Sustainable Food Consumption
Exploring Consumers’ Perspectives

Authors: Pär Gustafsson
Emmy Torstensson
Johanna Velin
Supervisor: Dan Halvarsson
Examiner: Åsa Devine
Date: 2017-05-23
Subject: Marketing
Communication
Level: Bachelor
Course code: 2FE21E
Abstract
The aim of this study was to explore consumers’ descriptions of sustainable food consumption. The concept of sustainability can be difficult to grasp, but is often defined in terms of three pillars; environment, society and economy. Prior research of sustainable food consumption have often focused on one of the pillars rather than all of them together in relation to consumers understandings of sustainable food consumption. Notwithstanding, previous research have mentioned that in order to fully comprehend sustainability it is essential to take all of the three pillars into consideration. Therefore, this study acknowledged this gap, as it focused on the three pillars of sustainability as a base, and further connected the three pillars to the four food concepts; organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets and waste, in order to fully understand consumers descriptions of sustainable food consumption.

The study was conducted using a qualitative approach, and the data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a sample of students and employees at Linnaeus University in Sweden. The interviewees gave varied and interesting answers, which later were analyzed in comparison to the theory on the subject. With the answers from the interviews it was concluded that environmental and social sustainability were prioritized to economic sustainability among participants. As the participants’ descriptions of sustainable food consumption was varied, and all of the four concepts in relation to three pillars were analyzed, a framework was developed in order to clarify how the consumers describe sustainable food consumption. The study also presents a number of implications for further research as well as managerial implications.

Keywords
Sustainable food consumption, consumers description, three pillars of sustainability, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, social sustainability, organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets, vegetarian, locally produced, waste reduction, food waste

Thanks
We would first like to thank our thesis tutor Lecturer Dan Halvarsson of the Department of Marketing at Linnaeus University. His guidance and advice throughout the writing of this thesis has been of incredible help and support in order to successfully conduct the study and to write this thesis.

We would also like to thank Senior Lecturer Setayesh Sattari of the Department of Marketing at Linnaeus University. Her expertise in the subject of sustainable consumption, and knowledge in research methods has been of great value for us while writing this thesis.

Furthermore we would also like to thank our examiner Senior Lecturer Åsa Devine of the Department of Marketing at Linnaeus University. Her critical review and feedback on the paper has helped us improve the quality of our thesis significantly.

We would also like to acknowledge all of the opposition groups, who have critically reviewed our paper and the references which have been used.

Last but not least we would like to thank the participants in the study, from the Linnaeus University, who were willing to participate and give their valuable time to help us successfully conduct this study.
Contents

1 Introduction ______________________________________________________ 5
  1.1 Background __________________________________________________ 5
  1.2 Problem Discussion ____________________________________________ 6
  1.3 Purpose ______________________________________________________ 8
  1.4 Research Question _____________________________________________ 8

2 Literature Review _________________________________________________ 9
  2.1 The Three Pillars of Sustainability _______________________________ 9
      2.1.1 Environmental Sustainability _______________________________ 10
      2.1.2 Economic Sustainability __________________________________ 10
      2.1.3 Social Sustainability ______________________________________ 11
  2.2 Sustainable Food Consumption ___________________________________ 12
      2.2.1 Organic __________________________________________________ 12
      2.2.2 Fairtrade ________________________________________________ 14
      2.2.3 Dietary Choices ___________________________________________ 15
      2.2.4 Waste ___________________________________________________ 16

3 Conceptual Chapter _______________________________________________ 19
  3.1 Organic ______________________________________________________ 20
  3.2 Fairtrade _____________________________________________________ 21
  3.3 Sustainable Diets ______________________________________________ 22
  3.4 Waste Reduction ______________________________________________ 23
  3.5 Conceptual Table ______________________________________________ 24

4 Methodology ______________________________________________________ 25
  4.1 Deductive Approach ____________________________________________ 25
  4.2 Research Strategy ______________________________________________ 25
  4.3 Data Source and Collection Method ________________________________ 27
  4.4 Sample Selection ______________________________________________ 29
  4.5 Operationalization _____________________________________________ 31
  4.6 Question Sequence _____________________________________________ 38
  4.7 Interview Guide _______________________________________________ 39
      4.7.1 Interview Guide ___________________________________________ 40
  4.8 Research Quality Criteria ________________________________________ 42
  4.9 Pretest ______________________________________________________ 44
  4.10 Data Analysis Method __________________________________________ 45
  4.11 Ethical Considerations _________________________________________ 47

5 Empirical Investigation _____________________________________________ 50
  5.1 Environment __________________________________________________ 50
      5.1.1 Organic __________________________________________________ 50
      5.1.2 Fairtrade _________________________________________________ 51
      5.1.3 Dietary Choices ____________________________________________ 52
      5.1.4 Waste ___________________________________________________ 54
1 Introduction
This chapter introduces the reader to the phenomena of study, followed by a problem discussion which leads into the purpose of the study, lastly followed by the research questions.

1.1 Background
The subject of sustainability is not a particularly new one, as the criticising of environmental and social consequences of economic activity has been traced as far back as the ancient Babylon (Belz & Peattie, 2012). One of the most used and mentioned (Minton et al., 2012; Kahriman-Ozturk, Olgan & Güler, 2012; Tascioglu, 2014; Hanss & Böhm, 2012) definitions of sustainability is that of the United Nations (1987), which states that sustainability is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The concept is often used by both consumers and producers to show concerns about the environment (Minton et al., 2012).

Elkington (1998) first addressed the three aspects environmental, economic and social as a foundation to understand sustainability. In 2005, the United Nations brought forward these three aspects as a definition for sustainable development; environmental, economic and social (United Nations General Assembly, 2005). These aspects are commonly referred to as the three pillars of sustainability, and they work together in order to achieve sustainable development (Kahriman-Ozturk, Olgan & Güler, 2012; Khoshnava et al., 2016; Rodriguez-Serrano et al., 2017). While sustainable development is not always interpreted in the same way, dividing it into the three pillars is a common approach (Berglund & Gericke, 2016).

The environmental pillar is the one most commonly connected to the concept of sustainability (Beattie, 2015), and regards how we consume the natural resources of our planet, and at what rate (Circular Ecology, 2016). Companies can reduce their planetary impact by for example reducing carbon dioxide emissions, using recycled materials and reducing their water usage (Beattie, 2015). The economic pillar has to do with resources, and how they should be used responsibly and in a sustainable way (Circular Ecology, 2016). Lastly, the social pillar regards the social well-being of a society, community or country, and the ability to sustain this well-being in the long-term (Circular Ecology, 2016).

Shah (2005) regards the three pillars as consequences of consumerism, or over-consumption. Verain, Dagevos & Antonides (2015) highlight that these consequences form an issue which
is particularly highlighted in developed countries. Shah (2005) states that consequences such as increased poverty, demolition of the environment, large gaps between the poor and the wealthy, and further environmental and social issues are common. These issues have arisen concern, which has led to a growing belief that sustainable consumption needs to be developed and increased (Shah, 2005). In recent years, consumers are becoming more keen on purchasing ‘green’ products (Solomon et al., 2013), that is, products that do not have a negative effect upon the environment and thus are sustainable (Speer, 2011), therefore many consumers show a willingness to pay more for these products than products which are not sustainable (Solomon et al., 2013). Similarly, Gershoff & Frels (2015) and SolarCity (2017) state that one can see an increased interest in purchasing sustainable products, particularly within the Western hemisphere. According to Solomon et al. (2013) the demand has derived from both an increased awareness in personal and global health, as well as an increased concern about the environment.

1.2 Problem Discussion

Due to the growing awareness and interest in purchasing sustainable products in recent years (Solomon et al., 2013; Gershoff & Frels, 2015; SolarCity 2017; Simpson & Radford, 2012), more companies have begun marketing themselves as environmentally friendly organizations (Minton et al., 2012; Armstrong & Kotler, 2012). The outcome of this is a competitive market (Solomon et al., 2013), which has resulted in an increase in sustainable products (Simpson & Radford, 2012). However, this increase in sustainable products has also created confusion regarding what a sustainable product is. Kilbourne (2010) and Connelly, Ketchen & Slater (2011) state that sustainability is generally hard to define, and that consumers often do not understand the term. The general term of sustainability is a very abstract and intangible aspect, which each individual perceives differently (Murphy, 2005). However, in order to fully be able to comprehend sustainability, one has to understand the three pillars upon which it builds; the economic pillar, social pillar and environmental pillar (Lozano, 2008; Wilson, 2015).

Simpson & Radford (2012) argue that consumers and the society are still influenced by the green movement which started in the twentieth century, in which the main focus of sustainability is the environmental aspects. However, according to the same authors academics have often accepted that sustainability needs to be understood by the three pillars,
while media and corporations have often failed to understand this. According to Simpson & Radford (2012) corporations have started to focus on more social aspects of sustainability, rather than the three pillars combined. The failure among marketers to combine the three pillars of sustainability has also influenced consumers, as they usually only understand one of the pillars rather than the whole (Simpson & Radford, 2012). Simpson & Radford (2012) researched consumers’ perceptions of sustainability. The authors concluded that more research needs to be conducted on consumers’ understandings of sustainability and in particular through interviews. Thus, the consumers’ understandings from Simpson & Radford’s (2012) research are not aligned with Lozano (2008) and Hanss’ (2012) claims that all three pillars of sustainability have to be addressed.

This lack of understanding is also evident more specifically when it comes to sustainable food consumption. Food consumption has a strong impact on the society, the environment and the economy, and has become progressively concerning according to Solomon et al. (2013). According to Reisch, Eberle & Lorek (2013) food consumption is connected to such issues as water use, greenhouse-gas emissions, world hunger and health issues such as diabetes. It is further discussed that the market for both fairly traded and organic food are steadily growing (Reisch, Eberle & Lorek, 2013).

A large number of behaviours are related to sustainable food consumption, among which choosing organic and locally produced food, consuming less meat, and decreasing food waste are common (Belz & Peattie, 2012). According to Janßen & Langen (2017) product labels often guide consumers in their purchase decisions when buying sustainable food for private consumption. However, according to the same authors, consumers are not always aware of the sustainability aspects of certain labels, despite the fact that the three pillars of sustainability are often incorporated in those labels and certificates, such as Fairtrade (Janßen & Langen, 2017). When it comes to food sustainability, as according to Azapagic et al. (2016), Sidali, Spiller & von Meyer-Höfer (2016) and Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014), there is no universal understanding of what sustainable food actually is, since all individuals perceive the term differently depending on their background, values and culture.

As the research by Janßen & Langen (2017) and Simpson & Radford (2012) shows, there is a lack of understanding of what makes products sustainable, and consumers do not seem to understand the three pillars of sustainability. Simpson & Radford (2012) also present a
research opportunity to grasp the subject further, through interviews. While Solér (2012) and Minton et al. (2012) state that researchers need to look specifically into how consumers view sustainable food consumption, since food is as previously mentioned a largely unsustainable form of consumption. Researchers have studied the area of sustainable food consumption in the past, but often concentrated on single areas such as the environmental or social aspects of food consumption and have not described what sustainable food consumption is from the consumer’s perspective (Sidali, Spiller & von Meyer-Höfer, 2016). Therefore the opportunity to look into sustainable food consumption from the consumer’s view through interviews to explore the setting, is evident. Thus, there is a need to address this gap and investigate consumers’ views of sustainable food consumption, with all three pillars in consideration.

Since marketers have failed to understand what sustainability is, particularly when it comes to sustainable food consumption (Belz and Peattie, 2012; Scott & Vigar-Ellis, 2014), there is a need to correct this understanding and communicate this to consumers while also meeting the demand for sustainable food products (Janßen & Langen, 2017; Simpson & Radford, 2012). Nevertheless, one can see the importance for marketers to understand how sustainable food consumption is viewed by consumers, in order to be able to meet the increasing demand, and communicate successfully with the segment (Solér, 2012; Harris, 2007; Hans & Böhm, 2012; Minton et al., 2012).

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore how consumers describe sustainable food consumption.

1.4 Research Question

- What do consumers understand as sustainable food consumption in relation to the three pillars of sustainability?
2 Literature Review

This chapter discusses the findings and theory from prior research and thus presents a literature review. Firstly, the three pillars of sustainability are discussed, which are divided into the environmental pillar, the economic pillar and the social pillar. Thereafter, sustainable food consumption is presented through four major concepts which are highlighted within the literature of sustainable food consumption; organic, Fairtrade, dietary choices as well as waste.

2.1 The Three Pillars of Sustainability

Nowadays, the three pillars of sustainability are widely known and accepted when discussing sustainability (Elkington, 1998; Wilson, 2015; Giulio et al., 2014; Patala et al., 2016). Wilson (2015) developed a model based on Elkington’s (1998) cornerstones of sustainability, namely the environmental, the social and the economic pillar. Wilson’s (2015) model explains the relation between the three pillars, which can be seen in Figure 1. It is presented as three circles where each circle embraces one of the pillars, and thusly describes the connection that the pillars has to sustainability (Wilson, 2015). Therefore, the model aims to explain that in order for something to be fully sustainable all of the three pillars need to be considered (Wilson, 2015). Hence, the middle part of the model could be seen as where all of the pillars intersect with each other and achieve sustainability.

![Figure 1: The Three Pillars of Sustainability (Wilson, 2015)](image-url)
2.1.1 Environmental Sustainability

According to Elkington (1998) environmental sustainability is concerned with what is referred to as ‘natural capital’, which is the nature’s equity of resources, where the main idea is that the natural capital should be used in the best and most sustainable ways. Wilson (2015), further explain that environmental sustainability concerns energy, water, biodiversity, waste and transportation. Therefore, utilizing techniques which does not harm the atmosphere, water preservations and animal life are important aspects to consider (Elkington, 1998), as well as caring for the diversity of biological species (Morelli, 2011). There is however no universal definition and explanation behind environmental sustainability, but most researchers agree that it is about being efficient and careful with the nature's resources (Schaefer & Crane, 2005; Wilson, 2015; Hans, 2012; Elkington, 1998). Nevertheless, Morelli (2011, p. 6) constructed a definition of environmental sustainability, which he explains as; “meeting the resource and services needs of current and future generations without compromising the health of the ecosystems that provide them”.

According to Wilson (2015), Hanss and Böhm (2012), Jungbluth, Tietje and Scholz (2000) and Morrelli (2011), environmental sustainability is also concerned with reducing and addressing problems regarding waste disposal, pollution and emissions from production and transportation. Furthermore, the current usage of fossil fuel and non renewable fuels are issues that also need to be reduced in order to achieve a sustainable environment (Morelli, 2011).

2.1.2 Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability is described by Elkington (1998) as to understand and investigate how organisations can perform long-term profitability, and how to sustainably keep its performance without losing physical or human capital. Therefore, the pillar concerns economic performance and the effect that the economic factor has upon sustainability (Wilson, 2014). Anand (2000) states that economic sustainability is associated with intergenerational equity, which describe how one generation utilize the natural resources and how it affects the upcoming generations. Consequently intergenerational equity concerns how to achieve an equal economic sustainability through the use of natural resources (Anand, 2000). Accordingly, Padilla, (2001) claims that it is important to provide a fair future for the new generations, where one can utilize the same amount of resources as now. Therefore,
economic sustainability is also concerned with how to reach a global sustainable economy without damaging the environment (Bonciu, 2014). As developing countries are growing with an increased demand for a similar consumption habit as the western countries, the environment will be greatly affected (Balatsky, Balatsky & Borysov, 2015; Myers & Kent, 2002). Thus, there is a need amongst the world’s countries to understand how to achieve long-term profitability without harming the environment (Myers & Kent, 2002; Bonciu, 2014). The issue is often related to the uneven distribution of the world's natural resources, as some resources such as fossil fuels are limited (Asif & Muneer 2007; Balatsky, Balatsky & Borysov, 2015) and affects the global prices (Elkington, 1998). Furthermore, the production process of natural resources often affects the environment and contributes to global warming, as well as extinction of raw material (Bonciu, 2014). Sauvé, Bernard & Sloan (2016) refer to the circular economy, a model of production and consumption as a way to understand economic sustainability and how to minimize the effect upon the environment.

