverance and determination. Characterised by grasslands, fjords and a mountainous landscape, agriculture accounts for about 0.5 per cent of GDP (2015), with only 3.5 per cent of the land being arable (SSB 2016; 2020). Of this, only 2.9 per cent is fully cultivated land. Also, large land areas in both inland and upland areas that can be, and are, used as pastures, particularly in the summer. In comparison, forests account for 37.4 per cent of total land area, while only 1.7 per cent is built land (SSB 2019). In 2018, 184,000 agricultural properties existed in Norway, with just over 39,600 of these being farms (Klimakur 2030, 2020: 173).

Traditionally characterised by small to medium scale family farming, Norwegian agriculture has experienced a shift towards industrialisation in recent years. In the past 10 years, the number of farms with active production has decreased by 18.3 per cent, from 47,688 in 2009 to 38,938 in 2019 (SSB, n.d). The volume of production, on the other hand, has remained stable in the same period, while the average individual farmland area has expanded by 40 acres since 2009.

Moreover, the Norwegian self-sufficiency rate⁵ has persisted at between 40-50 per cent since the 1970s (Regjeringen 2017, 18). Indeed, only one-third of agricultural operations take place on land owned by the farmer, and the number of agricultural properties transfers *outside* the family increased from 29 per cent in 2009 to 33 per cent in 2019 (Bye and Steinset 2019). Instead, many farmers rent land from their neighbours, relatives or people who have moved from the district to urban areas but keep ownership of the family farm and appurtenant lands. The overall production of agricultural products has nevertheless persisted, despite the number of farms with

⁵ The *self-sufficiency rate* is defined as how much of the food we consume, measured in energy, which is produced in Norway. It can be distinguished from *the coverage rate*, which is total Norwegian production (incl. exports) relative to total Norwegian consumption.

active production having decreased, suggesting a shift towards larger, more industrialised forms of production.

In contemporary Norwegian agriculture, few people generally subsist on income from farming. In a bi-annual survey of farmers in Norway, the majority of respondents reported earning less than 25 per cent of total household income from farming, with most having another profession on the side, many within the agricultural sector or similar industries (Zahl-Thanem, Fuglestad and Vik 2018, 22). In 2019, only 12 per cent of Norwegian farmers met the criterion for full-time food production, the defining feature being that 90 per cent of income must originate from farming, while only 10 per cent can come from other activities (SSB n.d). In 2018, the average business income from farming was 199,900 NOK, while the average income from other activities such as other businesses, pensions, income from capital, and salary from other professions⁶, constituted the remaining income. In comparison, the average salary of a trained nurse is 548,160 NOK, while a full-time grocery store worker has an average annual salary of 400-416,760 NOK (SSB n.d).

It should be considered however, that the income from farming is not necessarily representative of the actual (hours of) work put in. For instance, farmers are typically paid (by wholesalers etc.) per litre or kg of product delivered, and this price does not necessarily reflect the hours spent collecting the produce. Moreover, the majority of farms in Norway are so-called family farms. Family farming is a way of organising agriculture, where the farmer is predominantly dependent on family members for managing and operating production. Globally, FAO estimates that small-scale *family-run* farms contribute 70 per cent of food production. In a Norwegian context, Zahl-Thanem, Fuglestad and Vik (2018) found that amongst farmers, the majority reported being dependent on their partner or children for the daily operations of the farm, with many noting a substantial number of hours contributed by close family. Indeed, the family farm is a strong tradition in Norway, with 60 per cent of farmers believing that either a family member or relative will take over operations after they are themselves unable to be in charge (Zahl-Thanem, Fuglestad and Vik 2018, 30).

⁶ Average salary from other professions was in 2019 285 900 NOK (SSB).

2.2 The Norwegian Foodscape and Supermarket regime

To understand recent rural developments, we must first take a step back and observe the Norwegian food chain as a network of interconnected activities, actors and structures. In Norway, three corporate food retailers dominate the grocery and wholesale market, having a near monopoly in 2018 with a combined market share of 96.2 per cent (Dagligvarefasiten 2019). As a dominating feature of the Norwegian *foodscape* (see Johnston, Biro and MacKendrick 2009), both for the grocery and restaurant sector, the relationship between agriculture and dominating corporate retailers is pertinent. With the rise of corporate food retailers in the 80s, the grocery sector has gradually gained more control, and now takes the majority of the food sector's financial dividends, despite the bargaining power of agricultural co-operatives (Bjørkhaug, Almås and Vik 2015). Olsen refers to this as the “supermarket revolution” (a term recognised and used globally) and points out that this shift has occurred despite strong import protection and “an agricultural policy management regime that still provides central market regulatory roles for agricultural co-operatives” (Olsen 2010, 8). Indeed, as Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman (2012) points out:

“[s]upermarkets have gained more direct control over the supply chain by reducing their reliance on the arm's-length transactions of spot markets and wholesale brokerage and distribution networks in favor of more centralized coordination involving direct contracts and close working relationships with lead suppliers and other members of the chain” (88).

According to Olsen (2010), this supermarket revolution is a direct result of global economic development. Alongside globalisation and technological developments in the post-war era, the institutionalisation of market liberalism and capital in the global economy created the foundations for new ways of trading and existing within and across borders, resulting in the transition of food to a system characterised by transnational corporations, monocrops, and supermarkets (Ibid). As a result, the Norwegian food system exists within a global “socioeconomic framework built around price, standardisation, simplicity and speed” (Amilien 2011, 103). The interconnected structures of global order within the food sector have a strong foothold, and their power has, in the past decades, increasingly influenced agricultural development and food provisioning in Norway (Olsen 2010; Almås et al. 2013).

For most of the 20th Century, product-oriented agricultural politics concerned with the access to and distribution of enough food at an affordable rate, dominated European food markets (Olsen 2010). Overall, little controversy and minor conflict around access to, and the safety and security of, food existed. In the 1980s, however, partially driven by policies of economic liberalisations within the EU and the global markets, increasing attention was given to ‘the consumer’ (Ibid). Today, “perceptions of food as problematic” are highly influenced by the consumer and *consumer choice*, and “the interests of ‘the consumer’ [has] found a place in the discourse of the food system” (Kjærnes et al. 2007, 10).

2.2.1 The Norwegian consumer

The average Norwegian consumes 5 kilograms of frozen pizza per year (Holmberg 2019). The appreciation for foods like minced meat, sausages and plain cheese, as well as the love for frozen pizza, is not unsurprising according to Kjærnes (2016). As she notes, our expectations and practices relating to food have gradually adapted, and food products have evolved to match. As women entered the workforce in the 1960s and 70s, which resulted in less time for preparing meals but greater purchasing power, corporate retailers developed products that responded to the changing everyday lives of people. Corresponding to Norwegian values of frugality and social homogeneity, the new industrial food was easy to prepare and reasonably priced (Kjærnes 2016). Today, only one-quarter of Norwegians plan their food purchasing (Klimakur 2030, 2020, 198). Norwegian purchasing behaviour is generally price-oriented (irrespective of class or income-bracket). Despite having the highest price-level of food and drinks in Europe at 63 per cent above average⁷ (SSB 2019), Norwegians only spend 11 per cent of their total household income on food. In comparison, the average household expenditure on food and drinks in Europe was 18 per cent in the same period (SSB 2019). Unexpectedly then, low-cost grocery retailers have a market share of 66.5 per cent (Dagligvarefasiten 2019). Indeed, cost and ease persist as markers of quality in a Norwegian context (see Hegnes and Gustavsen 2019), with far less emphasis on quality and origin (Amilien 2011).

⁷ Of the 28 EU countries including the UK.

2.3 Alternative food networks: doing food differently?

Since the 1990s, a growing body of social science research – particularly within the fields of human geography, sociology, agro-food studies and anthropology – have been dedicated to examining so-called alternative food networks (AFN⁸) (Whatmore, Stassart and Renting 2003; Holloway et al. 2010; Maye and Kirwan 2010; Goodman et al. 2012). Alternative food networks are “rooted in particular places” and in 1997, Feenstra defined these as initiatives aiming “to be economically viable for farmers and consumers, use ecologically sound production and distribution practices, and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community” (28). These initiatives, such as community-supported agriculture (CSA), farmers’ markets (FM), and organic box schemes, are characterised by a commitment to sustainability and ethical consumption, shorter distances between producer and consumer (both in terms of physical distance to food, and a connection to place), and encouragement of trust and ‘embedded relationships’ (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Sage 2007; Blumberg et al. 2020). Feenstra (1997) argues that AFNs have the potential of benefitting the members of the community in a multitude of ways connected to social equity and democracy. Indeed, multiple studies have found that AFNs configure and re-establish relations between consumers and producers, often leading to embedded relationships based on respect, trust and a shared commitment to a set of principles of food provisioning (Holloway and Kneafsey 2000; Sage 2007). Moreover, AFNs may improve local community relations (Winter 2003) and encourage democratic participation in food provisioning activities (Goodman and DuPuis 2002; Hinrichs 2003; Goodman 2004).

In recent years, several bottom-up grassroots food initiatives (grassroots innovation), have appeared throughout Europe and North America in the past few decades (Goodman et al. 2012). Grassroots innovation refers to solutions to sustainability led by communities, rather than governments or corporations. They are bottom-up approaches to ecological, social and economic issues wherein the local population are involved with devising the most suitable and beneficial solution for every member of the local community. Seyfang and Smith define grassroots as “innovative networks of activists and organizations that lead bottom-up solutions for sustainable development;

⁸ Several related terms and acronyms to AFN exist: local food systems (LSF), short food supply chain (SFC or SFSC), alternative agro-food networks (AAFN) and alternative food initiatives (AFI). For clarity and consistency, AFN will be used throughout this thesis.

solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the communities involved” (2007, 585). In other words, the actors and beneficiaries of grassroots innovation are local communities.

Placing grassroots innovation as activity in “contrast to mainstream business greening”, Seyfang and Smith argue that grassroots forming “niche practices on the margins” historically have played an important role in challenging so-called socio-technical regimes of technological processes that “lock us into trajectories and lock out sustainable alternatives” (Seyfang and Smith 2007, 588). In other words, grassroots innovations provide space for new ideas and practices to “develop without full exposure to the range of processes channelling regime development” (Ibid, 588). As a result, grassroots innovation has the potential to redefine food relationships by incorporating shared values into practices of food provisioning and consumption, and thus re-imagining the organisation of territorial resources and re-embedding economic activity into the social sphere (Rossi 2017). According to Rossi, we thus go beyond the concept of food sovereignty⁹, to a “form of *food citizenship* built and shared collectively, to a new social pact encompassing rights and responsibilities” (Rossi 2007, 17, added emphasis), a ‘vision’ extending beyond mainstream ideas about localisation, sustainability, democracy, and transition within and of the food system.

While grassroots innovations are characterised as bottom-up community initiatives, AFNs can, at the core, be identified as initiatives of food distribution or the constitution of new food relationships (albeit their primary concern being production and consumption), and does not necessarily need to be community-driven. Grassroots innovation and AFNs are not mutually exclusive, and as such, an alternative food initiative can be both. For example, REKO is both a grassroots movement of food provisioning in local communities *and* it is a network facilitating direct trade between producers and consumers.

According to Murdoch, Marsden and Banks (2000), the wide-spread emergence of AFNs can be attributed to the industrialisation of the food system, or rather, the issues that consumers associate with it. As a way of opposing conventional and mainstream food production and provisioning, many consumers become conscious of their food

⁹ “Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (La Via Campesina)

choices and the impact of their actions on the overall system, resulting in an attempt to change their patterns of consumption. As a result, consumers decide to participate in one or multiple AFNs (Murdoch, Marsden and Banks 2000; Maye and Kirwan 2010).

Consequently, AFNs are often conceptualised as ‘alternatives’ to the conventional, industrialised system of food provisioning, challenging a structure considered to be less ethical and sustainable than what these alternatives provide (Michel-Villarreal 2019). The ‘conventional’ food system is here understood as relying on industrialised, mechanised and large-scale monocrop agriculture characterised by long supply chains and the use of fertilisers and pesticides (Beus and Dunlap 1990). Consumers access this food through supermarkets and other corporate retailers, the final level of a ladder of intermediaries producing, processing, distributing, marketing and selling food in the supply chain.

However, this approach to AFNs has received critical attention from several scholars (Allen 2003; Holloway et al. 2007; Follet 2009; Tregear 2011; Wilson 2012; Blumberg et al. 2020). According to Renting et al. (2003), the main difference between the conventional food chain and alternative food networks is that the food reaching the consumer contains certain information and knowledge that mainstream food does not (Venn et al. 2006). Critical approaches to AFN research, therefore, question the ‘alternative’ discourse dominating the field and its creation of a good/bad binary, suggesting that this makes AFNs ‘conceptually problematic’ (Holloway et al. 2007). For instance, Follet (2009) argues that AFNs are a “heterogeneous mix of networks vastly different from one another” (49), and when left at this binary, the discussion remains incomplete. Indeed, food initiatives within both the alternative and conventional frame of reference have their own ability to address economic, social and ecological issues at a different scale, scope and reach, and with different motivations and intentions.

Although AFNs as a concept shed light to the alternative practices and activities that are somewhat different from those occurring within the conventional system, “it does little to advance the discussion of the transformative potential of food to build economic and social spaces beyond capitalism” (Wilson 2012, 719). Indeed, several scholars (Dupuis and Goodman 2005; Guthman 2008) argue that AFNs may reinforce

processes of exclusion and neoliberal subjectivities (Alkon and McCullen 2010; Blumberg et al 2020). Moreover, Holloway et al. (2007) argue that a relational and reactionary definition of the ‘alternative’, as opposed to the ‘conventional’, run the ‘risk of romanticising’ these alternatives “in such a way that they are not subject to the same degree of critical reflection” (4). Instead, the good/bad binary facilitates a totalising and essentialist view of the world, and as a result, the concept of “alternative” becomes near impossible to define (Wilson 2012).

Nevertheless, the conceptual framework of AFNs as *an alternative* and the discourse of *alternativeness* “might be powerful in stimulating challenges to what are *felt* to be, or *experienced* as, unjust economic relations” (Holloway et al. 2007, 5, added emphasis). It is particularly useful in a Norwegian context where three corporate retailers dominate, and have a near-monopoly over the wholesale sector, as demonstrated above. That way, establishing other options for accessing food, like farmers’ markets, community gardens or box schemes with the ability to compete outside the local sphere, become challenging. Although the binary opposition between alternative and conventional does not reflect the reality of food provisioning per se (Wilson 2012), the concept of AFNs remains useful as it embeds the notion that alternative food networks (and initiatives) are a *reaction*. Hence, an assumption by consumers that something is “wrong” with the conventional system generates participation in alternative food networks.

Recognising the lack of clarity and inherent conflicts of the concept of AFNs, I use the definition given by Maye and Kirwan (2010). Here, alternative food networks are understood as organised channels of food provisioning that connect farmers, wanting a fair price for their food or those who produce in a way distinct from conventional agriculture, directly with consumers concerned with the moral and ethical dimensions of their consumption practice, by either removing or limiting intermediaries and through facilitating new markets for trade and sales (Maye and Kirwan 2010). Departing from this definition, some of the theoretical frameworks and discussions must be examined, which have shaped the research on AFNs in recent years.

2.3.1 Theoretical perspectives in AFN literature

Scholars researching AFNs have approached the now extensive literature on alternative food networks and sustainable consumption from a broad variety of theoretical and conceptual positions from different fields. Drawing on three such perspectives – political economy, convention theory and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) – provides a sense of how AFNs have been tackled theoretically, and what understanding and knowledge this has generated. It should be noted that this review is by no means exhaustive, and the purpose is merely to contextualise the analytical decisions later on.

Contemporary AFN research emerged as a reaction to the dominating role of the Marxist economy in traditional approaches to the geography of food and agri-food studies, commonly through commodity systems analysis¹⁰ (Buttel 2008; Friedland 1984; Goodman and DuPuis 2002). Inspired by the Marxian approach, the *political economy* approach to the study of AFNs attributes problems of food to forces of neoliberal politics and capitalist economy (Allen et al. 2003), arguing that the transformative potential of AFNs is impeded by structural processes (Goodman 2004; Bernstein 2010), which result in such movements being “in constant struggle against threatening forces of global capitalism” (Tregear 2011). As such, the primary contribution of AFNs in this regard is to counter capitalist market structures and its consequences (Blumberg et al 2020). For example, the concept of ‘reflexive localism’ (DuPuis and Goodman 2005) acknowledges the local as “a publicly contested site of political-economic struggle, exploitation and accumulation,” but that it is “formed *relationally* as local and external actors constantly maneuver for advantage in the changing spatial division of labor” (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012, 8). In other words, AFNs underpinned by reflexive localism “avoids being hijacked by socio-political elites and economic interests” (Tregear 2011, 420) whilst maintaining a structure as collective agents.

However, not all within political economy agree on the potential of AFNs in doing so. For instance, Watts, Ilbery and Maye (2005) argue that based on their relation to conventional food supply chains (as engaged with or subordinate to), localised and ‘quality-turn’ AFNs are “weaker alternatives of food provision”, as they “emphasize

¹⁰ Also referred to as Commodity Chain Analysis

the foods concerned, not the networks through which they circulate” (30). As a consequence, the products distributed through AFNs remain ‘niche market foods’ incapable of challenging trends of conventional and industrialised agriculture (Ibid). In this way, AFN products are subject to capitalist structures in society regardless, and their capability to challenge the neoliberal regime is strictly limited.

However, this view has been criticised as being too centred on production in its focus. Moreover, Murdoch, Marsden and Banks (2000) suggests that this view fails to consider the networks which have succeeded outside the ‘conventional logic’ of neoliberal market structures. Indeed, according to Wilson (2012), a poststructuralist political economy perspective offers the view of considering AFNs as *autonomous food spaces* “where food is both site and the means for building worlds beyond capitalism” (734). As such, a political economy which drives the discussion beyond alternative versus conventional (Ibid) to recognising how researchers might imagine AFNs (Gibson-Graham 2006), presents a route towards “a politics of possibility in the landscape of contemporary food politics” (Harris 2009).

As a reaction to the neoliberal understandings of AFNs within political economy, cultural theories of AFN research seek to explore the relationships and dynamics of alternative production and consumption, including connecting producers and consumers in the AFN value chain (Kirwan 2004). Following the cultural turn (Murdoch, Marsden and Banks 2000; Buttel 2001), consumers in AFNs, their values, perspectives and practices, and the limitations of consumer agency received significant attention (Slocum 2007; Alkon and McCullen 2011; Zoll et al 2018). One of the major approaches to analysing these connections is Convention Theory (Murdoch, Marsden and Banks 2000; Ponte 2016). Convention Theory originated in France and was later developed by Storper and Salais (1997). It opposes the framework of political economy as it leaves “little theoretical space to discern much deviation from the precepts of ‘capitalist ordering’” (Morgan, Marsden and Murdoch 2006, 17). Instead, Storper and Salais (1997), pose that institutions, values and practices form the basis for economic activity as all production systems are permeated with conventions of “humanly constructed orders of routines, cognitive frameworks, institutions, practices, and objects” (Storper and Salais 1997, 12).

Murdoch, Marsden and Banks (2000) argue that AFNs function and persist as long as consumer needs and producer capabilities are united under conventions of quality and value, which opposes the conventions of the industrialised food system. The relationship between consumers and producers within AFNs is maintained through communicating knowledge about the production process, and product characteristics and qualities as distinguishable from conventional products (Blumberg et al. 2020). Building on this, scholars of convention theory and AFN research identify the multitude of contexts, institutions and practices that either sustain or dissolve AFNs (Renting, Marsden and Banks 2003).

However, according to Blumberg et al. (2020), convention theory is built on an assumption that farmers generate added value through distributing their products in AFNs (Marsden, Banks and Bristow 2002). They argue that the ‘worlds of production’ (Storper and Salais 1997) through which much of conventional theoretical analysis bases itself on, fails to sufficiently acknowledge the economic processes and systems which the producers in AFNs are subject to (Blumberg et al. 2020), such as competition to generate and maximise profits (Guthman 2004). Moreover, convention theory fails to acknowledge the exclusion of consumers in AFNs based on financial means and purchasing power.

The final theoretical framework that will be presented here is Actor-Network Theory (ANT). As a reaction to the disproportionate attention given to human perspectives, ANT emerged to reintroduce agency and non-human actors to AFN research (Whatmore and Thorne 1997). According to ANT, the ‘alternativeness’ of AFNs resides in the ways they “reconfigure networks of human and non-human actants” (Blumberg et al. 2020, 7), problematising the notion that agency *only* resides with people. Instead, the ‘modes of ordering’ (Law 1994) conceptualised in ANT suggests that although conventional networks stretch across all space, it does not necessarily *colonise* all space (Blumberg et al. 2020). Instead, a multitude of networks shaped by various actors (human and non-human) constitute space and influence the continuous processes of the food system, maintaining an equal relationship between consumers and producers in influencing this (Lockie and Kitto 2000).

As with convention theory, ANT has been criticised for failing to explain *why* actors in AFNs have the financial means or capabilities to participate, despite illuminating

the elements required to sustain the relationships within and between such networks (Blumberg et al. 2020). Moreover, in explaining the trajectories of AFNs, these theories focusing on the meso-level interaction of actors and networks in modes of ordering governance may risk oversimplifying causal factors, “not leaving enough room for other explanations to emerge” (Tregear 2011, 421). Of the aforementioned AFNs, the food network REKO will be introduced, before turning to the theoretical positioning that frames the analysis moving forward.

2.4 From farm to table: growing an alternative food community

First, let us take a step back and explore the roots of REKO. Similar to the Norwegian context, as a farmer engaged with organic agriculture, Snellman experienced the challenges of the wholesale grocery sector (Snellman 2017, TEDxReggioEmilia). In Finland in 2013, the number of farms was steadily decreasing. After first encountering the French AMAP model by coincidence in 2012, Snellman brought the framework back to Finland: “When I saw the system to exchange product between producers and consumers, I got overwhelmed of this genius way. So, I thought, *when I return back to Finland, I will like to create something similar*” [Snellman 2017, TEDxReggioEmilia, 2:46 – 3:02].

In January 2013, Snellman and his project group first presented their ideas for a new network at a public meeting. The response was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting what they already knew about the demand for local and organic produce, has been a topic of public discussion sometime earlier. After a more challenging process of acquiring interested producers, the first REKO ring delivery was held on the 6th of June 2013, at Jakobstad in Finland. In 2018, more than 200 REKO rings operated in the country, involving over 4500 producers and 280 000 consumers, representing over 5 per cent of the Finnish population (Ehrnström-Fuentes, Jauho and Jallinoja 2019, 405).

2.4.1 To Jakobstad and beyond: REKO in Norway

Since Snellman and his group started the first REKO ring in Finland in 2013, the network has grown to encompass hundreds of rings in several countries, stretching from REKO Dayboro in Australia, to REKO Tromsø in Norway, and engaging

thousands of consumers and producers across the world. In Norway, REKO gained Robyn*'s attention in 2017 during a project working to “increase local food production in Norway, as well as stimulate better profitability and make consumers aware of the importance of small-scale food production and local processing” (Norsk Bonde- og Småbrukarlag n.d, translated). During a conversation with a farmer, she was made aware of the network that operated in Sweden, which eventually led to a study tour to investigate producers' experiences with the AFN:

“REKO has been a really fun thing to be part of getting started. It was very lucky that we stumbled upon [it] (...) I talk a lot with producers. There was a producer in Eidsvoll who had watched a Youtube video from a Swedish farmer who used REKO (...) I became very curious, so we went on a study trip to Sweden to look at [it] and travel around to the producers. And it was like: “this works”. So, when we went back, we arranged a meeting and invited Thomas Snellman and some administrators who had been central in the start-up there. The ball started to roll there and then, and I have been involved in starting some rings here [since]” [Robyn* 2019].

The first Norwegian REKO ring delivery took place in November 2017 (Bond 2019). Being built on the principle of no cost associated with participation in the network, REKO has been dependent on word-of-mouth and the media to spread awareness of its existence and gain members [Robyn* 2019]. In the two and a half years that REKO has been operating in Norway, the network has grown to over 100 local rings with more than 1000 producers advertising their products to 500,000 Norwegians (post in REKO Norge, 2020; Framtiden i våre hender, 2020). According to Robyn*, much of the rapid popularity of REKO in the past year can be attributed to the networks' establishment in Oslo: “After REKO came to Oslo this summer, the big media houses picked it up. I think all of [them] have written about it. Several food bloggers have also written about it. It's taken it to a new level, because [REKO] relies on good media coverage” [Robyn*, administrator].

REKO Oslo first started in the summer of 2019 at Bygdøy, a peninsula in the western parts of the city. Characterised by forests, green parks with rich biodiversity and agriculture alongside residential areas, one could assume the location to be perfect. However, REKO Bygdøy did not survive for long. After hearing about the network

from a friend and wanting to participate herself, Karoline* started REKO St. Hanshaugen:

“I saw online that there was a REKO ring starting at Bygdøy, but it was quite far from where I lived as I live quite close to the city centre. So, I decided to take matters into my own hands. After meeting with the other administrators at Bygdøy and the Norwegian Farmers’ and Smallholders’ Association, I started my own ring at St. Hanshaugen. It did not take long before it took off, and I was then contacted by Prindsen Hage which also wanted a ring (...) so I did it” [Karoline*, administrator].

Karoline is now an administrator of both REKO St. Hanshaugen and REKO Prindsen Hage. In her role, she attends the weekly deliveries where she organises producers and assists consumers, maintains visibility on the Facebook group, and maintains the organisational structure of the two rings. Perhaps unlike the administrators of many other rings, she also puts a lot of effort into the REKO project and advertising it, stating that: “[REKO] has been very well received by the population, so we feel that we are starting a food revolution. So, part of what I do is to substantiate this [hause opp] so that people feel like they are involved in a movement, something *more* than only shopping at a REKO ring” [Karoline*, administrator].

The founder of REKO Oslo describes it as a movement, and she is not the only one. At the time of research, REKO Oslo¹¹ had 14,500 members, a number that in July 2020 had grown to nearly 27,000 members¹². REKO Oslo has attracted attention from thousands of consumers across the city who, every other Sunday purchase fresh vegetables, urban produced honey, meats and eggs, as well as baked goods, spring rolls and the like, from the back of a parked car. To introduce the case study of REKO Oslo is the following extract from a REKO visit in February 2020:

My grip around the coffee cup tightened as the cold wind returned. Looking across the park, with the sunset bathing Oslo in warm orange light, there was little reminding me of the November storms of last year. It was a crowded Sunday afternoon, not unusual by any means. During the winter months, the average Norwegian chases sunlight like it’s the most valuable commodity out there. And with only a few hours of daylight, it might as well be.

¹¹ St. Hanshaugen and Prindsen Hage, not including Bjerke.

¹² 26 814 members on 21.07.20.

It was, therefore, no surprise that a park in the middle of Norway's most populated city would be crowded on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

Soon, cars started appearing. A woman wearing a green vest assigned them spots as they arrived, forming a circle. Booths opened, tables unfolded and bags, boxes and bottles were orderly placed behind the car. I got up, gathered my things, and started approaching the cars. Others did the same. A week earlier I had placed my order in a Facebook group. More than 20 producers had listed their available products for this week, with the selection including eggs, meat and baked goods, to mention some. It would not take long before the square in front of me, which in the summer was filled with tables, lightly clothed Norwegians and beer, was buzzing. People were moving from car to car, having a chat and enjoying themselves. And so was I. Although the temperature neared zero, people's moods were not. Behind me, a woman grabbed a pack of eggs, laughing as a little girl tried to get her parents attention. Around me, exchanges were made. Boxes, bags and bottles found new owners. Soon my bag was filled with fresh produce; eggs from a small farm in the mountains in Telemark, fresh milk and a small glass of honey from bees in Oslo. After a while, tables were folded and placed back in the car. Some left, and soon, any trace of a buzzing exchange ever having

2.4.2 The case study: REKO Oslo

REKO is a network using a direct sales model for agricultural products and other foodstuffs, where 100% of profits go to the producer. The network is divided into local chapters¹³, called rings, started and run by volunteers. REKO currently has rings in several countries, including Finland, Sweden and Norway. This study includes two such rings in Oslo, Norway, which in this thesis is collectively referred to as REKO Oslo:

REKO St. Hanshaugen¹⁴ was started in June 2019. Deliveries take place every two weeks on Sundays, lasting one hour from 16:00 – 17:00. The ring uses an open space within the limits of St. Hanshaugen Park.¹⁵ The area is regulated as a car-free zone, but deliveries to the neighbouring café during the

¹³ Local networks, i.e. local chapters, are throughout this chapter referred to as rings, while network is used to refer to REKO as a whole, either internationally or nationally in Norway.

¹⁴ Now REKO St. Hanshaugen/Grünerløkka

¹⁵ As of June 2020, REKO St. Hanshaugen has moved its delivery to a car park near Grünerløkka to allow for more producers to participate and comply with COVID-19 infection control measures.

summer is permitted. The REKO St. Hanshaugen Facebook group has grown substantially since its establishment and reached 15,000 members in February 2020¹⁶.

REKO City Centre/Prindsen Hage¹⁷ was founded a few weeks after REKO St. Hanshaugen by the same group of volunteers. Handouts take place on the grounds of Prindsen Hage, a cultural café and bar space which hosts different events throughout the year¹⁸. The location is situated near the Central Station. Deliveries take place every other week on Sundays from 15:00 – 15:30, alternating with delivery at REKO St. Hanshaugen. In February 2020, the REKO Prindsen Hage Facebook group had 6,900 members.

Participants in REKO became members by joining the Facebook group of a network ring. A ring is usually connected with a geographical area like REKO Trondheim (a city), REKO Voss (a town) or REKO St. Hanshaugen (a district in the city of Oslo). Each ring has its delivery window, usually between half an hour to an hour and a half, often decided by the administrators. Delivery takes place at a predetermined location, typically a car park. All distribution is done by pre-ordering food or foodstuffs through the Facebook group. Producers post an overview of their products, prices and any additional information the consumer might need to the group in advance, and the consumer places their order in the comments section. Some producers operate with prepayments, others do not. Consumers then collect their products from the decided location at the given time. The producers distribute the goods from the back of their car, some using tables to assist. Some REKO rings operate with producer numbers, meaning each producer participating in the given chapter has its number, making it easy for the consumer to locate and identify a producer both on Facebook and at the short distribution.

¹⁶ Reached 15000 members on 09.02.20

¹⁷ Now REKO City Centre/Sukkerbiten

¹⁸ Delivery moved to Sukkerbiten in August 2020.



Delivery at REKO Oslo City Centre location | Image: author

REKO has three core principles (Norsk Bonde og Småbrukarlag). Firstly, the network should be open and free for every participant, meaning that the producer should not have any added costs of participating. Thus, the network is run and organised by volunteers. Second, REKO is a platform for direct trade between producer and consumer, removing any intermediaries. In this, it is required that the producer only sell foodstuffs that they have produced themselves whether meat or hot sauce. That way the producer ends up with 100% of the profit from the sale. Finally, the producer is responsible for following national laws, rules and regulations that apply to their production and distribution, including tax regulations and food safety measures (Norsk Bonde og Småbrukarlag). In addition to these principles, local rings are allowed to create their own restrictions and locally adapted regulations, usually determined by the administrative group.

I now turn to present the theoretical framework from which the remaining analysis will depart.

3 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical perspectives and concepts that will allow us to understand the growth of REKO, participant motivation, its future potential and the sustainability of the network. Together, these perspectives constitute the theoretical framework used to understand, analyse and support the empirical findings from the research process. I depart from social practice theory, which constitutes the foundation of the theoretical framework. To enrich this perspective and illuminate how social practices interact with the wider system of food, I introduce the multi-level perspective. Together, these constitute the theoretical framework of this thesis through which my findings will be analysed.

I start by exploring social practice theory (SPT), discussing how it provides a useful analytical framework for understanding consumers and their practices in a social context and shifting from conventional food consumption to REKO consumption. From there, I introduce the multi-level perspective (MLP), discussing how the three analytical levels interact to stimulate transition of and within regimes in the wider food system, through the starting-point of sustainable consumption. Recognising the limitations of both frameworks, as either emphasising the process of normality or novelty respectively, I proceed by presenting how the two frameworks can be taken together to explore how the food system is sustained, as well as how transition might occur. I start by presenting each theory individually before explaining how they will be combined.

3.1 Social practice theory

Theories of social practice are increasingly influencing the study of food. Recognising that practices of neither production nor consumption exist in a vacuum (Warde 2005; Domaneschi 2012), and that “relationships from both these two sides of the food sector are inextricably intertwined in the process of food ‘valorization’” (Domaneschi 2012, 309), theories of social practice suggest a ‘middle ground approach’ shifting emphasis from *behaviour* to *practices*. Founded upon the works of Bourdieu, Foucault, Schatzki (1996) and Giddens (1984) from the 1970s through the late 1990s, and more recently on the works of Reckwitz, Shove, Spaargaren, and Warde (amongst some), *social*

practice theory (SPT) “present pluralistic and flexible pictures of the constitution of social life” (Schatzki 1996, 12).

In essence, SPT attempts to shift the focus from the consumer as a “free and sovereign agent revealing their preference through market decisions,” unbound by material properties or social context (Seyfang et.al. 2010, 8; Fine 2013), to the understanding of how social context, everyday habits and practices and material ‘things’ determine consumption (Shove 1998, 2003a, 2003b; Reckwitz 2002; Warde 2005). Thinking of consumption (and production) as *behaviour*, presuppose any actor as rational and predisposed to consume (and produce) in a way deemed beneficial and useful to maximise profit and value vis-à-vis input or labour, which reduce action to that which is visible (Fine 2013). Instead, Warde (2005) argues that consumption is “a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian, expressive or contemplative purposes, of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion” (137). Thus, sustainable consumption within an SPT frame considers the ecological, economic and social dimensions, and consequences of appropriation and appreciation at the level of both individuals and community, with the roots of change distributed across agents and based in social norms, cultural contexts, structures and practices (Spaargaren 2003; Sahakian and Wilhite 2014).

SPT offers an analysis that “pays attention to *both* agency and structure, which makes room for (combining) both bottom-up and top-down dynamics of change, and which recognizes the mutual influencing and co-shaping of human actors of the one hand and objects and technological infrastructures of the other” (Spaargaren 2011, 815, added emphasis). Indeed, as Giddens argues, neither the individual actor nor societal structures should form the basis of the study of social phenomena, but rather “social practices ordered across space and time” (1984, 2). In this view, the transition towards a sustainable food system is not the result of individual action, attitude, behaviour, beliefs or values, nor of policy and structural ordering alone, but instead as transforming practices “embedded within and occurring as part of social practices” (Hargreaves 2011).

3.1.1 The elements of social practice

Before examining how social practices change and by extension, how food systems transformation might occur, we must take a step back: What exactly are social practices? Although different theories of practice exist (see Warde 2005), social practices are generally conceptualized as complex relational interactions between the material world, the individual self, and the social. A practice is composed of multiple elements that are interconnected, and as defined by Reckwitz (2002), is “a routinised type of behaviour,” coordinated and performed, in which “bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (249-250). It is a chain or set of moments and actions in which processes of body, cognition, knowledge, experience, agency, structures, values and norms converge in routinised behaviour (eating breakfast, commuting to work, cooking dinner) that, when considered together with other such chains, constitute much of everyday life. In other words, a social practice involves actions performed in order, reproduced by individuals as *carriers of practice* (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) in different geographical regions through time.