Bonciu (2014), further describes the circular economy as an industrial model, where the main goal is to reuse resources, as well as to avoid waste of raw material. The model can be illustrated as a circle, where the raw material is extracted from the earth, then produced, purchased and recycled (Sauvé, Bernard & Sloan, 2016). Thus, the economic circle takes care of waste and pollution and focuses on providing a sustainable economy (Sauvé, Bernard & Sloan, 2016; Bonciu, 2014).

2.1.3 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability acknowledges the issues of social capital, which concerns aspects such as human rights, animal welfare, false marketing and other ethical issues (Elkington, 1998; Wilson, 2015; Jitmaneeroj, 2016). Weingaertner & Moberg (2011) agree with Elkington (1998), and claim that social capital, human capital and wellbeing are general associations of social sustainability, where well-being is connected to health. Wilson (2015) further explains that social sustainability considers human rights, child labour, working standards, product responsibility, local communities as well as health aspects. Thus, social sustainability acknowledge the ethical issues that are impossible to ignore and which must be dealt with (Elkington, 1998). According to McKenzie (2004, p. 25) the definition of social sustainability is; “a positive condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition”.
2.2 Sustainable Food Consumption

Elkington (1998) stresses the importance of understanding how products and consumption is sustainable. Therefore, there also exists an importance of understanding how different food products can be sustainable, as well as to understand how food consumption can be sustainable without affecting the three pillars negatively (Azapagic et al., 2016; Hans & Böhm, 2012). Thusly, according to Patala et al., (2016) and Notarnicola et al., (2017) products might not be sustainable in all of the three aspects, which makes it essential to understand how food consumption affect the three pillars. Consequently, this could be done by investigating how the consumption of food affects the environmental, economic and social aspects (Azapagic et al., 2016; Hanss & Böhm 2012; Kaiser et al., 2003; Tanner & Jungbluth 2003).

As aforementioned, Wilson (2015) presented a model of sustainable development and production, this model can also be applied to describe how to evaluate and understand sustainable food production as well as food consumption. Furthermore, Voget-Kleschin (2015) and Belz and Peattie (2012) highlight four concepts when investigating sustainable food consumption; organic food, fairtrade labeled food products, reducing animal based products, and reducing food waste. Goggins and Rau (2016) present similar food categories through a table and its impact upon the three pillars, where organic, fairtrade, wastage and different types of diets are connected to the environmental, economic, and social pillars. Different types of diets are described as meat, sustainably sourced seafood, locally produced, plant based diets (vegetarian diet) and choosing eggs from free range hens (Goggins and Rau, 2016), which together could be described as dietary choices. These four concepts of organic, Fairtrade, diets and waste are evident within the literature, and could be considered to be a representative of sustainable food (Voget-Kleschin, 2015).

2.2.1 Organic

Organic agriculture concerns a production process where the products are produced without damaging the soil or the ecosystem, and further aims to produce healthy products (Voget-Kleschin, 2015). Thus, organic agriculture is an environmental friendly farming process, which takes care of the land as well as provide alternative food chains (Darnhofer, 2005). According to Darnhofer (2005) organic agriculture is described as a production process that considers animal welfare, crops as well as rural development. Goggins and Rau’s (2016) table
further presents organic agriculture through the environmental pillar as farming without artificial chemical fertilizers, utilizing restricted use of pesticides and antibiotics in order to protect the biodiversity and consumers’ health. Nevertheless, the environmental friendly production also results in positive opportunities to develop the rural agriculture (Darnhofer, 2015).

Furthermore, Rigby & Cáceres (2001) state that organic agriculture is difficult to define, however that the production process has high restriction with the usage of chemicals. Restrictions in antibiotic, pesticides and chemical fertilizers, thus contributes to healthy products (Goggins & Rau, 2016). Therefore, the social pillar is connected as organic production provides healthy nutritious products and aims to minimize diseases amongst humans (Rigby & Cáceres, 2001). Animal welfare is also an important factor within organic agriculture which connects to the social aspects as well, as it considers the ethical aspects of taking good care of the animals (Goggins & Rau, 2016). The organic label furthermore operates as a bridge between the producer and the consumer (Rigby & Cáceres, 2001). Goggins & Rau (2016) agree with this, as the social impact of organic production often improves social connectedness as well as relationships.

The economic pillar mentioned by Goggins & Rau (2016) considers the fact that organic production decreases external costs compared to conventional food production, as well as improves the supply to meet the increased demand for organic products. Pretty, Ball, Lang and Morison (2005) discuss the environmental costs, which are affected by the change within agriculture and the production of food as well as the transportation process, which could be reduced by increasing organic agriculture. Zander & Hamm (2010) state that if organic products are marked with an additional ethical attribute such as animal welfare, the willingness to pay a premium price increases. Nevertheless, according to Lien, Hardaker & Flaten (2007) the premium price of organic agriculture plays an important role as it can affect the economy, and if the premium prices were erased it would affect the farmers’ economy negatively. Lien, Hardaker & Flaten (2007) further state that conventional agriculture is often more economically sustainable than organic agriculture. Smith, Clapperton & Blackshaw (2004) agree with this to some extent as organic agriculture depends upon its premium price as well as the cropping system. However, with the right crops that have a great demand on the market, a working production system, as well as premium price, organic agriculture could be economically sustainable (Smith, Clapperton & Blackshaw, 2004).
2.2.2 Fairtrade

The Fairtrade label is often placed on food products such as bananas, coffee and tea (Goggins & Rau, 2016), and aims to achieve better working conditions and an equal share of the profits for the producers in developing countries (Grunert, Hieke & Wills, 2014). Fairtrade also operates as a way to minimize the poverty for farmers in developing countries (Goggins & Rau, 2016) as well as to negotiate better prices and agreements for the farmers (Grunert Hieke & Wills, 2014). Furthermore, it also contributes to improve the agriculture for the farmers and their production process, as well to establish sustainable projects (Goggins & Rau, 2016). The connection to the economic and social pillar is thus evident, as Fairtrade strives to achieve equal share of the profits and minimize poverty on one hand (Goggins & Rau, 2016), and on the other, improve the working conditions for the producers (Grunert, Hieke & Wills, 2014).

Thereupon, there are certain requirements for a product to be labeled with Fairtrade, where one example is a reduction in the use of pesticides (Elder, Zeriffi & Le Billion, 2013). Additionally, Goggins & Rau (2016) state that Fairtrade certification contributes to a better sustainable agricultural production process as well as further investments within projects that aim to achieve a better environment. However, Elder, Zeriffi & Le Billion (2013) who conducted a study in Rwanda, claim that Fairtrade farming and non-Fairtrade farming is not always that different when it comes to the environmental aspect. The reason is that the government within Rwanda, subsidies pesticides to the coffee farmers, which results in that Fairtrade farmers use pesticides in the production process similarly as non-Fairtrade certified farmer (Elder, Zeriffi & Le Billion, 2013). However, this might not be the situation in every country and its Fairtrade agriculture, as the final decision of how the requirements are achieved is thus mostly decided by the government of a country (Elder, Zeriffi & Le Billion, 2013).

Moreover, Fairtrade connects to the social pillar as the certification prohibits child labour, it aims to improve the health for the farmers and enhance the cooperations between farmers within the communities (Goggins and Rau, 2016). Vogel-Kleschin (2015), further discuss Fairtrade as the single production process which present itself as improving the social conditions for farmers. It further relates to the economic pillar as it allows farmers to export their products to other countries, which also contributes to minimize the poverty (Goggins & Rau, 2016).
2.2.3 Dietary Choices

Lacirignola et al. (2014) argue that the current food consumption in general is unsustainable, as there is an overuse of natural resources. One of the major reasons for unsustainable food consumption is according to Kastner, Koch & Nonhebel (2012) the consumption of animal products, as they are largely responsible for the over consumption of the world's natural and scarce resources. The environmental pillar is highly affected by the meat production due to the large release of emissions as well as forests that are cut down in order to produce meat (Goggins & Rau, 2016). The unsustainable fishing is also an important factor that affects the environment, as it damages ecosystems and the biodiversity of species (Jonell et al., 2016). Therefore, sustainably sourced and produced seafood is better for the environment, as it contributes in preserving coral reefs, better welfare for the fish and seafood, while also being able to meet the increasing demand by consumers for sustainably sourced seafood (Goggins & Rau, 2016). According to Reisch, Eberle & Lorek (2013), a plant based diet is more preferable in order to reduce the impact upon the environment. Graca (2016) agrees with this and says that that there are numerous substitutes for meat consumption which are better for the environment, among them plant based diets.

Nevertheless, the consumption of meat and animal based products does not only damage the environment, but also the welfare of the human body, as well as the social and ethical aspects of animal welfare in mass production of meat and dairy (Graca, 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016). Overconsumption of meat can result in different types of cancer as well as cardiovascular diseases (Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker, 2002). Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker (2002), further claim that policies that works towards a better distribution process of protein food such as meat, could minimize food poverty in both developed and undeveloped countries. A reduction of consumption in meat will therefore benefit both the social and the environmental pillar (Goggins & Rau, 2016). As decreasing the intake of meat will result in increased health for humans, animal welfare, minimize food poverty as well as a decrease in pollution and a reduction of deforestation which considers both the environmental and the social pillar (Goggins & Rau, 2016).

The economic pillar is also affected, due to the fact that the production of meat is an expensive process for the farmers. A reduction in meat production and consumption could therefore benefit the producers as it will become cheaper for farmers to produce plants or other meat substitutes than producing meat (Goggins & Rau, 2016). Furthermore, eggs from
free-range hens could also generate profit for the producer, as the eggs are produced through animal friendly circumstances the eggs get a higher quality, which further increases the demand for free-range eggs (Goggins & Rau, 2016).

Another diet choice that has become increasingly popular is to consume locally produced products (Lockie et al., 2002). Locally produced products are often more environmental friendly as well as more healthy (Lockie et al., 2002). Trobe (2001) claims that holding farmers market’s helps the producer to get direct contact with the consumer, which further contributes the consumers with locally produced vegetables or fruits. The social pillar is thusly affected positively, as it enhances the cooperation within the community and providing healthy products (Trobe, 2001). The connection between the producer and the consumer also benefits the producer economically, due to the fact that the producer can sell their products directly to the consumer (Trobe, 2001). Due to less transportation the locally produced products will not damage the environment, as it will decrease the pollution from vehicles (Trobe, 2001).

2.2.4 Waste
In regards to food consumption, the subject of waste, and a sustainable management of it, is a recurring discussion among researchers (Bates & Phillips, 1999; Cicatiello, Franco, Pancino & Blasi, 2016; Vandermeersch et al., 2014). In general, there are two kinds of waste which are closely connected to food consumption; the actual food waste, as well as the packaging waste (Thøgersen, 1996).

Lacirignola et al., (2014) say that mankind’s overconsumption of food has led to more food being thrown away or wasted. In fact, food waste is an increasingly concerning problem, as 25-50 % of the food which is produced in the world is being wasted or thrown away (Gadde & Amani, 2016; Mena, Adenso-Diaz & Yurt, 2011). One explanation for the large amounts of waste is that it has to do with the foods’ shelf life, and with an increasing demand for fresh products which have short shelf-life, more food is actually being thrown away than before (Mena, Adenso-Diaz & Yurt, 2011). Food waste has negative effects on the environment due to pollution and landfills (Cicatiello et al., 2016), which is clearly connected to the environmental pillar. In regards to the economic pillar, there is a landfill tax which creates a cost for producers, which could be avoided or at least reduced if the waste was reduced (Bates & Phillips, 1999). Additionally, the economy for both farmers and consumers is negatively
affected by the food wasted (Cicatiello et al., 2016). Lastly, the social pillar of sustainability regards health risks from the pollution (Cicatiello et al., 2016), food poverty where people cannot afford a healthy diet (Alexander & Smaje, 2008; Papargyropoulou et al., 2014) and an unequal distribution of food where some people have too much food, and other starve (Goggins & Rau, 2016). Thus, a reduction of food waste would improve both economic, environmental and social sustainability.

On the other hand, there is food packaging, which can be made from various kinds of materials, such as glass, metal, plastics and paper (Marsh & Bugusu, 2007). Due to our frequent consumption of food, food packaging takes up nearly two thirds of the volume of all packaging waste (Marsh & Bugusu, 2007). Some environmental problems regarding this large amount of waste, are different kinds of emissions from decomposition or combustion of the waste (Marsh & Bugusu, 2007; Thøgersen, 1996; Bates & Phillips, 1999), landfills (Bates & Phillips, 1999) and plastics in the oceans (Jambeck et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2009) which damages and kills wildlife, which further presents a threat to biodiversity (Thompson et al., 2009). However, some of these can also be connected to the social pillar, in particular in regards to health, as certain chemicals found in plastics can be connected to health issues (Thompson et al., 2009). Furthermore, ethical concerns regarding animals who either take in the waste, or get entangled in it, can also be included in the social pillar (Thompson et al., 2009). In regards to the economic pillar, Jambeck et al. (2015) and Marsh & Bugusu (2007) connect the increase in waste to economic growth, and state that along with economic growth comes an increase in consumption which consequently will lead to an increase in waste. Something which has been implemented in certain areas in order to decrease littering is bottle bills, charging a small refundable deposit at the purchase, which creates an economic incentive among consumers to return their bottles for recycling (Marsh & Bugusu, 2007).

If the waste connected to food consumption was to be reduced, recycled, or recovered for other use, the impacts on the environment, society and economy would be improved (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Bates & Phillips, 1999). In regards to the environment, meat and other animal products have the largest impact, and a reduction of this waste would save a large amount of natural resources (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Bates & Phillips, 1999; Goggins & Rau, 2016). Social benefits of recovering food waste include feeding the poor (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016), improved health and awareness (Goggins & Rau, 2016), and less plastics in the nature which creates better aesthetics and improved conditions for fishing.
and tourism (Thompson et al., 2009). Economic outcomes involve better economy and larger savings for companies which recover waste (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Bates & Phillips, 1999; Goggins & Rau, 2016) as well as a more efficient business (Goggins & Rau, 2016; Bates & Phillips, 1999) and an overall reduction in the charges for disposal of waste (Bates & Phillips, 1999). Furthermore, less food waste will reduce the costs for the consumer and could improve their economy (Goggins & Rau, 2016; Cicatiello et al., 2016).
3 Conceptual Chapter

The conceptual chapter aims to clearly connect the different theories for the reader, so that the upcoming chapters will be easier to comprehend. The chapter presents a model for each food aspect; organic, Fairtrade, diets and waste, connecting all three pillars under that aspect. Furthermore, the models are based upon Wilson’s (2015) model of the three pillars.

In order to understand sustainable food consumption it is important to understand the three pillars of sustainability; the environmental pillar, the economic pillar and the social pillar (Lozano, 2008). Therefore, to determine whether a product is sustainable, all of the three pillars need to be considered and evaluated, as the three pillars of sustainability present the general term of what is sustainable and what is unsustainable (United Nations General Assembly, 2005). Furthermore, sustainable food consumption is mainly divided into four concepts; organic, Fairtrade, dietary choices and waste (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Goggins & Rau (2016). These are the most evident concepts that are brought up within the literature when investigating sustainable food (Voget-Kleischin, 2015; Belz and Peattie, 2012; Goggins & Rau, 2016). Therefore, the concepts will be presented giving one example of how the concepts affects each of the pillars, thus how the concept is sustainable. Furthermore, in order to clarify even more for the reader, a table will be presented in order to show the connectedness of how each food concept affects each of the three pillar of sustainability.
3.1 Organic

In regards to organic food, the production generally benefits the environment, in comparison to the production of non-organic food (Goggins & Rau, 2016). The reduction of the usage of toxic pesticides and artificial chemical fertilizers is beneficial for the environment as it leads to less pollution, this reduction also improves people’s health (Voget-Kleschin, 2015), which connects the environmental pillar to the social pillar. The health is also improved by the fact that the food they are consuming does not contain any pesticide residue (Goggins & Rau, 2016). Furthermore, with a working production system as well as an increased product value for organic products, the willingness to pay a higher price is increased (Lien, Hardaker & Flaten, 2007), thus connecting the economic pillar to the previous two. The willingness to pay a premium price also increases when the ethical benefit of the product is evident (Zander & Hamm, 2010). In Figure 2, one can see the case of reduced toxins and the affects that has upon the economy, environment and society. This is, however, only one of the many benefits of organic food, and is presented in order to clarify how these can be connected.