The performance of each practice requires certain competences, capabilities and materials (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). For example, the practice of “grocery shopping,” typically involves the travel from home to a site of food distribution, whether a grocery store or a market; deciding which products to purchase and placing them in a bag or basket; and the exchange of money for the products. The practice requires the individual to have “background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (Reckwitz 2002, 249), which here include competences about the different food products and knowledge of the whereabouts of and access to a place of food distribution. Moreover, the individual must have the bodily functions to access the grocery store or market, and the financial means to purchase the food. Similarly, in another example, the practice of growing potatoes involves preparing the earth and pre-cultivating the potatoes, planting, fertilizing the earth, and harvesting the potatoes after 8-12 weeks depending on the type of potato. Additionally, to be able to perform the practice, the practitioner is dependent on the knowledge of how to produce food and of proper soil cultivation, needs the physical ability to sow the seeds and harvest the potatoes, and must have access to earth, seeds and the appropriate tools and harvesting equipment.

According to Sahakian and Wilhite 2014, agency, rather than residing in the individual, is distributed across ‘three pillars of social practice’. Similar to how Schatzki (1996) distinguishes between understanding, proceeding and engaging, and Sahakian and Wilhite (2014) divide practice into body, materials and the social, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) identify and define these elements as competences, meanings and materials. The first element, *competences*, include the physical and mental knowledge, and capacity people embody to be able to perform the practice, including the skills necessary. The second element, *material*, includes objects, things, the physical body and infrastructures, and concerns how these elements are influenced by everyday practice. Finally, the third element, *meaning*, describes the social and cultural contexts wherein people exist, including norms, institutions and laws. In other words, the practice is based on a shared meaning to which the practitioners subscribe. Moreover, *meaning* captures how the individual practitioner with their motivations, values, beliefs and emotions interact with the systems, structures and norms that form practices (Fonte 2013b). Thus, the three elements of practice allow us to understand how practices are interconnected and operate (see Sahakian and Wilhite 2014), and how “practices emerge, persist, shift and disappear when connections between elements of these three types are made, sustained or broken” (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012, 14).

Giving attention to the power dynamics present across different contexts, Sahakian and Wilhite argue that “some aspects of a practice might have more capability towards changing the practice, yet no single element of a practice can act alone towards that change” (2014, 40). In other words, although every element within a practice has agency, the degree to which this agency extends, and thus the influence on the overall practice, varies. Applied to the three elements of practice then, the influence of each element and the changes occurring when links are established are of varying importance to the transition of practice.

3.1.2 The transition of practice

To explain how practices are maintained and stabilised, Pantzar and Shove (2010) identify ‘three circuits of reproduction’. In the first circuit, the different elements of a practice reproduce the structure of the practice and hold it together, despite each element being autonomous. For example, the practice of brushing one’s teeth involves

materials such as toothpaste, a toothbrush and water; the competences of knowing *how* to brush one's teeth, but also that teeth brushing is necessary for maintaining dental care; and the social norms surrounding dental care and personal hygiene. All these elements, although in essence autonomous (a toothbrush is just a tiny brush marketed for cleaning teeth), reproduce the practice of brushing your teeth. The second circuit refers to the relations between 'whole' practices, like the relation between grocery shopping and cooking dinner or *harryhandel*¹⁹ and driving practices, as they together form interconnected 'systems of practices' (Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013). The third and final circuit concerns the 'temporal dynamics and path dependence', or the sequencing of practices in which the past and future of practices connect (ibid). In other words, the practices of today are a product of the past (Shove et al 2012). As such, the normality of practice is maintained through three different levels of interaction between and within practices, illustrating the strong connection and multiple integrations for the stability and continuation of practice. Departing from this then, how can we explain the transition of practice?

The practices and social norms of today are rooted in the past and are the result of "persistence, transformation and disappearance" (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012, 64). To change practices in a more sustainable direction, structures and institutions must be shifted for sustainable consumption to be desirable, possible and convenient (Shove 2014). As such, sustainable transition is not necessarily about individual behaviour, but rather about shifting structures and reframing the elements of, and integration between the three elements of material, meaning and competence (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). Indeed, according to Warde (2005) practices vary from the individual perspective, and includes perceptions, different experiences, embedded knowledge and skills. As such, he argues that "we can differentiate on the basis of the potential contribution of agents to the reproduction and developments of the practice" (138).

The reproduction and stability of practices are results of the 'repeated integration of [these] elements,' and according to Pantzar and Shove (2010), innovation in practices thus originate from creating and breaking links between the three elements

¹⁹ *Harryhandel* is typically used as a derogatory term to explain the phenomena where Norwegians drive across the border to Sweden to purchase goods and services like alcohol, meat and sweets, which are cheaper there than in Norwegian supermarkets.

(Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013, 406; Pantzar and Shove 2010). For a practice to form, all three elements must be present and socially linked. Moreover, the new practice must be carried out by members of the society, which can occur through establishing *communities of practice* (Lave 2019). This way, early carriers of new practices are critical, as they establish and reinforce the patterns and characteristics of new practice (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012).

According to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), “individuals engage in many practices and consequently belong to multiple communities at once” (68). This way, networks of social interaction are critical in the spread of practices, which for instance can occur through forming bridges between different communities of practice through social learning (Wenger 2000; Sahakian and Wilhite 2014). Through experiential learning, the elements of practices are transformed through engagements with new meanings, worldviews and shifting competences as new knowledge is introduced at the intersection of practices (Wenger 2000; Lave 2019). Consequently, the peripheral engagement and new participation in practices (for example as those offered by AFNs within protected niche spaces (Geels 2011)), can ultimately shift the path of the practice and how it interacts with the surrounding structures and ordinate system (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). In this way, each interaction with new practice through performance by individuals or communities bears a *window of opportunity* where existing practice of unsustainable consumption may be reconfigured to a new trajectory (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). As a result, every interaction with and between practice “contain the seeds of constant change” as “people in myriad situations adapt, improvise and experiment” (Warde 2005, 141).

Indeed, “The principal implication of a theory of practice is that the sources of changed behaviour lie in the development of practices themselves. The concept of practice inherently combines a capacity to account for both reproduction and innovation” (Warde 2015, 140). In understanding the formation and dissolution of practices through the establishment of links between the three elements mentioned above, and by extension transition of practice, we turn to Heisserer and Rau (2015). Based on the work of Schatzki, they suggest three theoretical concepts that constitute practices and thus where transition may originate: practical intelligibility, social site and the field of possibilities.

First, practice is not created by individuals, rather, individuals are carriers of practice (Seyfang et.al. 2010; Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). “That is to say, they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors” (Giddens 1984, 2). However, as with any action by different people in different spaces across different times, practices vary. Shove, Pantzar and Shove (2012) note that the adoption of a new practice depends on the local context and culture. Moreover, from individual to individual, community to community, a practice such as commuting, cooking or bathing have internal variations: distinctly different characteristics of activities within a practice as performed by people(s). According to Schatzki (2002), practical intelligibility is that which belongs to the individual agent, and not the practice. “Practical intelligibility determines what it is that a person does next in the flow of conduct” (Schatzki 2010, 114), or “how practitioners carry out actions that makes sense to them” (Hessierer and Rau 2015, 588). For example, while family A follows the layout of their local supermarket in picking products, starting with fruits and vegetables and moving from there, family B follows their shopping list, moving back and forth from different areas in the shop as they cross off the items on their list. Practical intelligibility thus explains the individual performance of practice.

This brings us to the second point, that interconnected and related practices construct the spaces in which social order is determined, “resulting in the emergence of social site” (Hessierer and Rau 2015, 588). The social site can be described as where people are connected through a network of social practices that influence each other. For example, the social site of food consumption in Norway not only involves grocery shopping and its variations, but how eating and the habits linked to it, influence the number and types of foodstuffs people purchase, or how cooking determines the limits and possibilities of eating. Similarly, the social site of production in Norway involves a network of agricultural practices, from growing potatoes to dairy farming, which again are determined by culture, experience, knowledge and physical and material constraints of the land.

Finally, ‘the field of possibilities’ refers to the potential paths of action, framing ‘practitioners’ doings and sayings’ (Hessierer and Rau 2015, 588). It is a key feature of practices, allowing us to understand the possible ways in which a practitioner can perform a practice and the negotiations taking place in ‘doing’ the practice that makes

the most sense. Moreover, the field of possibilities includes the contexts in which the options for action exist, including built environments, infrastructure and access to these.

For the consumer, what to eat, what not to eat, how to eat and how much time, money and energy should go into the practice of eating varies from culture to culture, illustrating ‘the complexity, variability, and contextual dependence of consumption’ across the world (Warde 2011). Similarly, what to grow, what not to grow, how to grow and how much time, money and energy should go into the growing of different foods varies from farmer to farmer, and is dependent on factors such as weather, soil, labour costs, available resources, demand from the grocery sector or other consumers, and season. These factors, categorised as competences, meanings and materials, all have a significant impact on not only how we go about performing and engaging with and within the practice, but also how transitions of and within practices come about.

3.2 Multi-level perspective

The multi-level perspective (MLP) has gained prominence as a theoretical framework for researching transitions in the food system in recent years. Developed by Rip and Kemp (1998), and refined by Geels and Schot (2007), MLP posits that long-term transformations in food (and elsewhere) occur through the interaction within and between “complex and long-term processes comprising multiple actors” (Geels 2011, 24), and are defined as the transition from one socio-technical regime to another (Ibid, 26). The regime is social in that it involves not only technical innovations but also consumer practices, cultural meaning, a complex network of actors and groups, formal and informal rules and social norms that maintain the existing system, infrastructures, markets and scientific knowledge (Geels 2011; El Bilali 2019). A shift in regime is the result of non-linear interactions at the interface of three analytical levels (Geels 2011; Hargreaves et al. 2013; El Bilali 2019): niche-innovations, the socio-technical regime and socio-technical landscapes, which, according to Geels (2010) are “heterogeneous configurations of increasing stability” (495) or a hierarchical structure wherein higher levels are more stable than lower levels.

Niches are *protected spaces* (Geels 2011) wherein radical innovation develop, and refers to a network of actors and emerging technologies, materials and practices that

“deviate from existing regimes” (Ibid, 27). Innovation at the niche level is crucial for regime transition by generating what Geels refers to as “seeds for systemic change” (Ibid), or the necessary elements of social organisation, visions and learning processes that make the foundation for novel configuration in regime transition. The **socio-technical regime** is embedded with *deep structures* ensuring the stability of existing technical, social, cultural, financial, political and material elements that form the contemporary food system (Geels 2010). The elements of the regime, such as rules and regulations, institutions, shared beliefs and cognitive routines, legal contracts and social actors are what maintain existing systems and dominating structures (Geels and Schot 2007). **Landscapes** are the social and cultural processes and pressures that preserve systems and the regime, and that encompass global political and economic trends and developments, climate change, conflict, crises, war, and deeply ingrained values and beliefs such as religion or national identity. It is where stability persists, and change occurs as long-term processes of disrupting intrinsic structures across borders, social contexts and contrasting worldviews. The socio-technical landscape thus “form an external context that actors at niche and regime levels cannot influence in the short run” (Geels 2011, 28).

3.2.1 Transition pathways

The transition of a regime consists of multiple processes across dimensions and different levels, so-called *circular causality* (Geels 2011, 29). Although transition remains complex in character and each regime shift is the product of individual and unique processes at all three levels, we can identify a pattern of interaction between niches, the regime and the landscape. Facilitating the occurrence of transition, change within the socio-technical regime creates pressures that in turn destabilise the current regime, creating *windows of opportunity* (see Geels 2002) for innovation that has developed over time in the protected niche space. Utilising DiMaggio and Powell’s definition of organisational fields as constituting “a recognized area of institutional life (...) that produce similar services or products” and which direct attention “to the totality of relevant actors” (1983, 148), Geels and Schot (2013) argue that change affecting only one ‘population’ is not ‘systems innovation,’ “distinguishing it from technological discontinuities” (Geels and Schot 2007, 402). In other words, food systems change encompasses *more* than, for example, transforming processes of meat

production, as transitions should be understood in regimes as fields of organisation (Geels and Schot 2013). It also affects cultural meaning, policies and user practices.

As such, Geels and Schot (2007) identify four *pathways of transition* within the framework of multi-level perspective: the (1) **transformation pathway**, where innovations at the niche level have been insufficiently developed, but pressure at the landscape level stimulate the gradual adjustment of the regime; (2) **de-alignment and re-alignment**, where niches are insufficiently developed, but where major pressure at the landscape level destabilises the existing regime, which causes de-alignment, and where prolonged existing niche innovations lead to realignment moulding one niche as a new regime; (3) **technological substitution**, where technological niche innovation is sufficiently developed alongside landscape pressures on the existing regime; and (4) **reconfiguration**, where innovations at the niche level are incorporated into the regime, triggering “further adjustments under landscape pressure” (Bilali 2019, 2). For instance, food transition as reconfiguration can occur as the dominating corporate retailers add local products in local regional stores, resulting in a culture shift where local commodities are normalised. The transition along the transformation pathway, on the other hand, can be exemplified by local food initiatives like farmers’ markets remaining as a niche activity, while European trends and developments towards local food gradually influence the Norwegian supermarket regime to include local foodstuffs in their stock range. Moreover, an additional **sequence pathway** exists, wherein transition starts on one path, but shifts to another in time.

With REKO being a niche facilitating alternative food consumption, the primary focus throughout the analysis will be the interface of niches and regimes in bringing about sustainable change. Geels (2011, 28) distinguishes between three core processes of niche innovation or development: the “articulation (and adjustment) or expectations or visions”, or the guiding principles or characteristics of the innovation activities which drive external interest; building social networks or niche communities and expanding these and the subsequent resources available to the niche; and processes of learning and articulation resulting in a *stable configuration*, in other words, the competences in areas such as technology, economy, organisation and infrastructure necessary to uphold and expand the niche. In short, niche innovations gain momentum if their networks expand, particularly to include powerful actors conveying ‘legitimacy and resources’, their expectations – or guiding principles – become broadly accepted (i.e.

enter the sphere of the regime and landscape levels), and competences across dimensions are aligned through learning processes (Geels 2011, 28).

3.2.2 Path dependence and the challenge of transition

According to Geels (2011), sustainable transitions bring about particular challenges because they are purposive and oriented towards an environmental goal, rather than the result of emergent profitability-seeking technologies and innovation. In other words, the extent to which private actors are incentivised to address environmental transformation is limited, as the aim of a collective good is in contrast with the vested interests and market-oriented mechanisms of private enterprise that ultimately will resist such changes. Hence, efforts of sustainable transition become dependent on public financial support and community initiatives such as taxation, regulatory frameworks and subsidies or community funding and locally established initiatives. As a consequence, it is “unlikely that environmental innovations will be able to replace existing systems without changes in economic frame conditions” (Geels 2011, 25). Indeed, this is true for sustainable transitions in the Norwegian food system, as subsidy has marked itself as a significant element of the survival and persistence of Norwegian agriculture (Bjørkhaug, Almås and Vik 2015).

Transitions of the food regime are therefore likely to face resistance from existing market mechanisms and structures, which are stabilised through *lock-in mechanisms* (Geels 2011). Existing infrastructures, competencies, shared beliefs, and power relations, are all examples of mechanisms that perpetuate and stabilise existing systems, making sustainable transitions difficult (Geels 2011). Although the system may permit small changes, the entrenched structures of the food regime make it challenging for transitions to occur, being further perpetuated by the aim to uphold existing power relations. Thus, “These lock-in mechanisms create *path dependence* and make it difficult to dislodge existing systems” (Geels 2011, 25, emphasis added), and as such, innovation within the regime is oriented along *predictable trajectories* (Geels 2010). In other words, the regime is set up to reproduce itself, making transition challenging. This echoes the path dependence of practices as understood through SPT, wherein practices reproduce themselves and the wider system to maintain normality. The central analytical aim is therefore to understand the emergence of sustainable

innovation and ecological alternatives and “how these can replace, transform or reconfigure existing systems” (Geels 2011, 25).

3.3 Bridging the multi-level perspective and social practice theory

Whilst the multi-level perspective lends itself to describe the transition of food regimes through the interaction between sustainable niche innovation, dominating regimes and the socio-technical landscape, it does not help us to understand how individuals and groups maintain or modify regimes (Hargreaves et al. 2011), nor the role of consumers in bringing about transitions. Smith et al. (2005) argue that “there is a tendency to treat regime transformation as a monolithic process, dominated by rational action and neglecting important differences in context” (1492). Regimes survive only through the reproduction of the social structures, contexts and practices by individual actors in the system (Hargreaves et al. 2011). As such, the MLP fails to explain the processes of normality perpetuating the regime (Hargreaves et al. 2013). Hargreaves et al. (2011) therefore suggest introducing social practice theory to explain the stability and normality of regimes, particularly through practices of consumption, including “how civil society groups are as likely to try and challenge unsustainable forms of normality as they are to promote and generate sustainable novelties” (3). Moreover, while the MLP examines novelty through the dynamic between three vertical levels, the SPT instead focuses attention on “horizontal dynamics of practices that cross-cut multiple regimes and systems as practices and their elements follow their circuits of reproduction” (Ibid, 9). Moreover, as consumers are the focal point of this thesis, SPT’s attention towards individuals, communities and consumption practices, offers a deeper analysis than the MLP on transitions relating to sustainable consumption. Indeed, as Geels (2011) argues, introducing other theories and combining them with the MLP can enrich the analytical insights of regime transitions.

The key difference between MLP and SPT is the point of analyzing transitions: whilst MLP is concerned with transitions in regimes, SPT is concerned with transitions in practice. Although recognising the contributions of each theory to the field, combining the horizontal and vertical by researching REKO and food transitions through *both* approaches, provide a useful and fruitful analytical framework. Niches, regimes and landscapes interact with and maintain everyday practices and vice versa. According to

Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang, combining the two allow us to fully understand transitions. They suggest three lines of enquiry: 1) “transitions in regimes as they occur through interactions between niches, regimes, and landscapes – the vertical circle”; 2) “transitions in practices as they occur through change and continuity in different circuits of reproduction – the horizontal circle”; and 3) “how regimes and practices interconnect with and bump into one another in the course of transition processes – the points of intersection” (Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013, 408).

While transitions within MLP occurs through realignment within and between the three levels, SPT sees transition as a result of “horizontal circulation and integration of different elements of practice” (Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013, 402). For this reason, combining these theoretical frameworks in analysis has received criticism, the argument being that the two approaches are fundamentally different in their understanding of innovation and how it comes about. It is thus *not* the aim of this thesis to combine the two theories into one, coherent framework for analysis, rather, to use their ‘crossovers’ as a foundation for deepening the analysis on transitions of and within food systems.

In integrating MLP and SPT, we can understand their differences in how they approach normality and novelty. Whereas social practices are useful in understanding how normality and stability are maintained, and how practices are prolonged over time, the multi-level perspective allows us to comprehend how this normality may be disrupted, and address how niches and novelty might become normalised in regimes (Hargreaves et al. 2011; Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013). In other words, while MLP “allows one to examine the emergence of novelty through the interactions between the vertically ordered levels of niche, regime, and landscape (...), SPT focuses attention instead on the horizontal dynamics of practices that cut across multiple regimes as they follow their circuits of reproduction.

Moreover, “By loading the concept of landscape with the constraining aspects of structures that are beyond the control of agents” we risk treating the relationship between structure and agency as dualism when instead it is a *duality* (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber 2011, 10). In other words, we must consider both agency and structure when research the impact of AFNs. According to Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber (2013), “Agency and structure are two sides of the same (interaction) coin”

(10). As such, following the logic of Grin (2013) then, we observe that the three levels of niches, regimes and landscapes correspond with three levels of the institutionalisation of practices: (1) novel or niche practices that “preshadow the rules and resources of a new regime-in-the-making” (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber 2013, 11); (2) regime practices, or the ‘nexus of practices’ (Shove 2003b) that are widely performed and known by groups of actors; and (3) the principles of organising, which are not practices per se, but instead consist of the institutions that change time-space.

Building on work by Shove (2003a) and later developed by Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang (2013), figure 1 illustrates how MLP and SPT can be combined in analysing transitions in the food system. Practices are reproduced within the level of the regime. Through pressures from the landscape and new practices at the niche level, practices change.

I will now present the methods used in this study, before moving on to the analysis and discussion of REKO in the light of the theories presented in this chapter.

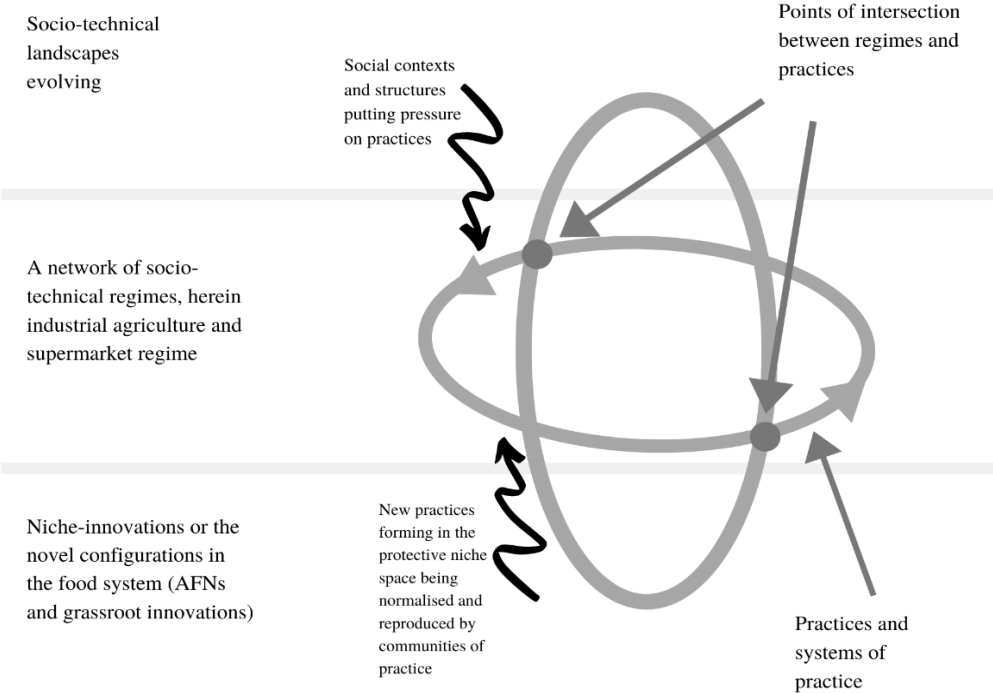


Figure 1: Combining MLP and SPT (based on Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013, adapted from Shove 2003a, 193).

4 Methodology and research design

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology for the thesis. Firstly, I present my research design and the chosen methods. I explain my reason for choosing each method and the concurrent approach, as well as the process of collecting and reviewing data. The challenges and limitations presented in the process and how I worked to overcome these are reviewed throughout the chapter where relevant. Finally, I reflect on the ethical considerations in the research process.

4.1 Research design

In August 2019, I was invited to the REKO St. Hanshaugen Facebook group by an acquaintance. A friend's mother had mentioned a similar concept in Bergen, so it was not the first time I had heard about it. REKO on St. Hanshaugen had recently started, as the one existing at that time in Oslo was inaccessible for most. Having originally decided to do a thesis on the energy consumption of cryptocurrency mining – most definitely interesting, but a topic which I had struggled making a meaningful connection with – the Facebook group was a friendly reminder of the world of food I had grown up with and learned to appreciate. Scrolling through the page, I was reminded of the work that goes into the production of food, and the culture and tradition behind so many of the farming practices taking place in Norway daily. Recognising my interest in food as a motivational driver, as well as the increasing need for research on transforming food systems in a warming world (addressed in chapter 1), I decided to change my topic.

Intrigued by this new network, I placed an order and attended my first REKO delivery in September 2019. During my first few visits, I took photographs, wrote small notes and reflected upon what I observed in a field diary. Simultaneously, I also followed the Facebook-group closely, saving any relevant information and following any discussions taking place. The observations and data gathered in this period, from August 2019 till early October, became the foundation from which I designed my research question and agenda. Also, the preliminary participant observation gave me insights into the structures of REKO, which later in the process allowed me to better understand and analyse the themes covered by my interview participants.

I conducted the majority of my fieldwork in October and November 2019, including 11 out of 12 interviews and one round of online surveying. One interview was conducted in December of the same year. After a second round of online surveying, the data collection commenced in early January 2020.

4.2 The case study

Empirical research is defined as any research or a study wherein analysis and conclusions are drawn from empirical evidence, meaning any ‘real’ evidence such as observations, experiences, measurement of phenomena, surveys etc. As a common feature of empirical research, the case study is a technique concentrating on the dynamics and processes present within a specific context, including single or multiple “examples” or cases relevant for the particular setting. REKO is an example of one such case, where two alternative food networks (in the analysis treated as *one*) in Oslo are examined. Generally, research on alternative food systems tends to include one or more case studies (Michel-Villarreal et al. 2019). Although most frequently associated with qualitative research, the depth and width which case studies allow for in the research process make the method suitable for a mixed methods approach. Case studies can be used for different purposes and with different intentions. My thesis looks at REKO St. Hanshaugen and REKO Prindsen Hage *together* as a single case representing a sustainable food initiative in an urban area. The case is later explored and analysed as a representation of what food systems transition *can* look like in an urban, Norwegian context, rather than as a claim to what it *is*.

Although this study presupposes the case study approach as important for understanding AFNs, cases are largely dependent on place and context, and as such, the findings are limited in their generalisability. However, as with other work within the qualitative tradition, generalisability is not the aim of this study.

4.3 The mixed method approach

In the design and implementation of a research project, an understanding of the world and how we should research it influences each decision made in the process. In academia, it is a strongly held belief by many researchers that qualitative and quantitative research methods are rooted in “epistemological and ontological

commitments” (Bryman 2016, 629) and that “every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world” (J. A. Hughes 1990, 11 in Bryman 2016, 629). As such, the method chosen in a study originates from the perception of both what reality is and what it can be, while simultaneously being influenced by our understanding and notion of the creation and obtainment of knowledge.

Many scholars criticise mixed methods research for combining two irreconcilable approaches and understandings of what is and how we can know (Seale 2018, 307). The paradigms underlying qualitative and quantitative traditions “...may be at odds with each other,” and that they are at ‘cross-purpose’ and thus cannot be combined (O’Leary 2017, 165). As a result, most researchers presuppose that *either* qualitative *or* quantitative methods are best suited to describe and understand the world (Seale 2018). In social science, the prevalence and preference of the qualitative tradition can be explained by the methods’ ability to develop a greater understanding of both individuals and groups, as well as places and situations, and to explore the interactions, processes and experiences taking place within and between these (Bryman 2016). On the other hand, the quantitative traditionally values the ‘scientific’ method, based on the belief that society, like the physics of the universe, the biology of animals or the numbers operationalising popular mathematical equations, can be quantified (O’Leary 2017). Quantitative social science research can thus be recognised by methods such as testing a hypothesis, maintaining objectivity, deductive logic and ‘experimental and quasi-experimental design,’ all grounded in the ‘value of quantification’ (O’Leary 2017, 134).

However, as Bryman (2016) argues, it is difficult to maintain the argument that any one method can carry certain epistemological and ontological implications, and that one method thus is generally *better* than the other. Although specific methods are more appropriately suited to answer certain questions, the *either-or* dichotomy determining much of social science research today limits the potential of knowledge-creation and adequately understanding the phenomena the researcher is attempting to grasp (Bryman 2016; O’Leary 2017). Instead, Bryman views research methods as autonomous and capable of being utilised in different forms regardless of epistemological and ontological assumptions. Research methods, he argues, can therefore be combined, and it may be “both feasible and desirable” to do so when

appropriate (Bryman 2016, 631). As a result, this study applies a mixed method approach. Indeed, as O’Leary (2017) suggests, the mixed methods approach has the potential to “overcome the short-comings and biases inherent in each individual approach” and allow the researcher to keep an open mind and thus “allow for methodological diversity, complementarity of approaches, and both inductive and deductive reasoning” (164).

4.4 Sampling

When referring to a sample, a *population* is the sum of every element of your research, not the ‘general population’. For example, in a study about the experience of a youth participation program in the local municipality, the population would be every individual between 13-18 years of age residing in the target area. In my case study, the population was the total number of members of the two Facebook groups, whether they were active consumers, administrators of the network, producers who delivered or non-active group members. At the time of conducting my fieldwork, this number increased from 13,000 at the start to about 16,000 when data collection commenced. I will, therefore, be using a median of 14,500 members as the member size for the remainder of this thesis. However, it should be noted that a large number of these people are assumed to be members of both REKO St. Hanshaugen and REKO Prindsen Hage, and are therefore counted twice in the total number of members. Additionally, a proportion of the members, albeit small, were journalists, researchers etc. As such, although the *potential population* was 14,500, the *actual population*, meaning an individual participating in REKO, was less.

A common issue in determining the sample size when conducted internet-mediated research was and continues to be, Facebook algorithms (Padayachee 2016). In short, algorithms determine what an individual user sees in his or her feed. Inactivity, either generally on the platform or within the REKO groups, is likely to result in a published survey not being visible to the user. A substantial proportion of the REKO Facebook group members are not active consumers, meaning they are members of the Facebook group but have for some reason chosen not to purchase anything. Although they are regarded as important for my research and included in the sample, the workings of the Facebook algorithm have to some degree influenced who in the population was able to access the survey and thus participate. Unfortunately, as REKO requires all orders

to go through the Facebook group, the only other option to ensure representativeness would have been to message each member individually with a request to participate. With 14,500 members, this was not feasible. For these reasons, the *actual* population was impossible to measure and the sample is *not* representative of the selection per se.

Thus, although my survey was distributed to the entire *population* and can be said to be representative, the sample was mainly *purposive*. Representative sampling refers to a random selection wherein “each element in a population has an equal chance of being selected” based on the idea that a random sample will allow the researcher to “control for researcher bias; represent a population; and generalize findings to that population” and thus ensure representativeness (O’Leary 2017, 207; Seale 2018). Purposive sampling, on the other hand, is a selection of participants based on the assumption that the “research questions influences who or what the researcher decides to study” and the participants thus are chosen from the population-based on their knowledge, characteristics, insights or experience (Seale 2018, 156).

For my quantitative element, two surveys were distributed in the respective Facebook groups. The producer-survey was shared by a network administrator in a closed group, while the consumer-survey was distributed in REKO St. Hanshaugen and REKO Prindsen Hage Facebook groups, first by a network administrator and a few weeks later by myself. For the latter, I chose to use the network administrator for her connection to and previous activity within the groups, with the hopes that being shared by an admin, the survey would not only generate more responses coming from a trusted source but also reach a higher number of respondents within the algorithm. The two surveys generated 269 (active and inactive consumers) and 11 (producers) responses. For this project, only the consumer survey was used as the research focus shifted.

I used a combination of quota sampling and variation sampling for my interviews. In the survey, respondents were given an option to report their interest in participating in an interview. Out of these, 25 people were contacted based on their age, gender and consumption habits and invited to participate in an in-depth interview. An additional participant was recruited through a shared friend, while a final participant was an acquaintance of mine whom I was aware of being engaged with REKO as well as several other food-related projects, and thus chosen based on experience and knowledge of the topic. Interview participants were chosen in an attempt to reflect the

respondents of the survey and acquire variation, and to get the experiences of those who had purchased both one time and on multiple occasions. I aimed at getting a range of ages, participants with children, people in a partnership, and those who lived on their own. Additionally, I conducted interviews with key informants: two administrators and two producers were chosen based on their involvement and role in the network, as well as their knowledge about REKO beyond Oslo.

4.5 Online Survey

The quantitative data were collected through an online survey. I used the University of Oslo's survey software *Nettskjema* to create and distribute the survey. In addition to being free and optimised for academic research, the survey software ensured the safe storage of data, adhering with the requirements of NSD. Furthermore, the data were easily accessible during and after collection and were downloadable as an SPSS file.

The survey was distributed in October 2019 and January 2020 in the Facebook groups of REKO Oslo. It was shared once by myself and once by an administrator. The survey generated 269 responses from consumers in the network. The overall rationale of the survey was to map and identify the consumers in REKO, their motivations, barriers to participation, and purchasing patterns of participants in REKO. The respondents were asked about the frequency of REKO purchase, which products they bought, sustainable practices and to rate the importance of different motivations to participate, amongst some. This way, the data collected offered insights on who the participants in REKO Oslo were (chapter 5), their purchasing patterns and sustainable consumption, and their reasons for participating in an AFN. To ensure validity, I tested the survey in advance. This was done to cover all relevant aspects and to make sure the survey would generate the type of results necessary for my research.

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Univariate analysis was used to measure frequency distribution across single variables, such as age or level of obtained education (Seale 2018). To explain the relationship between some of the variables surveyed for and to demonstrate proportions related to subgroups, bivariate crosstabs in SPSS was used. The findings are presented throughout this thesis using figures and tables.

The data analysed were not used to generalise (Seale 2018), instead, it was used to measure trends and tendencies amongst the REKO consumer population. All questions were pre-coded, but the survey included one open comment-box at the end which allowed respondents to add critiques, general comments, expand on motivations or barriers, or include points they felt were missing. Several respondents took advantage of this, which enriched the data and allowed for further analysis later on.

To ensure reliability, the survey is attached (Appendix 3). Moreover, where available and relevant, the data were compared to data from a national survey by Telemarksforsking (Leikvoll et al. 2020) to account for similarities and differences.

A risk of using surveying as a method is that the chosen questions and available response-options could be irrelevant or inaccurate, which reduce the reliability of the findings. The pre-coded questions can miss out on nuances, contextual factors or potential answers. I attempted to avoid this by exploring similar surveys and studying literature and key concepts before designing the survey. Moreover, I also included an open comment-box.

Despite testing the survey in advance, some aspects of motivations for participating in REKO were absent. For example, several respondents commented that animal welfare was important for their participation in the network. As such, the survey results are not extensive in presenting participant motivations, but instead, demonstrate general tendencies and importance of specific factors.

4.6 The semi-structured interview

I conducted eight in-depth semi-structured interviews with REKO consumers in November and December 2019. In the same period, I had interviews with two Oslo-based producers: one vegetable farmer and one honey-producer, then a further two interviews with network administrators. One working externally on a project funded by an agricultural organisation, and the other a founder of REKO in Oslo and admin of the two Facebook groups. The network administrator interviews were conducted before the consumer interviews, providing some new information from which I developed my original interview guide (Appendix 2) to include. After 11 interviews, I reached data saturation, and I conducted the final interview in December 2019. The

interviews lasted between 25 minutes to 1 hour and 16 minutes. Appendix 1 presents an overview of the interviewees and their backgrounds.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with my participants for several reasons. Firstly, semi-structured interviews, while allowing for open conversation and flexibility, maintains a structure, and assisted me in covering all the topics (Bryman 2016). While some interviews invited informal, open conversation and only required me to ask a few questions, others followed the structure and asked nearly every question set out in the interview guide. The semi-structured interview format thus allowed me to ensure that I covered each topic while adjusting my questions to suit the context and individual interviewee better, and thus explore the differences between participants (Bryman 2016). Second, whenever appropriate, the semi-structured interview enabled me to ask follow-up questions and explore new themes not covered in the guide. Finally, the flexibility allowed me to let the interviewee take control when appropriate, increasing comfort, and inviting a more open and relaxed conversation, which ultimately led to information which I would not have been able to obtain in a more structured setting.

10 out of the 12 interviews were conducted in Norwegian, while the latter 2 were conducted in Norwegian/Danish and Norwegian/Swedish. These interviews were translated to Norwegian during the transcription process. Recordings of my interviews were transcribed upon the completion of fieldwork using the software F5 and coded using NVivo. In writing chapter 5-7, relevant quotes from the interviews were translated into English as needed. All translations were conducted by myself and any uncertainties were controlled by a third-party.

Using *Nettskjema*'s built-in feature, I transferred my online survey data to Excel and did a standard descriptive analysis to calculate trends across the dataset and provide statistics on who the members are, what and how much they purchase and their given reasons for participating in REKO. Closed answers limited the amount of answers respondents were able to give, however, an open-ended question at the end of the survey allowed participants with other reasons than those stated in the survey to give these, an opportunity several survey respondents made use of. The data was then coded and cross-referenced with the findings from my interviews. The results from the survey are presented in chapter 5 and 6.

To the extent possible, I attempted to avoid bias in my coding by utilising deductive and inductive coding when analysing my qualitative data. Initially, I generated codes based on a preliminary analysis of the data from my quantitative survey, thus allowing me to analyse data across the two methods. As I went through the coding process, new themes appeared, prompting me to generate new codes inductively, something that later also proved useful in going deeper into the data material and findings from both methods used.

4.7 Challenges and limitations

Both survey respondents and interview participants were self-reporting. A few questions asked them to estimate their total expenditure and consumption of foods from REKO and other 'alternative' sources. The results they reported can, therefore, be expected to have a degree of uncertainty, as they are estimates rather than exact calculations (Bryman 2016). Researchers have identified several issues connected to self-reporting, including bias and memory errors. As a result, the sections in which participants were asked to make estimations may deviate from the actual expenditure or consumption shown in the data. However, as the data is largely consistent both between the responses and other research, the significance of this deviation on the following findings and analysis is limited.

Originally, I intended on including both producers and consumers equally in the study. However, with the Christmas season approaching, most producers were busy and unable to participate in the study, and I had to modify my project accordingly. As Seale (2018) addresses, purposive sampling allows the researcher to "adapt their sampling as they go along, depending on the ideas that are being generated during fieldwork" (156). Furthermore, this flexibility allows for adapting to situations where participants either are unavailable or cancel. As for my project, using purposive sampling allowed me to adjust my research accordingly when a limited number of producers got back to me, eventually including more consumers to slightly shift the focus of the thesis.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Having myself purchased products through the REKO network, this experience allowed me to establish a common ground with the interview participants. However, although my engagement with the network gave me an advantage in my research through an acquired general knowledge about the network, it also ran the risk of increasing bias and the failure of objectivity. I dealt with this in two ways. Firstly, I built into both my interview guide and approach to research considerations for objectivity and reliability. Secondly, I ensured that any conversation of my own experience of the network was addressed at the end of each interview so that I did not influence the views, thoughts and information given by each interview participant. Similarly, my background in small-scale farming through my upbringing was not something I disclosed to the participants unless they asked, and only at the end of the interview.

Some benefits of interdisciplinary research are the scope and scale, as well as the depth, of what it allows you to investigate. Deciding on a research topic and narrowing it down were challenging processes, and resulted in completely changing my research topic and question in September 2019, as such I engaged with limited literature before data collection. In retrospect, engaging with the literature before embarking upon data collection could have given me additional insights or clues as to what to look for. On the other hand, it could also have steered me down a narrow or biased pathway. Thus, with the particular order that the research components were conducted in, I was able to maintain objectivity and an open mind going into the data collection phase. This later resulted in choosing my theoretical framework from the findings that emerged in the empirical data.

I now proceed to present my empirical findings and analysis, and start by presenting my findings from the survey, exploring who the participants in REKO Oslo were. Chapter 5 and 6 explore the establishment of the REKO network, examining the conditions for becoming a REKO consumer. Chapter 7 explores the transition of food systems using examples from my empirical study to explore challenges and opportunities for food systems change in a Norwegian context.

4.8.1 Positionality

“Research is a *process* not just a product” (England 1994, 244, author’s emphasis). It continues beyond communicating the findings and it occurs before commencing data collection (Bourke 2014). Our own biases shape the research process and “Identities come into play via our perceptions, not only of others but of how we expect others will perceive us” (Bourke 2014, 1). Similarly, our position influences the process of reflection: on data, on findings, and the implications of our research (Ibid). Therefore, I position myself as a White, female masters student with a background in social science and international relations to make visible my position and privileges. My undergraduate studies have influenced my research interests to encompass the systemic structures inhibiting and influencing all parts of human and non-human relationships, complexities and workings. Thus, how I have chosen to analyse my data through the theoretical framework presented above, was shaped by my academic background.

Furthermore, I declare my previous background with food, as having partially grown up on a farm in Western Norway has led me to have certain attitudes and beliefs towards food production, including certain knowledge and insight the average Norwegian consumer may not possess. During my interviews, participants were made aware of my participation in the network, which allowed me to establish a common ground from which conversation could emerge, and a mutual understanding that both the participant and I knew what REKO was. However, I ensured that any conversation of my own experience of the network was addressed at the end of each interview. Moreover, unless asked, I did not state my previous knowledge of food production. This was done to not influence the interviewees’ perception of me as something other than a fellow REKO consumer or researcher. Through recognising my biases and identifying my positionality, I gained insight into how my dissemination of the findings was influenced, and how my interviewees could have and perhaps did perceive me.

5 Mapping engagement with ‘alternative’ food: REKO Oslo and its consumers

In the theory chapter, I brought forward how individuals are carriers of practice, and that whether a practitioner adopts a practice is subject to a multitude of complex elements of social, cultural and structural character. Through these elements, we can analytically address the elements which inform and set the precedence for any current and future action amongst participants of both unsustainable and sustainable character.

Drawing on the three circuits of reproduction which presupposes that practices are reproduced through interactions between separate practices (Pantzar and Shove 2010; Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012), this chapter maps out the engagements with consumption by participants in REKO Oslo based on a survey by 269 consumers in two REKO rings in Oslo. First, I present the consumers in REKO Oslo and their socioeconomic status, exemplified through education, to offer an overview of participants from which later analysis can depart. I follow this by mapping their REKO purchasing patterns. The second part of this chapter explores patterns of sustainable consumption amongst participants in REKO and aims to explore whether there is a relationship between the two. Where relevant, I offer a comparison of either REKO Oslo and REKO nationally, or consumers in REKO Oslo and the general urban population, to further illuminate any outcomes that may be specific to participants in REKO Oslo. Thus, in this chapter, I address the first few sub-questions of this thesis: *Who are the consumers in REKO? What role do socioeconomic factors play for participation in an urban AFN, and is there a relationship between participation in REKO and other patterns of sustainable consumption?*

Before examining the socioeconomic status of consumers in REKO, as well as their pre-existing patterns of sustainable consumption, the participating consumers in the network are presented. I first identify who the consumers are, focusing on age, gender and composition of the household, before presenting their REKO consumption patterns. This mapping will function as a springboard for analysing REKO consumption later on.

5.1 Presenting participating consumers

In the following mapping, participants in REKO are identified as either active consumers (have purchased through the network) or dormant consumers (members of the Facebook group, but have not purchased through the network). Doing this enables 1) the comparison of members within the Facebook group and 2) identifies any significant differences between the two groups. The latter is of particular relevance when discussing barriers for participation in chapter 7. The categories of active and dormant consumers run through the entire thesis, and the distinction is utilised where relevant for the analysis.

Both empirical and theoretical research on gender has drawn attention to “the division of labour that gives women responsibility for food preparation” in the household (Little, Ilbery and Watts 2009, 203). According to data from SSB, women spend more time on the purchase and preparation of food in the household than men (Vaage 2012, 84). It can thus be expected that a larger share of consumers in the network are female than male.

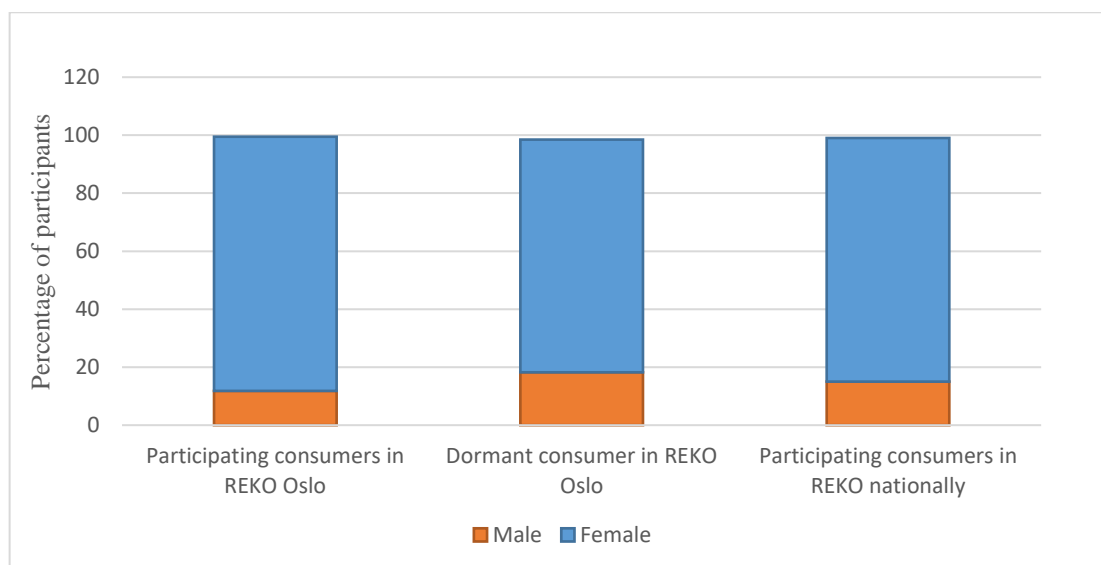


Figure 2 Gender of participants in REKO divided by active consumers (n=203) and dormant consumers (n=66) in REKO Oslo, and consumers in REKO nationally (n = 1534)

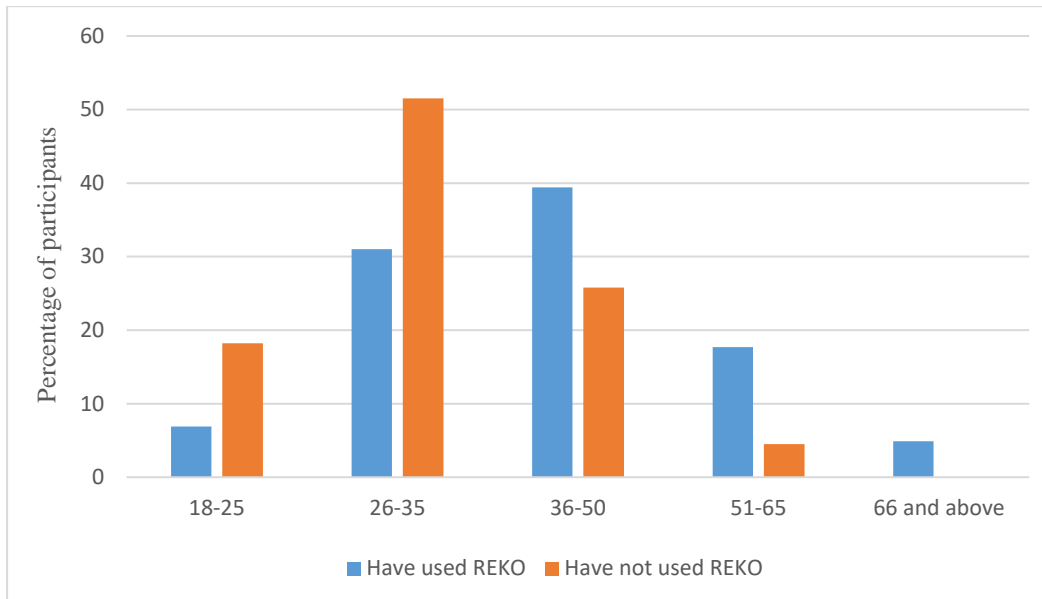


Figure 3 Age groups of participating (n=203) and dormant consumers(n=66) in REKO Oslo

Figure 2 presents the distribution of consumers in REKO based on gender and Figure 3 shows the age of active and dormant participants. A clear majority of consumers in REKO Oslo and REKO nationally were female (Figure 2), thus confirming the aforementioned assumption. About 63 per cent of active consumers were 36 years or older, whilst about 60 per cent of dormant consumers were 35 years or younger (Figure 3). Therefore, according to the findings presented in Figure 4, those who *had not* purchased through REKO were on average younger than those who *had* purchased through the network, suggesting that age is tied to participation. This follows Leikvoll et al. (2020) which found that the majority of consumers in REKO nationally were between 31-60 years old (77 per cent of respondents, n = 1685), with half of the consumers being 41 years or older.

Table 1 Number of people in the household of consumers in REKO Oslo (n=269)

Number of people in the household	Percentage of respondents
1	24.5
2	42
3	20.8
4 or more	12.6

Table 1 presents the number of people in the household of consumers in REKO Oslo. The majority of consumers lived in a small household of either one (24.5 per cent) or two (42 per cent) people. This is in contrast to findings from REKO nationally, where about half of the consumers lived in a household of three (18 per cent) or four or more people (29 per cent). It is important to note that the question only shows the number of individuals living in a household, not the composition of the household. Thus, three members in a household could mean two parents and a child or a single parent and two children. Likewise, two people in a household could be a couple, a single parent or friends co-habiting and sharing costs of living. Nevertheless, the findings in Table 1 demonstrate that the majority of consumers in REKO Oslo shop for one or two people, suggesting that the network to a larger extent appeal to smaller households.

5.2 Patterns of REKO consumption

At the time of surveying, REKO Oslo had 14,500 members. Although suggesting that the network was popular, the number of members does not indicate consumption nor the importance of REKO participation within the food purchasing practice. Figures 4 and 5 show patterns of consumption in REKO.

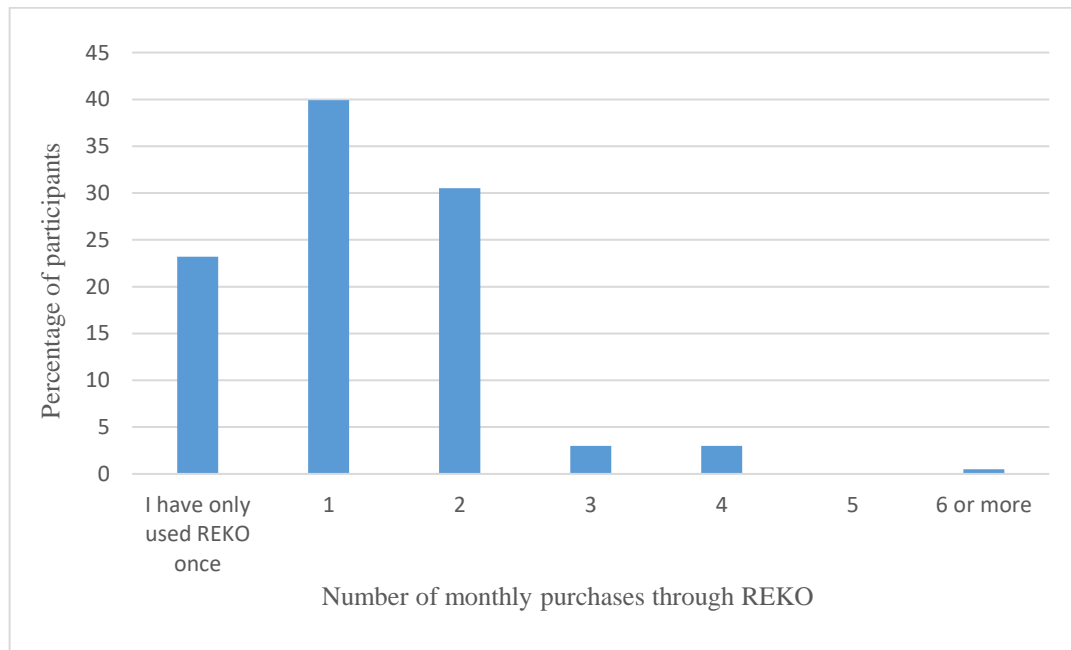


Figure 4 Frequency of purchase in REKO Oslo by consumers (n=203)

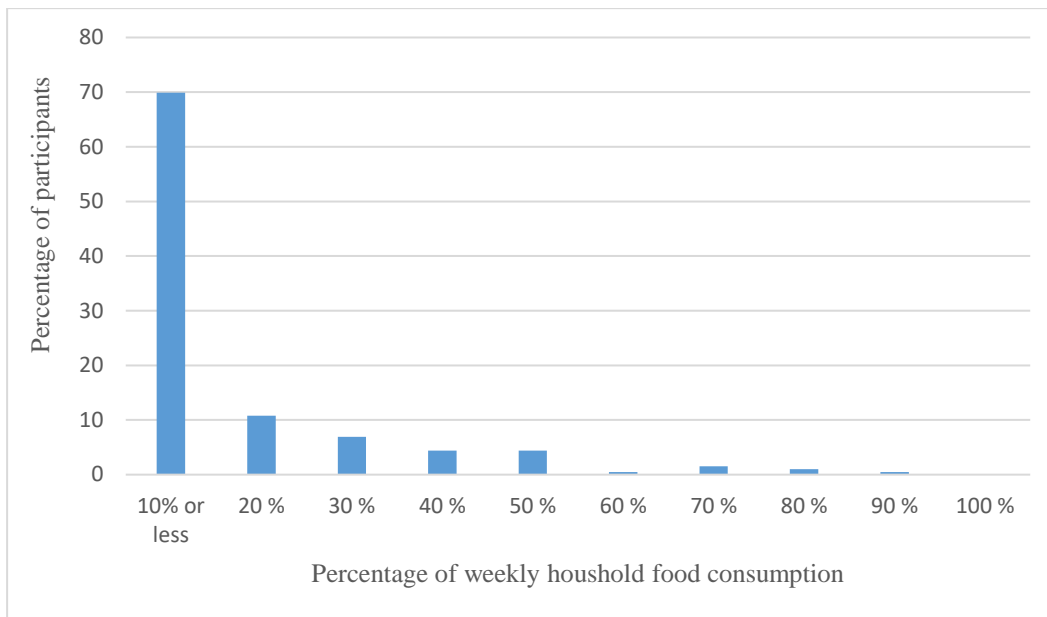


Figure 5 Average of weekly household food consumption purchased through REKO (n=203)

Figure 4 presents the number of monthly purchases in REKO by consumers in REKO Oslo, whereas Figure 5 presents the percentage of weekly food consumptions from REKO amongst consumers in the network. About 40 per cent of the participants used REKO once per month, while 37 per cent used REKO twice per month or more often. About a quarter of the respondents had only used REKO once (Figure 4). The majority (70 per cent) of consumers in REKO Oslo purchased 10 per cent or less of their weekly household food through the network (Figure 5). Thus, despite 37 per cent of consumers purchasing through REKO Oslo twice per month or more often, the importance of this food measured as the volume of weekly food consumption was small. However, as deliveries in each ring only occurred twice per month, purchasing through REKO Oslo was likely supplementary to other purchasing patterns. Therefore, according to the findings presented in Figures 4 and 5, REKO had not established itself as a reliable and “go-to” source for food for its members, and it is thus argued that the REKO consumption was an irregular niche activity for the majority of the participants.

Figure 6 gives an overview of the products consumers in REKO purchased through the network. It shows the popularity of different food groups amongst participants.

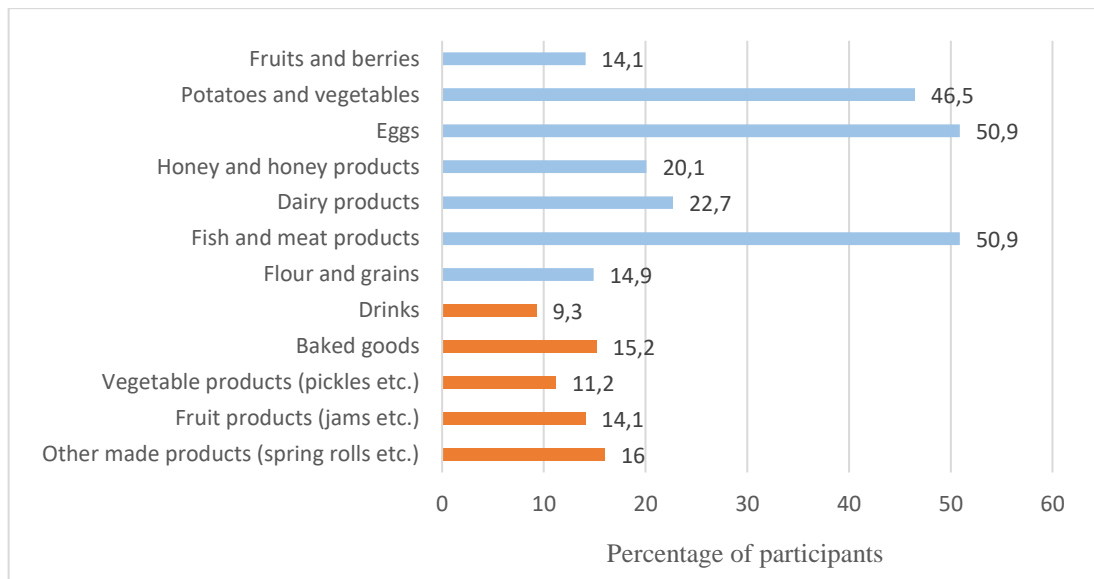


Figure 6 Overview of products normally purchased by each respondent in REKO (n = 203), in each product category, multiple answers

Figure 6 presents the products consumers in REKO Oslo had purchased through the network. The findings show that primary products were most popular amongst consumers in the network. Half of the consumers had purchased fish and meat products (51 per cent) or eggs (51 per cent), whilst 47 per cent had purchased potatoes and vegetables. On the other hand, only a minority of consumers had purchased manufactured products such as jams, pickles, drinks and spring rolls. This follows the findings by Leikvoll et al. (2020) that consumers in REKO desired primary products, particularly vegetables. As such, according to the findings presented in Figure 6, we can argue that REKO Oslo was first and foremost a network for purchasing primary products, with manufactured products being less popular.

5.3 The socioeconomic status of consumers in REKO

The availability of and access to healthy, affordable and sustainable foods have historically been linked to an individual or group's socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is used to measure the combined social and economic position of an individual or group within a social structure or hierarchy and is oftentimes measured through income, education and occupation, or a combination of similar factors. Through the examination of socioeconomic status, inequalities in terms of accessing resources, having privilege, and the social, cultural, political and financial power available to an individual, are revealed (Baker 2014). Relating to food, having

a lower socioeconomic status is linked to malnutrition and poor access to healthy, sustainable and affordable foods (Warde 2011; MacKendrick 2014). Similarly, high social, cultural and economic status is linked to higher consumption (Hansen 2012), and income and wealth facilitate access to healthy, fresh and sustainable foods, a greater range of choice in foods, and the opportunity to act following personal food ideologies (MacKendrick 2014). Observing so-called sustainable alternatives to food, clothing and transport in Norway, these are oftentimes more accessible to those with higher income. Purchasing sustainable clothing, although of higher quality and more likely to last, thus reducing the overall cost per use of the item, has a higher up-front cost than sweatshop produced garments from the high street. Similarly, travelling by train is oftentimes costlier than by plane, especially travel on short notice. For foods, local or organic products are oftentimes costlier than their conventional or imported counterparts (Nibio, Matportalen). Thus, based on these insights, scholars should assess at least one socioeconomic element when researching AFNs. Therefore, this section explores the relationship between participation in REKO and level of education as a socioeconomic factor influencing consumption.

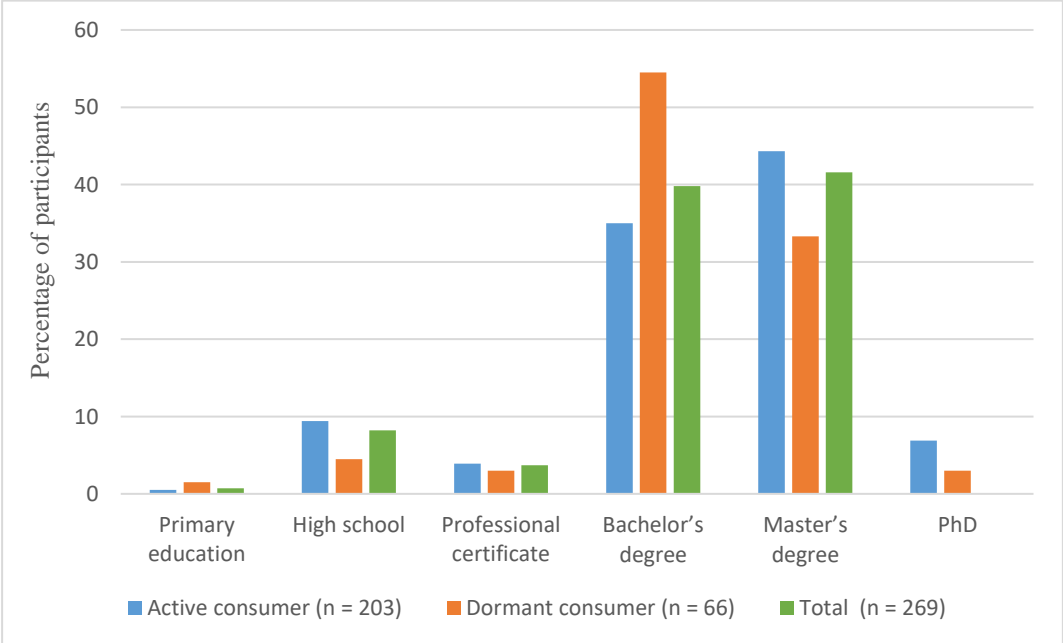


Figure 7 Highest obtained level of education amongst consumers in REKO Oslo

The findings in Figure 7 show that the level of education is found to be high²⁰ amongst consumers in REKO. The majority had a bachelors’ degree or higher, whilst only 8

²⁰ High education is derived from the term higher education which is defined as education that leads to an academic degree. Here, that includes education at bachelors’ level or higher.

per cent had only completed high school. The level of education was slightly higher amongst active consumers compared to dormant consumers.

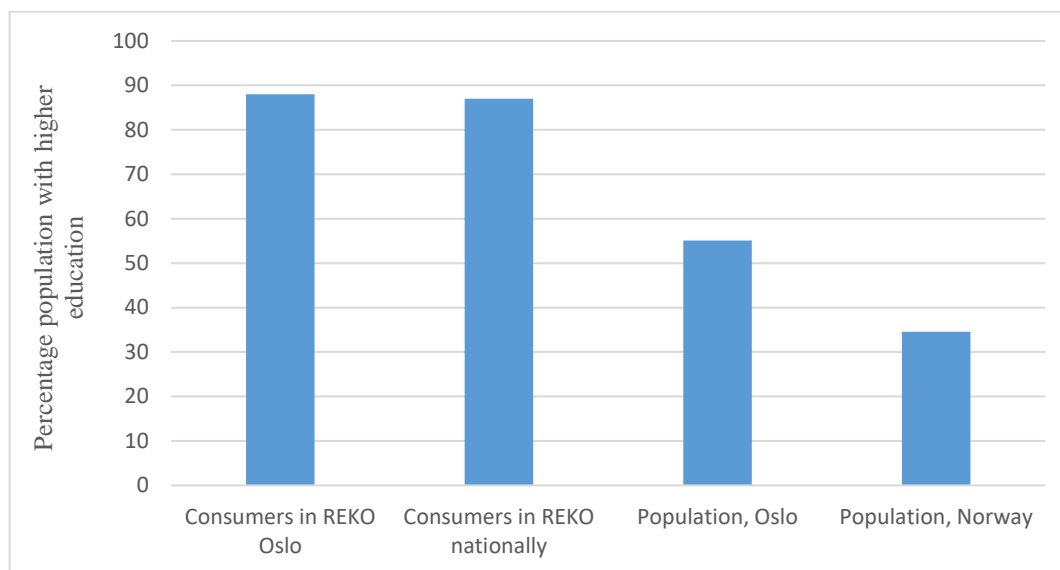


Figure 8 Percentage of population with higher education | Data on education levels of the Norwegian and Oslo general population from the Norwegian Statistical Bureau²¹ (SSB 2019), and REKO nationally from Leikvoll et al. (2020).

Figure 8 shows the level of higher education amongst consumers in REKO and the general population. Whilst nearly 90 per cent of consumers in REKO had education at bachelors' level or higher, only 55 per cent of the population in Oslo and 35 per cent of the population nationally had completed education at Bachelor's level or higher. The obtained degree was also higher amongst consumers in REKO. For example, as Figure 7 shows, 5.9 per cent of consumers in REKO held a PhD, nearly five times higher than the national average at 1.0 per cent (SSB 2019, education levels in the population). The findings from Figures 7 and 8 thus indicate a considerably higher level of obtained education amongst consumers in REKO compared with the general population.

Based on the survey we do not know the field of education nor whether the consumer has an occupation relevant to their education, which makes it difficult to identify the extent to which the education itself matters. Moreover, as the respondents were not asked about their level of income, we do not know the significance of this, nor the relationship between education and income in influencing REKO engagement.

²¹ It should be noted that the data from the REKO survey only includes people of 18 years or older, while the data from SSB includes those of 16 years or older. However, the data gives an indication of the difference between those who have purchased through REKO and those who have not.

Nevertheless, the role of education is significant to consumer participation in REKO. One reason for this might be that an individual with university-level education might be more likely to seek out alternative ways of consuming following political ideals or values. Data from SSB show that those with higher education are more likely to partake in political processes such as being a member of a political party or voting at the general election (Kleven 2019). Whilst REKO is not a political institution²², it operates through a set of principles that might be argued as of political character by some. Likewise, individuals who have obtained degrees within fields such as social, environmental or political science might seek out alternatives like REKO based on their existing knowledge of relevant areas. Nevertheless, Figures 7 and 8 demonstrate a relationship between participation in REKO and obtained level of higher education. Therefore, based on the substantial difference between consumers in REKO and the general population, the argument is made that higher education enables participation in REKO.

5.4 Patterns of sustainable consumption

As “the range of practices in existence today results from an unbroken lineage of past patterns of persistence, transformation and disappearance” (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012, 64), existing consumption influences future consumption. This applies to both collective practice and the individual carrier of practice, as the latter is informed and guided through his or her embedded knowledge and perceptions. Moreover, according to Shove and colleagues (Ibid), “inter-practice relations” affect individual practices, and are part of maintaining them through circuits of reproduction. As such, mapping existing patterns of sustainable consumption amongst consumers in REKO Oslo allows us to identify whether there is a relationship between these practices and the new engagement with an alternative food network, and potentially demonstrate the relevance of this to participation in REKO.

A prerequisite for sustainable practice is for ecological options to be readily available to the consumer, and for the consumer experiencing environmentally sound consumption, to be equally or less challenging than regular consumption. This can

²² Political here refers to serving a political agenda in line with party politics or clear left, centre or right leaning views.

involve infrastructure, distance or general knowledge of what a sustainable choice is. Figure 9 presents how consumers in REKO experience making sustainable choices.

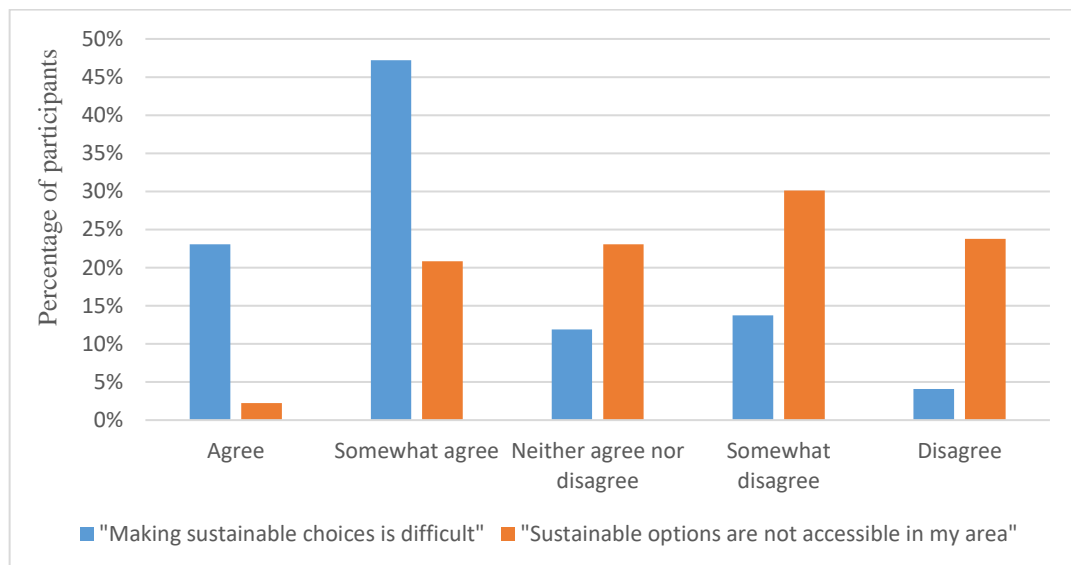


Figure 9 Perception of sustainable choices and options by consumers in REKO Oslo (n=269)

As presented in Figure 9, consumers in REKO are generally satisfied with the accessibility of sustainable options in their area, with more than half of the respondents stating that they somewhat or fully disagree with the statement “Sustainable options are not accessible in my area”. One fifth of respondents does however somewhat agree that sustainable options are inaccessible to them and 23 per cent neither agree nor disagree, suggesting that the accessibility to sustainable options could be improved for a significant portion of REKO consumers. Furthermore, a clear majority of the participants find making sustainable choices to be difficult, with 70 per cent of respondents agreeing or somewhat agreeing with the statement “Making sustainable choices is difficult”.

The survey does not reveal why participants find making sustainable choices challenging, nor which areas of consumption this apply to in their given context. However, Figure 9 indicates that the majority of consumers in REKO, although pleased with the accessibility of sustainable options available, are finding making these choices difficult. As such, we can assume that the challenges of making sustainable choices are less related to the accessibility of such options and that other factors, such as infrastructure, existing practices, cost, convenience, or lack of knowledge, are of greater importance.

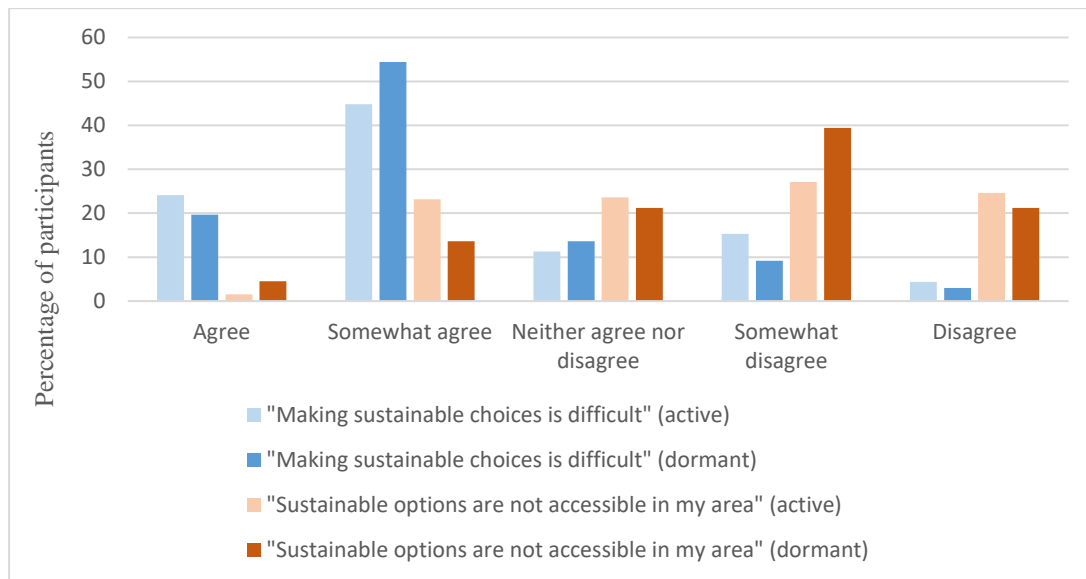


Figure 10 Perceptions on sustainable options and choices by active (n=203) and dormant (n=66) consumers in REKO Oslo

Figure 10 shows that there is a minor difference between active and dormant consumers in their experience of sustainable accessibility. Dormant consumers overall find sustainable options to be more accessible than active consumers, while active consumers find making sustainable choices to be more difficult than dormant consumers. Perception of sustainable accessibility, therefore, might be a factor in whether a consumer engages with REKO or not, but the difference is minor and we can therefore not draw any conclusions based on the data material. Thus, the findings presented in Figures 9 and 10 suggest that sustainable accessibility plays a minor role in determining participation in REKO Oslo and that other factors such as existing practices are more likely to be of importance. I therefore now turn to the participants' pre-existing patterns of sustainable consumption.