![Figure 2: Organic and the Three Pillars](image-url)
3.2 Fairtrade

Fairtrade is closely associated with social sustainability, as it mainly regards the working- and living standards of those working with the production of the food (Grunert, Hieke & Wills, 2014). In order to improve these standards, farmers in developing countries are paid a larger part of the profit, which, in the long-run, can decrease the poverty in these countries (Goggins & Rau, 2016) and thereby closely connects the economic pillar with the social pillar. Furthermore, another implementation which insures the working standards for the farmers is that of less chemical fertilizers and pesticides (Hisham & Le Billion, 2013), which naturally is better for the environment, thus connecting the environmental pillar to the previous two. In Figure 3, one can see the interconnections between the three pillars in regards to Fairtrade production.

![Figure 3: Fairtrade and the Three Pillars](image-url)
3.3 Sustainable Diets
In regards to sustainable dietary choices, a common choice is that of a reduced or terminated consumption of meat (Graca, 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016). In regards to the economic pillar, growing vegetables or other substitutes for meat can lead to lower costs for producers, and in regards to the environment, there is less pollution which further leads to the social pillar and an improved health among people (Graca, 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016). Increased health is further a direct outcome of reducing one’s intake of meat (Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker, 2002; Goggins & Rau, 2016). Thus the reduction or termination of one’s meat consumption has a clear effect on all three pillars, and there is a connection between the three. As can be seen in Figure 4, this example is drawn up in the model of the three pillars, showing how the sustainable diet of less or no meat consumption affects the environment, economy and society.

![Figure 4: Sustainable Diets and the Three Pillars](image_url)
3.4 Waste Reduction
There are several outcomes of waste reduction which can be connected to the three pillars of sustainability, and which further can be connected to each other. With a waste reduction there will be less costs for producers, which regards the economic pillar, as well as less pollution and landfills in regards to the environmental pillar, which then affects the social pillar and better health among people (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Bates & Phillips, 1999). Thus, as illustrated in Figure 5, all the three outcomes are connected, not only to the reduction of the waste, but to each other.

![Figure 5: Waste Reduction and the Three Pillars](image-url)
### 3.5 Conceptual Table

**Table 1: Summarization of the Literature Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Concept</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Organic**  | - No chemical fertilizers & pesticides  
- Less pollution  
- Protected biodiversity  
- Protected ecosystems | - Decreased external costs for producers  
- Meets demand  
- Product value increases | - Improved health  
- Animal welfare  
- Improved connections between communities |
| **Fairtrade** | - Less pesticides (dependent on country) | - Decreased poverty  
- Equal share of profits  
- Better prices for farmers  
- Improved export in developing countries | - Improved health  
- Better co-operation between farmers  
- Improved working and living conditions for workers  
- No child labour |
| **Sustainable Diets** | - Saves natural resources  
- Less pollution  
- Preserved ecosystems and biodiversity  
- Reduces deforestation | - Less costs for farmers  
- Increased profits for producers  
- Meets demand | - Improved health  
- Animal welfare  
- Less food poverty  
- More equal distribution of protein |
| **Waste Reduction** | - Less pollution  
- Less landfills  
- Preserved biodiversity  
- Saves natural resources | - Less costs for producers  
- Better economy for both farmers & consumers  
- Reduction in disposal charges | - Improved health  
- Less food poverty  
- Less starvation  
- Animal welfare  
- Less plastics in the nature  
- Better fishing & tourism conditions |
4 Methodology

The chapter of methodology aims to present the reader with a solid and transparent explanation as to how the authors have conducted the study. It presents the methods chosen and an operationalization which connects the theoretical concepts to the interview questions.

4.1 Deductive Approach

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) and Hyde (2000), researchers can choose either a deductive approach or an inductive approach to one’s research. A deductive approach is research based and constructed upon existing theories generated by other researchers to test a concept or case (Daugherty, Hoffman & Kennedy, 2016). This is further illustrated by MacInnis (2011, p. 149), who states that deductive reasoning “occurs when a person begins with a statement known or believed to be true and then uses this statement to make conclusions about something else”. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) a deductive approach is mainly considered to be of a quantitative nature while a qualitative approach is usually considered to be inductive. However, Bitektine (2008) says that deductive approaches can be used in qualitative research to test theories. Hyde (2000) agrees that it can be used in qualitative research but is rarely conducted. However, it can yield a greater validity to the findings if a deductive approach is used in qualitative research than an inductive procedure (Hyde, 2000). In a deductive take on research, the steps used to test a theory needs to be clear and transparent (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). One characteristic and aim is to be able to generalize the findings from a sample into a larger population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Hyde, 2000). The deductive approach is usually referred to as the scientific method, as opposed to its alternative of inductive research (Daugherty, Hoffman & Kennedy, 2016). An inductive approach then, is when the research begins with collecting data and analyzing it to create theories or brand new ideas (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Due to the fact that existing research on both sustainable consumption and the three pillars has been conducted previously, the authors of this paper will explore these ideas on consumers in a new setting, namely food. As the research of this study derives from previously tested theories, the researchers decided to utilize a deductive approach in this paper.

4.2 Research Strategy

After having chosen one’s research approach (deductive or inductive), the next step is to choose the research design based on one’s research purpose (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill
According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016, p. 163); “research design is the general plan of how you will go about answering your research question(s)

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) and Bryman & Bell (2011) state that a researcher has three alternatives to design one’s research, either a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach or a mixed-methods approach. The choice depends entirely on what the purpose and research questions of a study is. In general terms, Bryman & Bell (2011) explain that a quantitative approach is more concerned with an explanatory or a descriptive purpose, meaning that one usually looks at different variables, independent and dependent variables and looks at the relationships and explanations behind a phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In a qualitative approach the researcher is often more concerned with an exploratory purpose. This usually means that in a qualitative approach researchers usually explores a brand new topic or test existing theories in a new, yet appropriate setting (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Neuman, 2003). However, according to (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016) a study does not solely have to use only one research purpose, instead researchers can combine different purposes to understand different aspects of one’s research, this method is mostly used in a mixed method approach.

Looking at the qualitative research approach more closely, one can see that the qualitative research strategy is used mainly in order to explore and to go more in-depth to understand the meanings and incentives behind different behaviors and phenomenons (Gaya & Smith, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Researchers often take on a qualitative approach to interpret how people and their affiliated groups and cultural belongings affect their incentives or reasons for certain behaviours, and how they build different forms of attitudes through their subjectivity (Winter, 2000). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), a qualitative method approach focuses more on representing the results with words rather than with statistics which a quantitative study utilizes. This is further illustrated by Silverman (2015) who states that qualitative research is more involved with people’s verbal descriptions of the world around them, and is a means to interpret and understand people's descriptions. Patton (2015) and Silverman (2015) state that qualitative research is research which contributes to knowledge by testing and evaluating existing theories. Qualitative research can be used to understand individuals and groups understanding, perspectives and experiences, as well as understanding the underlying context (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, according to Roininen, Arvola & Lähteenmäki (2006), using a qualitative method is suitable when investigating consumers’ perspective and
understandings of a new concept. Hence a qualitative approach is commonly used for seeing something from the eyes of the people who are being studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Silverman (2015) numbers can also be used but are not analyzed with statistical measures like in quantitative research, thus simple fractions can be used to understand how people’s views differ.

Since the purpose of this paper is to explore how consumers describe sustainable food consumption, the qualitative approach seems to be the most applicable to the purpose as it allows to go more in depth as well as understanding research in a new setting which quantitative research does not allow, since its purpose is more to explain and describe how things are. The qualitative approach also allows the researchers to look into individuals’ perspectives and understandings of new concepts which other methods cannot do to the same extent.

4.3 Data Source and Collection Method
Irwin (2013) states that there are two forms of data, primary and secondary; both of which can be used in either quantitative or qualitative studies. Primary data is described as data which is collected for a particular purpose by the researchers themselves (Salkind, 2010). Secondary data on the other hand is empirical data collected by previous researchers which is then used to draw conclusion in a new setting or purpose (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Primary data can be collected in a number of different ways, out of which interviews, focus groups and surveys are common approaches (Salkind, 2010). When it comes to qualitative research it is usually conducted through focus groups, semi-structured interviews or unstructured interviews, and results in primary data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Naturally, both approaches have advantages and disadvantages alike (Salkind, 2010; Irwin, 2013). Primary data can be a costly data source as it is very time consuming and might require highly skilled interviewers (Salkind, 2010). While secondary data is cheaper and more time saving compared to primary data (Irwin, 2013), primary data is often of higher quality and more suitable for the research purpose as secondary data originally was collected for a different purpose (Salkind, 2010).

This research will rely solely on the collection and analysis of primary data, which while more time consuming, is the data which will be most suitable for the particular purpose of this paper and is considered to be of higher quality. Furthermore, with a rather new subject which has been implied to need more research (Solér, 2012 & Minton et al., 2012), the secondary
data available would be quite limited and perhaps not dense enough for this study. The primary data in this case will be collected through as previously mentioned a qualitative and deductive approach, through the form of interviews.

Interviews can be conducted in three different forms of interview styles which a researcher can adopt depending on their goals and those are; structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Structured interviews are according to Bryman & Bell (2011) more fixed and standardized which does not allow a lot of variation in the respondents answers, it is thus a more narrow and strict approach to research. Structured interviews is mostly utilized in quantitative research due to its level of standardization (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are referred to as qualitative interviews, and are closely tied to a qualitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The different approaches can be conducted either individually or in groups (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The data collection method for this study will be semi-structured interviews, which allows for a more flexible process than structured interviews (May, 2011). Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) say that in semi-structured interviews, the researchers create questions built upon specific themes and theories which they wish to cover and understand more deeply with the help of the interviewees thoughts and responses. According to May (2011) the advantages of semi-structured interviews is that it allows the respondents to answer questions in their own way, as well as make their own statements and comparisons.

The main objective of a semi-structured interview is mostly often to grasp the participants’ understandings of the environment around them, including behaviour and various issues and events. (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Nevertheless, the aim is also to avoid respondents prejudice concerning the subject in question, and still the interviewer must prepare the questions so that the conversation has a proper flow (May, 2011). The same author further discuss the dilemma between a balance of keeping a distance when analyzing the interviews as well as being committed and engaged within the conversation. Thus, there are several aspects that the researcher must consider when conducting interviews (May, 2011). The interviewer must acknowledge how they might affect the respondent's answers and avoid their influence as much as possible. The respondents must also understand what might be expected from them in order to achieve valid results (May, 2011). Furthermore, the respondents must feel that they contribute to something within the research, that their answers matter and are important (May,
2011). As previously mentioned it is also important to have a flow within the conversation, therefore depending on the interview the questions might be asked differently in order to get the respondents to feel more comfortable (May, 2011).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method for this study because of how they open up for grasping deeper meanings and understandings of the participants, and because of their close connection to qualitative research and a deductive approach. Semi-structured interviews was also chosen since it is a manageable way to create and analyze relevant primary data. For this particular research, the method is of particular relevance as the aim is to understand consumers’ perspective of sustainable food consumption, and the use of semi-structured interviews is expected to allow for participants to bring up their own perceptions, rather than being led into an answer. The approach of semi-structured interviews also allows the questions to be based and developed from theory, meaning that the questions are asked specifically to gain insight into a theory or topic. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

4.4 Sample Selection
Selecting a sample technique in one's research depends on the research strategy, in a quantitative study probability sampling techniques is often utilized to avoid errors and biases (Bryman & Bell, 2011). While in a qualitative research, although one can choose probability sampling, it is perhaps more common to use non-probability sampling techniques (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As this research is focused on a qualitative approach such sampling techniques will be further discussed in this chapter. According to Bryman & Bell (2011) and Neuman (2003) there are several ways to select an appropriate sample.

Marshall (1996) says that purposeful sampling is one of the most recurring sample techniques used in qualitative research. In a purposeful sampling technique a researcher seeks out and selects participants which he/she finds suitable to answer the research question(s) (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). In such a strategy researchers can seek out different participants who fulfill one or several criterias to be included in the sample (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). In this sampling strategy, it is also important to try to get a varied mix of participants still, so that the answers are not biased or skewed in any direction (Marshall, 1996). Patton (2015) elaborates on a purposeful sampling technique and say that it can be beneficial to use in order to understand people and their insights about a specific area, phenomenon or topic. According
to Patton (2015) in a purposeful sampling technique participants or subjects are often chosen to represent a slightly larger target group or population.

In qualitative research, academics often have trouble to or ignore to justify the utilized sample size, due to the fact that it is hard to determine how many participants are enough (Boddy, 2016). In quantitative research it is easier to determine what is statistically enough or required to reach an agreeable level of validity and reliability (Boddy, 2016). However, when it comes to qualitative research the praxis is to reach data saturation, meaning that no new participants in the study will generate new or different data than previous participants (Boddy, 2016). Usually 20 participants will generate data saturation, but not necessarily always (Boddy, 2016). According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) for a qualitative research conducting semi-structured and/or in-depth interviews a sample size between 5-25 is considered adequate.

For this research, it was decided to use a purposeful sampling technique since it was deemed necessary to gain accessible data from a specific target group at a balanced way to increase both reliability and validity. As previously mentioned, according to Koerber & McMichael (2008) a purposeful sampling strategy is a technique used to select a sample which are closely aligned with the research questions. Thus in this case the researchers decided to be including students and teachers from the Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden, from as many of the faculties as possible, and also staff members with different job tasks. The university was chosen since this is where the authors of this paper are currently students thus making it easily accessible. The reasoning to choose teachers, students and workers from all around the campus and different faculties were deemed to create a varied mix of people with different focus and backgrounds.

The participants were selected in the following way; the researchers sent out e-mails and messages to teachers and students at all faculties with an invitation consisting necessary information about the study. The researchers also contacted individuals they already knew at the university. Further, a message was posted on Växjö Campus Facebook group page, urging people to participate. The researchers reached out to every faculty at the university namely the faculty of Business & Economics, the faculty of Health and Life-Sciences, the faculty Arts & Humanities, the faculty of Technology, the faculty of Social Sciences and the board of Teacher Education.
The chosen sample consisted of a total of 20 participants, consisting of 10 students, 9 teachers and one staff member. The total number of participants were chosen due to (Boddy, 2016; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016) recommendations for appropriate sample sizes. The samples gender distribution was 10 female and 10 male participants, while the participants age span was that from 20-62 years of age, thus a balanced and varied sample from the academic setting.