5.4.1 Consuming food

Food is at the pinnacle of sustainable development (SDG2), and changing practices of sustainable food consumption is key to reaching both the SDGs and global warming reduction targets. Similarly, the Norwegian government sees changing food consumption and our diets in a sustainable manner as necessary to meet our sustainable development targets (Regjeringen 2019b; Klimakur 2030, 2020). Table 2 presents sustainable food consumption in the home by participants in REKO as a matter of *choice*.

Table 2 Percentage of consumers in REKO making sustainable food choices at home (n=203)

“I make sustainable food choices at home”	Percentage of active consumers
Agree	39
Somewhat agree	42
Neither agree nor disagree	15
Somewhat disagree	3
Disagree	1

Table 2 shows that the majority of active consumers in REKO Oslo claim to make sustainable food choices at home. Only 4 per cent either somewhat disagree or disagree with the statement, whilst more than 80 per cent of the participants somewhat or fully agree and thus perceive their own eating as being sustainable to a certain extent. However, participants were not asked about their perception of what sustainable meant, and neither were they given a definition. Moreover, their answers might have been skewed by an idealistic perception of themselves, and not reflect actual sustainable food consumption in the home. Indeed, “people who espouse green values do not always act in accordance with them” (Shove 2010, 1276). Furthermore, “choice” presumes a rational actor, however, sustainable actions are less so the result of behaviours and choice as it is of systems and structures which form, influence and determine consumption (Spaargaren 2003; Shove 2010). Nevertheless, Table 2 shows that participants *perceived* their consumption to be sustainable and that participants in REKO Oslo claimed to consume so-called sustainable foods as part of their diet. Thus, it suggests that participation in REKO is part of an *idea* amongst consumers in REKO that sustainable food consumption is at least partially a choice, and that a clear majority are enacting their ability to choose sustainably.

According to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), practices are interconnected with other practices in bundles or complexes. Trying to change practice can thus be challenging, as these practices create interconnected dependencies. For example, the practice of automobility has shaped many of our social structures, thus having to be

considered when attempting to change many other practices (Urry 2004). Indeed, the rise of the car and driving has significantly influenced and shifted food consumption practices, as driving allows for larger quantities to be purchased at once and transport via lorry or by sea have diversified the availability of products in Norwegian supermarkets throughout the year. In the case of food consumption, we can, therefore, assume there to be a relationship between multiple food practices, and food practices and other practices such as driving. Figure 11 shows the relationship between local and organic food purchasing and the consumption of sustainable foods at home.

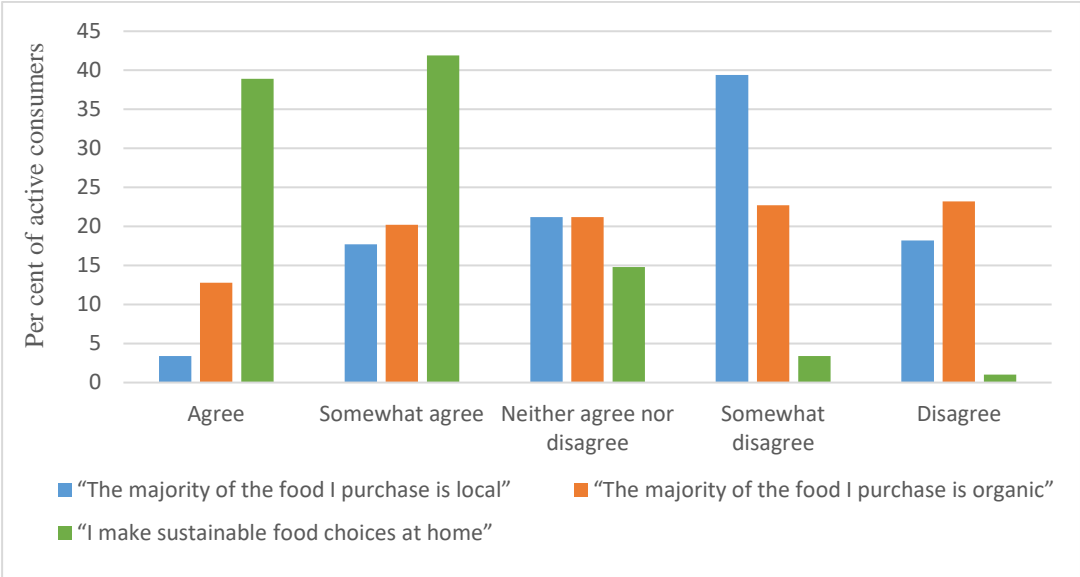


Figure 11 Relationship between sustainable food habits at home and purchasing organic and local food amongst active consumers in REKO Oslo (n=203)

The findings presented in Figure 11 indicate that although the majority of respondents claimed to consume sustainable foods at home, neither local nor organic foods were significant to this practice. There is an observable difference in participants’ stated food consumption practices at home, and their practice of purchasing local or organic foods. However, local and organic are not the only indicators of sustainable purchasing, nor are they necessarily sustainable (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). Besides, Figure 11 did not include other sustainable food consumption such as reducing meat, veganism, seasonal produce or eating foods with a proven low carbon footprint, and so the extent to which their food choices are sustainable cannot be accounted for. Regardless, Figure 11 might indicate that sustainable shopping practices are less routinised and normalised than suggested through the participants’ claims to sustainable food consumption.

The findings from Figure 11 suggest that the link between claimed sustainable consumption at home and sustainable purchasing were less significant than previously assumed, at least of local and organic foods. Figure 12 demonstrates the frequency of consuming low-emission foods, exemplified through reducing meat consumption and opting for local food (tied to food miles).

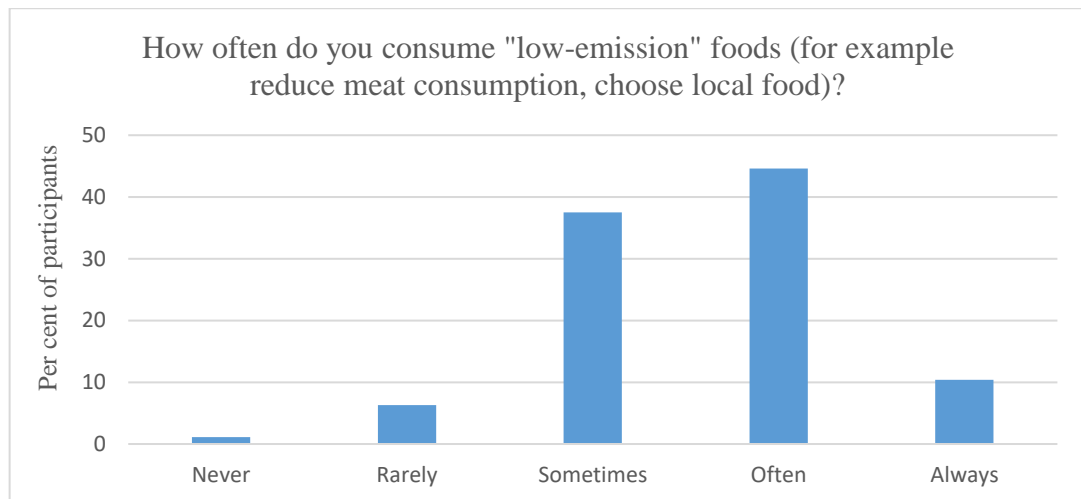


Figure 12 Frequency of consuming low-emission food amongst participants in REKO Oslo (n=269)

The findings illustrated in Figure 12 indicate that the majority of consumers sometimes or often choose low-emission foods when consuming. However, only 10 per cent of consumers always choose low-emission foods. This demonstrates that consuming climate-friendly food is prevalent, albeit not the only element of food practice in place amongst consumers in REKO. Figures 11 and 12 thus show that while participants in REKO claim to consume sustainable low-emission foods at home, local and organic food purchasing is not prioritised. One reason for this might be that consumers engage in other sustainable purchasing practices, such as reducing meat or purchasing products that are about to go off. Indeed, several survey respondents commented that they followed a vegan or vegetarian diet, hinting at habits of their sustainable consumption not being presented as options in the survey. The findings suggest that the majority of REKO participants consume sustainable foods regularly, but it is not the only type of foods they consume. Thus, Figures 11 and 12 demonstrate a relationship between pre-existing patterns of sustainable food consumption and participation in REKO. However, it does not show a link between purchasing organic and local foods and participation in REKO.

5.4.2 Sustainable transport and regulating energy

The findings from the previous section demonstrated a relationship between sustainable food consumption patterns and REKO participation. Here, the relationship between REKO participation and other sustainable patterns of consumption will be explored. Amongst these, the practices of heating and adjusting temperatures, regulating energy consumption, low-emission transport alternatives for long-distance travel and sustainable transportation for short-distance travel, were found to be of relevance. Figure 13 demonstrates the frequency of the aforementioned sustainable patterns amongst consumers in REKO (see Appendix 3 for an overview of the survey).

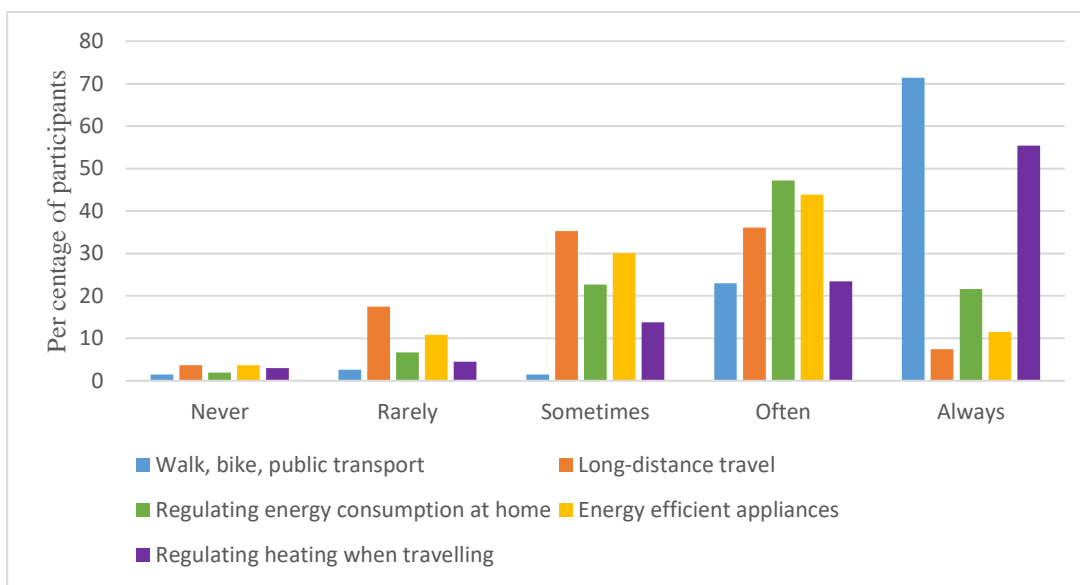


Figure 13 Frequency of sustainable behaviours of energy consumption and transport amongst consumers in REKO Oslo (n=269)

The findings from Figure 13 show that participants in REKO were engaged in sustainable patterns of consumption related to energy and transport. The majority of consumers engaged in all practices sometimes or often, whilst about 70 per cent of participants in REKO walked, biked or took public transport as part of their daily commute. Similarly, more than half of consumers turned down the thermostat when going away, suggesting an awareness of the link between heating and energy use. However, the question does not indicate *why* the participants turned down the thermostat, and the motivation might have been financial rather than a concern for the environment (or both). Figure 13 shows sustainable patterns of both regular and irregular character, such as daily commuting alongside more infrequent long-distance commuting practices. To examine the relationship between REKO participation and

sustainable consumption patterns more closely, the two routinised (see Halkier 2009) practices of transport and energy are given further attention.

The majority of participants engaged in sustainable patterns of reducing energy consumption and opting for sustainable transport sometimes or often. Figure 14 shows the distribution of participants' frequency of regulating their household energy consumption through practices such as turning off the lights and unplugging electrical appliances

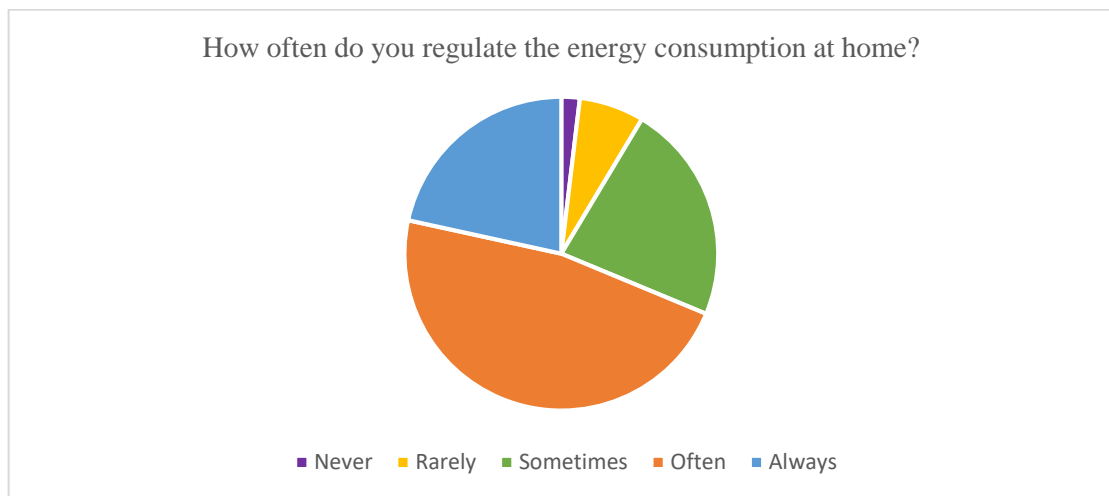


Figure 14 Frequency of regulating energy consumption through different practices at home for REKO participants (n=269)

The findings presented in Figure 14 show that 47 per cent of the consumers in REKO Oslo *often* regulated their energy consumption at home, while 22 per cent *always* did. Thus, nearly three-quarters of the surveyed participants held habits of regulating energy consumption in the home, indicating the existence of routinised sustainable patterns of consumption. Figure 14 thus demonstrates a link between the sustainable practice of regulating energy consumption and participating in REKO. Figure 15 shows the frequency of sustainable commuting amongst participants in REKO Oslo.

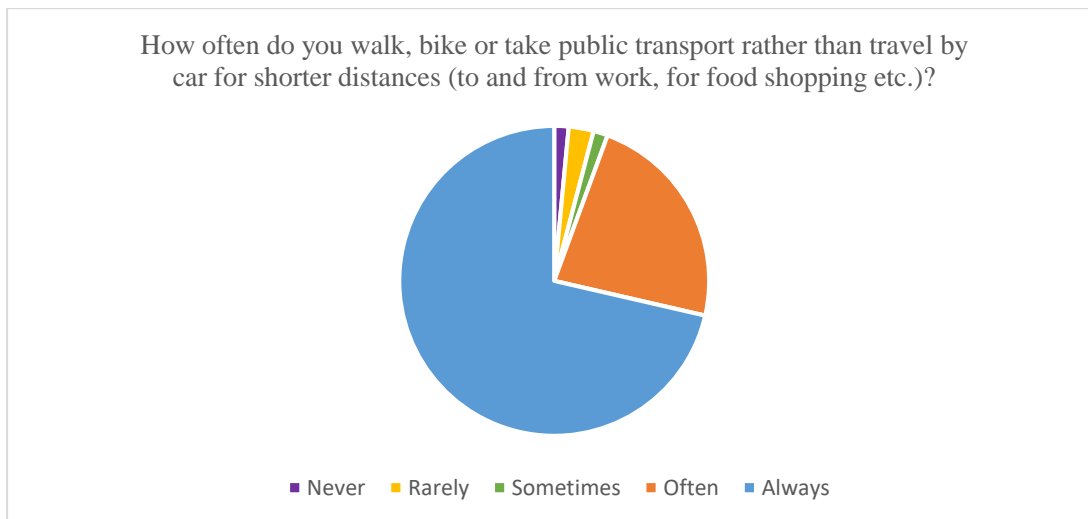


Figure 15 Frequency of regular sustainable commuting amongst REKO participants (n=269)

Figure 15 demonstrates the relationship between sustainable commuting and participation in REKO. It shows that a quarter of participants always walked, biked or took public transport when travelling shorter distances like to and from work or to do grocery shopping. One explanation for this, other than performing sustainability through practices, is that many of those living in Oslo may not own or have access to a car. Parking spaces are limited and with adequate public transport nearby, many do not need a personal vehicle. In any case, Figure 15 shows that participants in REKO were engaged in a regular and routinised practice of sustainable commuting. This is consistent with the finding regarding sustainable food consumption, which showed that consumers in REKO claim to make sustainable food choices at home (Table 3). It indicates that patterns of sustainable food consumption exist alongside patterns of routinised energy regulation (Figure 14) and sustainable commuting (Figure 15).

However, although the findings presented in this chapter suggest a *relationship* between sustainable consumption patterns related to food, energy and transport, and participating in REKO, it does not demonstrate causality. The findings in this section do not include data for those who are not members of REKO Oslo. As such, no conclusions can be drawn to the *significance* of previous patterns of sustainable consumption on *determining* whether someone becomes a REKO consumer. If the relevant data were available, it could potentially demonstrate that non-members had higher engagement with sustainable patterns of consumption than REKO consumers.

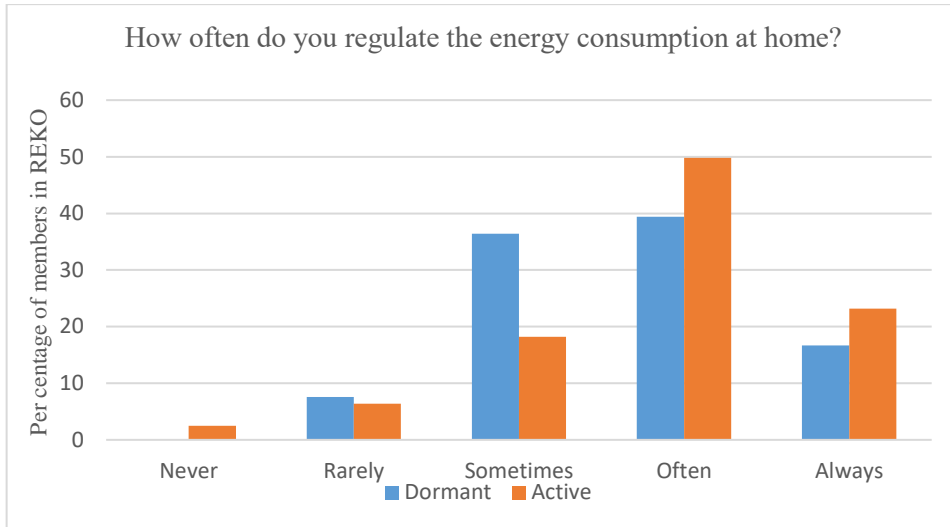


Figure 16 Frequency of regulating energy amongst dormant (n=66) and active (n=203) consumers in REKO Oslo

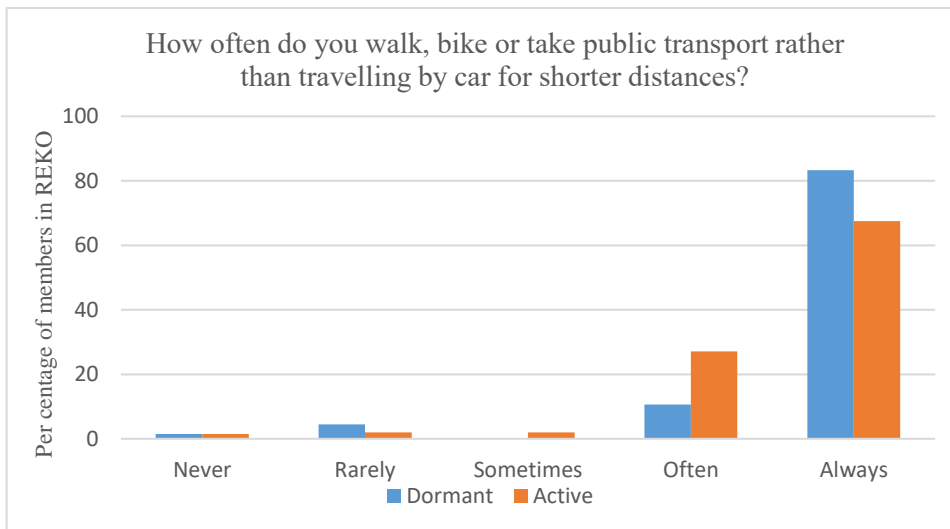


Figure 17 Frequency of sustainable commuting amongst dormant (n=66) and active (n=203) consumers in REKO Oslo

Figure 16 present the frequency of regulating energy amongst active and dormant consumers, and Figure 17 present the frequency of commuting amongst active and dormant consumers. As the findings from Figures 16 and 17 illustrate, there is little difference between the sustainable patterns of dormant and active consumers. Therefore, we can assume that the findings from Figures 14 and 15 are not exclusive to consumers in REKO. This suggests that the patterns of sustainable consumption presented in this sub-section are not exclusive to consumers in REKO. As such, the findings in this section only demonstrate a relationship between participation in REKO

and other sustainable consumption patterns, not the significance of this relationship, the impact or whether there is a causality between the two.

5.5 Findings, discussion and limitations

In this chapter, I have carried out a “mapping” of participants in REKO Oslo and their engagement with the network to offer a background from which further analysis and discussion in this thesis can occur. Utilising practice theory, I explored the consumption patterns of participants in REKO Oslo, their socioeconomic status related to education, their perceived access to and of sustainability, and other patterns of sustainable consumption. I presented findings related to three different sustainable consumption practices: sustainable food consumption, energy regulation and sustainable transport. The relationship of these practices with the overall consumption in REKO was examined to identify the links between existing sustainable practices and the participation in a new network of alternative consumption.

According to Halkier (2009), sustainable consumption can appear either *as* food practice or *as part of* food practice, thereby making alternative food consumption “multi-relational”. In other words, novel sustainable food consumption does not necessarily constitute new practices but instead often reconfigure whole or specific elements of existing food practice. The findings in Figures 4 and 5 demonstrated that participation in REKO was infrequent and a supplementary activity to other practices of grocery shopping. Therefore, I argue that consumption through REKO cannot be considered a routinised practice but instead an element of conscious deliberation within existing food purchasing practices. Moreover, following Halkier (2009), I therefore maintain that consumption through REKO must thus be considered *as part of* existing food practice as a niche activity of sustainable consumption.

However, although the data suggest that REKO is of little importance in terms of daily food consumption for participants in the network, the context in which the data was gathered must be considered before drawing any conclusions. The findings combined with the research context prompt the need for further research to establish the *significance* of REKO purchasing in the everyday lives of participants.

Based on the findings in Figures 7 and 8, I argued that education is important for participation in REKO and that research on *why* participants engage in an AFN must

include consideration for at least one socioeconomic factor. Alternative food networks have been criticised for favouring higher socioeconomic status (education, occupation and income) through their organisation and structure (Zoll et al. 2017). Indeed, participation in an AFN oftentimes requires the competences, time and money to consume differently to the practices of the incumbent regime (Watts, Little and Ilbery 2018). Although the respondents in this survey were not asked about their income nor occupation, higher education is linked to a stable income (Nygård and Boateng 2015), and thus might be reflective of other socioeconomic factors that influence participation in REKO. Furthermore, in the urban context of Oslo, education as a socioeconomic determinant can therefore be expected to play a role for consumers' involvement with REKO and other AFNs, as the level of education and income is generally higher than in the districts.

Next, I showed that participants in REKO found making sustainable choices to be difficult, but that this was not a result of the accessibility of sustainable options in their area (Figures 9 and 10). In light of this, I argued that sustainability involved *more* than access, and includes other factors, such as practices, infrastructures, and embedded knowledge. Following this, I presented the sustainable food consumption patterns of participants in REKO. I found that while the majority of participants claimed to consume sustainably at home (Table 2), including consuming low-emission foods regularly (Figure 12), this was not reflected in their purchasing patterns, exemplified through local or organic foods (Figure 11). However, local and organic foods are not the only ways in which a consumer can consume sustainably. Indeed, as many survey respondents illuminated, they ate vegan or vegetarian foods. As such, I maintain that patterns of sustainable food consumption did exist amongst participants in REKO Oslo.

Nevertheless, the findings from this chapter suggest that purchasing patterns of alternative or sustainable consumption were irregular. Therefore, I expand on the argument of REKO as *part of* existing food practice and argue that consumption in REKO must be considered a niche activity rather than a food purchasing practice of its own.

Furthermore, the findings from this chapter demonstrated that there was a relationship between other sustainable patterns of consumption and participation in REKO, as

evident in the findings from Figure 13. Indeed, one finding I brought forward in this chapter was the relationship between routinised sustainable practices of commuting and energy regulation and REKO participation, which showed a link between commuting, energy regulation and purchasing through REKO. However, as I argued in the previous section, the relationship is not necessarily significant, as the results do not show any causality, nor do they include a comparison with the general population to determine whether this is unique to consumers in REKO. As such, although a relationship is demonstrated, we do not know the impact and relevance of this on REKO participation or consumption. Regardless, I argue that existing practices of sustainable consumption must be considered when examining participation in an urban AFN, as the prevalence of it can demonstrate embedded knowledge which might influence a prompt to participate in niche communities.

Further enquiry is necessary to fully understand the relationship between socioeconomic status, existing sustainable practices and participation in REKO. The findings do not demonstrate the level of significance of sustainable patterns of consumption on REKO participation, only that such actions had been performed by consumers in REKO at some point. Moreover, although the findings presented in this chapter suggest a relationship between education, sustainable patterns of consumption, and participation in REKO, the findings are insufficient as explanations of *how* and *why* consumer practices change, including explaining *to what extent* these existing practices matter. Statistics enable the suggestion of patterns and systemic structures but may obscure an understanding of the explanatory elements in different contexts. As shown in the theory chapter both structures and agency related to practices, as well as developments at the niche, regime and landscape levels, determine the establishment of new food consumption practice. Indeed, as Figure 4 demonstrated, nearly a quarter of survey respondents had only used REKO once. Thus, to fully comprehend the elements that realise participation in REKO and sustainable food consumption, Chapter 6 will present the findings regarding the becoming of a REKO consumer and discuss *why* participants engage in an alternative food community.

6 Sowing the seeds of change: Shifting practice and growing a niche community

The mapping of REKO consumers in chapter 5 showed that there was a relationship between patterns of sustainable consumption and participation in REKO Oslo. Moreover, I demonstrated that those consuming through the network were more likely to have completed higher education than residents of Oslo as a whole or the general population, which suggests that socioeconomic status and participation in an AFN are related. However, these findings are inadequate in explaining why consumers get involved with REKO Oslo, nor why members continue to participate after the initial trial (first time). In this chapter, I therefore explore the relationship between the motivations and actions of the individual carrier of practice and the growth of the community of REKO practice as a whole, as well as how the community negotiates its boundaries, to address the first part of the main research question: *Who is REKO for and why do participants engage?*

Combining results from the qualitative interviews and quantitative survey, I use social practice theory and the concept of niches (MLP) to explore how participants become REKO consumers. I argue that shared attitudes and beliefs alongside sustainable practices were important for the creation of a community of REKO consumption practice. Although individual practitioners did not have REKO consumption as part of their routinised grocery practice (see chapter 5), their contribution to the community as carriers maintain and reproduce the network. Furthermore, I argue that through the negotiation of boundaries, participants in REKO Oslo are partaking in a process of inclusion and exclusion, which influence both the question of who REKO Oslo is for and what the potential of the niche is. To elucidate this matter, I ask: *How does REKO Oslo explain and negotiate its boundaries for participation and by extension what the network is not (and whom it is not for)?*

I first explore the becoming of a REKO consumer shifting from proto-practice to REKO practice, focusing on participant motivations, engagement, meaning-making and collective agency. I then explore the boundary negotiations that are taking place. Finally, I bring together the findings from chapters 5 and 6 to discuss the first research question as stated above.

6.1 Consumer engagements in REKO Oslo

Becoming a REKO consumer and adopting the REKO practice does not happen in a vacuum: it is the product of experience, personal history, beliefs and the social systems, in which we live, abides by and consumes in (Warde 2005). Likewise, the formation of a new practice is reliant upon a network of interdependent, routinised practices that are part of everyday life (Sahakian and Wilhite 2014). Building on the multi-level perspective addressed in the theory chapter, we also observe the connection between transition at the three levels of niche, regime and landscape, and the formation, stabilisation and dissolution of practices (Geels 2011; Hargreaves et al. 2011) across time and space. New, sustainable consumption thus consists of multiple integrated elements tied directly to and surrounding the activity (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012), guiding and eventually determining the outcome of sustainable reflective action shifting from proto-practice to practice (Ibid).

Table 3 Motivations to participate in REKO Oslo

Self-oriented motivations	Socio-political motivations	Community-oriented motivations
Quality of product	Ecological sustainability	Social interactions and enjoyable delivery
Trust in the producer	Alternative to supermarket	Supporting the farmer
Acquiring knowledge	Animal welfare	Be “part of something”
Health	Ethical food	Supporting local business and value creation
Accessing new foods	Organic food	Supporting local food production/localism
Food interest	Norwegian agriculture is “better”	
Joy of a new experience	Fairness	
Grass-fed meat	Use purchasing power	
Dream of becoming a small-scale producer		
Authenticity		

An overview of the motivations to participate in REKO that emerged in my survey and during my interviews is available in Table 3. The motivations amongst consumers in REKO are divided into three categories: self-oriented, socio-political and community-oriented (Zoll et al. 2018). Also, why this is important when tied together with theory

– why should we/can we care about individual motivations (because they are group motivations, but also that there are wider motivations and not just individual feel-good things).

Returning to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), the processes of emotion, mental activities (such as attitudes and beliefs), and motivational knowledge, are integrated with the element of meaning, “a term we use to represent the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment” (23). The process of creating links first between meanings and thereafter between these elements, competences and materials addressed (later on) is here referred to as meaning-making: or how participants make sense of their engagement with the network. Particularly, meaning-making is important in understanding how practitioners form relations between “shared understandings of good or appropriate performance” (Ibid, 23), competences, and the social and cultural contexts of meanings. In other words, to explain an individual becoming a REKO consumer, we must understand how they create meaningful relations between their inner world, their physical world and the social world around, and how this evolves into consumption as part of established food practice.

6.1.1 Engagement and meaning-making: Making sense of REKO consumption

Whilst the members of REKO might have different understandings and interpretations of food consumption; shared attitudes, purposes, feelings and beliefs across the group must be present for the shared “engagements and the reproductions of [the REKO consumption] practice” (Fonte 2013b, 234). Indeed, according to Sahakian and Wilhite (2014), “Beliefs are also part of our bodily dispositions” (29), or in other words, the agency that resides within the body. With the niche network participation, consumers in REKO establish a link between themselves as a carrier of the particular practice and the social and symbolic significance of being a practitioner within the secluded niche space, thus allowing the integration of reflective with unreflective action in a process of managing novelty (Dwyer 2009). Through this *meaning-making*, consumers in REKO connect different elements of values, beliefs and assumptions, and thus form the “essence” or meaning behind the (REKO) community of practice. Proceeding from the identified self-oriented and socio-political motivations amongst consumers in

REKO Oslo as presented in Table 3, we now explore some of the shared assumptions and beliefs that create the *essence* of REKO participation (as collectively understood by its community of practice).

Ethics and animal welfare

For the interviewed omnivorous consumers in REKO Oslo, the welfare of animals was an important motivation for participation: “When it comes to ethics, I really care about the animals. (...) Are they outside grazing? Are they alright? Do they get to be cows, you know?” [Christoffer*, consumer]. Animal welfare was viewed as a central part of the ethics of food and thus thought to be an essential quality of the products available in REKO Oslo. According to network administrator Karoline*, consumers assumed that the farmers treated their animals with care, and therefore valued the transparency of many producers about their production. Moreover, this assumption was extended to the characteristic of ‘small-scale’: “There is this belief that [purchasing through REKO] supports the small producer who usually does not get by. [There is this] impression that they have a good relationship with animal welfare and treat the earth in a way that (...) makes sense” [Liv*, consumer].

However, as a survey respondent noted, no checks and balances exist in ensuring that high levels of animal welfare are maintained:

“It seems as if consumers think its good animal welfare because its local and there are pictures of the production. I've seen several "industrial", intensive producers on these groups, particularly egg producer with 7500 hens in one house. I don't think these should be allowed to attend Reko.” (Survey respondent 2019).

Indeed, neither producers nor administrators are subject to any controls, as “The REKO model does not include processes that make administrators in the individual local groups accountable for the decisions they make” (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Leipamäa-Leskinen 2019, 16). That way, the products offered at REKO might not have greater levels of welfare for animals than their conventional counterparts. As such, the belief that REKO had greater animal welfare is an assumption rather than a fact. Nevertheless, animal welfare remained as very important for many consumers [Survey respondent 2019], and participants in REKO Oslo instead relied on what

producers were showing and telling them to be truthful [Anne-Marie*, consumer]. Indeed, animal welfare as a ‘value’ of REKO was “commonly developed through trust as much as through verification” (Curry and Kirwan 2014, 344).

Trust in producers and their products

As a network, REKO operates based on trust (see Thorsøe and Kjeldsen 2016). In REKO, trust appears at many points of interaction [Robyn*, administrator] and that way acts as an institutional mechanism of the self-organised network (Thorsøe and Kjeldsen 2016). As Robyn* explained, there is trust between consumers and producers that the former will pick up the products which they have ordered, and between administrators and producers that the producer will show up to the distribution regardless of the number of products sold. Similarly, this trust extends to the producers fulfilling the promises of the REKO initiative, by following national laws and being truthful in their depictions of their production, for example about the welfare of their animals or the agricultural values of the farmer [Anette*, consumer]. Indeed, building on the argument by Curry and Kirwan (2014), how the participants view the producers and whether they trust their claims to certain values, are more important to the consumption practice than verifying these assumptions through for example a visit to the farm. Neither of the two producers interviewed had experienced any consumers wanting to visit them or their production [Didrik*, vegetable farmer; Tina*, honey producer]. Moreover, none of the interviewed consumers had visited any of the production facilities or farms, nor were they intending to, arguing that they trusted the word of the producer. As Anne-Marie* so eloquently put it when talking about REKO facilitating communication between consumer and producer: “I trust them, and I don’t think it necessarily helps to talk to them. If they want to fool me, they will do it.”

Moreover, the lack of needing verification suggests that consumers trusted producers *before* engaging with the network. That way, producers do not need to establish trust, instead, they must merely reproduce and maintain it as consumer participate in the network. One reason for this might be connected to the overall high levels of trust amongst Norwegian consumers (Berg et al. 2006), where any trust in REKO adds on to the general levels of trust amongst Norwegians. Another reason might be that the producers in REKO are transparent and share images, narratives and videos from their farms in the REKO groups or on their own Facebook page. That way, producers

confirm the existing beliefs amongst consumers about who these producers are and which values they reflect. Indeed, when asked about what he perceived REKO's values to be, Tom* mentioned honesty, genuineness and trust. He then followed: "You asked me why I purchase through REKO? That's some of it. And then it's just... It feels close. And it feels safe". Tom's feelings about REKO as trustworthy, genuine and safe were mirrored by other participants as well. Indeed, according to administrator Karoline*, the close interaction between consumers and producers generate higher levels of trust as the producer appear authentic and honest. Thus, the consumer was invited to experience the ethical and local narrative presented in person, rather than through an advertisement or an image on a packet of chicken amongst hundreds like it at the nearest supermarket. That way, the producers reproduced the initial level of trust amongst consumers.

Ecological sustainability

The assumption that the animal welfare of REKO producers was "better", and that consuming meat through the network thus was ethically justifiable, is closely connected with how participants made sense of and explained sustainability. To them, sustainability had an ecological, economic and social dimension, wherein sustainable development involved local as well as global considerations [Liv*, consumer; Robyn*, administrator]. How the consumers in REKO chose to engage with the topic of sustainable consumption can be summarised in Anette's* definition of sustainable food:

"Sustainable food must consider the environment in the broader sense, including the people and animals involved in the production. So, in a way, it's a holistic understanding that food should be produced in a way that allows us to maintain production over a long period. It must take into consideration the resources involved in the production (...) and must take as a starting point the local conditions of the area where the food is produced, as well as the human and social dimension."

Indeed, the local context appeared as an important element to include when considering sustainability amongst the interviewees. As Tom* noted, in a Norwegian context, the question of whether or not to eat meat included a consideration for

preserving the cultural landscape through grazing animals. Moreover, many consumers mentioned the cold climate, arguing that when considering the local conditions for food production in Norway, where the season for plant-based alternatives is short, meat (albeit in smaller amounts than the average Norwegian consumed) could be regarded as sustainable.

The consumers in REKO Oslo that were interviewed agreed that the network offered foods that they considered to be sustainable. Figure 18 presents how important surveyed consumers in REKO Oslo viewed elements of ecological sustainability to be when choosing to participate in the network.

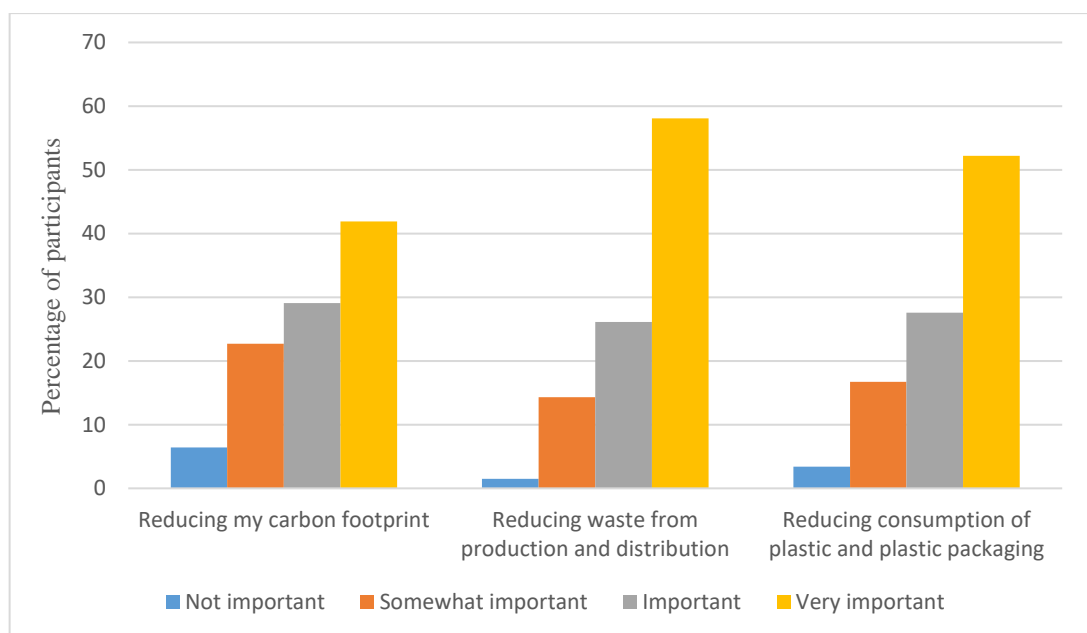


Figure 18 Ecological sustainability as a reason for consumer participation in REKO Oslo (n=203)

The findings from Figure 18 show that ecological sustainability was an important motivational driver for participating in REKO. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of consumers found reducing their carbon footprint to be important for their participation in the network, whilst the majority of consumers found reducing plastic (80 per cent) and waste (84 per cent) as being important. These findings indicate that consumers in REKO found the network to be ecologically sustainable and that these characteristics motivated their participation. This level of importance can be extended to an assumption about the consumers in REKO as eco-minded. Their beliefs about ecological sustainability include how resources should be used and disposed of, thus reflecting some of their environmental values. Indeed, in the words of a survey respondent: “I wish all the plastic wrappings to hell”.

However, purchasing through REKO might not lead to these reductions, despite the removal of intermediaries potentially resulting in limited distribution waste. Pointing towards the sustainable challenges of the network, a survey respondent noted that the pre-ordering, which involved not seeing the products in advance, made it difficult to avoid packaging, as the consumer does not know what (and how much) is used. As a result, the concern for ecological sustainability amongst REKO consumers does not necessarily translate to sustainable practice, despite their efforts or desires to act per their environmental values. Nevertheless, the sustainable motivations of consumers in REKO Oslo suggest shared sustainable beliefs and attitudes resulting in consumption through the network, thus supporting the initial argument that pre-held assumption and values of individuals as shared amongst the community, contribute to the engagement with REKO Oslo.

6.1.2 Collective agency and communities of practice

Agency, as defined by Ortner (1989), is “the capability or power to be the source and originator of acts” (Sahakian and Wilhite 2014, 28). In regards to agency within people as carriers of the REKO consumption practice, Halkier (2009) notes that “practitioner agency is always at the same time conditioned and capable of change, depending upon the specific social and practical constellations” (n.p). In other words, agency is distributed amongst multiple elements that interact and connect, of which the agency of an individual consumer (or the body) in the network is only a small part (Sahakian and Wilhite 2014). Whilst individual action is grounded in thought, concepts and the inner world, REKO consumption as carried by the community (and their shared values and beliefs) engage with materials and the social world around. Thus, to explain consumer agency in REKO, we must start from an understanding that consumers in REKO are part of a community of practice (Lave 2019).

Better access to specific foods

The basic motivational purpose amongst consumers in REKO Oslo was the purchase of ethical, sustainable and locally produced foods directly from the producer with no intermediaries involved in the process. REKO is primarily a network for distributing local food as rings are geographically attached and producers are required to attend the delivery themselves (Norsk Bonde- og Småbrukarlag n.d). Figure 19 shows the

importance of different elements of access, including local food, on the decision to participate in REKO amongst consumers.

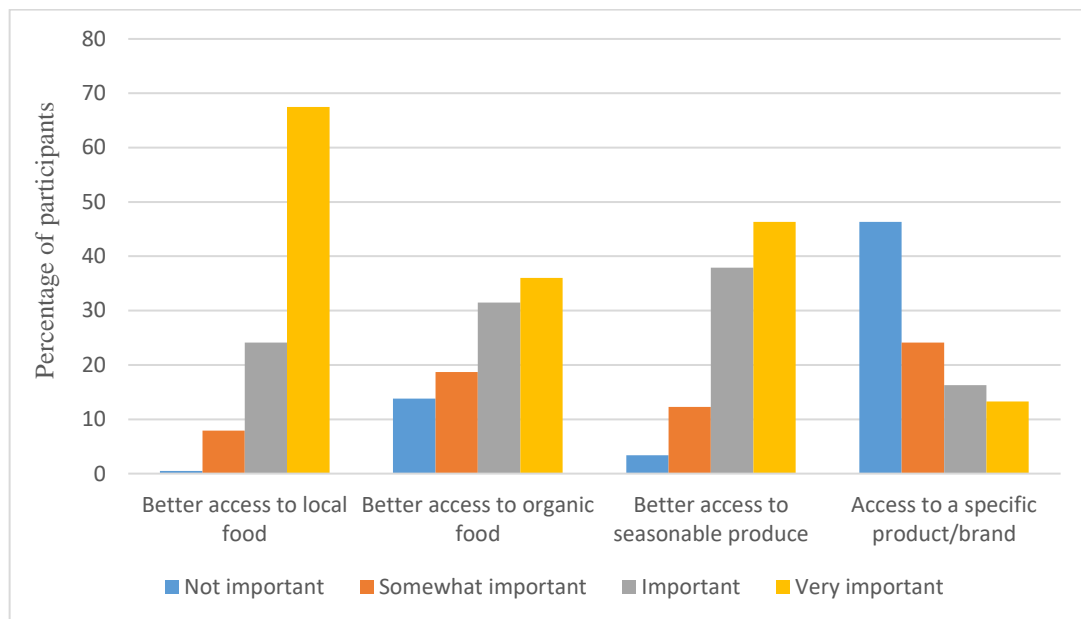


Figure 19 Access as a reason for consumer participation in REKO Oslo (n=203)

The findings from Figure 19 show that better access to local food was important to a clear majority of consumers in the network, with nearly 70 per cent stating it as being very important. Indeed, only one respondent stated that access to local food was not important to their participation in the network. Considering that REKO is a network for the distribution of local food, this being important is unsurprising. However, it does suggest that consumers in REKO have certain (positive) attitudes towards local food that prompt their participation.

It was the belief amongst several interviewed consumers in REKO Oslo, that preserving Norwegian agriculture was of importance and that Norwegian agriculture was carrying its own value: “Norwegian agriculture is important, it is something we must take care of” [Karoline*, administrator]. Indeed, connected to this was an assumption of Norwegian products being “better”. For example, Christoffer* mentioned his attitude towards Norwegian products as of higher quality, and therefore always attempting to choose those products even when not engaging in the REKO practice. Tom*, on the other hand, valued the use of antibiotics in Norwegian meat production, or rather lack thereof compared to imported meats. Another element which appeared of importance to explain why consumers valued local food, was that of sustainability, which will be further addressed later on. However, as Karoline*

reflected on, there is a tendency to regard Norwegian food as more sustainable than imported foods due to the number of food miles. Local food thus becomes an extension of this, by its virtue considered “better” as it is short travelled. Although it is not necessarily true that reducing food miles is more environmentally friendly, indeed, research suggests otherwise (Coley, Howard and Winter 2009), it was the opinion of the majority of consumers interviewed that it was more sustainable. Thus, we can use the framework of ecological sustainability in understanding why consumers valued local food in their REKO consumption practice.

In chapter 5, I showed that although consumers in REKO found sustainability to be challenging overall, they did not perceive accessibility to sustainable options to be part of this (Figure 9). However, Figure 19 suggests that better access to foods of different qualities nevertheless played an important role in consuming through REKO. As demonstrated above, local food was important to the majority of consumers. Furthermore, better access to organic and seasonable products was also of importance, although less so than local food. On the other hand, access to that access to specific products or brands were insignificant amongst the majority of consumers in REKO, with nearly half stating it to not be important. However, the findings from Figure 19 indicate that a shared attitude towards local, organic and seasonal foods as favourable and in some instances better than the option, existed amongst consumers in REKO Oslo, supporting the initial claim that shared beliefs, attitudes and values were of importance to the becoming of the REKO consumption practice.

Supporting farmers

In the past year, increasing attention in the public debate has been given to the relatively low salaries of farmers and agricultural workers. The reason for the low total income of food producers, particularly for small-scale farmers, is complex. As demonstrated in chapter 2, it is often due to structures in the conventional regime favouring large-scale industrialised production at the level of both production and supermarkets (Baumol, Litan and Schramm 2007; Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). The attitude of the consumers in REKO towards participation allowing them to engage in direct producer support, thus exercising their agency, can be summarised in this quote by Anne-Marie*:

“I think it’s important to support people who are trying to live off small-scale [production] (...) and that the farmer who actually lives off it gets a better income, or can get it by selling directly to the consumer. (...) I have heard of those who have quadrupled their turnover, and that means that local producers have the opportunity to expand and invest completely without having a job alongside it.”

Figure 20 presents the importance of agency and supporting farmers directly by consumers in REKO Oslo as a motivation to participate in the network.

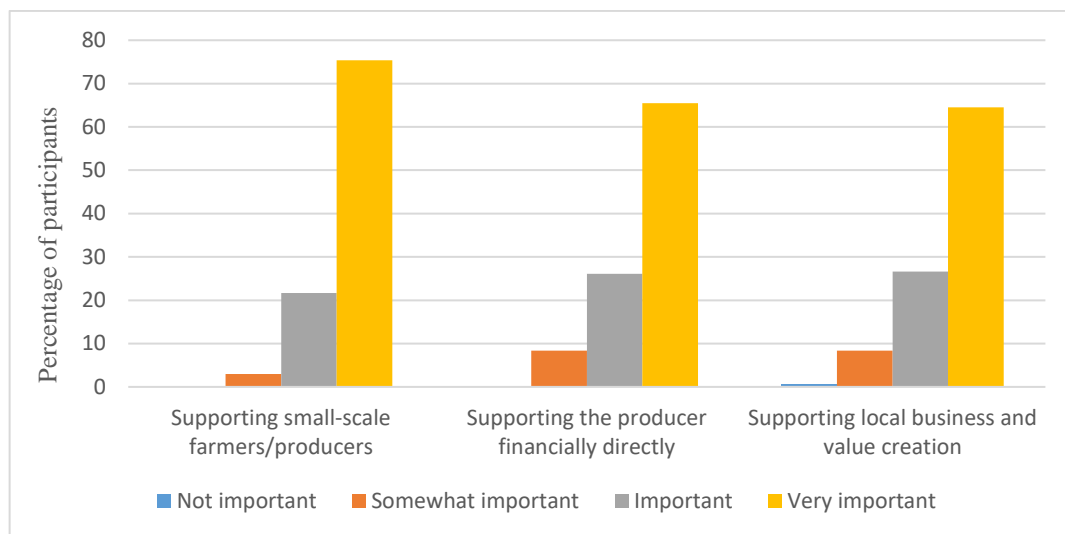


Figure 20 Agency and support as a reason for consumer participation in REKO Oslo (n=203)

The findings in Figure 20 show that the majority of consumers in REKO found supporting producers financially, supporting small-scale producers, and supporting local business and value creation, to be very important for their decision to participate in the network. Indeed, when comparing all motivations by survey respondents, directly supporting producers, as well as local value creation and access to local food, were most important amongst participants. As one survey respondent commented: “The most important thing about REKO for me is that the producer is left with a larger share of what I pay for the product” (translated).

This “desire for agency” was reflected in the participants’ concern for farmers’ financial welfare. Removing the intermediaries from the transaction is a principle of REKO, however, it also appeared as an important motivational factor for choosing to engage with REKO Oslo.

REKO as (an) alternative to supermarket

According to Anne-Marie*, REKO allowed participants to act following ones' own ethical principles. Amongst consumers in REKO Oslo, there was a shared belief and assumption that the network inhibited values of ethics, fairness and sustainability, and that what REKO offered was somehow different from traditional grocery retailers. Indeed, many of the consumers interviewed for this project emphasised how their participation in REKO Oslo was an act of resistance, indicating that REKO possessed some qualities that the supermarkets did not, and that these qualities were in tension with the conventional regime. Describing their participation as reclaiming agency, consumers in REKO Oslo expressed concern for the current state of things, while collectively assuming that REKO as an institution offered an alternative to the 'limitations' of the supermarket. As Liv* iterated:

“REKO is something completely different ... there is something about reclaiming ownership of your community. I find that appealing. That it's not these large chains that are allowed to decide what's available to people. That you can talk to the producers yourself and ask questions, that's something completely different.”

This assumption was also evident in the stated motivations of consumers in REKO as found in the survey. The majority of consumers (80 per cent) found that REKO being an alternative to the supermarket was either important (35 per cent) or very important (44 per cent). Only 5 per cent did not regard REKO as being an alternative to the supermarket as being of any significance to their REKO practice. This suggests that whilst the network in itself held qualities that are appealing to the consumers, such as offering local or organic food, it simultaneously had the added value of being something different. This difference became symbolic of something that the conventional regime was not, indicating tension between the supermarket regime and the niche REKO network (Wenger 2000; Geels 2011). Moreover, as an alternative, REKO thus allows participants who want to fulfil this gap. As one survey respondent put it: “The popularity of the REKO rings show how much people want to contribute to society, something which you today often don't feel like you have the opportunity to. We want to, but we cannot make it happen, the conditions are not right... when an opportunity suddenly appears, a lot of people are ready!” (Survey respondent, 2019, translated).

However, the observation of REKO as an alternative by consumers was not only a result of the network offering different qualities. Instead, for some participants, purchasing through REKO was a resistance of the unfair and permeable structures of the food regime, economic regime and by extension the supermarket regime. As Liv* noted when asked about the essence of REKO: “I want to say that the most important thing for me is the personal relationship you get from it, the fact that you take back power in away.”

The concern for the economic aspect of the supermarket regime and REKO as an alternative was particularly prominent with the two administrators. The following quotes reflect their attitude towards the supermarket regime:

“There are some at the top who sit and earn an awful lot more money than everyone else. And farmers do not earn much on the goods they sell to [the supermarkets] at least. I think people want to be part of changing that. They want to be part of this revolution, they want to be part of taking back power.” [Karoline*, administrator].

“[The supermarkets] run a business. They do exactly what they want (...) and they’re gonna earn max. So, they have no vested interest in building up Norwegian agriculture and business. It's not interesting. They are in it to make money.” [Robyn*, administrator].

Some consumers also expressed their concern regarding this. Speaking in the context of a documentary series on food waste which had, at the time of conducting the interviews recently been released, Lene* expressed discontent with supermarkets’ attitude towards contemporary issues and their role in dealing with them. According to her, the chains needed to take greater responsibility, claiming that: “[the supermarkets] cannot hide behind the fact that “consumers do not want it”. Consumers do not know what they want until the chains give them the opportunity to try it” [Lene*, consumer].

Reflecting the resistance mentioned earlier, Christoffer* was positive to farmers earning more through REKO, explaining his participation as capitalism versus anarchy, suggesting that the REKO food consumption practice extended beyond the realm of mere food consumption. Instead, participation in REKO was a way of

reclaiming economic agency in terms of the distribution of wealth: “It’s a very positive side there [to shopping at REKO], that Rimi-Hagen²³ doesn’t seem to be left with that much at the end of the day”.

Pratt and Luetchford (2014) sum up the essence of the desire to reclaim agency in the food market well: “Markets and commodities connote economic relationships based on self-interest; they are exchanges conducted in terms of monetary values by individuals whose social identities are (generally) irrelevant to the transaction” (12). In other words, in the contemporary food regime, the self (or meaning in the inner world, i.e. knowledge, beliefs, attitudes etc.) is removed from the transaction, and so is the social (meaning in a social and systemic context). Through their REKO consumption then, members return elements of meaning, beliefs and values into the transaction, making food more than a commodity and thus reshaping how food is assumed to in the community of practice as opposed to the expectations of the dominating regime. Indeed, as Kjersti* summarised it: “It is so wonderful to get good ingredients and at the same time do something that is in line with all the values or the world you want. It sort of goes quite politically deep then, and value-wise deep”.

As such, we observe the importance for motivational knowledge (Reckwitz 2016) in a shared framework of beliefs and attitudes (Fonte 2013b) in establishing the REKO community through the becoming of a REKO consumer as a carrier of the community of practice. However, merely being part of this community and engaging with its working infrequently, is not enough to shift established regimes (see Geels 2011) practices to enforce or bring about sustainable transitions. Indeed, according to Shove (2012), the deep structural connections stabilised and habitual practices have cannot be sufficiently disrupted by individual (or community) conscious raising. This was also found to be accurate during my fieldwork.

6.1.3 A new way of doing things? The dominating practice of grocery retail shopping

According to Shove (2012), there is “no reason to suppose that people can be released from the grip of habitual practices by consciousness raising or by bringing taken-for-granted arrangements into view” alone (109). Attempting to change a social practice

²³ Owner of a former Norwegian grocery store corporation.

through top-down pressures in the form of informational campaigns typically have a minor impact (Tukker et al. 2010). Similarly, brief engagements with sustainable consumption do not necessarily bring about sustainable practice. For instance, “meatless Mondays” will not drastically change meat consumption practices, nor will they transform the system of meat provision, such as opting for cotton over polyester shirt will not transform clothing practices. Transition in practice is not the result of individual behaviour change, but instead of shifting structures to make sustainable consumption possible, convenient and affordable (Shove 2014). Hence, the occasional encounter with REKO Oslo does not equal the emergence and adoption of new sustainable food consumption to replace existing conventional practice (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). As Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) call to mind, more than brief encounters are “required if practices are to retain faithful cohorts of suitable committed carriers” (69).

However, as people are carriers of practice (Shove 2014), structural change is unavailing unless both individuals and communities shift existing practice in a sustainable direction or adopt new practices. Despite having declared an intent to resist the ‘supermarket regime’, consumers in REKO largely maintained their conventional grocery shopping practices. Figure 21 presents the source of the majority of groceries consumed in the household of REKO consumers.

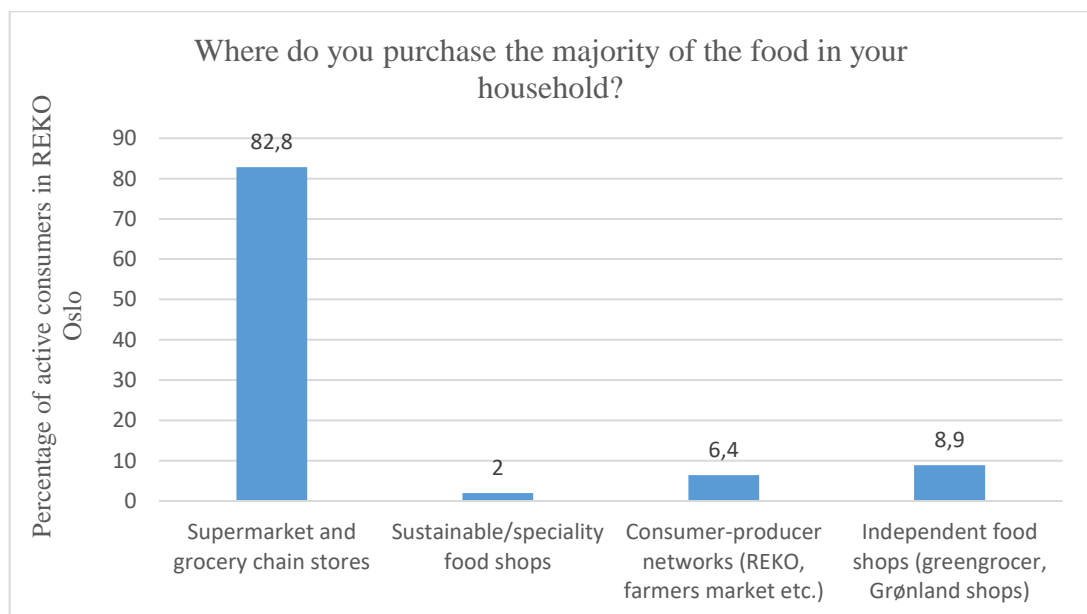


Figure 21 Origin of the majority of purchased food in the household by active consumers (n=203) in REKO Oslo

As the findings from Figure 21 demonstrate, a significant majority (83 per cent) maintained their conventional grocery shopping practice despite purchasing products through REKO. Amongst dormant consumers, the percentage that purchased the majority of their food from supermarkets and grocery chain stores were even higher (96 per cent). This suggests two things. First, that motivations alone (or individual behaviour change based in beliefs and attitudes) cannot change consumption practice, and second, that brief encounters with alternative consumption are not enough to release consumers of the ‘grip of habitual food shopping practices’ (Shove 2012).

As evident in the findings presented in both chapters 5 and 6, consumption through REKO was *part of* the practice of food consumption (Halkier 2009). Rather than being its own practice, consuming through REKO was supplementary to other grocery retail purchasing activities. For example, when discussing her REKO participation, Anette* explained that REKO for her was a source of specific products (alongside an act of political consumerism (see Bossy 2014 and Boström, Micheletti and Oosterveer 2019)). She bought eggs, flour and meat from the network; got vegetables from her own production (when in season); and purchased the remaining food from conventional grocery stores. This approach to consumption through REKO appeared as a pattern also amongst some of the other consumers, and several participants bought (particularly) eggs from REKO Oslo. Nevertheless, also amongst the interviewed consumers, the conventional grocery shopping practice remained strong and most purchased the majority of their foods from the local supermarket. Thus, although having experienced rapid growth and popularity since its establishment, REKO Oslo was only an additional option to the conventional consumption practices of grocery retail shopping.

6.2 Growing a niche and negotiating boundaries: Network practices of inclusion and exclusion

Shared motivations, beliefs and attitudes (Fonte 2013b) are only one element that sustains the REKO community and determines who can become carriers of the practice (or members of the community). Another element is the process of negotiating network boundaries (Wenger 1998; 2000) for the inclusion and exclusion of participants, practices and meanings. According to Ehrnström-Fuentes and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2019), researchers should turn their attention to the processes of defining good and

bad food in AFNs to account for the diversities and flexibilities within and between networks of niche food innovation. Although AFNs often operate based on certain assumptions about the world and conventional food production, consumers are not necessarily motivated by the promise of reducing harm and doing food differently (Ibid). When they are, contradictions and incoherencies exist in regards to what this means. Similarly, conflict is oftentimes present between the different ideas of what remains most important. This way, researching boundary negotiations aid our understanding of what REKO is, who can participate, and where the community of practice resides within the protected sphere of niches.

The very notion of community, including communities of practice, implies the existence of a boundary of inclusion and exclusion, of which both formal and informal principles and norms play a role (Wenger 1998). Indeed, “Shared practice by its very nature creates boundaries” (Wenger 2000, 232). For example, on one hand, the formal boundaries (or institutional organisation) for consumers in REKO Oslo include repertoires, capabilities and ways of communicating, such as being a member of the Facebook group and placing orders through the group. Similarly, the formal boundaries for participation for producers are geographical proximity, following national regulations and laws of food safety, and the size of production. For both consumers and producers, participating in at least one distribution is also a formal boundary. Moreover, within the doings of the network also rests the shared practices amongst participants, which appear as the visual dynamics that define what REKO is and simultaneously distinguishes it from other niche networks (Wenger 2000). Certainly, according to McMeekin and Southerton 2012, “Distinctions between insiders and outsiders ... play a critical role in shaping how [practices] are understood by the different participants, and what the subjective bases of competent and satisfactory performance (including modes of consumption) are for those groups” (350).

On the other hand, both consumption and production in REKO were subject to multiple informal criteria which taken together constituted the boundary alongside the previously defined formal elements. These informal elements were “produced by its members through mutual engagement” (Wenger 1998), and included meanings, worldviews, informal governance and self-organisation, different histories, beliefs, and assumptions about the network or products. According to Ehrnström-Fuentes and

Leipämaa-Leskinen (2019), moral boundaries, “which motivate the actors to join the network to change society” (13), determine how consumers in REKO make sense of what is ethical and what is “good”. The shared attitudes and beliefs identified amongst consumers in the previous section were part of this moral web of meanings (Ibid) alongside ethical prioritisations and social contexts in society and were continuously negotiated between participants and shaped by external niches and the food system at large.

The plurality of motivations amongst consumers in an AFN may lead to confusion, conflict and dissolution (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Leipämaa-Leskinen 2019). The consumers in REKO Oslo generally agreed on the moral boundaries of the network where animal welfare, the health of humans and planet, and a fair income for producers dominated. Although individual variances of moral motivations to participation occurred, they were not significant enough to cause any discussions or negotiations. Instead, disagreement and tension materialised at the intersection of different *market* boundaries, pointing at the challenges of creating a ‘protected’ niche network (Ibid) within the limitations and pressures of the dominating food system (Geels 2011). The negotiations, mainly carried out by producers and administrators, centred on which ‘alternative’ qualities REKO should offer as opposed to the supermarket. REKO Oslo had from the start chosen to restrict access to the network based on the volume of production, instead favouring small-scale producers [Karoline*, administrator]. According to Karoline who founded REKO Oslo, this was due to competition. She argued that: “you have the farmers’ market and you have the food hall and so many other fancy shops that can take in [products] from the slightly larger [producers], so they will be able to deliver anyway. I think that if [REKO Oslo] get the ones that are too big, they will push the prices and ruin it for small-scale producers”. Vegetable farmer Didrik* agreed, and argued that REKO Oslo should be for the small-scale producers who otherwise had limited options in distributing their products and receiving a fair price. Consequently, his boundary led to some producers getting angry as they were excluded from participating in the local rings and accessing the urban consumers in REKO Oslo [Karoline*, administrator].

As a result, the availability of products had to some extent suffered. Many consumers expressed a desire for vegetables and potatoes to be available all year round, or at least for a longer period, and suggested that perhaps allowing larger producers to access

REKO Oslo could fill this gap. Network administrator Robyn* echoed this. She expressed concern over the fact that a limited product range or a lack of producers could result in the decreasing popularity of the network over time. Additionally, she argued that:

“What is the discussion now is that many people expect that REKO is only small scale. It must be sustainable. It should respond to some ethical attitudes that some have. And then it turns out, that everyone knows, after all, that ethics is not a common feeling. Some think that [only small-scale producers] is perfectly fine, while some think it is not okay.”

Moreover, as Karen* argued, *big* did not necessarily mean ‘*bad*’ and larger producers could still produce according to the moral and ethical boundaries of the network. Indeed, participants in AFNs tend to fall in the ‘small-scale trap’ (a play on what Born and Purcell (2006) term the ‘local trap’), assuming something inherently ‘good’ about small-scale versus medium to large-scale food production. Although true in many instances, this is not always the case. Having said that, the majority of consumers still valued small-scale production over product access being stable throughout the year, much due to the previously discussed issue of fair price and supporting the producer directly. Additionally, by upholding the boundary of small-scale production, practitioners in REKO Oslo reproduced the idea of the network offering ‘alternative’ qualities to that of the conventional system. This way, the “othering” of producers outside REKO Oslo was upholding the REKO niche, thus maintaining what the community of practice was not (Wenger 2000).

Another discussion relating to boundaries was that of network governance, or rather the absence of it. Whilst REKO is a network based on self-organisation and the engagement of enthusiastic volunteers, the Norwegian Farmers’ and Smallholders’ Association (NBS) has operated as an advisory organisation since the network emerged, helping administrators set up local rings throughout the country. Recently, NBS has embarked on creating a handbook for REKO nationally which will include guiding principles and regulations as to what the network and by extension each ring will look like (Sagmo 2020). Although open to a certain degree of locally determined adaptation, for some rings this initiative will change how it operates and which producers are allowed to participate.

As an association for farmers, NBS wishes for REKO to be for primary producers, and not for secondary producers or so-called food manufacturers. “One of the principles of REKO is that the person who raised the cattle or grew the vegetables sells the products themselves and receives 100 per cent of the sales price. That is what is meant by ‘without intermediaries’” (NBS project manager for REKO in Norway, Sagmo 2020). She continues: “Butchers and meat processing companies have nothing to do with REKO, as none of these have raised the animals themselves (...) The same goes for much else. Vegetables for example. You can't go to Coop (grocery chain) and buy all the pots of basil and sell pesto at REKO. If you grow basil yourself, however, it is different” (Sagmo 2020).

Although being in line with what current consumers want (Figures 4 and 5), by creating this boundary of scale, REKO risks creating tension within and between rings and potentially leading to conflict. Indeed, according to Ehrnström-Fuentes and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2019) argues that “Setting strict national standards can thereby hamper the emergence of local REKO groups if there is insufficient flexibility to accommodate and negotiate rules according to local circumstances” (13). Thus, assuming these elements will be included in the final handbook, we can expect drastic changes in the way REKO Oslo operates if rings are to follow this line. At the present moment, several of the producers in REKO Oslo are so-called food-manufacturers, including a chocolatier, a few drinks producers, a spring-roll vendor and multiple home-bakeries. With the new regulations, these would not be allowed entry to the network. As such, the handbook can potentially cause tension amongst participants and increase discontent amongst producers as happened under similar circumstances in Finland (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Leipämaa-Leskinen 2019).

The process of negotiating boundaries is important as it defines the “possible transformations that [can] occur within the protective space of the niche alternative” (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Leipämaa-Leskinen 2019, 17). For REKO Oslo, the process of negotiating boundaries determine how the network can develop and evolve. In other words, which boundaries REKO sets determines what the network can be. Moreover, this means that boundaries determine the potential of the community of practice shifting from the niche level to the regime and reconfiguring the food system (Geels 2011). For example, a few consumers mentioned their concern with how Facebook as a platform would cope with the network expanding, suggesting that the process of

ordering would be confusing for both producers and consumers if the network grew. Indeed, both Robyn* and Karoline* mentioned that REKO in Trondheim had had trouble as it grew and distribution included some 50 producers and several hundreds of consumers attempting to pick up their products in an hour. Thus, the materiality of Facebook appeared as a potential limitation to future expansion (Wenger 2000). Furthermore, the requirement of scale as discussed above, present another such limitation, as the small-scale producers were only capable of delivering so much which often resulted in them selling out [Karoline*, administrator; Didrik*, vegetable farmer]. Hence, the market boundary of small-scale represents a defining element of possible transformation that can occur within REKO Oslo, and if the network grows, is bound to emerge as a topic of further negotiation.

That being said, boundary negotiations do not in and of themselves define the scope and limits of REKO. Instead, they allow us to develop an understanding of how REKO interacts with other AFNs within the ‘protected’ niche (Geels 2011). Indeed, according to Wenger (2010), “Boundary processes can merely reflect relations of power among practices, in which case they are likely to reinforce the boundary rather than bridge it” (127). In other words, boundary negotiations identify the contradictions between AFNs that perhaps share similar moral or institutional elements and thus maintain their difference. Amongst the participants in REKO Oslo, this appeared in the process of distinguishing REKO as an ‘alternative’ where the farmers’ market had failed. In particular, consumers and administrators were concerned about how the farmers’ market had pushed out small-scale producers through the cost of participation, pricing amongst producers and the time and resources required to attend [Karoline*, administrator]. Indeed, Lene* also expressed this concern, and extended it to REKO Oslo, saying, “The time is important; it should be an everyday thing. [The producers should not have to] spend their weekend selling, they should be able to have a free Sunday too.” Nevertheless, she confirmed the difference between the two AFNs, noting that REKO generally appeared more accessible for the producers. This way, boundary negotiations become important for understanding the processes of continuation and growth of niche communities of practice and for the establishment of niche innovation in general (Geels 2011), as “radically new insights often arise at the boundaries between communities” (Wenger 2000, 233-234, added emphasis).

6.3 Shifting practice and building niche communities:

The findings in this chapter have demonstrated that the becoming of a REKO practice is the product of complex and interconnected elements of materials, competences and meanings, alongside agency, individual motivation, and knowledge. First of all, I would argue that existing patterns of sustainable consumption can act as anchors of current understandings, and alongside socioeconomic factors, they partially determine the incorporation of new knowledge and actions to individuals and communities of practice. Indeed, in chapter 5, the relationship between participation in REKO Oslo and existing sustainable consumption was demonstrated, although not as causal. As such, the argument is not that these patterns of consumption are necessary, nor that participants in REKO Oslo have higher engagement with these forms of consumption. Instead, the presence of such a relationship suggests that sustainable consumption through REKO is not a separate engagement and that existing knowledge and worldviews which encompass other sustainable consumption are of some significance.

An interconnected web of existing practices, habits, knowledge and socioeconomic elements form “a field of predispositions for action” that determine, alter and reproduce REKO consumption through repeated performances, cognition and continuously embedding reflexive and unreflective knowledge (Wilhite 2013). Through three circuits of reproduction (Pantzar and Shove 2010), practices are thus maintained and stabilised the levels of singular practices, systems of practices and path dependence wherein new practice evolve out of old ones (Hargreaves, Longhurst and Seyfang 2013), as I illustrated with REKO and supermarket food shopping. Furthermore, through the process of meaning-making, existing practices and knowledge interact with elements of competences, meanings and materials to form new REKO consumption practice.