4.5 Operationalization

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) in a deductive approach, theories need to be conceptualized and divided into measurable and understandable parts or variables. This is done in an operationalization table, which brings forth the used theory and deconstructs it into more usable concepts and variables which can be translated into questions which is supposed to measure those concepts or variables (Bryman & Bell, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). An operationalization was made in order to present the concepts that were brought up in the theory more clearly for the reader. The table will further be used as a basis for the interview guide. Therefore, the operationalization will assist the researchers when analyzing the empirical material, in order to see the relationships between the concepts and the consumer’s point of view.
### Table 2: Operationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>Sustainability consists of the three pillars; environmental, social and the economic pillar. These three pillars of sustainability address the importance of utilizing natural capital, social capital and physical/human capital in a sustainable way.</td>
<td>Sustainability consists of the three pillars; environmental, social and the economic pillar. These three pillars of sustainability address the importance of utilizing natural capital, social capital and physical/human capital in a sustainable way.</td>
<td>Elkington (1998), Wilson (2015)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable food consumption</strong></td>
<td>Sustainable food consumption refers to how one can consume food in a sustainable way in relation to the three pillars of sustainability. Sustainable food products consider four concepts; organic food, Fairtrade labeled food products, dietary choices, and reducing food waste.</td>
<td>Organic, Fairtrade, dietary choices &amp; food waste, in relation to the three pillars.</td>
<td>Voget-Kleischin (2015), Beltz &amp; Peattie (2012), Goggins &amp; Rau (2016)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe sustainable food consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organic</strong></td>
<td>Organic agriculture refers to farmers that produce its products sustainably in the sense to utilize healthy soils with great care, preserve ecosystems as well as the health of people. Organic</td>
<td>Consumption/ production of organic food.</td>
<td>Voget-Kleischin (2015), Goggins &amp; Rau (2016)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe organic food and its production/consumption.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
production through an environmental point of view is described as farming without artificial chemical fertilizers as well as pesticides in order to protect the biodiversity and consumer’s health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic &amp; the social pillar</td>
<td>Organic food is often healthy and nutritious as it is not contaminated with pesticides, chemical fertilizers or antibiotics. It aims to improve the health of people. Organic food production often improves the social connectedness between the producer and the consumer. Furthermore, organic food products aim to be animal friendly.</td>
<td>Organic consumption/production in relation to the social pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) and Rigby &amp; Cáceres (2001).</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe organic food products, its consumption/production in relation to the social pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic &amp; the economic pillar</td>
<td>Organic farms reduce the external costs compared to conventional farms. It further is depended upon its premium price as well as increase the demand of organic food products.</td>
<td>Organic consumption/production in relation to the economic pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Smith, Clapperton &amp; Blackshaw (2004)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe organic food products, its production and consumption in relation to the economic pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairtrade</strong></td>
<td>Fairtrade products aims to make sure that farmers in undeveloped countries receive an equal share of the profit. It further aims to improve the working conditions, better prices and improves the agreements for the farmers, in order to minimize poverty in undeveloped countries.</td>
<td>Fairtrade food products and its consumption/production.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016), Grunert Hieke &amp; Wills, (2014)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairtrade &amp; the environmental pillar</strong></td>
<td>Fairtrade utilizes less pesticides. It contributes to sustainable agriculture and increased investments within sustainable projects.</td>
<td>Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption in relation to the environmental pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Grunert Hieke &amp; Wills, (2014)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption in relation to the environmental pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairtrade &amp; the social pillar</strong></td>
<td>Fairtrade and the social pillar aims to improve working conditions, living condition to stop child labor and minimize poverty.</td>
<td>Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption in relation to the social pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Vogel-Kleschin (2015)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption in relation to the social pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairtrade &amp; the economic pillar</strong></td>
<td>Fairtrade and the economic pillar is connected to supporting undeveloped countries, creating an equal share of profits, better prices for the farmers, to minimize poverty, and enhance cooperation.</td>
<td>Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption in relation to the economic pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Grunert Hieke &amp; Wills, (2014)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe Fairtrade food products, its production/consumption in relation to the economic pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary choices</td>
<td>Dietary choices refer to the consumption of animal products, as they are largely responsible for the over consumption of the world's natural and scarce resources. For example, meat, eggs (Free-range) Seafood. It is also connected to animal welfare.</td>
<td>Dietary Choices, its production/consumption.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Kastner, Koch &amp; Nonhebel (2012), Reisch, Eberle &amp; Lorek (2013)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe different dietary choices, its production and consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary choices &amp; the environmental pillar</td>
<td>Reducing the intake of meat improves the environment by saving resources. Sustainable fishing can preserve or lessen the impact on biodiversity and coral reefs.</td>
<td>Different dietary choices, its production/consumption in relation the environmental pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Kastner, Koch &amp; Nonhebel (2012), Jonell et al. (2016)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe different dietary choices, its production/consumption in relation to the environmental pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietary choices &amp; the social pillar</td>
<td>Dietary choices in relation the social pillar is connected with that reducing the intake of meat improves the general public's health. It is also referred to animal welfare such as; sustainable fishing improves the conditions for the fish and seafood. Free ranged hens improve the life and quality of the hens and the eggs.</td>
<td>Different dietary choices, its production/consumption in relation to the social pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016) Horrigan, Lawrence &amp; Walker (2002), Graca (2016)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe different dietary choices, its production/consumption in relation to the social pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dietary choices &amp; the economic pillar</strong></td>
<td>Dietary choices and the economic pillar is explained as it reduces the intake of meat, it lowers the cost for producers. Furthermore, free range hens improve the potential profits for producers.</td>
<td>Different dietary choices, its production/consumption in relation to the economic pillar.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe different dietary choices, its production/consumption in relation to the economic pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waste</strong></td>
<td>Waste refers to how one can reduce the waste of resources. It can be achieved through recyclability, reusability and better efficiency. There are two types of waste; the actual food waste as well as the packaging waste.</td>
<td>Waste and how to minimize overuse of resources.</td>
<td>Goggins &amp; Rau (2016), Thøgersen (1996)</td>
<td>To understand how consumers view and describe waste.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Waste & the social pillar

- Waste of food affects the society and people’s health negatively, due to pollution.
- Waste of food packaging, can affect people's health due to chemicals within the plastic, as well as animals that get exposed for plastics within the nature.

#### Waste, how to minimize overuse of resources and its effect upon the social pillar.


To understand how consumers view and describe waste, overuse of resources in relation to the social pillar.

### Waste & the economic pillar

- Food waste affects the farmers as well as the consumer’s economy negatively.
- Due to an increase in consumption, there is an increase in waste which affects an increase within the economy.
- Moreover, Economic outcomes involve better economy and larger savings for companies which recover waste.

#### Waste, how to minimize overuse of resources and its effect upon the economic pillar.


To understand how consumers view and describes waste, overuse of resources and its impact on the economic pillar.
4.6 Question Sequence
According to Neuman (2003), in qualitative research and field interviewing there are three types of questions to use and which should preferably be asked in a specific order. Firstly descriptive, followed by structural and lastly contrasting questions, due to the fact that the questions become more elaborated and complex, thus, one should start with the fundamentals and progressively move into deeper questions (Neuman, 2003).

Descriptive questions are asked in order to understand how the interviewee sees a setting as well as to learn more about the actual interviewee; who, what and when questions are examples of descriptive questions which should be asked (Neuman, 2003). The same author states that after the descriptive questions is asked, the next step should be to ask structural questions. Those are questions which are connected to categories or pieces of theory to see if the interview participants agree and how their view of a subject is (Neuman, 2003). Lastly, the same author says that an interviewer should ask contrasting questions about two or more categories or themes to gain a deeper understanding of the interviewees understanding. These three types of questions could be seen as general questions which could be used both in semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Neuman, 2003).

When it comes to questions which are characterized of a semi-structured interview technique, there are several question types and advices to follow. First of, when conducting semi-structured interviews, it is necessary to construct questions that could be coded and easily analyzed (May, 2011). Silverman (2015) says that semi-structured interviews involves some probing questions, which is guiding the interviewee to answer a specific question in regards to a topic or theme. Thusly, probing questions could be used, which is a method where the interviewer encourage the respondent to develop its answers, which could motivate the respondents to analyze his/her answers even further (May, 2011). Probing questions also asks the how, why and what questions but is usually questions asked after an interviewee's answers to a previous question (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). This is often managed and conducted with the help on an interview guide, which consists of certain topics to be brought up by the interviewer at some point (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
Furthermore, in semi-structured interviews the interviewer has the freedom to ask questions which are not included in the guide, if it is deemed necessary (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, it is of outmost importance that the interviewers know how the questions should be asked to the respondents, as well as having a deep understanding of the context of the interview (May, 2011). It is further necessary that in order to conduct successful interviews it is also important to figure out what types of questions that will be included within the interview guide (May, 2011). For instance one can choose between open ended or closed questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Open ended questions are usually; how, why or what questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Closed and specific questions are of use when one wish to discuss and explore the topic of a specific theme or theory, specific questions include: can or could you describe (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). For qualitative research it can be useful to first ask how followed by why questions to gain a deeper knowledge, especially in their cultural context and standing point for interviewees responses (Silverman, 2015).

Since this study is utilizing a deductive approach with an exploratory purpose the proposed questioning sequence was deemed appropriate to use in order to go more in depth when dealing with consumers description of theoretical concepts. The authors of this paper decided to integrate all three types of questions into the interview guide and under each theoretic section (organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets and waste) to get as rich and deep material as possible in order to answer the research question. Other questions which were used were open questions and probing questions. Due to semi-structured interviews nature of being highly flexible, follow up questions was also asked. As semi-structured interviews purpose is to get the respondents to speak more freely, the questions within the interview guide will be more open ended and probed when necessary. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

4.7 Interview Guide
The interview guide is as previously mentioned a tool to guide the interviewers in order to ask relevant questions connected to a theme or category (Bryman & Bell, 2011), in this case to the theory of sustainable food consumption. With the operationalization and semi-structured interview technique as the basis, an interview guide had been constructed to help the researcher’s through the interviews. The time length of the interviews were approximately 30 minutes, in order to give the respondents the time
they need to answer the questions. The interview came both in an English and a Swedish version, depending on which language the respondents prefered to use. The english one is presented below, while the Swedish version is visible in Appendix 1.

4.7.1 Interview Guide

Sustainable Food Consumption
1. Have you ever heard of sustainability?
   • How would you describe sustainability?
   • When did you become familiar with the subject? Where/by whom?

2. Have you ever heard of sustainable food consumption?
   • How would you describe sustainable food consumption?

3. How would you recognize sustainable food products?
   • Are there any food products which you would regard as more sustainable than others? Which ones? Why?

Organic
1. Have you ever heard of organic food products?
   • How would you describe organic food products?

2. Are there any environmental outcomes of consuming these products? Which ones?

3. Are there any social outcomes of consuming these products? Which? (With social outcomes we mean how it affects the people; you, people around you or far away, different communities and cultures.)

4. How do you believe these products are priced in comparison to non-organic products? Why do you think this is?
   • Would you pay a premium price for organic products? Why?
   • What economic outcomes would there be for you if you were to consume these products?

5. Is there any connection between the social, economic & environmental outcomes when it comes to organic products?

Fairtrade
1. Have you ever heard of Fairtrade-labeled food-products?
   • How would you describe Fairtrade products?

2. Are there any environmental outcomes of consuming these products? Which?

3. Are there any social outcomes of consuming of these products? Which?

4. How do you believe these products are priced in comparison to non-fairtrade products? Why do you think it is so?
   • Would you pay a premium price for Fairtrade products? Why?
• What economic outcomes would there be for you if you were to consume these products?

5. Is there any connection between the social, economic & environmental outcomes when it comes to Fairtrade products?

**Dietary Choices**
1. What kind of dietary choices can you make in order to be sustainable? Which ones? (*If they don’t understand, explain what we mean by dietary choices: Vegetarian, vegan, free-range eggs, locally produced etc.*)

2. Are there any environmental outcomes of these dietary choices? Which ones?

3. Are there any social outcomes of these dietary choices? (With social outcomes we mean how it affects the people; you, people around you or far away, different communities and cultures.) Which ones?

4. How do you believe products specialized for these dietary choices are priced? Why do you think it is so?
   - Would you pay a premium price in order to consume a specific diet? Why?
   - What economic outcomes would there be for you if you were to follow one of these diets?

5. Is there any connection between the social, economic & environmental outcomes when it comes to these different dietary choices?

**Waste**
1. Do you know what sorts of waste are produced by food consumption? Which? (*If they do not have a clear understanding of it, explain that we mean the waste and recycling of the packaging of food products, as well as biodegradable waste*)

2. Are there any ways in which people can reduce the waste produced by their food consumption? Which ways? (*If they do not have a clear understanding of it, explain that it could be things like sorting one’s waste at home, adopting a waste-free lifestyle, composting, recycling, and so on.*)

3. Are there any environmental outcomes of reducing this waste?

4. Are there any social outcomes of reducing this waste?

5. Are there any economical outcomes of reducing this waste?
   - What economic outcomes would recycling/sorting waste at home/ living waste-free have on you?

6. Is there any connection between the social, economic & environmental outcomes from waste?
Concluding questions

1. If you were to only consume sustainable products, what would be the reason?

2. (Explain the idea behind the three pillars of sustainability to the participant) Do you put the same importance on the three p:s? Are any of them more important/sustainable to you?

3. Out of these four: Organic food, Fairtrade-labeled food, reducing waste from food consumption & following a sustainable diet, are any of them more important/sustainable to you?

4.8 Research Quality Criteria

In order to ensure the quality of a research, there are certain criteria to meet, mainly the two concepts of validity and reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). These concepts are commonly associated with quantitative research (Silverman, 2015). However, Bryman & Bell (2011) argue that it is important to apply these criteria to qualitative research as well. Creswell & Miller (2000, p. 124-125) define validity in qualitative research as “how accurately the account represents participants’ realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them”. However, Silverman (2015, p. 21) says that “Validity is another word for truth”.

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) using a semi-structured interview format can increase a study's validity and credibility. The same authors say that due to the possibility that the researchers can clarify questions and also guide the respondent in semi-structured interviews, the study can often gain high validity, but also higher credibility. Credibility can also be gained if the questions are based on themes of theory and is thus created in order to answer the research questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Thus in a deductive approach utilizing theories in creating the questions while also analyzing the data from theory, it can be considered to be of high credibility (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Thus, since this study is using a semi-structured interview format and a deductive approach, the validity and credibility criterias can be considered to be applied to the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The same authors state that while a semi-structured format can gain higher validity it can create some concerns for reliability. In semi-structure interviews the lack of standardization as well as the ability to ask additional and flexible questions not originally included in the interview guide, makes it
hard to replicate a study, therefore reliability as well as dependability is of concern (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Since it is unlikely to be able to replicate a qualitative study to gain the exact same results as previous researchers have, it is perceived to be difficult to apply reliability in qualitative research (Heyink & Tymstra, 1993). Neuman (2003) instead explains that qualitative researchers understands and accepts that different sources and data collection techniques might not produce consistent data, therefore the need for replication is not heavily used in qualitative research. However, if the procedures for conducting and presenting the data is clear and transparent it can overcome the problem of reliability (Neuman, 2003). Ali & Yusof (2011) further elaborate on reliability in qualitative research and instead say that when it comes to reliability the researchers instead needs to document and clarify how their research was conducted from data gathering to interview questions and as well as how the data was analysed and presented.

Thus, in order to show how the findings were conducted, the authors decided to be clear and transparent in all of the study’s steps and processes. In this paper the authors also transcribed every interview into a separate word document. As the interviews were conducted in Swedish the recording had first to be translated into English while also being transcribed.

According to Bryman & Bell (2011), there can also be problems with reliability and validity when it comes to the chosen sample. The same authors further state that it is important to have a varied mix of participants. Thus the chosen sample for this study was also selected to avoid problems with reliability and validity, therefore the sample which was selected was as previously mentioned gathered from different faculties at the university, as well as gathering students, teachers and staff members to participate, while also fulfilling the recommendations by (Boddy, 2016; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016) for required sample size by conducting 20 interviews.

Other actions which were taken on to avoid errors and quality problems was to conduct the interviews at a time of the participants’ choosing to prevent participants to answer the questions incorrect because they might have been in a hurry. To avoid researcher biases and errors, that is that the researcher conducts a mistake, the authors of this paper
decided to transcribe and record all interviews to make sure that they can be presented correctly. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

Lastly, according to Liedtka (1992) it is important to conduct a pretest on the interview questions before the data collection starts to increase validity and reliability. The specifics of the pre-test follows in the next sub-chapter.

4.9 Pretest
According to Bryman & Bell (2011) in order to avoid problems arising with certain questions in the interview guide, it is important to pretest the questions prior to the data collection. According to Bryman & Bell (2011) a pretest also known as a pilot study is a process in where researchers test their questions to determine if the approach, questions or instructions need to change amongst many other obstacles which could be find in a pretest. According to Bryman & Bell (2011) a pretest allows for discovering problems which might otherwise only have been discovered after conducting a few interviews, such problems might include: problems with understanding the question or questions which are difficult to answer.

The actual pretest can be conducted by asking the intended questions to an individual, who then gives feedback on the questions, or to conduct a pilot-study of the actual interview on an individual (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore when conducting a pretest, it is important to make sure that the respondents of the pretest are not part of the sample for the data collection later on (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

This study will make use of a pretest in order to avoid any problems which might occur during the data collection process, in particular it might highlight if there are any questions which are difficult to understand or answer properly. As just mentioned in this study the researchers utilized a pretest to increase validity and reliability. The pretest process started with presenting the intended interview questions to a helpful marketing professor at the Linnaeus University. After that, the questions were changed and re-formulated to some degree before they were submitted for review by other marketing students for increased feedback. The questions was not in a large need of any change at this time, however some questions were rephrased to be more clear. The next step which was conducted was to actually test the questions on individuals from the intended
sample. After this process of actually testing the questions in an interview format in a real setting, the questions was not in need to be changed, due to the fact that they were deemed easy to respond to, relevant to the theoretic concepts the researchers wished to know more about, and that the answers given was of relevance to answer the research questions. As a result the researchers thereafter proceeded with the interviews. (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

4.10 Data Analysis Method
In qualitative research, the data which is collected is often richer and more subjective than quantitative data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The same authors state that qualitative data consists more of words and pictures which can be interpreted in many ways, compared to quantitative data consisting of numbers and statistical conclusions. Hence in qualitative research the data has to be analyzed more carefully and clarified. Most often in such a case, a researcher has to deal with massive amounts of data consisting of text or images (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The same authors state that to reduce and comprehend the data it is often divided into categories or themes.

For the analysis to be conducted in a qualitative approach using interviews, the questions and answers have to be written down or recorded. If recorded, the interviews needs to be transcribed to show the data visually. Otherwise, it is extremely hard to make an analysis completely out of recordings alone. Transcribing is a process of rewriting the audio-recorded interviews in text, it is also important to note what the respondents didn’t say and how they said the things they did. For example, if a question was hard to answer the interviewee might have had a long time thinking about what to answer, this needs to be included into the transcription. (Silverman, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

In this paper the authors transcribed every interview into a separate word document. As the interviews were conducted in Swedish the recording had first to be translated into english while also being transcribed.

After the data has been collected it needs to be analysed and interpreted accordingly (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Neuman (2003) claims that analysis work in qualitative research is a process in where the researcher looks at the data and then try to organize
them into different themes. Since qualitative research usually is inductive a grounded theory approach is often utilized to sort the data and assign parts into different themes and codes (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However since this study is using a deductive approach another method needs to be used. Before an analysis of the collected data can occur, the researcher(s) has to choose a research approach, either a deductive or inductive approach. In this paper the authors have decided to work with a deductive approach and will therefore analyze the data accordingly (Silverman, 2015).

Spiggle (1994) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) explains that when the qualitative research is of a deductive nature, the researchers still classify the data into themes (called classification), although, in this case the researchers tries to relate and compare the data with the existing theory utilized to ask appropriate questions. The theory is often divided into categories and then the data is tried to be paired with the categories, sadly not all data can always be interpreted into categories, and is then lost (Spiggle, 1994). Furthermore, Neuman (2003) says that it is not only important to analyze what is said in qualitative research but also to look and compare what is not mentioned by participants in the study. However if the data gathered and divided into categories does not efficiently answer the research question, a research can then reanalyze the data with an inductive approach to find new themes (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

This way of analyzing data with the help of theoretic categories is often called a thematic analysis. When utilizing a data collection technique of interviews, a thematic narrative analysis approach can be used. It works similarly as thematic coding, although each interview needs to be transcribed into text form. Silverman (2015). Usually the whole amount of text from for example a transcribed interview is analyzed as a whole to interpret, however, themes and codes can still be assigned although it is more important to understand the context and line of thought by interviewee participants. Thus a participants interviewees line of thought and answer can still be interpreted as a whole based on context but also categorized into deductively reconstructed thematic categories originating from theory. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) says that if this approach is utilized with a deductive research approach the themes will be associated and built upon existing and utilized theory from the theoretical framework. There are several steps to this approach, first one needs to look at the data and then label or code specific
answers. These codes can then be connected or related into larger themes or categories (Silverman, 2015).

In this paper the researchers decided to analyze the data through a thematic narrative analysis, as it grants the researchers more data to analyze and draw conclusions about, compared to a simple categorization process in where often some of the meaning behind the codes are lost, and furthermore since the coding strategy does not allow all data to be coded. Therefore the thematic narrative approach was deemed the most useful since the text can be analyzed as a whole without any meaning or wording becoming lost in the process. It also allowed the researchers to still be able to use coding and categorization when needed to analyze the data and classify it into theoretic concepts as well as to make relationships between answers and theory.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

According to Bryman & Bell (2011) and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), when conducting a study, it is important to consider certain ethical issues which might cause problems throughout the process. When it comes to qualitative research, it is more likely to possess more ethical concerns than quantitative research, however all research has its ethical interests and burdens (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). There are four basic problems to consider in regards to business research: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, according to Neuman (2003) ethical approaches which researchers can adopt include informed consent, as well as promising privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

In regards to harm to participants, it is important for researchers to make sure they avoid such a situation where potential or actual harm is done to the participants. It can involve anything from physical harm to harming the self-esteem of the participants. In order to avoid such situations, it is important that the researcher takes these questions in consideration before the data collection and takes all necessary precautions. (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

In regards to lack of informed consent, regards such data collections as observations where the participants do not necessarily know they are being observed, or who the
researcher actually is. In these situations it is important for the researcher to consider whether the participant has received as much information necessary in order to make an informed decision about their participation in the project. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

When it comes to invasion of privacy, it regards respecting the privacy of the participants. It is not uncommon that participants choose not to answer to certain questions, and thus the researcher needs to pay close attention to the participants and allow them to withdraw from their participation if they wish to do so. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

Lastly, the subject of deception regards a situation where the researcher is not honest about the purpose of their research. Deception is not uncommon in research, as saying that a research is something it is not can allow respondents to react naturally to experiments and questions. However, deceiving participants can lead to less financial support, distrust and problems finding future participants. (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

For this research, various ethical considerations were made to overcome these ethical and social issues. Precautions were taken in order to avoid harm to participants and invasion of privacy, among which a pretest of the interview questions, and careful consideration of the questions developed. The attempts in this study to secure ethical procedures included promising anonymity and no invasion of privacy, the only information gathered with the consent of the participants which might been of sensitive nature was their age, their status as either a student/teacher/staff as well as to what department or faculty they belong. The researchers also asked the participants for their consent to record the conversation to easier analyze the data and depict it properly.

Furthermore, personal interviews in a secure and isolated environment was selected in order to avoid that individual's answers would be changed or biased if other people could be listening to the conversation, then the participant might answer in a way to be socially accepted and not reflect his or hers true answers. This phenomenon is called social desirability bias. Other reasons for choosing interviews in a isolated and quiet setting was due to the possibility of the participants feeling guilty or lowering their self-esteem of not knowing enough about sustainable food consumption or being sustainable
enough themselves. It also allowed the participants to have the freedom of describing the topics entirely as they see it themselves without worrying who is listening. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)
5 Empirical Investigation

In this chapter the collected data from twenty semi-structured interviews will be presented. First of, the answers to each of the four aspects; organic, Fairtrade, diets and waste will be presented in relation to the three pillars of sustainability. The structure is not solely based on the interview guide, but have instead been related to the theoretical framework, for easier understanding and connection.

5.1 Environment

5.1.1 Organic

When connecting organic food to the environmental pillar, the most recurring opinions were that organic food is better for the environment than non-organic products, that organic food is natural, and that there is less or no pesticides used in the production of organic products. The subject of pollution was mentioned by many participants, who brought up various issues which were reduced or not used at all in an organic production. These concerns regarded sprayed crops, artificial flavours, toxins, chemicals, pesticides, CO2 emissions, artificial fertilizers and GMOs. In regards to a reduced pollution, it was a general opinion among participants that organic production reduced or excluded these issues, which was better for the environment and led to less pollution. Another connection a few participants made, was that organic food was often locally produced, which would then lead to less transports which thus was better for the environment. One participant commented that when it comes to organic production, more insects can survive and pollinate flowers, which was then good for the environment. One of the answers about environmental outcomes of consuming organic products was;

“I’m not sure, but I would guess that it is to minimize toxins that are sprayed out in the soil, and also to avoid intake of dangerous chemicals when eating it”

Another aspect which was deemed positive for the environment was that organic production created a more natural environment, and opinions voiced in regards to this were that organic production wasted less natural resources, that there was no damage to the soil, that ecosystems were less affected, that organic production was more natural overall and that a more natural environment meant less negative effects upon it. Furthermore, a few participants mentioned that they buy organic food and pay a higher price for it because it benefits the environment.
However, not all participants were positive to organic and it’s affects on the environment. Some participants brought up that while organic food might be better than non-organic, there were other aspects to take into considerations which might sometimes present an even better option. These included meat and other animal products, and that even if these products were organic, this production still had a big negative impact on the environment. Many participants also mentioned that organic production still needed transport, and that the environmental costs of this could be very high, especially if the product was produced on another continent. Other comments in regards to this were that organic avocados could never be sustainable because of how much water the production required, that seasonality needed to be considered, that organic bananas still caused deforestation, and that all consumption has a negative effect on the environment. One participant who reasoned in this way stated:

“I cannot say that it has a positive effect, because almost, as far as I know, all kinds of consumption has an effect on the environment. So that you grow something organic does not mean that it is good for the environment. I mean that it is a bit misleading to say that it is good for the environment because there are still, somewhere within the production there are transports. So even if it is produced in a good way somewhere in Spain, it still needs to be transported here, and that has a big environmental impact. But my impression is that it should affect the environment and pollution less. That is how it should be.”

Furthermore, there was a lot of hesitation among some participants who were unsure if and how organic food affected the environment, and that the labels did not clearly convey that. There were also comments that organic food production had higher amounts of shrinkage than non-organic production and that organic production utilized different pesticides and different approaches to cultivation than non-organic production. Some participants were very negative towards organic food production, and commented that it was plain bad for the environment. Some comments were that organic production damages the farmland because of inefficiency, that it depletes the earth, and that it was no better than non-organic production.

5.1.2 Fairtrade
When asked about how Fairtrade affects the environment, participants had quite varying opinions. However, the most frequent comment among participants was that they were unsure about whether or not Fairtrade affected the environment. However, some participants argued that Fairtrade was good for the environment. The arguments in
regards to this were that there were less or no use of chemicals, more sustainable transport and less pollution overall. Furthermore, the second most frequent comment was that there were less chemicals and toxins used in the production in order to improve working conditions, which was good for the environment as well. One of the respondents thought that Fairtrade contributes to less carbon dioxide emission.

Another comment was that the company had more power when it came to Fairtrade production as it was more small scale, so that if one farmer did not want to use less chemicals in their production, they could just go to another farmer. Furthermore, another common opinion amongst the participants was that a Fairtrade business made more money, which could then be used for better equipment which could benefit the environment, and which opened up opportunities for turning the process into an organic one. Fairtrade was further connected to organic by one participant who was unsure of the effects of Fairtrade production on the environment, but who stated that if it was combined with organic then it would include less toxins and pesticides.

On the other hand, some participants argued that Fairtrade production had a negative impact on the environment. Comments voiced in regards to this were that Fairtrade production was not considered to be environmentally friendly, that it contributed to deforestation and that Fairtrade might have a negative impact on the environment as it involved regulating the market. One of the interviewees said that:

“It depends on the products, I do not believe that bananas for instance are good for the environment because of the deforestation, even though the main idea is to help the producers, it affects the environment negatively.”

5.1.3 Dietary Choices
When asked about how more sustainable diets affected the environment, most interviewees agreed upon that the diets they could think of were good for the environment and that it could have a big effect on a lot of people that followed sustainable diets. The most frequent answer by far had to do with that a reduction in meat would affect the environment positively. More than half of the comments made mentioned vegetarian food, a reduction in meat consumption as well as various environmental outcomes of these choices. The majority of participants thought that a reduction in meat was good for the environment, and that adopting a vegetarian or
A vegan diet would further benefit the planet. The arguments involved that cows contribute to a lot of methane and CO2 emissions, that meat production wastes a lot of natural resources and that there are a lot of emissions from transport as Swedish cows are fed with South American soybeans. It was further argued that vegetarian food is less mass-produced than meat and that vegetables are simply better for the environment. Furthermore, some participants argued that the paleo diet is bad for the environment because it consists of a lot of meat, and that consuming meat was considered the worst diet. Other comments in regards to this were that meat produced abroad might be cheaper than Swedish meat, but it is worse for the environment, and that while some people thought that GMOs and artificial meat is bad, it is more sustainable for the environment as there are so many people to feed. However, some participants conveyed hesitation towards these vegetarian diets stating that soy as a substitute might be bad for the environment, that some vegetarian food produce the same amount of emissions as that of chicken production, that meat-substitutes could be produced across the world and involve a lot of transportation and that cows contribute to keeping the fields open. Nevertheless, one respondent said:

“I think that the more dietary choices people make, the more we are going in the right direction for sustainable food consumption. So I hope that in a few years, that there is no reason to talk about organic or locally produced, but that we have actually done some optimization of how we eat and so on.”

Another dietary choice which was commonly mentioned was that of locally produced food, which was only perceived to have positive environmental outcomes. These outcomes included less transport and emissions, as well as fertile soil and open landscapes. Other dietary choices which were brought up as having positive outcomes for the environment were eating less fish, not having pesticides and toxins in one’s diet and a Mediterranean diet. Furthermore, a few participants argued that Fairtrade and organic were included in sustainable dietary choices.

Some interviewees conveyed concerns about choosing a more sustainable diet, mentioning that they did not think dietary choices affected the environment very much, that one person’s choices did not matter, and that there were both negative and positive outcomes. Dietary choices that were argued to be bad for the environment were palm oil, LCHF and food that requires a lot of water in the production process. Furthermore, one
participant argued that eating out could have a negative outcome, as one does not necessarily know the origin of the food, as well as the production process.

5.1.4 Waste
When talking about waste produced from food consumption, it was agreed upon by all of the interviewees that waste is bad for the environment. Examples of this included toxins being emitted when combusting waste, that waste means that we are throwing away resources, that we are producing more than we consume, and that buying food in bulk is bad, as food then gets thrown away. One participant stated that;

“Of course! There are so many toxins that are released into the environment even though you are recycling. And if you reduce your waste the toxins will also be reduced.”

Furthermore, one participant was unsure as to how waste, or a reduction of waste, affected the environment. In general, most participants agreed that a reduction in waste was good for the planet in regards of less production, less use of oils for plastics, less CO2 emissions, cleaner air, less waste in the nature and less transport emissions from travelling to recycling stations. Many suggestions were made as to how people could reduce the impact on the environment produced by waste from food consumption. Recycling, in particular of plastic and aluminium, was a popular opinion as to how waste could be reduced. It was also argued that if plastics are recycled there will be less toxic emissions. Other suggestions for reducing one’s waste was the reuse of packaging by buying food in concept stores where one can bring their own packaging or adapting a zero waste lifestyle. It was further suggested to buy more unpackaged food, and to not buy bottled water, as well as using materials which are more environment friendly and durable in the long-term. Another opinion which was voiced was that separating one’s waste at source, was another thing which one could do in order to reduce the impact which waste has on the environment.

In regards to food waste, interviewees agreed upon that throwing away food is not beneficial for the planet, and that people could plan their consumption better. Other ideas for what people could do was to buy more frozen food which lasts longer, and donating expired food, or food with short expiration dates. One comment on throwing away food was that if we were going to throw away food, then that food should be locally produced so that there is no transport between countries only to throw away the
food in the end. However, comments regarding how food waste could be reused regarded that it could be turned into biogas, compost or district heating.

5.2 Social

5.2.1 Organic

When asked about the social outcomes of organic food, most interviewees had an opinion. However, some respondents were somewhat uncertain as to these outcomes, stating that they did not know what these outcomes were, that they depend on how quick a transition to organic food would be, and on which products it regards. Furthermore, some respondents were unable, or barely able, to answer the question.

However, the majority of responses regarded positive social outcomes of organic food, where the benefits for people’s health and bodies were particularly highlighted. These involved that organic food has more vitamins, no antibiotics, no GMOs, less toxins and that the risk for cancer and other diseases was smaller when eating organic food. One of the interviewees stated that;

“It is better for my body if I eat organic. I mean, you feel better, I can feel that I feel better because you don't get all those toxins that they spray on the food.”

Moreover, mental wellbeing was also commonly mentioned, mainly in regards to conscience. The majority of interviewees claimed that it felt better to eat organic food, and one participant stated that it was morally right to do so, while another felt guilty about not eating organic food. Other aspects that were mentioned were that of animal welfare, and that animals on organic farms lead a better life and are fed healthier food. The aspect of social acceptance was further brought up as a social benefit of organic food consumption. Certain attributes which were highlighted by some respondents as positive social outcomes of organic food were that it was more natural, tasted better and looked better.

Organic food was described as being better for society at large, and in particular for reducing class differences, creating more jobs and affecting workers in a good way, particularly regarding a reduction of toxins in their work environment. One respondent connected organic food to locally produced and said that it would be better for communities if those two were connected. A few respondents argued that organic food
is good for society because it raises awareness, and that society should adapt more to the environment.