As a niche practice, the shared attitudes, values and beliefs amongst consumers (as distinguished from individual AVB) also become the beliefs, attitudes and values of the practice. For example, as the aforementioned findings illustrate, it is a shared belief amongst consumers in REKO that animal welfare is ethically important and that the producers in REKO maintain the consideration for this in their production, more so than conventional producers. On the other hand, only Christoffer* found that REKO offering special products not available elsewhere, such as pork from Mangalica pigs

or quail eggs, to be an important element of choosing to purchase from the network, suggesting that few had an attitude of uniqueness in product to be of significance. According to Fonte (2013b), new practice is “called upon to respond” (234) to the shared beliefs and functions of participants in REKO. Seeing as individuals are both carriers of practice and collectively reproduce practice through being practitioners and actively participate in an infrequent activity (Halkier 2009), they simultaneously influence and adopt the knowledge, structures and qualities of the food network, including the attitudes, values and beliefs. In establishing an alternative food network then, “how the consumer goes about “knowing” food is just as important as farmers’ knowledge networks” (Goodman, DuPuis and Watson 2012, 45). Thus, whilst the uniqueness some producers offered as motivation was an individual variation (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) of the REKO consumption practice, the ethical consideration for animal welfare was shared amongst practitioners, and therefore a value of the network, reproduced by the carriers in the community of practice through their purchasing and consumption of “ethical meat” in REKO Oslo.

Furthermore, although the agency distributed amongst meanings, materials and competences all influence the consumption practice of participants in the network (Warde 2005; Sahakian and Wilhite 2014), I found that the strongest agency resided with the carriers in the community of the REKO consumption practice as engaging with a niche rather than regime (Hargreaves et al. 2013). Whilst the reframing and integration of new technologies and digital tools can facilitate the development of new networks of alternative practices, the process of meaning-making by REKO practitioners reflected the tension between the REKO niche and conventional regime as a springboard for action. Observing the creation of new collective patterns of food consumption as both conditioned and performative (Fonte 2013b), becoming a REKO consumer was a product of the consistent integration of reflexive elements with embodied knowledge (Giddens 1984; Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). How participants in REKO made sense of their participation tied in with their motivational knowledge (Reckwitz 2002) and was consciously deliberative. As the findings in chapter five show, REKO consumption was not regular nor was it by chance. Indeed, consumption through REKO is a planned food practice where consumers only know which products are available until a week before delivery [Karoline*, administrator]. That is not to say that individual rational behaviour was the driving force behind the

REKO practice, quite the contrary, but that as a niche innovation offering an “alternative” to a regime of conventional industrialised food provisioning activities, the reflexive element of participating in REKO is of significance. Thus, consumers actively partake in the decision-making of consuming and performing the REKO practice, demonstrating the agency of the community of practitioners in carrying the practice forward.

However, the existence of REKO consumption does not eliminate other unsustainable consumption practices. Indeed, although not necessarily unsustainable per se, participants in REKO largely maintained their supermarket purchasing patterns. Thus, the lock-in mechanisms of the existing and stabilised practice of grocery purchasing are evident (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). Departing from this, we can therefore treat participation in REKO Oslo not as shifting practice but as new engagement with a niche community, performing interests rather than performing food purchasing as practice.

6.4 Chapter summary

In the two preceding chapters, I have demonstrated how participants become REKO consumers and how the community of practice is carried forward through boundary negotiations of determining the ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ of the network. Referring back to the questions asked at the start of this chapter then, we observe that participants engage as part of other food practices (Halkier 2009) rather than as a food purchasing *practice* in its own regard. The individual participants carry the REKO community of practice forward through the continuous engagement with and renegotiation of the network values and beliefs, which also form the basic motivation for individuals to engage. Moreover, the overall consensus amongst consumers reflected in both the quantitative and qualitative material, suggests that consumers are somewhat predisposed to consume through REKO in two ways: first, through existing patterns of sustainable consumption and education as demonstrated in chapter five, and second as carrying the interest of alternative and/or sustainable food consumption through eating, growing and knowing food, wherein beliefs about local food, supporting the farmer and local value creation appeared as fundamental to the practice. Indeed, these beliefs are reflected in the stated principles of the network.

However, although I have shown how individuals might adopt new practices of food consumption and how communities of practice build around and drive forward a niche community, the findings in the preceding chapters are insufficient in explaining how and why transition in a food system come about. According to Fonte (2013a), “The co-optation of alternative values by the dominant system is represented as unproblematic, which lead to bypass the analysis of the specificity of the conventionalization process and the reconfiguration of the dominant socio-technical regime” (401).

Thus, to fully understand the relationship between food consumption practices, niches, regimes and food systems change, I will in the next chapter explore why sustainable transformations of the Norwegian food system are challenging to bring about, exemplified through REKO Oslo as an alternative food network. Moreover, the potential for REKO to initiate sustainable transitions will be assessed.

7 From farm to fork or fork to farm? Regime transitions and the challenges of food systems change

The previous two chapters illustrated the process of shifting practices of consumption at the micro-level through meaning-making and the integration of new and existing elements of meanings, materials and competences, as consumers became participants in REKO Oslo and the REKO community of practice.

The community of REKO participants has in the past year grown substantially within the “protected space” (Geels 2011) of the niche community, engaging consumers and producers in the urban and peripheral sphere of ‘local’ Oslo (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). REKO established itself as a niche network of ethical and sustainable food consumption promoting direct trade between producer and consumer in Norway in 2017, with an increasing number of rings appearing across the country since. In Oslo, it has operated since the summer of 2019, amassing a substantial following and stable (albeit infrequent) customer base. As demonstrated in the two preceding chapters, through REKO consumption, and shared attitudes and beliefs about sustainable food, the individual participants in REKO Oslo amalgamated into a community of ethically concerned practitioners, whose boundaries defined and reproduced the ‘ins’ and ‘outs’ of the food network. In time, the developments of REKO (in Oslo and nationally) may gradually reconfigure the Norwegian food system through transitions on the regime levels of agriculture and supermarkets (see Geels and Schot 2007). However, for the time being, the alternative food network REKO remains a niche offering supplementary options to the dominating food consumption practices of contemporary Norwegian society.

Indeed, as both the survey respondents and interviewees indicated, the practice of purchasing food through REKO remained just that – a niche. Although the passion and enthusiasm for REKO were evident, the majority of consumers remained loyal supermarket customers with REKO merely being a network for infrequent participation in localised direct trade. To explain this, I now turn my attention towards the Norwegian food system and structures that reproduce the elements making transitions towards a sustainable food system and consumption, challenging. I ask: *What are the barriers to consumption in REKO Oslo? In what ways does REKO*

challenge the Norwegian food system, and how can REKO consumption aid our understanding of why Norwegian food systems change is challenging?

I start by presenting the complex connections and interactions of the global and Norwegian food systems, which alongside the findings from the previous chapters, form the basis for exploring the barriers to participation in REKO Oslo for consumers, and opportunities for reconfiguration. This way, I aim to demonstrate and understand why transitions in the food system are challenging to bring about using the example of REKO Oslo. Thus, the final chapter of this thesis addresses the second main research question presented in the introduction: *Why are sustainable transformations in the Norwegian food system challenging to bring about?*

7.1 A system of complex connections and tangled weeds: Food systems transformation and its challenges

Like an unkempt garden of withered flowers, neglected plants and overgrown weeds, the contemporary Norwegian food system is a complex entanglement of connections, institutions, agents and practices. With its roots in a global system of production, processing, distribution and consumption, the provision of food in Norway is subject to the workings of agriculture, politics and developments around the world. Similarly, through these interconnected elements, the global food system influence and determine the possibilities of consumption in a Norwegian context. Hence, to understand the challenges of transitions within and of the Norwegian food system, we must first understand its connections to the global dynamics and structures of food, starting with the technological substitution of the previous food regime (see Geels and Schot 2007) which led to the food system in place today. The following account of the complex entanglements of the Norwegian food system is not comprehensive, nor is it intended to be a history of the incumbent food regime. Rather, it is an attempt to illustrate the multiple points of interaction and connection that make individual and secluded small-scale attempts at food systems transitions futile.

Landscape pressures and technological innovations for regime substitution

The contemporary food system and its regimes (Geels 2011) have its roots in the post-war period of Western war-torn countries and developments up until the 1980s

(Friedmann and McMichael 1989; Olsen 2010). In transitioning from the second to the third food regime²⁴ (Friedmann and McMichael 1989; Bernstein 2016), landscape-level pressures of food security, globalisation and trade, alongside technological advancements in the post-WW2 period, led the food regime on a pathway of technological substitution (Geels and Schot 2007).

Intending to create a stable world in their ‘own western-oriented imagery’ (Almås and Muirhead 2013, 35), Western states formed multiple international institutions for facilitating and maintaining cross-border cooperation and peace in the 1940s and 50s, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations (UN). For instance, in 1947, twenty-three countries (including Norway) signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that became a forum for international negotiations on the reduction of trade tariffs (Munthe 2014) and that way facilitated greater cross-border exchanges of goods. Moreover, the agreement made way for new structures and institutions of international trade, and in 1994, the structures of GATT was formalised in the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Ibid). For Norway, WTO provided a predictable, simple and cheap opportunity for value creation, increasing international export of Norwegian products (such as fish and oil), and cross-border trade (Regjeringen 2019b). Indeed, the Norwegian government argues that the international trade facilitated by WTO has been “a key prerequisite for our prosperity” (Ibid). Thus, we observe how international trade was an important mechanism in the formation of a new food regime in the 1980s and thus transition of the Norwegian food system in the 1990s (Olsen 2010), through the processes of globalisation and international trade.

A prerequisite for this development was, among other things, increased agricultural production and productivity in the food sector, caused by a concern for food security (Almås and Muirhead 2013). These developments were motivated by improving consumers’ diet and health, as malnutrition had been a significant problem amongst the populations of the US and Europe in the 1930s. Consequently, the sum of these developments led to the industrialisation of agriculture in Western European states and the US in the post-WW2 years. As such, smaller farms were eradicated or enlarged,

²⁴ There is an ongoing debate about whether or not we are in a third food regime, or if the current food regime is merely a “hangover” from the past (see McMichael 2009).

and surplus labour capacity in agriculture was transferred to the industrial sector (Almås and Muirhead 2013). Production became more specialised, and the international agricultural system moved towards favouring monocrops, where vast areas of land produce one or two crops, rather than a multitude (Almås and Muirhead 2013).

From the analytical frame of the multi-level perspective, technological innovations interact with the incumbent regime to bring about transitions within and of regimes following one of the four ‘transition pathways’ (Geels 2011). In the post-WW2 era, the technological advancements of the military and automobility systems (amongst some) were adopted and adapted to the needs of food provisioning activities, gradually shifting the food regime towards the corporate grocery retailing regime we know today. In 1970s America, technicians, engineers and scientists received substantial funding from the government to develop military technology and theories to compete with Russia for hegemonic power, a country whom in the previous years had taken the “lead” in multiple areas of critical interest (Olsen 2010). The forthcoming years saw the development of several critical innovations such as standardised containers for large shipments of critical material during the Vietnam war; digital communication tools to secure the US’ capability reciprocate nuclear attacks; space technology to ensure America’s progress in the space race; and new communication technologies such as the Internet, to mention some (Olsen 2010). These technological advancements also changed the food system.

For instance, optically readable barcodes were originally developed for organising parts for space technology, whilst the multi-lane highways that made way for the transport of food over large distances were financed through the military budget. This way, what was originally niche innovations and materials for military-grade use (Olsen 2010) or practices of driving within the system of automobility (Urry 2004), took on new meanings. As competences surrounding their use developed (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012), new practices of food production, distribution and purchasing formed, which resulted in the gradual shift to grocery retailers replacing over-the-counter colonial stores, and corporate retailers replacing food manufacturing corporations (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012) as the force of power in the food sector. Moreover, technological developments in the food sector resulted in the transition to

self-regulatory retail systems, which drastically transformed the food industry and practices of grocery shopping (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber 2013; Rinde 2016).

Indeed, the rise of the oligopolistic supermarket chain was partially caused by technological developments. As Olsen (2010) maintains:

“It is these changes in logistics technology that were behind the rapid development of retail chains in the 1980s and which led to the power relations in the food sector being turned upside down in many ways. The large savings the chains could achieve by combining new technology and gathering large purchasing volumes pushed out all traditional grocery trade” (58).

This way, the military power struggles of the post-war period made way for the development of technologies and materials for new food practices to form (Shove et al 2012) and the shift of power in the food sector to form a supermarket regime (Geels 2011; Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). These new technologies thus became an important innovation for transforming the food regime through *substitution* (Geels and Schot 2007). Moreover, the pressures from globalisation and international trade alongside a new economic system inspired by neoliberal ideals (Olsen 2010; Holt-Giménez 2017), ultimately led to a regime shift of both grocery trade (to a supermarket regime) and agriculture (to an industrialised agricultural regime). Consequently, current practices within the food system are trapped in the lock-in mechanisms of the incumbent regimes of supermarkets and agriculture, making sustainable transitions challenging.

The entanglements of the contemporary Norwegian food system

In the contemporary Norwegian food system, processes of international cooperation (and conflict), trade, and neoliberal economic policies (Olsen 2010) intersect with regimes of agricultural production and food distribution to reproduce unsustainable consumption practices (Hargreaves et al. 2011). Following landscape-level pressures and shifts in the agricultural regime in the post-WW2 period, the food sector was ‘revolutionised’ and in the 1990s, a new regime of supermarkets emerged in Norway (Friedmann and McMichael 1989; Olsen 2010).

Alongside the aforementioned developments, processes of the capitalist venture and productivist food production led to a redistribution of power in the food chain and the rise of the supermarket regime (McMichael 2009; Olsen 2010; Almås and Muirhead 2013). Whilst the powers of food manufacturing corporations such as Nestlé and Unilever were particularly pertinent during the Fordist era of mass food consumption in the 1950s and 60s (Goodman, Du Puis and Goodman 2012), the global shift of markets and transitions in agriculture created a *window of opportunity* (Geels 2002) for corporate retailers. Traditionally, food manufacturers had been tied to the processing of particular food products such as dairy, cereals or livestock. Despite attempts to diversify from their ‘original product base’, the food manufacturers and their “industrial capitals can still be identified by their historical location in the food chain” (Goodman and Redclift 1991, 90). Corporate retailers, on the other hand, operate primarily based on supplying food to consumers (and the changing demands of consumption through time), and therefore “have no primordial commitment to specific agricultural supply chains or production technologies” (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012, 86). Thus, corporate retailers maintained (and still does to this day) the ‘upper hand’ through low levels of “resource dependence” (Fligstein and Dauter 2007; Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012) in facing producers, manufacturers and processors of food. Indeed, taking a top-down approach, one can argue that the primary “product” of supermarkets are people, as humans need to eat and supermarkets offer producers and manufacturers access to consumers.

Hitherto, corporate retailers maintain control of the food supply chain (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012) and reproduce the structures, institutions and agencies upholding the supermarket regime, resulting in a lock-in (Geels 2011) of the Norwegian food supply chain dominated by industrialisation and overconsumption. As demonstrated in chapter 2, the three corporate retailers Reitangruppen, Norgesgruppen and Coop dominate the Norwegian food market and supply chain and thus determine the availability of products for consumers. Vice versa, they operate as gatekeepers for producers in accessing consumers through volume quotas, trade agreements and favouring large-scale, industrial products due to cost (Bjørkhaug, Almås and Vik 2015). Indeed, the regime of supermarkets (see Geels 2011) is characterised by “large firms operating in markets that, because of their limited size, are capable of supporting only a few competitors” (Baumol, Litan and Schramm 2007,

80). In other words, the use of ‘supermarkets’ in this thesis refers to grocery retailers as part of an oligopolistic structure rather than the number of products available in the specific grocery store, a structure that thus determines the conditions of the foodscape in which consumers consume and producers distribute.

Consequently, it is challenging for niche innovations, smaller companies and independent producers to penetrate the supermarket regime, largely due to the structures that reproduce the powers of the oligopolies. For instance, vegetable farmers with a smaller production struggle to access the Norwegian food market through traditional retailers, and must instead use AFNs and other alternative pathways such as trading directly with restaurants [Didrik*, vegetable producer]. Additionally, AFNs and niche food initiatives such as REKO might “run into the power embedded in the incumbent regime, which is likely to privilege the resistance of actors engaged in incumbent practices and which tends to reproduce itself, leading to inertia” (Grin 2013 36-37). In other words, agents of conventional regime practices are likely to resist sustainable transitions for multiple reasons owing to the lock-in mechanisms (Geels 2011) of the incumbent regime that stabilise and reproduce unsustainable consumption practices (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). For instance, existing knowledge of food both of the individual consumer and in the social world, the limited availability of alternative that can compete with conventional products on cost and convenience, and existing infrastructures, or rather lack thereof, are all mechanisms that lock current consumption practices on a trajectory (Geels 2011) of unsustainable consumption, environmental degradation and climate change. Similarly, on a larger scale, ‘alternatives’ that seek to challenge the dominating structures of the global food system are likely to be met with resistance, not only from the regimes but also from the actors and the practices that are continuously reproduced within and that uphold the unsustainable regimes and thereby the Norwegian food system (Hargreaves et al. 2011). Hence, the tangled web of connections between regime actors, practitioners, unsustainable practices and landscape-level dynamics make transitions within and of the Norwegian food system challenging.

To exemplify and elucidate this, I now turn to the barriers that consumers experience to participation in REKO Oslo.

7.2 Resistance at play: barriers to REKO participation

Since Snellman founded REKO in 2013, a process of reconfiguration (see Geels and Schot 2007) has gradually taken place as networks have grown and increasingly embedded REKO participation in localised food practices (Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012). We see this especially in how producers have grown, adapted and developed their production and business to the network, for example having to purchase additional milk to keep up with demand²⁵ or starting a second REKO business based on the success of the first [Didrik*]. Additionally, several producers have experienced increased sales through REKO [Karoline*], much due to the popularity of the network amongst consumers. These developments may begin to reconfigure the conventional regime new paths of environmentally friendly production and in time sustainable consumption. However, at the present stage, *more* is required for a regime shift and food systems change to take place. As REKO grows, it is likely to be met with resistance from the dominating structures (Geels 2010) of the regimes upholding the conventional food system. Moreover, the boundary negotiations of REKO Oslo are likely to continue to define who REKO is for and by extension also who it is not for. The barriers that emerged as themes in the survey and interviews are listed in Table 4.

Table 4 Barriers to participation in REKO Oslo

Product	Process	Participation
Expensive	Forgetting to order	Time of distribution
Cheaper alternatives elsewhere	Difficult to incorporate with everyday routines	inconvenient Location inconvenient
Produce sold out	Prefer the supermarket	Location inaccessible
No space for storing food	Ordering is too complicated	Takes too much time to participate
Not interested in the products sold		

²⁵ REKO producer Valmsnes Gård which has eight* cows and sell dairy products through REKO, has started getting milk delivered from Tine to keep up with the demand for their products.

To reveal some of the barriers to participating in REKO Oslo, survey respondents who identified as dormant consumers were asked why they had not purchased through the network (Table 4). The issue was also brought up and discussed with several of my interviewees, who expressed concern for some of the issues similar to those that appeared in the survey. It should be noted that two *levels* of barriers to participation exist. The first level is related to the barriers before becoming a member of the network and a local REKO ring. The potential consumer must be aware that the network exists, revealing the potential barriers of REKO relying on media attention and word-of-mouth [Robyn*, administrator]. Moreover, becoming a member involves access to relevant materials (a Facebook account and internet access) as well as the competences necessary to use these materials, which can appear as barriers in the process. The second level of barriers involves the network itself once the consumer becomes a member. Two such barriers were identified across the categories presented in Table 4: cost and convenience.

7.2.1 Cost and affordability

Alternative food networks have been criticised for failing to address large-scale social issues of a normative character, where local and ethical consumption “have been interpreted as potentially socially exclusive and reactionary” (Watts, Little and Ilbery 2018, 23; Alkon and McCullen 2011). For example, AFNs reproduce the White, middle and upper-class rural imaginary that ignores issues of poverty, inequality and social injustice (Alkon and McCullen 2011), and have been criticised for reproducing unequal power relations (Goodman 2004; DuPuis and Goodman 2005; Guthman 2008). The findings from chapter 5 show that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and REKO consumption, which suggests that the network might be experienced as less accessible by those having lower education or income. The findings from the survey suggest that one barrier to participating in REKO was the cost of food. Out of 66 respondents, 18,2 per cent stated that price not being as expected was a barrier to participation. Whereas for some, the price was an issue of affordability, for others, it did not make sense to pay more at REKO for similar products which they could acquire elsewhere:

“When I can shop local organic food at the most expensive market in Oslo (Maschmanns) to a lower price than REKO, REKO makes no sense to me. The

direct purchases from the manufacturer should benefit both consumer and manufacturers”.

Whereas the consumers in REKO Oslo use their ‘purchasing power’ to act according to their attitudes and beliefs (Table 3), this might not always be an option, despite a potential consumer perhaps sharing these feelings. Purchasing power is a privilege. As one consumer explained: “The choices made are very much affected by my low income. If possible, I would always choose local, organic, sustainable and so on, but this is often not possible due to high prices.” Indeed, not a single respondent disagreed with the concept behind REKO or felt like they lacked information about the production, suggesting that their attitudes and beliefs were shared with the active consumers, but that other elements, such as affordability, influenced their lack of participation: “Price is important - although I wish it weren’t!”. To an extent, this is to be expected, as the survey respondents still were members of the Facebook group.

Reflecting this concern, Goodman (2004) argues that, while “Consumers are sketched in the tropes of difference-making purchases and through ‘helping’ and ‘supporting’ farmers” (900), networks of alternative consumption may “contribute less towards improvements in social justice than conventional food networks” (Watts, Little and Brian 2018). Indeed, conventional food networks, although problematic in their own sense, have contributed to the process of food democratisation. For instance, in a Norwegian context where some live *kor ingen skulle tru at nokon kunne bu* (where nobody would think anyone could live), maintaining sufficient access to a variety of healthy and affordable foods is arguably only possible due to the concentration of power by supermarkets. This allows them to uphold supply even where it is not necessarily profitable, something that alternative food networks might have struggled to do. For example, in 2019, Oslo had significantly fewer grocery stores per capita than Northern Norway (Dagligvarefasiten 2020; SSB 2020), but a higher turnover per store. As Northern Norway make up 39,4 per cent of the land area compared to Oslo’s mere 0,1 per cent, this is unsurprising. Nevertheless, it suggests the access to food is maintained and food democracy is sustained.

Even though sustainable consumption should be for everyone, the reality is that it is not. This was echoed by survey respondents, but also by interviewed consumers. Whilst reflecting on her position as a politically aware and privileged consumer whose

socioeconomic status allowed for sustainable consumption, Anette* highlighted the importance of an awareness of the economic realities of others when promoting sustainability:

“There are people in Norway today where the economy is tight and where it is a reality that you have enough to pay for housing and cannot afford to pay what the food costs. And it is actually connected to a much larger debate about injustice in society. Because I think the food is mostly too cheap. That the price we see in the store has many hidden costs that are paid by someone else. But it can be a little too arrogant to say that everyone should pay what it costs. Because it is not certain that everyone has the opportunity to do so”.

Indeed, sustainable food consumption is a complex issue extending beyond merely *wanting* to consume in different ways, to whether one can. Moreover, as demonstrated in chapter 6, it is also about the social and cultural structures and the context in which the consumer participates, further perpetuating this dilemma. For example, convenience, or rather the *inconvenience* of REKO, appeared as a barrier to participation amongst consumers.

7.2.2 Convenience, availability and accessibility

Another barrier to participation in REKO was convenience. Here, several elements of concern appeared. First and foremost, dormant consumers reported that the number one reason for not having purchased through REKO was forgetting to order. Indeed, 62,1 per cent of dormant consumers stated this as a reason for not having participated. When considering the necessity of planning REKO consumption combined with the network living on a platform where algorithms largely determine what you see (and your active engagement with things influence this), this is unsurprising. If members want to participate in REKO, they must remember to do so and take an active decision to order.

Second, several dormant consumers found the time of distribution to be inconvenient. Nearly 40 per cent of consumers noted time to be a deciding factor for not having purchased through the network. Occurring only once every other week for one hour, consumers found having to fit this into their everyday lives to be challenging. For example, not knowing the size of the product or packaging used made it more difficult.

As one survey respondent who had used REKO argued: “It is a bit challenging to combine distribution times with kids in the ring nearest to me, so I therefore travel further. It is a bit heavy/challenging, but it is okay. When you use REKO it is a bit difficult to know anything about how they pack and which packaging they are using.” In particular, having children influenced this, which Lene* also noted in her interview. Moreover, many found the location of distribution to be inconvenient like the survey respondent noted. The reason for this is multiplex, and include the network being inaccessible (for example as a disabled person) or it being too far away.

Christoffer* also argued that the timing was inconvenient, suggesting that the need to plan REKO consumption could be a potential barrier for the growth of the network in the future. Indeed, according to him, time was one of the biggest constraints in REKO operating as an actual alternative to the grocery stores:

“I think the challenge probably lies a bit in that if people were to exchange purchases in the grocery trade for [REKO] products, you have to get people to plan and to take time out of their schedule. I had to drive back from the cabin because I had not planned to go to the cabin when I ordered the goods, but then I found out that we actually had time to go to the cabin this weekend. But we had to drive back at 12 to reach the REKO ring because it is a shame not to show up. So, we had to do it. So, I think it's probably about adults' lack of time, there is a lot to plan around somehow.”

Indeed, one fifth of respondents noted that they preferred the convenience of the supermarkets as a reason for not having purchased through REKO. In addition to the reasons mentioned here, several consumers were also displeased with the products offered, either in terms of price or available products. For example, one consumer argued that it was not worth attending the distribution often, as the selection was too poor. This was particularly pertinent for fresh produce like vegetables or fish, or the predominance of meat and animal-derived products. Indeed, one respondent noted: “I think REKO has an excess of meat and animal products. It is something I do not use and do not think is compatible with the focus on environment and sustainability. The prices of finished soups etc. are very high and I prefer to make them myself” (translated). Many interview participants echoed this and expressed a desire for more vegetables to be readily available. However, the product availability is influenced by

seasonal variations, and by including only small-scale producers (see Chapter 6), the availability of fruits and vegetables will be limited outside the growing season. Nevertheless, the discontent with available products suggests that the network cannot beat the convenience of the supermarket selection.

The barriers to participate in REKO are not extensive and only include perspectives and reflections from members of the network. Thus, the barriers as experienced by those who are not part of the Facebook groups have not been revealed and may demonstrate other concerns about barriers to sustainable consumptions such as lack of knowledge or other attitudes and beliefs. Moreover, the barriers of cost and convenience are likely to apply also to non-consumers, and perhaps to a greater extent than amongst the dormant consumers. However, at this stage, this remains as mere speculations and would require further attention and scrutiny.

The findings presented are examples of how transitions of and within the Norwegian food system are challenging to bring about. In becoming a REKO consumer, potential participants are faced with network boundaries that shape and determine the barriers to participation. The lock-in mechanisms (Geels 2011) of the incumbent regime and the Norwegian food system are evident. Moreover, the unsustainable food practices within the Norwegian food system are reproduced by carriers in society, locking our consumption in unreflective and routinised practices that are difficult to disrupt (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012). For instance, in a society where both parents are full-time workers and the children attend after-school activities, the ease of doing a quick stop at the supermarket and purchasing unsustainable convenience foods to be readily prepped at home, cannot be beaten by having to plan for a one-hour window every other weekend to purchase small-scale locally produced grass-fed ethically brought up meat. Additionally, the cost of these foods might not be something that a young couple can afford to “splurge” on as their incomes are low and their rent high.

These examples further demonstrate the entanglements of the Norwegian food system and challenges of change – purchasing and consuming food are not merely about the food itself but also all other dynamics of everyday life. As Anette* discussed with me in her interview, at the end of the day, consumption becomes a question of who should bear the economic burden of sustainable change. At the moment, it is either the consumer (of which many simply cannot afford to participate in AFNs) or the producer

(who receives anything but a fair price for the majority of products and sometimes push that burden on to the farmworkers), who take on that burden, rather than the corporate retailers or others within the system whom might have greater financial power and lenience in changing the regime. As such, the incumbent regime structures are reproduced, as practices of unsustainable consumption persist and barriers to sustainable consumption and alternative food networks are upheld.

7.3 Growing in a garden of tangled weeds: Opportunities for reconfiguration in the Norwegian food system

The food systems of the world have changed throughout time and will continue to do so until the human species ceases to exist. According to Goodman, Maye and Holloway (2012) “food is entangled in discourses and practices which necessarily have and indeed always will have ethical implications for humans and nonhumans, societies and environments, involved in its production-consumption relations” (1782). As demonstrated in this chapter, the contemporary Norwegian food system is a result of multiple interconnected processes of globalisation, capitalism and neoliberal politics, which together have formed how we do food in Norway and beyond. Although sustainable transitions of the food system are challenging to bring about, as academics, consumers, producers, activists, friends, family, neighbours and human beings, we should strive to create a food system wherein the least amount of harm comes to those who are part of it (Evans 2019). Thus, what REKO and other similar AFN niches may do is reconfigure (see Geels 2011) the supermarket regime to encompass greater care for the elements that has prompted these alternatives in the first place.

According to Bui et al. (2016), “niche development is necessary but not sufficient to trigger a regime shift” (93). Whilst consumer concern and interest is important, even as it culminates into niche alternatives like REKO, the mere existence of a niche is not enough to challenge established practices or the incumbent regime (Hargreaves et al. 2011; Hargreaves et al. 2013). For instance, despite being passionate participants in REKO Oslo, the findings from chapter 6 demonstrated the continued reliance on the supermarket regime for acquiring food. Consuming through REKO Oslo was supplementary to the established and stabilised grocery purchasing practice. Instead, innovations at the niche level are more likely to obstruct or alter the regime if pressures

at the landscape level lead to ‘cracks, tensions and windows of opportunity’ (Geels 2010).

Global occurrences at the landscape level can destabilise the regime and thus offer new pathways for innovation at the niche level to reconfigure established structures (Geels 2011). At the time of writing, the world is amid a global pandemic that has triggered (sustainable) transitions of both consumption and production. For instance, following the lock-down of Norway in March 2020, there was an upsurge in the use of online food retailers, signifying a change in the elements of the food purchasing practice (Nykamp and Gonera 2020). Additionally, REKO rings across Norway noticed increased interest from consumers, despite terminating organised deliveries (Warlo 2020; Facebook group posts). As the rings re-opened, REKO experienced a “formidable turnover”, of which REKO project manager in NBS argues: “It seems that Corona has contributed to further awareness of the origin of raw materials and the quality of food amongst the public” (Warlo 2020).

Indeed, a survey amongst Norwegian consumers on their food consumption habits during the pandemic revealed that 67 per cent had gained more respect for those who work to provide us with food - from farmers to employees in the grocery store (Kallum 2020). This is due in part to the attention Norwegian food production and farmers received since the lock-down; consumers experiencing the pressures and effects of a global pandemic on the food supply and availability of products; and in part to efforts by grocery retail workers as “essential personnel” (Kallum 2020; Nykamp and Gonera 2020). As such, global landscape-level pressures might trigger sustainable shifts in consumption. Indeed, as COVID-19 dispersed and countries went on lock-down, GHG emissions drastically decreased overnight, for example through the radical decline of international and national air-travel. This way, the current pandemic illustrates how landscape-level changes can elicit transitions of established practices and knowledge, which make way for niche innovations to reconfigure the regime (Geels 2011).

7.3.1 Regime technologies and niche innovation: Reimagining materials and reframing competences for alternative consumption

According to McMeekin and Southerton (2012), “Technologies and their scripts can be a powerful force in the dynamics of practice” (357). Once taken into use, materials such as technologies, object or things have agency (Sahakian and Wilhite 2014) and

thus influence practice. How we behave, act and exist as human beings are “directly affected by the power of infrastructure and technology to act upon our actions” (Ibid, 29). For example, in the context of the Norwegian food system, the infrastructures of supermarkets and how ownership is distributed amongst the three chains across the country geographically, expand or limit the options that are available to the individual consumer. Moreover, having a vehicle might influence your food shopping practice, as might *not* owning one. Indeed, technologies are not value-free nor context-neutral, but instead “exhibit forms of agency that open towards new and often unanticipated practices” (Sahakian and Wilhite 2014, Ibid.).

Amongst the interviewed consumers in REKO, the general notion was that Facebook worked well for its purpose as a platform for interaction and ordering. Whilst several consumers expressed concern for how the tool worked for producers, mentioning the ease of tracking orders or the time spent, the majority experienced using Facebook as a REKO consumer to be easy and convenient. For example, Anette* found the platform to be easier and less “administrative” than other tools, stating that REKO, compared to other channels of alternative food consumption, was “made simple”. In particular, Facebook is a way for producers to easily access interested consumers without requiring the materials, resources or competences of marketing [Didrik*, vegetable producer]. Indeed, one of the benefits of the network is that it builds on existing knowledge and practice. According to a survey by Ipsos (2019), 3,5 million Norwegians above the age of 18 years have a Facebook profile. Quickly checking Facebook while waiting for the bus or before going to sleep is common practice amongst many. Thus, by basing itself on a well-established platform for regular communication practice, the REKO network makes use of existing knowledge and reframes competence to elicit sustainable consumption and facilitate local direct trade (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012).

Indeed, when technologies are adapted by consumers and absorbed into the practices of everyday life, they simultaneously develop new meanings and potential uses beyond the initial script (McMeekin and Southerton 2012). The social networking service Facebook was launched in 2004, originally as a “hot or not” game for students. In time, it has developed into a multi-billion-dollar company connecting people across the world through individual memberships, “walls”, groups, pages and a chatting service called “messenger”. However, “it is by no means certain that design scripts will be

followed by all if any consumers” (McMeekin and Southerton 2012, 357). The “beauty” of technology and particularly social networks is how they adapt and form to the needs and desired uses of its consumers. As such, from a tool to connect students at Harvard University, Facebook is now used by millions daily, thousands that are members of REKO rings and engage in alternative and sustainable practices of food consumption.

Whilst the materials for the REKO practice was present before the network being established in Oslo, REKO has reimagined its use through re-scripting and creating links between the materials, meanings and competences (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012; McMeekin and Southerton 2012). By reframing existing competence of communications and purchasing practices (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) through a well-known digital software, REKO makes alternative and sustainable consumption “easy”, accessible and free, and thereby offers a potential pathway for triggering sustainable consumption and more impactful change.

7.4 Chapter summary and closing remarks

In this chapter, I have demonstrated some of the tangled connections in the Norwegian food system that reproduce and stabilise unsustainable consumption (and production). With its roots in globalisation, neoliberalism and economic developments in the post-WW2 era, the supermarket regime maintains control over the food supply chain in Norway, effectively determining the boundaries for both production and consumption. To elucidate the challenges of Norwegian food systems transformation, I presented the barriers to participation in REKO, and argued that engagement was subject to the dynamics and practices of everyday life, of where cost and convenience appeared as elements that simultaneously reproduced established structures and acted as barriers to change. Indeed, the lock-in mechanisms of the current food system make it likely that alternative food networks like REKO will remain in the margins of industrialised food supply chains.

However, as innovations in the food sector can influence and change consumption and food practices, consumers can influence and change elements of the food industry. Consumers are not merely passive receptors of structural dynamics and reproductions; as carriers of practice, consumers are agents of change (Spaargaren and Oosterveer

2010). This way, consumers can trigger niche innovations and technological developments resulting in reconfigurations of regime practices (Geels and Schot 2007). For instance, in the second half of the 20th Century, consumers' concern for food safety issues prompted the development of technologies for controlling food quality, which again stimulated private food regulations and global standardisations (Spaargaren, Oosterveer and Loeber 2013). Similarly, consumers' concern for animal welfare triggered transitions of practice in food production and processing, such as new methods for slaughtering cattle or improving livestock housing (Ibid). More recently, the interest of consumers in vegan and vegetarian foods has prompted Norwegian grocery retailers to produce and distribute a wider range of products in possession of these qualities, thus responding to these 'consumer demands' or shifts in the meanings of meat consumption as practice (Meny 2018; Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012).