On the other hand, various comments regarding how organic products could have a negative impact on society were made. Some of the interviewees found it difficult to trust organic labels and suppliers, that organic food is no better than non-organic food when it comes to societal outcomes nor health, and that there are other ways to positively affect society than through organic food consumption. Furthermore, concerns were raised in regards to resources used in organic production, and in particular that it used more resources than conventional production which is less efficient. Furthermore, people raised concerns regarding a possible growth in organic production, and that it could disfavour poor families and producers and lead to an uneven distribution of food.

5.2.2 Fairtrade
When asked about the social outcomes of Fairtrade food, the majority of the respondents made comments regarding the production workers in developing countries, and the benefits which Fairtrade provides for them. Nearly all respondents said that Fairtrade was better for developing countries, or that it provided better working conditions at the production site. They brought up that the workers are not being taken advantage of, that the work environment is not dangerous, that there is no exploitation of poor people and countries, and further that there is no corruption or child labour. Better living conditions for workers and their families, as well as the poor, and further sending children to school, were brought up as positive outcomes. Other comments were that Fairtrade helps to create jobs, and also benefits small farms. Other positive arguments were that Fairtrade contributes to democracy and to a better society, and one participant stated that they felt like they could trust the label. Fairtrade was also described as being trendy and cool, and several participants felt morally good from consuming Fairtrade food products. The opinion was also raised that it helps to create an awareness in society about the working conditions at the production sites. One respondent stated;

“There are better conditions for the ones who work with the production as well as the people who consume Fairtrade-labelled products feel better about themselves, as they feel that they are helping people on the other side of the globe, it affects both physically and mentally.”
However, a few participants were hesitant or negative towards the effects Fairtrade labeled food has on society. Their opinions regarded that it was hard to see the benefits, that it was naive to think that Fairtrade makes a difference, that they did not believe it helped, that it could not make a difference unless politicians in the producing countries allowed it and that Fairtrade was negative for society.

5.2.3 Dietary Choices
A commonly mentioned diet in regards to social sustainability was that of vegetarian food. Interviewees stated that vegetarian options are better for society than meat, and that they were concerned with animal welfare. Furthermore, they described being vegetarian as something trendy, and it was further connected to being more natural than meat consumption as it is today. Other aspects which were mentioned were that it feels morally better not to eat meat, that a reduction in milk consumption would be better for society, and that the working standards in the production of vegetarian food were better. The most mentioned social outcome from the sustainable dietary choices was health. A majority of respondents said that when consuming less meat, one’s health becomes better and there is a lower risk for diseases. Moreover, meat containing antibiotics was also commented as bad for the body, and an overall opinion that sustainable diets are often healthier could be seen among participants.

Another dietary choice mentioned was that of locally produced, which numerous interviewees agreed benefited small scale producers and smaller societies. Locally produced vegetables were also described as being better for society than imported vegetables. Furthermore, the different dietary choices were described as to bring more awareness to healthy food which could lead to a more healthy and sustainable society. Participants put emphasis on where the food was produced, and a recurring comment was that Swedish meat was both healthier and better for animal welfare, and that Swedish food producers were further described as having better working conditions. One participant commented that importing food could damage Sweden, and could for example put Swedish farmers out of jobs. Other comments were that a balanced diet leads to happiness, and that diets contribute to better living conditions for producers, when Fairtrade and organic are considered as diets.

Certain attributes regarding food products connected to sustainable diets were popularly brought up, and various interviewees said that locally produced feels exclusive and has
a high quality, and that imported food is of lower quality and has more substances in them. Furthermore, the taste of certain food products was also mentioned, one participant stated that vegetarian meat substitutes taste good, while another said they still ate meat because it tastes great. It was further argued that the demand is still high for unsustainable products because the taste is good. However, there were many comments regarding that an increased demand in these diets would force society to adapt, and examples of this adaptation included more options for these diets in restaurants, festivals, events and grocery stores.

A number of interviewees were hesitant or negative towards the social outcomes of sustainable dietary choices. Some commented that diets are not good for people’s health unless it is recommended for a medical condition, and another said that diets create stress, and certain diets can create hysteria and a pressure for people to be thin. One participant also stated that diets are simply marketing so that companies can make more money, and another said, in regards to vegetarian food, that if we were to stop milking cows the consequences could be fatal for the cows. Participants who were hesitant said that they could not answer the question, that diets can have both positive and negative effects and that their choices did not matter unless a large amount of people made the same choices.

5.2.4 Waste
The most recurring answer as to how waste from one’s food consumption affects society, was that they could not answer how it was affected or that they were unsure whether it was affected. Thus, most participants were uncertain in regards to the question. However, a majority of the various comments made suggested that reducing one’s waste is good for society. Comments regarded that if waste was reduced, then consumption would be reduced which was good for society, but could be bad economically. Moreover, it was also stated that less waste would lead to less pollution, which meant healthier people, and it would also mean a reduction in the amount you needed to recycle and the time you needed to spend recycling. Other comments were that we need to get rid of garbage, otherwise we would live in it, that society has to do their part and recycle, and that food waste can be donated from stores to less fortunate people. Further, less plastics in our bodies and more people using reusable containers and bags, were commented as positive outcomes of reducing the waste from food consumption. Another comment was that children are taught in school to reduce waste,
which is another social outcome of the reduction of the waste. One participant further stated that;

“I think that it affects the society in a positive way, as you get rid of toxins in the air, less pollution, we will feel better and become more healthy, live longer and the risk for autoimmune diseases will decrease as well.”

In regards to recycling, which was commonly connected to the reduction of waste from food consumption, some interviewees agreed that if we recycle we can create energy which then can heat up homes, and a further comment was that recycling can be beneficial for local businesses. However, a few interviewees agreed that it was municipalities and society’s jobs to take care of waste.

5.3 Economy
5.3.1 Organic
The large majority of interviewees agreed that organic food is more expensive than non-organic food, but that prices differ between categories. Another interviewee stated that the difference in price was not big. Furthermore, one participant brought up that there are cheaper brands for organic food products as well, and another comment was that seasonality affected the prices. However, most participants would pay a premium price for the organic products, followed by some who would pay a premium price to a certain degree, and a few who would not pay a premium price. Furthermore, various participants said that they currently do purchase organic products if there is not a big price difference from the non-organic alternative. However, various participants said that organic food products are too expensive. On the other hand, a few participants stated that the higher price was correct for the products, as the cost of production is higher and because other products are priced too low since their production quality is poorer and less sustainable. One participant argued that if the demand for organic products increases, then the prices will become lower. Furthermore, a few participants said that they wished organic products were the only choice.

Organic meat was brought up as something which was too expensive, and one interviewee suggested that people choose Swedish meat instead because of the high price on organic meat. Another food product which was specifically mentioned was bananas, which were questioned by one interviewee as to not being economically
sustainable to eat in Sweden due to the required resources, no matter if they were organic is not.

Opinions regarding shelf life were raised, however they were evenly distributed between that organic products had a longer shelf life, and that they had a shorter shelf life. Many participants argued that organic food is less resource efficient, and said that perhaps it was the reason for the higher price. Moreover, most interviewees mentioned that in organic food production, more money went to the farmers, and one participant pointed out that organic products create jobs. Opinions were evenly distributed between thinking that organic food affects the economy at large, and between that it does not affect the economy at large. One interviewee commented that it might affect the economy at large depending on how labour intensive the organic business was.

When asked about how their personal economy would be affected by eating organic food products, the majority of participants agreed that it would be negatively affected, followed by a smaller number of participants who said their personal economy would be nearly indifferent, and one participant did not know how their personal economy would be affected.

5.3.2 Fairtrade
The main economical outcome of Fairtrade was agreed upon by nearly all interviewees, as they viewed that more money went to the producers and workers in developing countries, and it was further commented that it benefits small farm. Various participants commented that Fairtrade affects the economy positively, and one participant further pointed out that producers get paid what the product is actually worth. Others commented that in developing countries an increase in salary which seems very small to us can make a big difference for the people living there. Nearly all participants said that Fairtrade products are more expensive than equivalent products without the label, and a few participants argued that the price is high because of low demand, and that it will decrease as the demand increases. One participant said that there should be no option and there should only be Fairtrade food products available on the market.

Most interviewees said that purchasing Fairtrade products would affect their personal economy negatively, followed by some who said that it would not really affect their
personal economy. However, most participants also stated that they were willing to purchase Fairtrade products at a premium price, followed by a few who were not. Some participants were willing to purchase it at a premium price within certain limits. Furthermore, one participant said that they thought people were prepared to pay a higher price for Fairtrade products.

A few participants were negative towards Fairtrade; one commented that Fairtrade was bad because the price is already fair as it has been set and agreed upon. Another comment was that politicians in certain countries decide where the money from Fairtrade products go, depending on if corruption is present.

5.3.3 Dietary Choices
Most interviewees stated that food products developed for sustainable diets, such as vegetarian substitutions for meat, are often more expensive due to the fact that meat is often mass produced. However, while the majority did think that meat substitution was more expensive than meat, some participants thought that it was not and commented that vegetarian food is cheaper, and that vegetarian meat is priced similarly as to Swedish meat. Another comment was that Quorn products were cheaper and used less resources than meat substitutes made from soy-protein. One participant commented that vegetarian substitutes for meat were more expensive than meat because more resources are required for the production process, and thus it is more expensive. Furthermore, one participant argued that oatmilk and other dairy substitutes made from oats, were sometimes cheaper than lactose free dairy products. Some interviewees further agreed that a vegetarian diet did not cost as much in regards to resources, as a regular omnivore diet did.

In regards to personal economy, opinions were scattered. A large majority of interviewees said that they were willing to pay a premium price to follow a sustainable diet if they could see the benefits of it. One participant further said that they would pay a premium price, but that they did not at the time, and another would be prepared to pay more if the animals had a better life. A few participants specifically stated that they would pay a premium price to eat locally produced food, and one participant said that eating more soy-products would save them money. Another interviewee stated that consuming less meat would benefit their economy. However, some participants stated that they would not pay a premium price to follow a sustainable diet, and a few further
said that they would not because they could not afford it. One participant commented that if they bought healthy or ethical food, they chose the cheapest option. While most participants agreed that following a sustainable diet would affect their personal economy quite much, they were closely followed by a group which said that it would affect their personal economy to a rather small degree.

A lot of the comments made regarded the price of certain food products, where most participants agreed that foreign meat is cheaper than Swedish meat, but that they chose the Swedish meat because it is more sustainable, and because it is cheaper than organic meat. However, one interviewee commented that meat was suspiciously cheap. Furthermore, one participant said that foreign food in general is cheaper than Swedish food, and that they thus bought foreign food. In regards to eggs, a few participants said that eggs from free range hens are very expensive, and another commented that organic eggs are cheaper than locally produced eggs. Another participant commented that eggs from free range hens are cheaper in Serbia than in Sweden. It was further argued by a participant that ethical choices cost more, and by another that sustainable food products are more expensive because they are healthy. Another comment was that the high prices were so that conditions and equipment at the production site could be improved to produce good and sustainable food. Another comment was that the prices for these food products should go down if the demand is increased.

Some comments regarded the economy at large, where a few interviewees said that the economy is not really affected by sustainable diets, and another commented that locally produced benefits the local economy. While one participant argued that there is a higher demand for meat than for vegetarian food, another stated that red meat requires more water and resources which is not economically sustainable.

### 5.3.4 Waste

Nearly all participants said that reducing their waste from food consumption would benefit their personal economy, and a few further agreed that it would improve the economy at large. Some said that firms would save money on producing less packages, while a few argued that preserving the environment with less waste would mean a better economy as well. One interviewee commented that if the waste from food consumption was reduced, the municipality could spend that money in other areas, and another commented that less waste would mean less imports, which would then be better for the
Many interviewees pointed out that waste could be turned into energy or new products, and that personally reducing waste would mean that they would only purchase what they needed. One comment was that food products that are about to expire can be sold at reduced prices, and another suggestion for how this waste could be reduced was to purchase food unpackaged, and bring one’s own packaging such as glass jars, this was further said to reduce prices. One participant stated that planning shopping lists can help purchase only what one needs, and another said that buying food when it is cheap and freeze in to reduce waste would also help to save money personally. Various interviewees brought up that reducing their waste would mean that they did not have to pay for transport to the recycling stations. Some also stated that they could save time to do other things by reducing one’s waste.

However, some participants were uncertain or negative towards how a reduction in waste from food consumption affected the economy. A few interviewees said that they did not know how it affected the economy, while a majority of participants said that reducing waste could actually be bad because it would lead to less production and consumption. A few participants brought up the industry which produce energy from waste, and that it would be affected negatively if waste were to be reduced. Another interviewee said that it all depended on the material of the waste, and that it could be both beneficial and harmful for the economy.

Furthermore, a few participants commented that a great deal of food which is still edible is thrown away, thus wasting resources which is not economically sustainable. One participant said that they are willing to pay more for reusable packaging and containers, and another thought that there should be fines for people who do not sort their waste. A few participants further commented that the costs paid to municipalities to sort one’s waste were high.

5.4 Sustainable Food Consumption

5.4.1 Combination of the Three Pillars

5.4.1.1 Organic
When connecting the three pillars of sustainability and how organic affects them, the answers were a bit scattered. Some of the participants could not come up with a clear answer, and believed that there was a connection but they did not know how. Mostly the respondents deemed one or two of the pillars to be more evident in the connection to
organic. One consumer stated that by consuming organic milk the producer get more money, and if the consumption of organic milk increases, the prices could decrease and obtain even more people to buy organic milk, which in turn also would help the cows to have better conditions. Nevertheless, one interviewee stated that if the organic products would be connected to Fairtrade then the producer would get more money. There were one respondent that connected organic to the social pillar as they stated that as the farmers do not utilize any chemicals within the production process, the prices increases. The prices further affects the consumer’s willingness to pay for organic food products, which could be both positive or negative for the organic farmers. Another of the respondents said that a problem with the organic prices could be that they are not willing to pay that much for food, and thus chooses non-organic products.

Another viewed organic products to be more natural, as it contained less pesticides, which then the person claimed is connected to the environmental pillar. Another person thought that organic had an effect upon the environment and the society, and believed that we might get more healthy by consuming organic products. There was also a suggestion that organic production creates better working conditions for the producers, however that it was difficult to see any other connection the the three pillars. Obesity was also mentioned as a societal cost as it reflects upon what people eat, which then results in medical costs to the society. The same respondent further stated that there is a large inequality of the distribution of food. Furthermore, there were only six of the respondents that explained a connection to all of the three pillars, one of them stated;

“I believe it does connect, higher prices gains producers: then the environment becomes better, and socially it has grown more accepted to buy organic. So it touches upon on all the three aspects.”

And another one stated that;

“I think it is all connected, as the industry wants to earn money, society buys cheap products, and don't consider organic products because people think about themselves. And then that affects the environment. Then society will be affected from non organic products and toxins in them.”

5.4.1.2 Fairtrade
The connection between Fairtrade and the three pillars of sustainability were mostly connected to the economic and social pillars by the respondents. Some of the participants could not give clear answer of how Fairtrade were connected to all of the
three pillars and some of them viewed it as difficult to see a connection. One respondent stated that there was not enough of a connection and another said that they could not answer the question. One respondent explained that Fairtrade contributes to better conditions for the farmers, and that they might use less pesticides and have some sort of policy about it, but the respondent was still not sure of this. The economy, however, was the pillar that was brought up many times and connected to Fairtrade, as farmers obtain more money from the consumers which results in a better economy as well as a better life for the farmers. One respondent viewed it as easier to connect Fairtrade to the three pillars than organic, and explained it as that Fairtrade benefits the small farmers, due to the fact that they get more money which contributes to better farming equipment. Fairtrade also results in that as the farmers can buy better equipment they can also reduce the use of pesticides which in turn affects the whole world. One of the respondents stated that:

“Yes, of course, it gains both the economy, and the society as its the people that builds the society and makes it develop.”

Furthermore, a few respondents stated that with the extra money which Fairtrade production made, there came opportunities for better equipment which could benefit both working conditions and the environment, and that there further came opportunities to turn the production process into an organic one.

5.4.1.3 Dietary Choices
When discussing the connection between diets and the three pillars, several of the respondents discussed vegetarian as a diet that connects to all of the three pillars. One of these respondents stated:

“If more people eat vegetarian food, it should be better for the environment and then also socially because people will feel better physically and then that would give us a better economy.”

Another participant explained that if everyone would be vegetarians then all of the three pillars of sustainability would be affected. Furthermore there was one respondent who discussed vegetarian diets as a way of contributing to human health as well as to the environment, due to the fact that the mass production of animals would then slow down. Consequently, a reduction in meat was considered by the participants to contribute to less diseases as well as less pollution. Two other respondents also claimed that it would be better for both personal health and the environment to reduce meat consumption, and
they further stated that if we continue to eat meat in this way we will import more bad quality meat, where the meat might be contaminated with antibiotics. There was also a connection to animal welfare when one of the interviewees discussed the consumption of animal product. Especially when it comes to milk, as if we would stop milking the cows immediately, it would hurt them and their udders. The respondent further stated that it was as such, weird to actually produce milk, and that it is important to think about the animals. Another respondent stated that;

“Eating meat is bad for the environment and the animals, and it is not very healthy, I hope more people will eat vegetarian food.”

One interviewee stated that the connection to the environmental, social and economical pillar and diets is that consumers pay more for sustainable diets, the producers then gets more money to produce sustainable products which are good for the environment. Consequently, one participant stated that they did not think that diets affected the pillars to a large degree, but if there were to be a large amount of people following a specific diet it might. While another explained that they could see a connection, especially when you think about vegetarian food, free-range eggs and locally produced, but the respondent did not further describe these connections. There were further explanations about how the diets affected their personal economy, Some respondents stated that if a diet would be beneficial to themselves to follow, then they might start consuming it. Furthermore, there was a similar explanation from another respondent about that the choice of diets mainly depended on one's own income. The participant further argued that if a specific diet was affordable to follow, then more people might start to consume it, and then it would affect the economy and maybe the society, which would further affect the environment.

Another one believed that if diets became more popular, the prices would decrease and more farmers could produce for instance more free-range eggs which would be both better in regards to quality, as well as animal welfare. One interviewee stated that the connection that they made was that locally produced products and organic is the same thing, and another one said that diets in general do not affect the three pillars of sustainability that much when it comes to the macro level.
5.4.1.4 Waste
The answers from the respondents about if they could describe how a reduction in waste is connected to the three pillars of sustainability were scattered, and many seemed to connect only one or two of the pillars to reduced waste. Other respondents did not give a thorough explanation of how waste is connected to the three pillars, and thus it resulted in different variations of explanations between all of the respondents. Some of the respondents said that it was difficult to explain, while one respondent stated that recycling was the major connection to the environment, the economy and the society. Another viewed the connection to be both local and global, while another participant claimed that there was no connection. Nevertheless, one respondent explained that they could see some benefits for the society and economy, but much less for the environment. Another believed that by recycling more plastics, an outcome could be that less plastic would be produced, which could result in an effect within the economy. One respondent thought that a reduction in waste would probably affect the society positively. There were a few respondents who took the production perspective into account, by saying that by reducing their waste they could further reduce their costs. One of the participants further stated that by reducing waste the companies save a lot of resources and thus we do not have to import more, which in turn also reduce costs. A few participants claimed that by reducing waste their economy was mostly affected positively, which was further described by one participant;

“Yes i think so, if i buy less and plan more my economy will be better, but the overall economy is dependent on consumption which might be bad.”

Some participants could see connections to all of the three pillars. One of these respondents explained that;

“Yes, the environment is a resource for the society and if there is more environment it is good for the society and the economy is kind of a factor here.”

5.4.2 Descriptions
All respondents except one had heard of sustainable food consumption prior to the study. Even though they could not give a complete definition, they could describe what they believed to be sustainable when it came to sustainable food consumption. One interviewee believed that we often lack knowledge about sustainable food and then have to trust the labels on the products. Some respondents had gotten more knowledge from different types of media, and stated that the climate change is deeply affected by the meat consumption, and that less meat consumption would be more sustainable. The
same thing was mentioned in relations to fish, that overfishing is unsustainable. Therefore, it was mentioned by one interviewee that people should consume fish labelled with certain certifications, in order to be more sustainable within their food consumption. Vegetarianism was also seen as a preferable choice in order to be sustainable within one's food consumption, due to the fact that meat utilizes too many resources within the production process. Other explanations about what sustainable food consumption was, regarded taking care of the food you buy. That is, to not throw away food in order to reduce waste. One of the participants who mentioned this said:

“To not waste food, take care of the food which is bought, and buy good products such as locally produced so you skip unsustainable transportation processes.”

While another explained that:

“Dont throw away food or at least as little as possible, save leftovers and reuse for other meals.”

Another participant also connected it to seasonality by saying that one should utilize lunch boxes in order to not throw away food and also only buy the food produced during the seasons in order to be more environmental friendly. Furthermore, one participant thought that it was important to look over the supply chain and to make sure that everyone within it gets paid a fair salary, that resources are utilized efficiently and not overexploited. Another respondent reasoned similarly and believed that in order to consume food sustainably one has to think about the resources and how it is utilized. The respondent further suggested that we should purchase organic food, and products that we know are animal friendly, as well as reduce our meat consumption and to recycle more in order to reduce waste. One participant further stated that it is important to acknowledge and investigate the working conditions for the producers and consider this when purchasing food. There was also a similar answer from another participant who thought that we should eat organic, locally produced, and non-GMO food in order to consume sustainably. Consequently, aspects regarding personal health and the importance of being aware of your own intake were brought up and regarded as sustainable food consumption. One participant thought that it was important to consider avoiding to eat too much in order to not become obese. Thusly, the health aspect was important to consider when consuming sustainable food. Two of the participants also explained that it is vital to think about making the world a better place when consuming food, and thus to have in mind not to throw away the food you buy, and that the
producer should only produce as much as we consume. One respondent concluded this by stating:

“The way you consume food needs to be sustainable for the environment, for society and for the survival of the earth.”

There were two respondents who believed it to be essential to acknowledge the environmental aspects, and mentioned that it is important to recycle and decrease dangerous chemicals within the food. Another respondent stated that it would be preferable to be able to see how much each product pollute the environment and that this should be labeled on the products. People could then compare products and see how much the products affect the environment. Another interviewee compared Swedish meat and Danish meat and confirmed that it is better to consume Swedish meat, as it has a better quality than Danish meat.

5.4.3 Knowledge Construction
The majority of participants had built their image of sustainability during the last five years, while a few stated that they had built it in the 1990’s, over thirty years ago, around 2010 and in the 2000’s. While most participants had built their image from discussions with other people such as family members, colleagues and classmates, quite many had also built their image either from work, school, university, traditional media, social media and/or from their parents. Other statements were that one participant’s daughter had learned about it in school which had been passed on to the participant, that they had learned through experiences and through grocery stores. Other comments were that they had learned about certain points of views from teaching and studying them; economical starting point, sociological perspectives, political scientific perspectives as well as sociological perspectives.

5.4.4 Recognition
The way the participants recognized sustainable food products differed to some extent. One of the participants thought it to be alarming if a product had a label that said extra long expiration date, as they believed it to be produced with chemical substances. However, frozen products were regarded by the same respondent as more sustainable as they did not have to throw away old vegetables, and they never had to worry about not having food at home, which was how they viewed sustainable food products.
Some of the respondents mentioned organic food products as sustainable, and some brought up that Fairtrade was a sustainable option. Another answer which came up was that locally produced products were regarded as sustainable food products, although one of the interviewees deemed locally produced as unsustainable. Furthermore, if products contained or had been produced with pesticides, chemicals and conservatives as well as e-substances some respondent regarded this as unsustainable. The meat aspect was also brought up by some of the participants, for instance Swedish food was regarded as more sustainable than food imported from other countries. However, one respondent thought that if products such as meat and fish were labeled as sustainable, one could draw the conclusion that the products were indeed sustainable. Several other participants answered similarly, and said that if there was a label that said sustainable on the food products, the product was regarded as such. At the same time, there were participants who were confused about the subject and as they did not know the definition, they could not evaluate how products could be sustainable. One of the respondents stated that they did not believe that food products could be sustainable at all, and another confessed that it was not a priority to look for sustainable food products when buying groceries, but suggested that the list of contents on the products would be a good alternative to check if a product is sustainable.

There were also participants that were more direct with their answers and stated specific food products which they viewed as sustainable or unsustainable. One example was that bananas were viewed as unsustainable to one of them, and another thought that raw and unprocessed food products were viewed as sustainable, and for instance boil in bag rice was viewed as unsustainable. Plastics used for packaging were also an important factor that came up as being unsustainable in regards to sustainable food. Potatoes over rice were also a suggestion that one of the respondents discussed as they viewed it as it is more difficult to trace the production of rice than potatoes that have been produced in Sweden. One of the respondents went to farmers to purchase meat and vegetables directly from the farmer and viewed it as more sustainable as they then knew that the food was locally produced and organic. A more advanced way of evaluating whether a product was sustainable was according to one of the interviewees, to investigate every part of the supply chain. Another commented that it was important to look at the origin of the food. Vegetarian food, as well as food packaging which can be recycled and
reused were viewed as sustainable options. Furthermore, one of the respondents answered that they could see if food was sustainable just by visiting a supermarket.

When comparing if different food products were regarded as more sustainable than others, some of the participants stated that vegetarian food was more sustainable. Accordingly, other respondents viewed meat as the least sustainable food product, while some respondents said that Swedish meat is more sustainable than foreign meat. One participant stated that they believed that lamb was more sustainable than other meat options, and other respondents believed that locally produced food was more sustainable than other food products. However, a few participants stated that they did not believe that vegetarian food was a sustainable option as it resulted in damaging the soil and thus had other side effects.

Both Fairtrade and organic were viewed as products which had more sustainable advantages, while one respondent could not answer which products that were more sustainable than others. To evaluate whether one product was more sustainable than others, another respondent stated that they thought that the price was a good indicator, as the price reflected the quality of the product. One interviewee further described sustainability in regards to food consumption as a ladder, where the bottom is organic, then came KRAV-labeled products and at the top was biodynamic food. Furthermore, some specific species of fish were deemed as more sustainable than others to one of the interviewees, and another viewed beans, vegetables and grains to be heavily sustainable food products while another thought that food in jars were more sustainable due to the durability.

**5.4.5 Prioritization**

The interviewees’ prioritizations between organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets and reductions in waste differed to a large degree. Only one person said that they were equally important and connected to high levels of sustainability, while the other interviewees had far more specific prioritizations. The most frequently mentioned description amongst participants was that reducing waste was the most important aspect to achieve a sustainable food consumption. A quarter of the participants said that diets such as eating less meat was of the highest importance, while a smaller amount of participants stated that Fairtrade was the important factor in order to achieve
sustainability, however one participant stated that “Fairtrade is only of harm”. The least prioritized of the four was to choose and consume organic products.

The prioritization between the three pillars on the other hand was more homogenous. A quarter of the participants said that all of the pillars are just as important while a slightly larger group of participants said that the environmental aspect was the most important one. A minority of the participants deemed the social pillar as the most important one out of the three. A pair of participants stated that the economy was the most important one to start with in order to improve the other pillars. One person argued that it was hard to decide upon one of the pillars as more important than the others, as it depended upon which food category one discussed. Another person was aligned with this way of thinking, and said that different aspects were more important than others depending on the situation.

5.4.6 Reasons for Sustainable Consumption
Half of the participants stated that if they were to consume sustainable food products, the main reason would be for ethical and moral reasons, where it was deemed important to support farmers, contributing to making the world a better place and become more sustainable. While some of the participants claimed that their reason would be to improve the environment, another participant stated that the main reason would be to improve both the environmental as well as the social aspects. While some of the participants stated that the main reason would be if they could see the actual outcome of it, or if it was beneficial for themselves, and they could afford it. Several participants also added that it would be to feel better physically, one wanted to be part of the movement, another wanted to do it because of the challenge and another to reduce time to throw away trash.
6 Analysis

This chapter will analyze the collected data through a thematic narrative approach in order to interpret the primary data, and to draw conclusions.

6.1 Environment

6.1.1 Organic

The main reaction among participants when asked about the environmental outcomes of organic food was that it was better for the environment than non-organic food, for reasons such as less or no pesticides utilized in the production, artificial fertilizers and CO2 emissions. This is consistent with theory from Darnhofer (2005), who says that organic farming is an environmental friendly process, and with that of Goggins & Rau (2016) who argue that organic farming does not utilize any artificial chemical fertilizers, and that the use of pesticides is restricted. Participants further suggested that organic farming wastes less natural resources than conventional farming, that there was no damage to the soil, and that there was less of a negative effect on ecosystems. This can be clearly connected to the theory of Voget-Kleschin (2015), which asserts that organic farming does not induce any damage to soil or ecosystems. These findings suggest that many consumers have an understanding of certain environmental outcomes of organic food which are correct in regards to the theory on the subject, and that these outcomes have in some way been conveyed in different media and situations. Based on the empirical material on how participants had built their images of sustainability, these media and situations mainly include discussions with peers, information from school and university, as well as social and traditional media.

However, comments were also made which were inconsistent with parts of the theory. Participants argued that other aspects needed to be taken into consideration to decide the environmental outcomes of these products, such as: transports, whether or not the products were animalic, seasonality and water consumption in the production of such products. Furthermore, some remarks fully contradicted the theory, arguing that organic agriculture is bad for the environment in terms of damaging the farmland due to inefficiency and depleting the earth. Both Voget-Kleschin (2015) and Darnhofer (2005) manifest that organic agriculture is protective of land and soil, and Darnhofer (2005) further argue that it is an environmental friendly process. Here, the respondents highlighted that there are other aspects that needs to be taken into consideration besides organic production, in order to evaluate whether the product is environmentally sustainable. Additionally, some respondents had a different opinion and suggested,
contrary to the theory, that organic agriculture was bad for the environment and farmlands. These opinions naturally have their origin somewhere. However, they could not be explained in this study as the reviewed theory directly contradicts these statements.

6.1.2 Fairtrade
In regards to the environmental outcomes of Fairtrade, most participants were uncertain as to whether there were any, and what these could be. This is connected to Hisham & Le Billion’s (2013) findings which distinguish that Fairtrade farming is not always environmentally superior to conventional farming. Nevertheless, even though Fairtrade agriculture might not always be environmentally sustainable, Hisham & Le Billion (2013) further state that there are certain requirements which need to be fulfilled in order to avoid damage on the environment, such as a decrease in the use of pesticides. This latter statement by Elder, Zerifﬁ & Le Billion, (2013) was connected to a few other participants’ comments, they emphasized that Fairtrade was indeed better for the environment in terms of chemicals or toxins. One respondent said that Fairtrade contributes to less CO2 emissions and more sustainable transport. However, the comments on CO2 emissions and more sustainable transport were not included in the theoretical framework of this paper, and neither were other environmental requirements for the Fairtrade certification, due to limited information within the theory. Therefore, one can clearly see that the uncertainty amongst the participants, as well as the gap within the reviewed literature are connected, which suggests a clarification for why the respondents have difficulties in understanding the environmental impact of Fairtrade.

Another connection to the theory can be clearly seen as participants put forward that the additional money brought into a Fairtrade business could be employed for equipment superior for the environment and further open up opportunities for turning the process into an organic one. Goggins & Rau (2016) reinforce this with their statement that a more sustainable agricultural production process and investments in environment improvement projects are possible contributions of Fairtrade certifications. This connection suggests that consumers’ opinions of these environmental outcomes of Fairtrade are aligned with existing theory, and has been conveyed to them through media or other situations. Some of the interviewees in the study claimed that Fairtrade food production has a bad impact on the environment in regards to contributing to deforestation and regulating the market. These statements were not supported by the
theory in this paper and thus makes it harder or impossible to explain where these deviant opinions derived from.

6.1.3 Dietary Choices
The most frequent answer as to how sustainable diets affected the environment was that a reduction in one’s meat consumption would be better for the environment, and that following a vegetarian diet would benefit the environment additionally as there would be a reduction in methane and CO2 emissions, as well as a more efficient use of natural resources. This connects with Goggins & Rau’s (2016) findings which adduce that meat production results in deforestation and a substantial amount of emissions. Participants further raised comments regarding locally produced food, and suggested that environmental outcomes embodied less transport and emissions, fertile soil and open landscapes. Lockie et al. (2002) stand behind this in their statement that locally produced products are often more environmental friendly, which Trobe (2001) further claims is related to the decrease in transports, and thus a decrease in pollution. It was additionally mentioned by interviewees that a reduction in fish consumption was positive for the environment, which is supported by Jonell et al. (2016) who state that the unsustainable fishing has a big weight on the environment as it damages ecosystems and biodiversity.