In this chapter, I demonstrated some of how REKO may challenge the structures of the food system. I argued that that the momentum of *niches* and *landscape-level* pressures needed to intersect with changes in social food practices for there to be a chance of *reconfiguring* the unsustainable elements and structures of the Norwegian food system. Thus, if occurring alongside policy initiatives and public pressures, the increasing interest in local food networks (such as REKO) might trigger a greater variety of local products made available at the supermarket. Likewise, as part of public discourse on farming income and concern for labour wages in agriculture, REKO might inspire *fair* and sustainable food production amongst farmers as they see an increasing demand for this. This way, REKO offers a window of opportunity for innovations in (alternative) food provisioning and thereby moments of sustainable consumption to gradually reconfigure unsustainable food practices at the level of niche innovations, if not of the Norwegian food system.

8 Conclusion

Food is an essential part of human life. It sustains, connects and divides us – from ourselves, our environments and the social worlds in which we exist. In the words of Hale et al. (2011): “Food is our most basic need and most fundamental connection with our environment and yet modern conveniences and an industrialized food system have created a culture of cheap food while alienating people from the landscapes that sustain them” (1853). The problems of the contemporary food system are apparent. Whilst the production and distribution of food cause the destruction of nature, environmental degradation and pollution of soil and waters, the (over)consumption and lack of access to foods lead to obesity, malnutrition, conflict, migration and climate change (McMichael 2013; Bernstein 2016; Holt-Giménez 2017; Otero et al. 2018; Poore and Nemecek 2018). As such, the unsustainable consequences of the use and abuse of natural and human resources with the sole aim of *eating*, are unmistakable. And so is the need for change. Indeed, in the words of Evans (2019), “Put bluntly, the planet does not care if it is damaged by the consumption of a Tiffany-heart bracelet or by the use of specialized equipment to participate in the practice of hiking” (511). The same goes for food, the planet does not care if it is damaged by rapeseed oil crops or palm oil crops. As such, the transition towards a sustainable food system is necessary.

Departing from this, this thesis has explored the interactions between niche food innovations and the elements of the Norwegian food system that reproduce unsustainable practices of consumption and production. The aim was to explore how consumers become participants in alternative food networks and demonstrate the barriers that these niche initiatives and their consumers encounter in attempting to bring about sustainable transitions in the Norwegian food system. This was done by examining the alternative food network REKO in Oslo, which seeks to connect consumers and producers locally through direct trade. To do so, I employed a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with a quantitative survey to offer a more thorough and in-depth analysis of the dynamics at play (Bryman 2016; O’Leary 2017).

This project has been an attempt to untangle one knot of the complex knowings and workings of the contemporary food system. The study contributes to the extensive

literature on sustainability in alternative food networks (see Michel-Villarreal et al. 2019) by addressing the social and systemic dimensions of niche initiatives in bringing about sustainable transitions in the food system, recognising how structures and practices do not exist in a vacuum, but instead are created and reproduced by society and its agents. In this way, the research starts on the assumption that sustainable transitions are challenging to bring about and examines the complex entanglements of the contemporary system. Indeed, there has been a tendency within research on AFNs to overestimate the contributions of single AFN initiatives (see Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman 2012), thereby simultaneously overshadowing the potential of these initiatives in reconfiguring conventional food regimes and unsustainable established practices.

The purpose of this study has been three-fold: first, to identify the motivations and processes behind consumer participation in REKO Oslo, to elucidate its rapid growth and popularity as a network for direct trade and local food. Second, to interpret consumer participation in the light of practices and structures, to demonstrate the challenges of sustainable transitions in consumption. And finally, to discuss sustainable transitions of the Norwegian food system in the light of the empirical findings from REKO Oslo and research on the supermarket regime. In the choice of theoretical framework, I have applied a combination of social practice theory and multi-level perspective to examine the complexities of transition, where the latter has worked to situate shifting practices and sustainable consumption in a wider context of niches, established regimes and landscape-level reproductions.

8.1 Research summary and findings

In chapter 5, I presented the consumer participants in REKO Oslo, their REKO consumption patterns and other sustainable consumption, including their attitudes towards the accessibility of sustainable options and choice. I demonstrated that there was a relationship between participation in REKO and higher education, and suggested that consumers with high socioeconomic status (exemplified through higher education) were more likely to become REKO consumers, perhaps through previously embedded knowledge. Following a demonstration of REKO Oslo participants' consumption patterns within the local ring, I showed that purchasing food through REKO was complementary to other food purchasing patterns, and argued that REKO

consumption thus must be regarded as *part of* the food purchasing practice, rather than a food practice of its own (Halkier 2009). Departing from this view, we can view AFNs and participation in them not necessarily as their own practices but instead as part of other food practices. Of course, this does not apply to all AFNs, for instance, CSA schemes oftentimes involve the practice of partaking in growing foods. But where it does apply, we can enhance our understandings of the implications of AFNs on the food system and food practices, and avoid oversimplified statements about the implications and contributions of these initiatives in a larger context.

In chapter 6, I utilised social practice theory to explore the becoming of REKO consumers and communities of REKO practice as understood by Lave (2019) and Wenger (2000). I found that consumers in REKO largely maintained their supermarket grocery purchasing practice, and observing this in the light of the findings from chapter 5, I argued that consumption in REKO Oslo was a niche activity, and thereby REKO as a network a niche community of food innovation (Geels 2011). Moreover, using Fonte (2013b), I argued that shared beliefs and assumptions about sustainable foods within the community of practice were a prerequisite for recruiting new consumers to the community, as it formed the foundation for negotiating and reproducing activity and boundaries (Wenger 2000) within the community.

In chapter 7, I brought forward the multi-level perspective (see Geels and Schot 2007; Geels 2011) to discuss the challenges of food systems transformation. Following a brief overview of how the contemporary food system and incumbent corporate retailer regime came to be, I argued that the Norwegian food system was caught up in a tangled web of connections making food systems change dependent on changes across different systems, structures and regimes extending beyond mere food. To further illuminate this argument, I used REKO Oslo as an example to aid our understanding of why sustainable transitions in the food system are challenging to bring about. I demonstrated that the barriers to participation in the network included cost and convenience, and argued that these barriers extend across most AFNs (Watts, Little and Ilbery 2018; Alkon and McCullen 2011), effectively making them alternative ways of consuming sustainably for those who can afford it. Indeed, I maintained that consumer participation in REKO Oslo could “loose out” as the novelty of the network faded, and the realities (time and money) of purchasing groceries through REKO became apparent.

Finally, I returned to the roots of AFNs, so to speak, and argued that the use of Facebook as a digital tool and social network represents what Geels (2010) refers to as a window of opportunity for reconfiguring the incumbent grocery retailing regime and niche AFNs. By reframing existing competence of purchasing (and other) practice (Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) through a well-known digital software, REKO makes alternative and sustainable consumption “easy”, accessible and free, and thereby offer a potential pathway for triggering more impactful changes to sustainable consumption. Moreover, I argued that this particularly applied to producers, with REKO being a new market to distribute products which otherwise would be challenging to sell through conventional sources.

Let us return to the core of this project. To answer the issues addressed in the introduction, the following main research questions were asked: *Who is REKO Oslo for and why do participants engage? And why are sustainable transformations in the Norwegian food system challenging to bring about?*

As demonstrated in both chapter 5 and 7, REKO Oslo is first and foremost for those who have the resources to participate. This includes the financial means and the time, but also the knowledge and competences (see Shove, Pantzar and Watson 2012) that facilitate engagement with an AFN. Indeed, the disparity between the education of members and the general population, suggests that REKO Oslo appeals to those who have certain cultural and social means, or in other words, belong to social networks where the meanings and competences of alternative or sustainable consumption are present. As I argued in chapter 6, sharing some attitudes and beliefs of those within the community of REKO Oslo were necessary for becoming a REKO consumer. Indeed, through boundary negotiations, the network reproduced and reimagined these beliefs, determining the essence of the network as understood by “insiders”, potential participants and “outsiders”, and by extension who the network was for. Moreover, the shared beliefs amongst consumers in REKO were a prerequisite for participation, as REKO became an outlet for performing consciously deliberated consumption following values and beliefs. Additionally, the network offered a way of accessing certain products and contributing to local value creation and food production by supporting farmers directly. However, participants in REKO Oslo engaged not to *replace* their grocery purchasing practice, but to perform elements of their interests, values and beliefs, thereby being something different than the sustainable transition of

consumption. Hence, rather than an extension or shift of the food practice, consumption through REKO Oslo was instead simultaneously part of other food practices *and* the engagement with a niche innovation representing certain values of the food that the individual consumers shared.

To answer why sustainable transitions in the Norwegian food system are challenging to bring about, I briefly traced back the institutions and regimes which reproduce the unsustainable structures of the Norwegian food system, to demonstrate how events and institutions at different levels have interacted and connected to form a path dependence (see Geels 2010) of environmentally degrading, resource-intensive, oligopolistic food provisioning. From the tensions, power struggles and technological advancements of military equipment in the post-WW2 era to automobilisation and developments in logistics and optics, the technological innovations in the post-war years leading up to the formation of the third food regime (see Bernstein 2016) in the 1980s, have resulted in the “supermarketisation” of food provisioning where a few corporate retailers dominate the food supply chain, locking society on a path (see Geels 2010) of unsustainable consumption. Landscape-level developments (see Geels and Schot 2007) characterised by globalisation, neoliberal politics and capitalist economics (Olsen 2010; Almås et al. 2013), have led consumers on a trajectory (see Geels 2010) of unsustainable consumption. Although the food system and structures of provision within it largely determine what is available and accessible to consumers, the continuation of existing food practices still depends on the uptake and reproduction by society. In other words, unsustainable consumption practices can only persist as long as individual carriers adopt and continue to engage with them, normalising them across society. As particular food conventions became normalised in society in the 1980s and 90s, environmentally harmful (over)consumption became the new social norm, with society as unreflective carriers of these practices. Hence, the Norwegian food system is reproduced through unsustainable practices carried across society (nationally and globally) further perpetuated by the lock-in mechanisms (see Geels 2011) of the incumbent corporate food regime, demonstrating the tangled connections that make sustainable transitions challenging.

8.2 Research implications and directions for future research

The research presented in this thesis has presented the consumers in REKO Oslo and their motivations, offering insights on who they are, why they participate and what the barriers to consumption are. Alongside contributing to the research on AFNs by offering a perspective that considers social practices as fundamental in bringing about systemic transition, the mapping of engagement in REKO Oslo also gives network administrators, agri-food organisations, REKO producers and policymakers important insights to the workings of this new food niche. Particularly, the research can contribute to the further development of the network, as it offers a comprehensive analysis of consumers and their motivations alongside insights of their experiences with the network, the products, the delivery and the use of Facebook as a platform.

This project has by no means been an exhaustive attempt at demonstrating the entire complex web of interconnections reproducing the unsustainable Norwegian food system, nor show all how REKO and other niches AFNs might penetrate the regime and bring about transitions. Rather, it has been an endeavour to uncover some of the complexities and to show how individual AFNs, regardless of their number and growth across the world, are insufficient in triggering change at the food system. Yet, how we may bring about food systems change (both in Norway and globally) remains to be seen.

Indeed, attention should be given to how AFNs and grassroots innovations may evolve as alternatives to the economic system and markets of food, not just as extensions of the neoliberal regime or as networks existing within autonomous spaces without the influence of capitalist economics, but as offering alternative ways of doing food that is ecologically, economically and socially sustainable throughout the system, from the production to the consumption and disposal of food. Moreover, research is needed on the implications of AFNs on sustainable consumption and whether these practices and networks replace or change elements of the *regime* or merely *other alternatives* within the protected niche space. Indeed, REKO requires further scrutiny as an alternative to the supermarket for both producers and consumers, with attention given to 1) the continuation and routinisation of REKO consumption across time-space after the novelty has worn out and 2) participant engagement with other AFNs prior, during and after REKO participation, to investigate the dynamics between this network and other

AFNs in bringing about sustainable change. As such, although REKO will not change the Norwegian food system on its own, it offers an opportunity to consume 'differently', even as a supplementary niche. And with the urgency of food systems transformation in a landscape of climate change, hunger and global inequality, every little bite of food matters.

Bibliography

- Alkon, Alison Hope, and Christie Grace McCullen. 2011. "Whiteness and Farmers Markets: Performances, Perpetuations ... Contestations?" *Antipode* 43 (4): 937–59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00818.x>.
- Allen, John. 2004. "The Whereabouts of Power: Politics, Government and Space." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 86 (1): 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0435-3684.2004.00151.x>.
- Allen, Patricia, Margaret FitzSimmons, Michael Goodman, and Keith Warner. 2003. "Shifting Plates in the Agrifood Landscape: The Tectonics of Alternative Agrifood Initiatives in California." *Journal of Rural Studies*, International Perspectives on Alternative Agro-Food Networks: Quality, Embeddedness, Bio-Politics, 19 (1): 61–75. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(02\)00047-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(02)00047-5).
- Almås, Reidar, Hilde Bjørkhaug, Hugh Campbell, and Christian Anton Smedshaug, eds. 2013. *Fram Mot Ein Berekraftig Og Klimatilpassa Norsk Landbruksmodell*. Trondheim: Akademika Forlag.
- Almås, Reidar, and Bruce Muirhead. 2013. "Utviklinga i Vesteupeisk Landbrukspolitikk Etter 1945 i Lys Av Internasjonal Handelspolitikk." In *Fram Mot Ein Berekraftig Og Klimatilpassa Norsk Landbruksmodell*, edited by Reidar Almås, Hilde Bjørkhaug, Hugh Campbell, and Christian Anton Smedshaug, 33–58. Trondheim: Akademika Forlag.
- Amilien, Virginie. 2011. "From Territory to Terroir? : The Cultural Dynamics of Local and Localized Food Products in Norway." *Sosiologisk Årbok* 3–4: 85–106.
- Amilien, Virginie, and Atle Wehn Hegnes. 2013. "The Dimensions of 'Traditional Food' in Reflexive Modernity: Norway as a Case Study." *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* 93 (14): 3455–63. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jsfa.6318>.
- Baker, Elizabeth H. 2014. "Socioeconomic Status, Definition." In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior, and Society*, 2210–14. American Cancer Society. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118410868.wbehibs395>.
- Bar-On, Yinon M., Rob Phillips, and Ron Milo. 2018. "The Biomass Distribution on Earth." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115 (25): 6506–11. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1711842115>.
- Baumol, William J., Robert E. Litan, and Carl J. Schramm. 2007. *Good Capitalism, Bad Capitalism, and the Economics of Growth and Prosperity*. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.985843>.
- Béné, Christophe, Peter Oosterveer, Lea Lamotte, Inge D. Brouwer, Stef de Haan, Steve D. Prager, Elise F. Talsma, and Colin K. Khoury. 2019a. "When Food Systems Meet Sustainability – Current Narratives and Implications for Actions." *World Development* 113: 116–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.08.011>.
- Béné, Christophe, Steven D. Prager, Harold A. E. Achicanoy, Patricia Alvarez Toro, Lea Lamotte, Camila Bonilla Cedrez, and Brendan R. Mapes. 2019b. "Understanding Food Systems Drivers: A Critical Review of the Literature." *Global Food Security* 23: 149–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2019.04.009>.
- Berg, Lisbet, Unni Kjaernes, Elena Ganskau, Vera Minina, Ludmila Voltchkova, Bente Halkier, and Lotte Holm. 2005. "Trust in Food Safety in Russia, Denmark and Norway." *European Societies* 7 (1): 103–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461669042000327045>.

- Bernstein, Henry. 2010. *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*. Canada: Fernwood Publishing.
- . 2016. “Agrarian Political Economy and Modern World Capitalism: The Contributions of Food Regime Analysis.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43 (3): 611–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2015.1101456>.
- Beus, Curtis E., and Riley E. Dunlap. 1990. “Conventional versus Alternative Agriculture: The Paradigmatic Roots of the Debate*.” *Rural Sociology* 55 (4): 590–616. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.1990.tb00699.x>.
- Bjørkhaug, Hilde, Reidar Almås, and Jostein Vik. 2015. *Norsk matmakt i endring*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Blumberg, Renata, Helga Leitner, and Kirsten Valentine Cadieux. 2020. “For Food Space: Theorizing Alternative Food Networks beyond Alterity.” *Journal of Political Ecology* 27 (1): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v27i1.23026>.
- Bond, Rebekka. 2019. “REKO-Ringer i Norge.” Norsk Bonde- Og Småbrukarlag. March 26, 2019. <https://www.smabrukarlaget.no/norsk-bonde-og-smabrukarlag/matnyttig/lokalmatringer/aktive-reko-ringer/>.
- Born, Branden, and Mark Purcell. 2016. “Avoiding the Local Trap: Scale and Food Systems in Planning Research.” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X06291389>.
- Bossy, Sophie. 2014. “The Utopias of Political Consumerism: The Search of Alternatives to Mass Consumption.” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14 (2): 179–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514526238>.
- Boström, Michele Micheletti, and Peter Oosterveer, eds. 2019. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Consumerism*. The Oxford Handbook of Political Consumerism. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190629038.001.0001>.
- Bourke, Brian. 2014. “Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process.” *The Qualitative Report* 19 (33): 1–9.
- Bryman, Alan. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bui, Sibylle, A. Cardona, C. Lamine, and M. Cerf. 2016. “Sustainability Transitions: Insights on Processes of Niche-Regime Interaction and Regime Reconfiguration in Agri-Food Systems.” *Journal of Rural Studies* 48 (December): 92–103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2016.10.003>.
- Buttel, Frederick H. 2001. “Some Reflections on Late Twentieth Century Agrarian Political Economy.” *Sociologia Ruralis* 41 (2): 165–81. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00176>.
- Bye, Anne Snellingen, and Trond Amund Steinset. 2019. “Hver tredje landbruksoverdragelse er fritt salg.” Statistics Norway (SSB). <https://www.ssb.no/jord-skog-jakt-og-fiskeri/artikler-og-publikasjoner/hver-tredje-landbruksoverdragelse-er-fritt-salg>.
- Clapp, Jennifer. 2015. “Food Security and International Trade: Unpacking Disputed Narratives.” Rome: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.
- Clark, Dylan. 2004. “The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine.” *Ethnology* 43 (1): 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3773853>.
- Claudi, Ida Breckan. n.d. “Problemet med soya.” Regnskogfondet. Accessed August 8, 2020. <https://www.regnskog.no/no/om-regnskogfondet/dette-mener-regnskogfondet/problemet-med-soya>.

- Coley, David, Mark Howard, and Michael Winter. 2009. "Local Food, Food Miles and Carbon Emissions: A Comparison of Farm Shop and Mass Distribution Approaches." *Food Policy* 34 (2): 150–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2008.11.001>.
- Curry, Nigel, and James Kirwan. 2014. "The Role of Tacit Knowledge in Developing Networks for Sustainable Agriculture." *Sociologia Ruralis* 54 (3): 341–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12048>.
- Dagligvarehandlen, and Nielsen. 2019. "Dagligvarefasiten 2019." Dagligvarehandlen. https://dagligvarehandlen.no/sites/default/files/dagligvarefasiten_2019.31.pdf.
- . 2020. "Dagligvarefasiten 2020." Dagligvarehandlen. https://dagligvarehandlen.no/sites/default/files/dagligvarefasiten_2020.3.pdf.
- Dehghan, Saeed Kamali. 2019. "Are Mexican Avocados the World's New Conflict Commodity?" *The Guardian*, December 30, 2019, sec. Global development. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/dec/30/are-mexican-avocados-the-worlds-new-conflict-commodity>.
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. n.d. "Urbanization." Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/urbanization/index.asp>.
- Domaneschi, Lorenzo. 2012. "Food Social Practices: Theory of Practice and the New Battlefield of Food Quality." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 12 (3): 306–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540512456919>.
- DuPuis, E. Melanie, and David Goodman. 2005. "Should We Go 'Home' to Eat?: Toward a Reflexive Politics of Localism." *Journal of Rural Studies* 21 (3): 359–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2005.05.011>.
- Dwyer, Rachel E. 2009. "Making a Habit of It: Positional Consumption, Conventional Action and the Standard of Living." *Journal of Consumer Culture*, October. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540509341773>.
- Ehrnström-Fuentes, Maria, Mikko Jauho, and Piia Jallinoja. 2019. "Perceptions and Experiences of Sustainability among Producers in the REKO Alternative Food Network in Finland." *Sosiologia* 56 (4): 401–21.
- Ehrnström-Fuentes, Maria, and Hanna Leipämaa-Leskinen. 2019. "Boundary Negotiations in a Self-Organized Grassroots-Led Food Network: The Case of REKO in Finland." *Sustainability* 11 (15): 4137. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154137>.
- El Bilali, Hamid. 2019. "The Multi-Level Perspective in Research on Sustainability Transitions in Agriculture and Food Systems: A Systematic Review." *Agriculture* 9 (4): 74. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture9040074>.
- England, Kim V. L. 1994. "Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research." *The Professional Geographer* 46 (1): 80–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0033-0124.1994.00080.x>.
- Ericksen, Polly J. 2008a. "What Is the Vulnerability of a Food System to Global Environmental Change?" *Ecology and Society* 13 (2). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26268000>.
- . 2008b. "Conceptualizing Food Systems for Global Environmental Change Research." *Global Environmental Change* 18 (1): 234–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2007.09.002>.

- Evans, David M. 2018. "What Is Consumption, Where Has It Been Going, and Does It Still Matter?:" *The Sociological Review* 67 (3): 499–517. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026118764028>.
- "Fakta om Befolkningen." n.d. Statistics Norway (SSB). Accessed August 8, 2020. <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/faktaside/befolkningen>.
- Feenstra, Gail W. 1997. "Local Food Systems and Sustainable Communities." *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* 12 (1): 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0889189300007165>.
- Fine, Ben. 2013. "Consumption Matters | Ephemera." *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization* 13 (2): 217–48.
- Fligstein, Neil, and Luke Dauter. 2007. "The Sociology of Markets." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (1): 105–28. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131736>.
- Follett, Jeffrey R. 2009. "Choosing a Food Future: Differentiating Among Alternative Food Options." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 22 (1): 31–51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-008-9125-6>.
- Fonte, Maria. 2013a. "Reflexive Localism: Toward a Theoretical Foundation of Integrative Food Politics." *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 20 (3): 397–402.
- . 2013b. "Food Consumption as Social Practice: Solidarity Purchasing Groups in Rome, Italy." *Journal of Rural Studies* 32 (October): 230–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2013.07.003>.
- Framtiden i våre hender. 2020. "Kjøp mer fra din lokale bonde!" Framtiden.no. July 10, 2020. <https://www.framtiden.no/202007107601/aktuelt/mat/kjop-mer-fra-din-lokale-bonde.html>.
- Friedland, William H. 1984. "Commodity Systems Analysis: An Approach to the Sociology of Agriculture." *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 1: 221–35.
- Friedmann, Harriet, and Philip McMichael. 1989. "Agriculture and the State System: The Rise and Decline of National Agricultures, 1870 to the Present." *Sociologia Ruralis* 29 (2): 93–117. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.1989.tb00360.x>.
- Geels, Frank W. 2002. "Technological Transitions as Evolutionary Reconfiguration Processes: A Multi-Level Perspective and a Case-Study." *Research Policy*, 31 (8): 1257–74. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333\(02\)00062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(02)00062-8).
- . 2010. "Ontologies, Socio-Technical Transitions (to Sustainability), and the Multi-Level Perspective." *Research Policy*, Special Section on Innovation and Sustainability Transitions, 39 (4): 495–510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2010.01.022>.
- . 2011. "The Multi-Level Perspective on Sustainability Transitions: Responses to Seven Criticisms." *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 1 (1): 24–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2011.02.002>.
- . 2012. "A Socio-Technical Analysis of Low-Carbon Transitions: Introducing the Multi-Level Perspective into Transport Studies." *Journal of Transport Geography*, Special Section on Theoretical Perspectives on Climate Change Mitigation in Transport, 24 (September): 471–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2012.01.021>.
- Geels, Frank W., and Johan Schot. 2007. "Typology of Sociotechnical Transition Pathways." *Research Policy* 36 (3): 399–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2007.01.003>.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 2006. *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttt07.

- Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. University of California Press.
- Goodman, David. 2004. "Rural Europe Redux? Reflections on Alternative Agro-Food Networks and Paradigm Change." *Sociologia Ruralis* 44 (1): 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2004.00258.x>.
- . 2009. "Place and Space in Alternative Food Networks: Connecting Production and Consumption." *Consuming Space: Placing Consumption in Perspective*, January.
- Goodman, David, and E. Melanie DuPuis. 2002. "Knowing Food and Growing Food: Beyond the Production–Consumption Debate in the Sociology of Agriculture." *Sociologia Ruralis* 42 (1): 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00199>.
- Goodman, David, E. Melanie DuPuis, and Michael K. Goodman. 2012. *Alternative Food Networks : Knowledge, Practice, and Politics*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203804520>.
- Goodman, David, and M. R. Redclift. 1991. *Refashioning Nature: Food, Ecology, and Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Goodman, Michael K., Damian Maye, and Lewis Holloway. 2010. "Ethical Foodscapes?: Premises, Promises, and Possibilities." *Environment and Planning A* 42 (August): 1782–96. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a43290>.
- Grin, John. 2013. "Changing Government, Kitchens, Supermarkets, Firms and Farms: The Governance of Transitions between Societal Practices and Supply Systems." In *Food Practices in Transition: Changing Food Consumption, Retail and Production in the Age of Reflexive Modernity*, edited by Gert Spaargaren, Peter Oosterveer, and Anne Loeber, 35–46. London: Routledge.
- Guthman, Julie. 2008. "Bringing Good Food to Others: Investigating the Subjects of Alternative Food Practice?" *Cultural Geographies* 15 (4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474008094315>.
- Hale, James, Corrine Knapp, Lisa Bardwell, Michael Buchenau, Julie Marshall, Fahriye Sancar, and Jill S Litt. 2011. "Connecting Food Environments and Health through the Relational Nature of Aesthetics: Gaining Insight through the Community Gardening Experience." *Social Science & Medicine (1982)* 72 (11): 1853–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.03.044>.
- Halkier, Bente. 2009. "A practice theoretical perspective on everyday dealings with environmental challenges of food consumption." *Anthropology of food*, no. S5 (September). <https://doi.org/10.4000/aof.6405>.
- Hansen, Arve. 2012. "Sustainable Development and Consumption from Rio to Rio and Beyond." *Tvergastein* 1: 60–67.
- . 2017. "Transport in Transition: Doi Moi and the Consumption of Cars and Motorbikes in Hanoi." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 17 (2): 378–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540515602301>.
- . 2018. "Meat Consumption and Capitalist Development: The Meatification of Food Provision and Practice in Vietnam." *Geoforum* 93 (July): 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.05.008>.
- Hargreaves, Tom. 2011. "Practice-Ing Behaviour Change: Applying Social Practice Theory to pro-Environmental Behaviour Change." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 11 (1): 79–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540510390500>.

- Hargreaves, Tom, Alex Haxeltine, Noel Longhurst, and Gill Seyfang. 2011. "Sustainability Transitions from the Bottom-up: Civil Society, the Multi-Level Perspective and Practice Theory. Working Paper." *Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment*, 1–26.
- Hargreaves, Tom, Noel Longhurst, and Gill Seyfang. 2013. "Up, Down, Round and Round: Connecting Regimes and Practices in Innovation for Sustainability." *Environment and Planning A* 45 (2): 402–20. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a45124>.
- Harris, Edmund. 2009. "Neoliberal Subjectivities or a Politics of the Possible? Reading for Difference in Alternative Food Networks." *Area* 41 (1): 55–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2008.00848.x>.
- Hegnes, Atle Wehn, and Geir Wæhler Gustavsen. 2019. "The Class and Culture of Norwegian Culinary Straw Men: A Response to Flemmen, Hjellbrekke and Jarness' 'Class, Culture and Culinary Tastes: Cultural Distinctions and Social Class Divisions in Contemporary Norway.'" *Sociology* 53 (3): 600–608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518776892>.
- Heisserer, Barbara, and Henrike Rau. 2017. "Capturing the Consumption of Distance? A Practice-Theoretical Investigation of Everyday Travel." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 17 (3): 579–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540515602304>.
- Hinrichs, C. Clare. 2003. "The Practice and Politics of Food System Localization." *Journal of Rural Studies*, International Perspectives on Alternative Agro-Food Networks: Quality, Embeddedness, Bio-Politics, 19 (1): 33–45. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(02\)00040-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(02)00040-2).
- Holloway, Lewis, and Moya Kneafsey. 2000. "Reading the Space of the Framers' Market: A Case Study from the United Kingdom." *Sociologia Ruralis* 40 (3): 285–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00149>.
- Holloway, Lewis, Moya Kneafsey, Laura Venn, Rosie Cox, Elizabeth Dowler, and Helena Tuomainen. 2007. "Possible Food Economies: A Methodological Framework for Exploring Food Production–Consumption Relationships." *Sociologia Ruralis* 47 (1): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2007.00427.x>.
- Holt-Giménez, Eric. 2017. *A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Ingram, Julie. 2018. "Agricultural Transition: Niche and Regime Knowledge Systems' Boundary Dynamics." *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 26 (March): 117–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2017.05.001>.
- Ipsos. 2019. "Ipsos SoMe-tracker Q1'19." Ipsos. April 29, 2019. <https://www.ipsos.com/nb-no/ipsos-some-tracker-q119>.
- Ivanova, Diana, Konstantin Stadler, Kjartan Steen-Olsen, Richard Wood, Gibran Vita, Arnold Tukker, and Edgar G. Hertwich. 2016. "Environmental Impact Assessment of Household Consumption." *Journal of Industrial Ecology* 20 (3): 526–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jiec.12371>.
- Jakobsen, Jostein, and Arve Hansen. 2020. "Geographies of Meatification: An Emerging Asian Meat Complex." *Globalizations* 17 (1): 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1614723>.
- Jarosz, Lucy. 2008. "The City in the Country: Growing Alternative Food Networks in Metropolitan Areas." *Journal of Rural Studies* 24 (3): 231–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2007.10.002>.

- Jeff. Pratt, and Peter. Luetchford. 2014. *Food for Change: The Politics and Values of Social Movements*. Anthropology, Culture and Society. New York: PlutoPress.
- Johnston, Josée, Andrew Biro, and Norah MacKendrick. 2009. "Lost in the Supermarket: The Corporate-Organic Foodscape and the Struggle for Food Democracy." *Antipode* 41 (3): 509–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00685.x>.
- "Jordbruk, faktaside." n.d. Statistics Norway (SSB). Accessed August 8, 2020. <https://www.ssb.no/jord-skog-jakt-og-fiskeri/faktaside/jordbruk>.
- Kallum, Lene. 2020. "Matvaner i Koronakrisen.Pdf." Oslo, Norway: Too Good To Go. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gPNGigbl1ntHTlqCuXJP9AV2mAe9Ghs/view?usp=embed_facebook.
- Kirwan, James. 2004. "Alternative Strategies in the UK Agro-Food System: Interrogating the Alterity of Farmers' Markets." *Sociologia Ruralis* 44 (4): 395–415. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2004.00283.x>.
- Kjærnes, Unni, Mark Harvey, and Alan Warde. 2007. *Trust in Food: A Comparative and Institutional Analysis*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230627611>.
- Kjærnes, Unni. 2016. 'Til forbrukernes beste? Endret handlingsrom for forbrukermakt og forbrukerinteresser'. In *Norsk jordbrukspolitik: handlingsrom i endring*, edited by Agnar Hegrenes, Klaus Mittenzwei, and Sjur Spildo Prestegard, 205–25. Bergen: Fakbokforlaget.
- Kleven, Øyvind. 2019. "Hver tredje med lite utdanning sitter hjemme i valg etter valg." ssb.no. June 2, 2019. <https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/hver-tredje-med-lite-utdanning-sitter-hjemme-i-valg-etter-valg>.
- Knutsen, Heidi. 2020. "Norwegian Agriculture Status and Trends 2019." *NIBIO POP* 6 (8). <https://nibio.brage.unit.no/nibio-xmlui/handle/11250/2643268>.
- "Kommunefakta." n.d. Statistics Norway (SSB). Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://www.ssb.no/kommunefakta/kommune>.
- Kvakkestad, Valborg, Per Kristian Rørstad, and Arild Vatn. 2015. "Norwegian Farmers' Perspectives on Agriculture and Agricultural Payments: Between Productivism and Cultural Landscapes." *Land Use Policy* 42 (January): 83–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2014.07.009>.
- "Landbruket i Norge 2015." 2016. Statistics Norway (SSB). <https://www.ssb.no/jord-skog-jakt-og-fiskeri/artikler-og-publikasjoner/landbruket-i-norge-2015>.
- Lave, Jean. 2019. *Learning and Everyday Life: Access, Participation, and Changing Practice*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108616416>.
- Law, John. 1994. *Organizing Modernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Leikvoll, Gunn Kristin Aasen, Christine Hvitsand, Ingvild Haugen, and Mari Engh. 2020. "REKO-ring: En viktig omsetningskanal for økologisk landbruk?" Telemarkforskning. <https://www.telemarkforskning.no/publikasjoner/reko-ring-en-viktig-omsetningskanal-for-okologisk-landbruk/3568/>.
- Leknes, Stefan, Sturla A. Løkken, Astrid Syse, and Marianne Tønnessen. 2018. "Befolkningsframskrivingene 2018." Statistics Norway (SSB).

<https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/attachment/354129?ts=1643ab45088>.

- Little, Jo, Brian Ilbery, and David Watts. 2009. "Gender, Consumption and the Relocalisation of Food: A Research Agenda." *Sociologia Ruralis* 49 (3): 201–17.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2009.00492.x>.
- Lockie, Stewart, and Simon Kitto. 2000. "Beyond the Farm Gate: Production-Consumption Networks and Agri-Food Research." *Sociologia Ruralis* 40 (1): 3–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00128>.
- "Lønn." 2020. Statistics Norway (SSB).
<https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/11418/tableViewLayout1/?loadedQueryId=10031574&timeType=top&timeValue=2>.
- MacKendrick, Norah. 2014. "Foodscape." *Contexts* 13 (3): 16–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214545754>.
- Mares, Teresa Marie, and Alison Hope Alkon. 2011. "Mapping the Food Movement: Addressing Inequality and Neoliberalism." *Environment and Society* 2 (1): 68–86.
<https://doi.org/10.3167/ares.2011.020105>.
- Marsden, Terry, Jo Banks, and Gillian Bristow. 2000. "Food Supply Chain Approaches: Exploring Their Role in Rural Development." *Sociologia Ruralis* 40 (4): 424–38.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00158>.
- Maye, Damian, Laura B. Delind, Maria Fonte, Josée Johnston, Kate Cairns, David Goodman, E. Melanie Dupuis, Michael K. Goodman, and Damian Maye. n.d. "Moving Alternative Food Networks beyond the Niche". *Int. J. of Soc. of Agr. & Food* 20(3): 383–389
- Maye, Damian, and James Kirwan. 2010. "Alternative Food Networks." *Sociopedia.Isa*, 1–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/205684601051>.
- McMeekin, Andrew, and Dale Southerton. 2012. "Sustainability Transitions and Final Consumption: Practices and Socio-Technical Systems." *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* 24 (4): 345–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537325.2012.663960>.
- McMichael, Philip. 2009. "A Food Regime Genealogy." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36 (1): 139–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820354>.
- . 2013a. *Food Regimes and the Agrarian Question*. Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire, UK: Practical Action Publishing. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1hj553s.9>.
- . 2013b. "Land Grabbing as Security Mercantilism in International Relations." *Globalizations* 10 (1): 47–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2013.760925>.
- Meny. 2018. "Økning i vegetar på 60 prosent. Press release." www.meny.no. October 18, 2018.
<https://meny.no/Om-MENY/pressemeldinger/okning-i-vegetar-pa-60-prosent/>.
- Michel-Villarreal, Rosario, Martin Hingley, Maurizio Canavari, and Ilenia Bregoli. 2019. "Sustainability in Alternative Food Networks: A Systematic Literature Review." *Sustainability* 11 (3): 859. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11030859>.
- Miljødirektoratet. 2020. "Klimakur 2030: Tiltak og virkemidler mot 2030." Oslo, Norway: Miljødirektoratet.
<https://www.miljodirektoratet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/m1625/m1625.pdf>.

- Morgan, Kevin, Terry Marsden, and Jonathan Murdoch. 2006a. *Worlds of Food: Place, Power, and Provenance in the Food Chain*. Oxford Geographical and Environmental Studies. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- . 2006b. *Worlds of Food: Place, Power, and Provenance in the Food Chain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Munthe, Preben. 2014. “GATT.” In *Store norske leksikon*. <http://snl.no/GATT>.
- Murdoch, Jonathan, Terry Marsden, and Jo Banks. 2000. “Quality, Nature, and Embeddedness: Some Theoretical Considerations in the Context of the Food Sector*.” *Economic Geography* 76 (2): 107–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-8287.2000.tb00136.x>.
- Nibio. 2008. “Hvorfor Koster Økologisk Mat Mer Enn Den Vanlige Maten?” *Matportalen.No*, 2008. https://www.matportalen.no/merking/tema/okologisk_mat/hvorfor_koster_okologiske_mat_mer_enn_den_vanlige_maten.
- Nielsen. 2019. “Dagligvarefasiten 2019.” Nielsen. https://dagligvarehandelen.no/sites/default/files/dagligvarefasiten_2019.31.pdf.
- Norsk Bonde og Småbrukarlag. n.d. “REKO-Ringer | REKO/Samarbeid | Norsk Bonde- Og Småbrukarlag.” Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://www.smabrukarlaget.no/norsk-bonde-og-smabrukarlag/matnyttig/lokalmatringler/>.
- Nygård, Geir, and Sadiq Kwesi Boateng. 2015. “Nesten alle i arbeid – store inntektsforskjeller.” Statistics Norway (SSB). <https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/nesten-alle-i-arbeid-store-inntektsforskjeller>.
- Nykamp, Hilde, and Antje Gonera. 2020. “Innovation for a Sustainable Food System.” 978-82-8296-640–5. Tromsø: Nofima.
- O’Leary, Zina. 2017. *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Olsen, Per Ingvar. 2010. *Norsk mat etter supermarkedsrevolusjonen*. 1st ed. Oslo, Norway: Unipub. <https://www.akademika.no/norsk-mat-etter-supermarkedsrevolusjonen/olsen-ingvar/9788274774926>.
- Ongley, E. D. 1996. “Control of Water Pollution from Agriculture.” Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- O’Reilly, Finbarr. 2018. “Precious as Silver, Vanilla Brings Cash and Crime to Madagascar.” *The New York Times*, August 30, 2018, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/30/world/africa/madagascar-vanilla.html>. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/30/world/africa/madagascar-vanilla.html>.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1989. *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism*. Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Otero, Gerardo, Efe Can Gürcan, Gabriela Pechlaner, and Giselle Liberman. 2018. “Food Security, Obesity, and Inequality: Measuring the Risk of Exposure to the Neoliberal Diet.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 18 (3): 536–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12252>.
- Padayachee, Keshnee. 2016. “Internet Mediated Research: Challenges and Issues.” *South African Computer Journal* 28 (2): 25–45. <https://doi.org/10.18489/sacj.v28i2.376>.

- Palmer, Sarah, Farida Fozdar, and Max Sully. 2009. "The Effect of Trust on West Australian Farmers' Responses to Infectious Livestock Diseases." *Sociologia Ruralis* 49 (4): 360–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2009.00495.x>.
- Pantzar, Mika, and Elizabeth Shove. 2010. "Understanding Innovation in Practice: A Discussion of the Production and Re-Production of Nordic Walking." *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* 22 (4): 447–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537321003714402>.
- Parr, Adrian. 2015. "The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics – Reflections." *Geoforum* 62 (June): 70–72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.03.012>.
- Ponte, Stefano. 2016. "Convention Theory in the Anglophone Agro-Food Literature: Past, Present and Future." *Journal of Rural Studies* 44 (April): 12–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.12.019>.
- Poore, J., and T. Nemecek. 2018. "Reducing Food's Environmental Impacts through Producers and Consumers." *Science* 360 (6392): 987–92. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aag0216>.
- Reckwitz, Andreas. 2016. "Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing." *European Journal of Social Theory* 5 (2): 243–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432>.
- Regjeringen. 2017. "Statens Tilbud: Jordbruksforhandlingene 2017." Oslo, Norway: Regjeringen.
- . 2019b. "Mat, Mennesker Og Miljø - Regjeringens Handlingsplan for Bærekraftige Matsystemer i Norsk Utenriks- Og Utviklingspolitikk 2019–2023." Oslo, Norway: Regjeringen. https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/planer-matsystemer-i-norge_norsk_web-versjon190919.pdf.
- . 2019. "WTO: Forutsigbar og enklere handel." Redaksjonell artikkel. Regjeringen.no. regjeringen.no. April 4, 2019. https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/naringsliv/handel/ud_innsikt/bakgrunn_wto/id2076083/.
- Reinert, Erik S. 2007. *How Rich Countries Got Rich and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor - Erik S. Reinert - Pocketbok(9781845298746) | Adlibris Bokhandel*. London: Constable and Robinson. <https://www.adlibris.com/no/bok/how-rich-countries-got-rich-and-why-poor-countries-stay-poor-9781845298746>.
- Renting, Henk, Terry K. Marsden, and Jo Banks. 2003. "Understanding Alternative Food Networks: Exploring the Role of Short Food Supply Chains in Rural Development." *Environment and Planning A* 35 (3): 393–411. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a3510>.
- Rinde, Harald. 2016. "Lars Thue, Espen Ekberg Og Christine Myrvang: Mellommannen. Joh. Johannson Og Kampen Om Dagligvaremarkedet 1866–2016." *Historisk Tidsskrift* 95 (4).
- Rossi, Adanella. 2017. "Beyond Food Provisioning: The Transformative Potential of Grassroots Innovation around Food." *Agriculture* 7 (1): 6. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture7010006>.
- Sadiddin, Ahmad, Andrea Cattaneo, Marinella Cirillo, and Meghan Miller. 2019. "Food Insecurity as a Determinant of International Migration: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa." *Food Security* 11 (3): 515–30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-019-00927-w>.
- Sage, Colin. 2003. "Social Embeddedness and Relations of Regard: Alternative 'Good Food' Networks in South-West Ireland." *Journal of Rural Studies*, International Perspectives on Alternative Agro-Food Networks: Quality, Embeddedness, Bio-Politics, 19 (1): 47–60. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(02\)00044-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(02)00044-X).

- . 2007. “Trust in Markets: Economies of Regard and Spaces of Contestation in Alternative Food Networks.” In *Street Entrepreneurs: People, Place and Politics in Local and Global Perspective*, edited by John Cross and Alfonso Morales, 147–63. London: Routledge.
- Sagmo, Liv Jorunn Denstadli. 2019. “Rydder Opp i Uklare REKO-Regler.” *Norsk Landbruk*, June 3, 2019. <https://www.norsklandbruk.no/aktuelt/rydder-opp-i-uklare-reko-regler/>.
- Sahakian, Marlyne, and Harold Wilhite. 2013. “Making Practice Theory Practicable: Towards More Sustainable Forms of Consumption.” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14 (1): 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540513505607>.
- Schatzki, Theodore R. 1996. *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511527470>.
- . 2010. *The Timespace of Human Activity: On Performance, Society, and History as Indeterminate Teleological Events*. Lexington Books.
- Seale, Clive. 2018. *Researching Society and Culture*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Seyfang, Dr Gill, and Dr Adrian Smith. 2007. “Grassroots Innovations for Sustainable Development: Towards a New Research and Policy Agenda.” *Environmental Politics* 16 (4): 584–603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644010701419121>.
- Seyfang, Gill. 2009. *The New Economics of Sustainable Consumption: Seeds of Change*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230234505>.
- Seyfang, Gill, and Alex Haxeltine. 2012. “Growing Grassroots Innovations: Exploring the Role of Community-Based Initiatives in Governing Sustainable Energy Transitions.” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30 (3): 381–400. <https://doi.org/10.1068/c10222>.
- Seyfang, Gill, Alex Haxeltine, Tom Hargreaves, N. Longhurst, and R. Baldwin. 2010. “Understanding the Politics and Practice of Civil Society and Citizenship in the UK’s Energy Transition.” *Paper Presented at the Energy Transition In An Interdependent World Conference, Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex, February 24-25th (Unpublished)*.
- Shove, Elizabeth. 1998. “Gaps, Barriers and Conceptual Chasms: Theories of Technology Transfer and Energy in Buildings.” *Energy Policy* 26 (15): 1105–12.
- . 2003a. *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience: The Social Organization of Normality*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- . 2003b. “Converging Conventions of Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience.” *Journal of Consumer Policy* 26 (4): 395–418. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026362829781>.
- . 2010. “Beyond the ABC: Climate Change Policy and Theories of Social Change.” *Environment and Planning A* 42 (6): 1273–85. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a42282>.
- . 2012. “Habits and Their Creatures.” In *The Habits of Consumption*, edited by Alan Warde and Dale Southerton, 12:100–113. Helsinki: Collegium.
- Shove, Elizabeth, Mika Pantzar, and Matt Watson. 2012. *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446250655>.
- Slocum, Rachel. 2007. “Whiteness, Space and Alternative Food Practice.” *Geoforum* 38 (3): 520–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.10.006>.

- Smith, Adrian, Mariano Fressoli, Dinesh Abrol, Elisa Arond, Adrian Ely, Mariano Fressoli, Dinesh Abrol, Elisa Arond, and Adrian Ely. 2016. *Grassroots Innovation Movements*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315697888>.
- Snellman, Thomas. 2017. *IL MARKET VIRTUALE, DIRETTO E ITINERANTE* / Thomas Snellmann / TEDxReggioEmilia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETHa7MPE11A>.
- Spaargaren, Gert. 2003. "Sustainable Consumption: A Theoretical and Environmental Policy Perspective." *Society & Natural Resources* 16 (8): 687–701. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920309192>.
- . 2011. "Theories of Practices: Agency, Technology, and Culture: Exploring the Relevance of Practice Theories for the Governance of Sustainable Consumption Practices in the New World-Order." *Global Environmental Change, Symposium on Social Theory and the Environment in the New World (dis)Order*, 21 (3): 813–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.03.010>.
- Spaargaren, Gert, and Peter Oosterveer. 2010. "Citizen-Consumers as Agents of Change in Globalizing Modernity: The Case of Sustainable Consumption." *Sustainability* 2 (7): 1887–1908. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su2071887>.
- Spaargaren, Gert, Peter Oosterveer, and Anne Loeber, eds. 2013. *Food Practices in Transition: Changing Food Consumption, Retail and Production in the Age of Reflexive Modernity*. London: Routledge.
- SSB. 2019. "Befolkningens utdanningsnivå, 1. oktober 2019." Statistics Norway (SSB). <https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/statistikker/utniv/aar/2020-06-19>.
- Steffen, Will, Katherine Richardson, Johan Rockström, Sarah E. Cornell, Ingo Fetzer, Elena M. Bennett, Reinette Biggs, et al. 2015. "Planetary Boundaries: Guiding Human Development on a Changing Planet." *Science* 347 (6223). <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1259855>.
- Sternberg, Troy. 2012. "Chinese Drought, Bread and the Arab Spring." *Applied Geography* 34 (May): 519–24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2012.02.004>.
- Storper, Michael, Robert Salais, and Robert Salais. 1997. *Worlds of Production: The Action Frameworks of the Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Storstad, Oddveig, and Hilde Bjørkhaug. 2003. "Foundations of Production and Consumption of Organic Food in Norway: Common Attitudes among Farmers and Consumers?" *Agriculture and Human Values* 20 (2): 151–63. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024069627349>.
- Tansey, Geoff. 1995. *The Food System: A Guide*. Earthscan Original. London: Earthscan.
- Taylor, Matthew, and Jonathan Watts. 2019. "Revealed: The 20 Firms behind a Third of All Carbon Emissions." *The Guardian*, October 9, 2019, sec. Environment. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/09/revealed-20-firms-third-carbon-emissions>.
- Thorgrimsen, Tone C. S. 2014. "Flere flytter til sentrale strøk." *Nationen*, April 29, 2014.
- Thorsøe, Martin, and Chris Kjeldsen. 2016. "The Constitution of Trust: Function, Configuration and Generation of Trust in Alternative Food Networks." *Sociologia Ruralis* 56 (2): 157–75. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12082>.
- Tregear, Angela. 2011. "Progressing Knowledge in Alternative and Local Food Networks: Critical Reflections and a Research Agenda." *Journal of Rural Studies, Subjecting the Objective—Participation, Sustainability and Agroecological Research*, 27 (4): 419–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2011.06.003>.

- Tukker, Arnold, Maurie J. Cohen, Klaus Hubacek, and Oksana Mont. 2010. "The Impacts of Household Consumption and Options for Change." *Journal of Industrial Ecology* 14 (1): 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-9290.2009.00208.x>.
- Urry, John. 2016. "The 'System' of Automobility?" *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (4–5): 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276404046059>.
- Ursin, Lars, Bjørn Kåre Myskja, and Siri Granum Carson. 2016. "Think Global, Buy National: CSR, Cooperatives and Consumer Concerns in the Norwegian Food Value Chain." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 29 (3): 387–405. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-016-9609-8>.
- Vaage, Odd Frank. 2012. "Tidene Skifter: Tidsbruk 1971-2010. Statistiske Analyser 125." Statistics Norway (SSB).
- Veninga, Willeke, and Rico Ihle. 2018. "Import Vulnerability in the Middle East: Effects of the Arab Spring on Egyptian Wheat Trade." *Food Security* 10 (1): 183–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-017-0755-2>.
- Venn, Laura, Moya Kneafsey, Lewis Holloway, Rosie Cox, Elizabeth Dowler, and Helena Tuomainen. 2006. "Researching European 'Alternative' Food Networks: Some Methodological Considerations." *Area* 38 (3): 248–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2006.00694.x>.
- Vittersø, Gunnar, and Torvald Tangeland. 2015. "The Role of Consumers in Transitions towards Sustainable Food Consumption. The Case of Organic Food in Norway." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 92 (April): 91–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.12.055>.
- Vojnovic, Igor. 2014. "Urban Sustainability: Research, Politics, Policy and Practice." *Cities, Current Research on Cities*, 41 (July): 30–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2014.06.002>.
- Ward Thompson, Catharine, Jenny Roe, Peter Aspinall, Richard Mitchell, Angela Clow, and David Miller. 2012. "More Green Space Is Linked to Less Stress in Deprived Communities: Evidence from Salivary Cortisol Patterns." *Landscape and Urban Planning* 105 (3): 221–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2011.12.015>.
- Warde, Alan. 2005. "Consumption and Theories of Practice." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 5 (2): 131–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540505053090>.
- . 2011. "Food Consumption." In *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture*, edited by Dale Southerton. Thousand Oaks, California. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412994248>.
- . 2014. "After Taste: Culture, Consumption and Theories of Practice." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14 (3): 279–303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540514547828>.
- . 2015. "The Sociology of Consumption: Its Recent Development." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (1): 117–34. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043208>.
- . 2016. "Consumption and Theories of Practice." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 5 (2): 131–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540505053090>.
- Warlo, Johan. 2020. "Oppsving for REKO under Korona." Norsk Bonde- Og Småbrukarlag. April 25, 2020. <https://www.smabrukarlaget.no/norsk-bonde-og-smabrukarlag/tema/oppsving-for-re/>.
- Watts, David Charles Hunter, Brian Ilbery, and Damian Maye. 2005. "Making Reconnections in Agro-Food Geography: Alternative Systems of Food Provision." *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (1): 22–40. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132505ph526oa>.

- Watts, David, Jo Little, and Brian Ilbery. 2018. "I Am Pleased to Shop Somewhere That Is Fighting the Supermarkets a Little Bit". A Cultural Political Economy of Alternative Food Networks." *Geoforum* 91 (May): 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.02.013>.
- Wenger, Etienne. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932>.
- . 2000. "Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems." *Organization* 7 (2): 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072002>.
- "What Is Consumption, Where Has It Been Going, and Does It Still Matter? - David M Evans, 2019." n.d. Accessed August 9, 2020. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.uio.no/doi/10.1177/0038026118764028>.
- Whatmore, Sarah, Pierre Stassart, and Henk Renting. 2003. "What's Alternative about Alternative Food Networks?:" *Environment and Planning A* 35 (3): 389–391. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a3621>.
- Whatmore, Sarah, Lorraine B. Thorne, David Goodman, and David Charles Hunter Watts. 1997. "Nourishing Networks: Alternative Geographies of Food." In *Globalising Food. Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring*, 287–304. London: Routledge. <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/nourishing-networks-alternative-geographies-of-food>.
- Wilhite, Harold. 2012. "Towards a Better Accounting of the Roles of Body, Things and Habits in Consumption." In *The Habits of Consumption*, edited by Alan Warde and Dale Southerton, 12:87–99. Helsinki: Collegium.
- Wilson, Amanda DiVito. 2013. "Beyond Alternative: Exploring the Potential for Autonomous Food Spaces." *Antipode* 45 (3): 719–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2012.01020.x>.
- Winter, Michael. 2003. "Embeddedness, the New Food Economy and Defensive Localism." *Journal of Rural Studies*, International Perspectives on Alternative Agro-Food Networks: Qua lity, Embeddedness, Bio-Politics, 19 (1): 23–32. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(02\)00053-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(02)00053-0).
- Zahl-Thanem, Alexander, Erik Magnus Fuglestad, and Jostein Vik. 2018. "Trender i Norsk Landbruk 2018: Et Landbruk i Endring." Trondheim: Ruralis - Institutt for rural- og regionalforskning.
- Zoll, Felix, Kathrin Specht, Ina Opitz, Rosemarie Siebert, Annette Piorr, and Ingo Zasada. 2018. "Individual Choice or Collective Action? Exploring Consumer Motives for Participating in Alternative Food Networks." *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 42 (1): 101–10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12405>.

Appendix 1 Overview interview participants

Name	Identification	Something about them
Lene*	Consumer	Female. Works at the university.
Karen*	Consumer	Female. Works in the cultural scene.
Kjersti*	Consumer	Female. Environmental geographer and teacher/community worker.
Christoffer*	Consumer	Male. Animator, partner is a chef.
Tom*	Consumer	Male. Student in nutritional supervision.
Anne-Marie*	Consumer	Female. Landscaper, agronomist and beekeeper.
Liv*	Consumer	Female. Works in the cultural scene.
Anette*	Consumer	Female. Gardener and information consultant.
Robyn*	Primarily administrator, but also consumer	Female. Involved with external organisation.
Karoline*	Primarily administrator, but also consumer	Female. REKO ring administrator.
Didrik*	Primarily producer, but also administrator	Male. Vegetable farmer, Oslo Education as food something, worked in restaurants before coming a farmer.
Tina*	Producer	Female. Honey producer, Oslo Learned the trade from her father, produce honey part-time and is also involved in teaching others about bees.

* Names have been changed to maintain the anonymity of interviewees.

Appendix 2 Sample interview guide

Question	Aim
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which REKO network did you last use? 2. What did you purchase? 	Opening question.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Which REKO networks have you used? 4. What do you normally purchase? 5. How much of your food would you say come from REKO? 6. How much of your food would you say come from somewhere else than the chain stores and supermarkets? 7. What do you think of the producers? 8. What do you think of the produce available? Is anything missing? 	<p>Understand use of network.</p> <p>Understand portion of purchases from network.</p> <p>Understand what the consumer thinks about the selection of goods available.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Where did you first hear about REKO? 10. How was your first encounter with the network? 11. Why do you purchase food from REKO? 	<p>Understand experience with network.</p> <p>Understand motivation and rationale for participating in the network.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Would you change anything about the network? 13. Is there anything that could be different? 	Understand obstacles/barriers to participate in network.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. What values do you feel like the network stands for? 15. Do you recognise yourself in these values? How? 	<p>Understand how interviewee relates themselves to the network. Understand how interviewee identifies network. Learn more about meaning-making in the network. Understand perception of network by consumers.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. What is the essence of ethical food for you? 17. What is the essence of sustainable food for you? 18. Do you consider your own consumption of food as ethical and/or sustainable? 19. If yes: In what way? 	<p>Understand interviewee's relationship with ethical and sustainable food.</p> <p>Understand motivation for participating in network.</p>

<p>20. If no: Why not? 21. How did you engage in ethical and sustainable food consumption prior to REKO? 22. Where did you purchase food before using REKO? 23. What need does REKO fulfil that you have?</p>	<p>Understand the role REKO has for interviewee when considering food as something with “value”.</p>
<p>24. What are your experiences relating to sustainable and ethical food in Oslo? 25. What are you missing in terms of food in Oslo? 26. What role do you think REKO plays in Oslo? 27. How do you see REKO in Oslo in the future? 28. Do you think there are characteristics to REKO in Oslo that are not found elsewhere? 29. If so: why?</p>	<p>Understand the role of REKO in Oslo. Understand future of REKO. Understand REKO in urban versus rural spaces.</p>
<p>30. Do you know of similar/other food initiatives in Oslo? In Norway?</p>	<p>Learn more about other initiatives in Oslo and Norway.</p>
<p>31. Would you like to add anything?</p>	<p>Give interviewee possibility to ask any question he or she might have.</p>
<p>32. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask?</p>	<p>Give interviewee possibility to learn more about the project.</p>
<p>33. Thank you for the interview!</p>	

Appendix 3 Survey consumers

NB: This is the initial survey. It does not include edits made after the test.

What best describes you? (pathways)

- A. I have used the REKO networks at St.Hanshaugen and/or Prindsens Hage.
- B. I am a member of St.Hanshaugen and/or Prindsens Hage Facebook groups, but have not used REKO.

Path A

Active consumer

Which networks have you purchased through? (Multiple choices available)

St.Hanshaugen

Sentrum /Prindsens Hage

Bygdøy

Bjerke

Other networks in the Oslo region

Other networks in Norway

How many times have you purchased through the network?

Only once

2-3

4-5

6 or more

What do you normally purchase? (Multiple choices available)

Fruits and berries

Vegetables and potatoes

Eggs

Dairy products

Fish and meat products

Flour and grains

Drinks

Baked goods

Products made of vegetables (like pickles etc.)

Products made of fruits and berries (like jam etc.)

Other readily made products (like spring rolls etc.)

Imagine all the food you buy in a week on a table. How much of your total household food consumption by item is purchased through REKO?

I have only purchased once

I only purchase one food item (for example eggs or blueberries)

I only purchase specialised items

A quarter or less

Half or less

Three quarters or less

I purchase all my food through REKO

**Which other alternative food places do you purchase/source from regularly*?
(Multiple choices available)**

**More than 5% of your total household food consumption normally comes from this source.*

Farmers market

Home-grown food

Urban farming projects (for example Losæter, Nabolagshager)

Independent food stores

Cooperatives

Directly from a local producer

Share farming

How important are following factors for purchasing through REKO? (On a scale from 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important) [1. Not important, 2. Somewhat important, 3. A bit important, 4. Important and 5. Very important]

Better access to local food
Better access to organic/ecological food
Better access to seasonable produce
Better access to speciality produce
Supporting small-scale farmers/producers
Access to specific products and/or brands
A good selection of food
Knowledge of production
Being sustainable
Direct contact with the producer
Supporting the producer directly financially
Predictability of pre-ordering
Supporting local business and value creation
An alternative to large chains
Reducing waste relating to production and distribution
Avoiding plastic and other packaging

How important are the following factors for purchasing through St.Hanshaugen or Prindsens Hage rather than other REKO networks? (On a scale from 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important). [1. Not important, 2. Somewhat important, 3. A bit important, 4.Important and 5. Very important]

Distance from where I live
Easily accessible from where I live
I prefer the selection at these locations
I can combine food shopping with other activities at the location
I can combine food shopping with other activities in a nearby area

The producers who sell through the network

I want to support sustainable food initiatives in Oslo

How much do you agree with the following statements? (On a scale from 1-5, where 1 disagree and 5 is agree) [1. Disagree, 2. Somewhat disagree, 3. Neither agree nor disagree, 4. Somewhat agree, 5. Agree]

I make sustainable food choices at home

I make sustainable food choices when eating out

Making sustainable choices is difficult

Sustainable options are not accessible in my area

I wish the City of Oslo prioritised making sustainable food accessible

The majority of my food is ecological/organic

I purchase the majority of my food from supermarkets or chain stores

I purchase the majority of my food from small businesses and independent stores

I purchase the majority of my food from REKO, farmers market and similar networks

Path B

Facebook-member, dormant consumer

What are the reasons you have not purchased through the network?

Prices are not as expected

The time for distribution does not suit me

Distance to location for distribution

Accessibility of location for distribution

Produce has sold out

Ordering is too complicated

I am not interested in the products they sell

I disagree with the concept behind REKO

I want more information about the production

I prefer other sources for purchasing ethical food

I forget to order

Have you used any of the alternative food distribution sources within the last 6 months? (Multiple choices available)

Farmers market

Home-grown food

Urban farming projects (for example Losæter, Nabolagshager)

Independent food stores

Cooperatives

Directly from a local producer

Share farming

If yes:

**Which other alternative food places do you purchase/source from regularly*?
(Multiple choices available)**

**More than 5% of your total household food consumption normally comes from this source.*

Farmers market

Home-grown food

Urban farming projects (for example Losæter, Nabolagshager)

Independent food stores

Cooperatives

Directly from a local producer

Share farming

Imagine all the food you buy in a week on a table. How much of your total household food consumption by item is purchased through alternative sources of food distribution?

I rarely purchase from alternative food distribution sources

I only purchase specialised food items (for example eggs or blueberries)

A quarter or less

Half or less

Three quarters or less

I purchase all my food at alternative food distribution sources

None. I purchase all of my food at supermarkets.

How important are following factors for purchasing through REKO? (On a scale from 1-5 where 1 is not important and 5 is very important) [1. Not important, 2. Somewhat important, 3. A bit important, 4. Important and 5. Very important]

Better access to local food

Better access to organic/ecological food

Better access to seasonable produce
Better access to speciality produce
Supporting small-scale farmers/producers
Access to specific products and/or brands
A good selection of food
Knowledge of production
Being sustainable
Direct contact with the producer
Supporting the producer directly financially
Predictability of pre-ordering
Supporting local business and value creation
An alternative to large chains
Reducing waste relating to production and distribution
Avoiding plastic and other packaging

How much do you agree with the following statements? (On a scale from 1-5, where 1 disagree and 5 is agree) [1. Disagree, 2. Somewhat disagree, 3. Neither agree nor disagree, 4. Somewhat agree, 5. Agree]

I make sustainable food choices at home

I make sustainable food choices when eating out

Making sustainable choices is difficult

Sustainable options are not accessible in my area

I wish the City of Oslo prioritised making sustainable food accessible

The majority of my food is ecological/organic

I purchase the majority of my food from supermarkets or chain stores

I purchase the majority of my food from small businesses and independent stores

I purchase the majority of my food from farmers market, cooperatives and similar networks

Path A/B:

How old are you?

I'd rather not say

18-25

26-35

36-50

51-65

65+

Where do you live?

District Alna

District Bjerke

District Frogner

District Gamle Oslo

District Grorud

District Grünerløkka

District Nordre Aker

District Nordstrand

District Sagene

District St.Hanshaugen

District Stovner

District Søndre Nordstrand

District Ullern

District Vestre Aker

District Østensjø

I live in the surrounding region.

I do not live in a convenient travel distance from Oslo.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Open comment box.

Thank you for your participation.

As part of the research project a series of in-depth interviews will be conducted with consumers, members of the Facebook groups who have not purchased through REKO, and producers. If you would like to participate in an interview like

this, please fill in your contact information below. Your contact information will be stored separately from your reply to this survey.

Name:

Email:

What best describes you?

- A. I have used the REKO networks at St.Hanshaugen and/or Prindsens Hage.
- B. I am a member of St.Hanshaugen and/or Prindsens Hage Facebook groups, but have not used REKO.

Thank you!

You will be contacted shortly.

Appendix 4 Information and consent form, interviews

NB: the information and consent forms contain the old question and focus of the topic.

Informasjonsskriv

Dette er en invitasjon til å delta i et dybdeintervju i forbindelse med masterprosjektet «*Assessing the Role of Grassroot Initiatives in Urban Sustainable Transitions: the Case of REKO*». Her gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva det vil innebære for deg.

De siste årene har REKO-fenomenet eksplodert i Norge, og i år har Oslo fått flere nye REKO-ringer. Formålet med dette prosjektet er å vurdere REKO-ringens rolle i Oslo som et initiativ for bærekraftig omstilling i byen, med fokus på bærekraftig mat. Prosjektet vil gi kunnskap om motivasjon og barrierer til deltakelse for både forbrukere og produsenter i to REKO-ringer i Oslo: St.Hanshaugen og Prindsens Hage. Videre vil prosjektet gi et innblikk i hvordan REKO som et initiativ forhandler sin egen rolle som et bærekraftig omstillingsprosjekt, og bidrar til en endring i vårt forhold til mat i byen.

Forbrukere og produsenter i REKO St.Hanshaugen og REKO Sentrum/Prindsens Hage inviteres til å delta. Medlemmer av de respektive Facebook-gruppene som *ikke* har benyttet seg av REKO inviteres også til intervju.

Datamaterialet vil bli benyttet i gjennomføring av oppgaven og videre formidling av denne. Resultatet av dybdeintervjuet vil i den grad mulig anonymiseres i oppgaven, med mindre annet er ønskelig fra intervjuobjektets side. Resultatet av prosjektet vil bli tilgjengeliggjort for forskning og for andre relevante institusjoner som arbeider med REKO i Oslo og Norge.

Spørsmål kan rettes til student Nora May Engeseth via e-post: norame@student.ilos.uio.no eller veileder Arve Hansen via e-post: arve.hansen@sum.uio.no. Vennligst oppgi prosjektnavn.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Dine personopplysninger vil oppbevares frem til prosjektslutt, og vil deretter anonymiseres. Datamaterialet anonymiseres i sin helhet ved prosjektslutt, og lydopptak slettes.

Prosjektet avsluttes 31.august 2020.

Du kan når som helst trekke tilbake ditt samtykke uten å oppgi grunn.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Senter for Utvikling og Miljø ved Universitetet i Oslo har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Ved spørsmål om samtykke eller deltakelse i studien, kan du kontakte:

- Senter for Utvikling og Miljø, Universitetet i Oslo ved student Nora May Engeseth via e-post: norame@student.ilos.uio.no eller veileder Arve Hansen via e-post: arve.hansen@sum.uio.no.
- Personvernombud ved UiO: Maren Magnus Voll via e-post: personvernombud@uio.no
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen,
Arve Hansen
Veileder og prosjektansvarlig

Nora May Engeseth
Masterstudent

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «*Assessing the Role of Grassroot Initiatives in Urban Sustainable Transitions: the Case of REKO*», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg forstår hvordan mine personopplysninger vil bli behandlet og hva mine rettigheter er.

Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju.

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektslutt ca. 31 august 2020.

Dato/sted: _____

Underskrift: _____

Appendix 5 Information and consent, survey

Innlegg Facebook (rekruttering):

«Jeg ønsker å få mer kunnskap om REKO-ringen i Oslo i forbindelse med masterprosjektet «*Assessing the Role of Grassroot Initiatives in Urban Sustainable Transitions: the Case of REKO*». Undersøkelsen tar kun noen få minutter og din besvarelse er anonym. Også du som ikke har benyttet deg av REKO-ringen oppfordres til å svare på undersøkelsen. Spørreundersøkelsen gjennomføres på engelsk.»

«De siste årene har REKO-fenomenet eksplodert i Norge, og i år har Oslo fått flere nye REKO-ringer. Formålet med dette prosjektet er å vurdere REKO-ringens rolle i Oslo som et initiativ for bærekraftig omstilling i byen, med fokus på bærekraftig mat. Prosjektet vil gi kunnskap om motivasjon og barrierer til deltakelse for både forbrukere og produsenter i to REKO-ringer i Oslo: St.Hanshaugen og Prindsens Hage. Videre vil prosjektet gi et innblikk i hvordan REKO som et initiativ forhandler sin egen rolle som et bærekraftig omstillingsprosjekt, og bidrar til en endring i vårt forhold til mat i byen.

Spørreundersøkelsen gjennomføres i forbindelse med en masteroppgave. Datamaterialet vil bli benyttet i gjennomføring av oppgaven og videre formidling av denne. Resultatet av spørreundersøkelsen vil bli tilgjengeliggjort for forskning og for andre relevante institusjoner som arbeider med REKO i Oslo og Norge. Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst underveis i besvarelsen trekke tilbake ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du velger å svare på denne undersøkelsen samtykker du til deltakelse. Spørreundersøkelsen er **anonym**, og din besvarelse kan ikke spores.

Spørsmål kan rettes til student Nora May Engeseth via e-post: norame@student.ilos.uio.no eller veileder Arve Hansen via e-post: arve.hansen@sum.uio.no. Vennligst oppgi prosjektnavn.

Det vil også gjennomføres en rekke dybdeintervjuer med forbrukere, produsenter og øvrige medlemmer i gruppen. Dersom dette er noe du kunne tenke deg å være med på, kan du melde din interesse per e-post til student Nora May Engeseth: norame@student.ilos.uio.no. Intervjuet varer i 1-2 timer. Dato og tid avtales nærmere med hver enkelt.»

Informasjon førsteside elektronisk spørreundersøkelse:

De siste årene har REKO-fenomenet eksplodert i Norge, og i år har Oslo fått flere nye REKO-ringer. Formålet med dette prosjektet er å vurdere REKO-ringens rolle i Oslo som et initiativ for bærekraftig omstilling i byen, med fokus på bærekraftig mat. Prosjektet vil gi kunnskap om motivasjon og barrierer til deltakelse for både forbrukere og produsenter i to REKO-ringer i Oslo: St.Hanshaugen og Prindsens Hage. Videre vil prosjektet gi et innblikk i hvordan REKO som et initiativ forhandler sin egen rolle som et bærekraftig omstillingsprosjekt, og bidrar til en endring i vårt forhold til mat i byen. Tittelen på prosjektet er «*Assessing the Role of Grassroot Initiatives in Urban Sustainable Transitions: the Case of REKO*». Her gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Spørreundersøkelsen gjennomføres i forbindelse med en masteroppgave. Forbrukere og produsenter i REKO St.Hanshaugen og REKO Sentrum/Prindsens Hage inviteres til å delta. Medlemmer av de respektive Facebook-gruppene som *ikke* har benyttet seg av REKO oppfordres også til å svare på undersøkelsen. Datamaterialet vil bli benyttet i gjennomføring av oppgaven og videre formidling av denne. Resultatet av spørreundersøkelsen vil bli tilgjengeliggjort for forskning og for andre relevante institusjoner som arbeider med REKO i Oslo og Norge.

Spørsmål kan rettes til student Nora May Engeseth via e-post: norame@student.ilos.uio.no eller veileder Arve Hansen via e-post: arve.hansen@sum.uio.no. Vennligst oppgi prosjektnavn.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Spørreundersøkelsen er **anonym**, og din besvarelse kan ikke spores. Du kan derfor ikke identifiseres i datamaterialet. Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst underveis i besvarelsen trekke tilbake ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn.

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet. Dersom du velger å svare på denne undersøkelsen samtykker du til deltakelse i prosjektet. Prosjektet avsluttes 31.august 2020.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Senter for Utvikling og Miljø ved Universitetet i Oslo har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Ved spørsmål om samtykke eller deltakelse i studien, kan du kontakte:

- Senter for Utvikling og Miljø, Universitetet i Oslo ved student Nora May Engeseth via e-post: norame@student.ilos.uio.no eller veileder Arve Hansen via e-post: arve.hansen@sum.uio.no.
- Personvernombud ved UiO: Maren Magnus Voll via e-post: personvernombud@uio.no
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen,
Arve Hansen
Veileder og prosjektansvarlig

Nora May Engeseth
Masterstudent