However, certain concerns were raised during the interviews, that sustainable diets did not necessarily make an enough positive impact as one’s personal choices were not enough to make a difference unless others also undertook a sustainable diet. This could however not be connected to the theoretical framework due to limited findings about the subject. Once again there is a clear connection between consumers understanding of diets and the reviewed literatures’ vague information about the subject.

6.1.4 Waste
In regards to the outcomes which waste from food consumption has on the environment, most interviewees said that those outcomes were negative. Outcomes mentioned were toxins emitted when combusting waste, an inefficient use of resources, CO2 emissions and transport emissions from travelling to recycling stations. Cicatiello et al. (2016) agree upon this in their statement that food waste has negative effects on the environment in terms of landfills and pollution. Furthermore, the theory suggests that various sorts of emissions related to the combustion and decomposition of waste have a
Participants suggested various ways to reduce the impact which waste from food consumption has on the environment, which mainly regarded the recycling of plastics and aluminium, the reuse of packaging and purchasing unpackaged food, as well as separating at source. This is supported by Bates & Phillips (1999) and Cicatiello et al. (2016) who say that if the waste from food consumption was to be reduced, recycled or recovered for other use the environmental outcomes would improve. Hence, the participants have a matching understanding with the theory concerning the outcomes which waste from food consumption has on the environment. Thus, this connection indicates that these outcomes have been clearly communicated to these consumers.

6.2 Social

6.2.1 Organic

In the study conducted, most participants connected organic agriculture to the social outcome of better health. Statements regarded that organic food has less toxins, more vitamin and is further free from GMOs and antibiotics, which leads to better health and a decreased risk for cancer and other diseases. This can be clearly associated with the findings of Goggins & Rau (2016) which says that organic agriculture contributes to healthy food products through restrictions in pesticides, antibiotics and chemical fertilizers. Rigby & Cáceres (2001) further support the findings with their argument that organic food products are healthy, nutritious and aim to minimize the amount of diseases. Another aspect which was mentioned by interviewees was that of animal welfare, and that animals on organic farms lead a better life and are fed healthier food. This is clearly connected to ethical aspects mentioned in the theory, in which Goggins & Rau (2016) connects animal welfare to organic agriculture. Interviewees further argued that organic agriculture had positive outcomes on society at large in terms of creating jobs, reducing class differences and improving working conditions for workers, which in this case could not be connected to the theory.

Contradictions between the theory and the empirical material were found, particularly in regards to trust. Rigby & Cáceres (2001) and Goggins & Rau (2016) argue that an organic production or label can serve as a bridge or relationship-builder between
producers and consumers, while several interviewees described a difficulty to trust organic labels and suppliers.

6.2.2 Fairtrade
The main reaction to the social outcomes of Fairtrade among participants of the study conducted regarded benefits for developing countries and improved working conditions at the production site, which clearly connects to the theory of Grunert, Hieke & Wills (2014) which states that Fairtrade has an aim to provide equal shares of the profits for producers in developing countries, as well as improved working conditions. Other comments by interviewees highlighted that Fairtrade does not have any child labour, or dangerous working conditions. Goggins & Rau (2016) support this in stating that Fairtrade prohibits child labour and aims to improve farmers’ health.

As mentioned in the empirical material, there were interviewees who were hesitant or negative towards the social outcomes of Fairtrade, in terms of not thinking it made a difference or that it was difficult to see that difference. It was brought up that Fairtrade cannot make a difference in developing countries unless politicians allowed it, which is partially agreed upon by Elder, Zerriffi & Le Billion (2013) who state that the government of a country has a final say in how the Fairtrade requirements are achieved. These findings suggests that the three pillars of sustainability could be benefited from including politics as it seems to have a pivotal role in achieving a sustainable food consumption

6.2.3 Dietary Choices
The major theme among interviewees was to mention a vegetarian diet in regards to social outcomes of sustainable dietary choices. They mentioned that a vegetarian diet was better for society, and that animal welfare was of concern. However, the most mentioned social outcome was that of health, a vegetarian diet was commonly connected to improved health and less risk for diseases. This is agreed upon by Graca (2016), Goggins & Rau (2016) and Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker (2002) who connect the consumption of meat and other animal based food products to worsened health. Furthermore, Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker (2002) state that an overconsumption of meat can lead to cancerous and cardiovascular diseases, agreeing with the findings from this study.
Locally produced food was further discussed by interviewees, recurring comments regarded benefits for small scale producers and smaller societies. La Trobe (2001) supports this in stating that locally produced improves the relationship between producer and consumer, which benefits the producer economically, and improves cooperation within the community.

Some contradictions were discovered in regards to comments from interviewees who said that diets are not good for people’s health unless it is a recommended action for a medical condition, and that diets could lead to stress and a social-pressure to be thin. However, from theory it is evident that certain sustainable diets, such as locally produced (Lockie et al., 2002) and a vegetarian diet (Graca, 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016) have a positive effect on consumers’ health.

6.2.4 Waste
In regards to the social outcomes of waste from one’s food consumption, most participants in this study were uncertain. However, comments were raised in regards to waste having negative social outcomes, and that a reduction in waste from food consumption would have positive social outcomes. It was mentioned that a reduction in waste would mean less pollution, which further would mean healthier people, which is completely agreed upon by Cicatiello et al., (2016) who state that pollution from waste does present a health risk. Another comment was that we have to get rid of garbage or else we would live in it, which is somewhat correlated with Thompson’s (2009) argument that plastics in the nature generate aesthetic and tourism-related issues. It was further stated by a participant that stores could donate food waste to less fortunate, which corresponds with the theory which says that social outcomes of a reduced food waste includes feeding the poor (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016).

6.3 Economy
6.3.1 Organic
As mentioned in the empirical material, most participants said that organic food products are more expensive than non-organic food products, but that prices differ between different categories. This can be connected to Smith, Clapperton & Blackshaw’s (2004) argument that organic food can be economically sustainable depending on a number of variables, out of which the right crop with a great demand,
and a premium price, are two. In addition, most participants stated that they were willing to pay a premium price for organic food, at least to a certain degree, which connects with the previously mentioned variable of a premium price on organic products to achieve economic sustainability.

It was further commented by interviewees that in an organic production process, more money went to the farmers. Furthermore, the participant also said that the premium price could affect the consumer’s willingness to pay, and thus choose the non-organic product as it is cheaper. This way of reasoning is connected to Lien, Hardaker & Flaten’s (2007) allegation that the premium price on organic food products is important for the farmer’s economy, hence consumers willingness to pay is an important cornerstone to achieve economical sustainability.

6.3.2 Fairtrade
Among participants of this study, the most general opinion was that economic outcomes of Fairtrade mainly regarded more money going to producers and workers in developing countries, which is agreed upon by Grunert, Hieke & Wills’ (2014) description that Fairtrade aims to improve working conditions and achieving equal shares of the profits for the producers in developing countries. It was further stated by participants in the study that Fairtrade affected the economy at large positively, which is in line with Goggins & Rau’s (2016) allegation that Fairtrade contributes to minimizing poverty in developing countries. Other comments from participants regarded that purchasing Fairtrade-labelled products would probably affect their personal economy negatively, which cannot be connected to the theory in this case.

One comment by a participant in the study regarded corruption, and that the politicians in a country decides where the money for Fairtrade go, which further can be connected to the argument that governments decide how the requirements of Fairtrade are achieved (Elder, Zerriffi & Le Billon, 2013). These findings together with aforementioned literature further suggests that politics could be included to the three pillars of sustainability.

6.3.3 Dietary Choices
Comments regarding economic outcomes of consuming sustainable diets mainly regarded prices of these products, as well as how it would affect participants’ personal
economy. This was not something which was supported in the theory, but a majority of participants were willing to pay a higher price to follow a sustainable diet. It was, however, argued by one participant that locally produced food benefits the local economy, which can be connected to Trobe’s (2001) arguments that locally produced food enhances cooperation within communities, and further benefits the producer economically. Moreover, it was argued by some interviewees that a vegetarian diet was more resource efficient than a conventional one, which Kastner, Koch & Nonhebel (2012) support in their statement that animal products are to a large degree responsible for the over consumption of earth’s resources.

There was one contradiction between the theory and the empirical material in this case, where a participant pointed out that vegetarian substitutes for meat are more expensive because they are more expensive to produce. However, Goggins & Rau (2016) state that vegetables and other substitutes for meat are cheaper for farmers to produce, which suggests the opposite.

6.3.4 Waste
Most participants in this study argued that their personal economy would improve if they were to reduce the waste produced from their food consumption, which is in line with Cicatiello et al. (2016) who state that consumers’ economy is negatively affected by the food wasted. Furthermore, some participants mentioned that companies could save money on producing less packages if there were a reduction in waste, which can be connected to the theory on some levels. While the theory does suggest that companies would have greater savings if there was a reduction in waste, it is not due to the reduced production of packaging but due to recovering waste (Cicatiello et al., 2016; Bates & Phillips, 1999; Goggins & Rau, 2016) and due to reduced charges for the disposal of waste (Bates & Phillips, 1999). Moreover, participants commented that throwing away edible food is a waste of resources, which is not sustainable in regards to the economy, which is agreed upon by Cicatiello et al. (2016), Goggins & Rau (2016) and Bates & Phillips (1999) who argue that reducing food waste would save a lot of natural resources. This further connects to Anand’s (2000) allegation that economic sustainability is associated with the use of natural resources and how it affects future generations. Thus, the opinions voiced in the interviews connected the literature on the
different subjects of environmental sustainability and economic sustainability, demonstrating a deeper understanding of it.

Interviewees further discussed how the industry which produced energy from waste would be negatively affected by a reduction in waste, and how a reduction in waste could lead to less production and consumption. However, this was not found in the theory and could thus not be connected to it. Although some interviewees could see the economical effects, it is evident that a large group of participants could not see the economical effects of waste, unless it was their personal economy which was affected.

6.4 Sustainable Food Consumption
6.4.1 Combination of Three Pillars
6.4.1.1 Organic
A common view among participants was the connection to the economic pillar, as organic products often are somewhat more expensive than non-organic products. One respondent connected all three pillars and said that as the farmers do not utilize chemicals within the production in order to not damage the environment, the price increases, however this also affects the consumers if they are willing to pay for it or not. Another respondent stated that consumers might choose non-organic food over organic, due to its premium price. This way of reasoning is in line with the theory as Rigby & Cáceres (2001) and Goggins & Rau (2016) state that organic products does not contain any pesticides or chemicals, which is thus connected to the environmental pillar. Furthermore, it is also connected to Smith, Clapperton & Blackshaw (2004) as they state that organic agriculture depends upon its premium price, and thus affects the economic pillar.

Furthermore, the environmental pillar as well as the social pillar was connected to organic, as some of the respondents explained that organic food is not contaminated with pesticides which contributes to better health as well as less medical costs to the society. Goggins & Rau (2016) claim that organic food is produced without dangerous chemicals in order to protect consumer's health, which is also explained by Rigby & Cáceres (2001), that organic products are nutritious and aims to minimize diseases. There is therefore a connection that the respondents made between the social and the environmental pillar, and even though biodiversity or the harm of ecosystems was not brought up, the participants could see an environmental connection to organic food.
However, as there were several respondents who could not see the connection between all of the three pillars, there exists a lack of understanding from the consumer side what the total benefits of what organic food contributes with.

6.4.1.2 Fairtrade

Various comments from participants which connected the social pillar with the economic pillar, was that farmers obtain more money when producing Fairtrade-labelled food products, which connects the economical part of a premium price with the social part of better living conditions for farmers in developing countries. These comments were in line with the theory of Grunert, Hieke & Wills (2014) who describe the aim of Fairtrade as to improve the working conditions for producers in developing countries, as well as more equally distributed share of the profit. Goggins & Rau (2016) further describe that Fairtrade is a means for reducing poverty in those same countries, which further connects to the comments of interviewees that Fairtrade contributes to both better economy and better lives for farmers in the producing countries.

A few comments conveyed in the interviews further connected the social pillar to the environmental pillar in regards to Fairtrade, saying that less pesticides are used in order to improve working conditions, which also improves the impact on the environment. Hisham & Le Billion’s (2013) statement that there indeed are requirements in regards to use of pesticides when it comes to Fairtrade, which support the comments, but it is Goggins & Rau (2016) who further argue that Fairtrade aims to improve the health of workers.

Furthermore, participants made connections between all three pillars when discussing the environmental outcomes of Fairtrade. The comments revolved around that more money from a Fairtrade product meant that producers had the opportunity to invest in better equipment which could improve both working conditions as well as benefit the environment, and that further opportunities included turning the production process into an organic one. This connects to Goggins & Rau’s (2016) suggestion that Fairtrade acts to improve the agricultural production process and opens up opportunities for investments within projects aiming to benefit environmental sustainability.
6.4.1.3 Dietary Choices

From the empirical data it is clear that the respondents ability to connect different diets to the three pillars differed somewhat. While a few could not see the benefits or connections, the dominating two groups where that which could connect the social and environmental pillar, as well as another group who could connect a vegetarian and vegan diet and eating less meat to all of the three pillars and explain their connections and effects on each pillar. The latter group seems to be in line with Kastner, Koch & Nonhebel’s (2012) claims that meat consumption is highly unsustainable in several ways seemed to be evident amongst the participants in the study. It also seems to be aligned with Reisch, Eberle & Lorek (2013) claims that a plant based diet is more preferable in order to reduce the impact upon the environment.

The participants who mainly connected the social and environmental pillar, for the most part cared about either animal welfare or about the actual physical health of themselves and society, thus clearly connecting their answers to the social pillar of sustainability as Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker, (2002) and Goggins & Rau (2016) state that eating less meat as well as reducing the intake of meat contaminated with antibiotics can result in better health for individuals and society as well as improving animal welfare.

As one interviewee stated when it comes to diets consumers pay more for sustainable diets, the producers then receives more money to perform and create sustainable products which is beneficial for the environment. This statement can clearly be connected to Goggins & Rau (2016) that diets affect the economical and environmental pillar as producers economy increases which could then improve the economy in the long run.

When discussing locally produced food as a part of a consumers diets, only one person could say that there is a connection to all of the pillars, although he/she could not describe or elaborate more on the connection. Which is somewhat surprising since locally produced food affects the environment (Lockie et al., 2002), the society and the economy (Trobe, 2001).

None of the respondents could connect a sustainable diet with the theory of Jonell et al. (2016) and Goggins & Rau (2016), that consuming seafood can be sustainable and is connected to the three pillars. Some participants could not see the benefits of following
a diet which they believed to be sustainable, which is somewhat surprising, as the literature in the theoretical framework presents several sustainable benefits of various diets consumers can choose to follow, such as eating less meat (Goggins & Rau, 2016) and eating sustainably sourced seafood (Jonell et al., 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016). The fact that most of these people seemed concerned about the affordability of these products and the fact that one participant believed that decision to eat sustainable diets alone, did not make an impact unless a larger number of people did as well, seems to be mainly connected to the economic pillar and the social pillar. None of the respondents could further connect a sustainable diet with Horrigan, Lawrence & Walker’s (2002) claim that policies which works towards a better distribution process of protein food such as meat, could minimize food poverty in both developed and undeveloped countries.

6.4.1.4 Waste
One respondent stated that recycling was the main connection between the economy, environment and social sustainability. This can be connected to the findings of Cicatiello et al. (2016) and Bates & Phillips (1999) which show that recycling waste from one’s food consumption, along with reuse and an overall reduction, has a big effect on the impact of waste upon both the economy, environment and society. However, this is directly contradicted by a large number of participants who were unable to connect the three and could only connect waste to one or two of the pillars.

Another respondent connected all of the three pillars by stating that the environment is a resource for society, and that the economy is an underlying factor. This is in line with the theory which shows that environmental problems such as plastics in the oceans which presents a risk for decreased biodiversity can be connected to social issues such as health problems and ethical issues regarding animal welfare (Thompson et al., 2009). Furthermore, Cicatiello et al. (2016), Bates & Phillips (1999) and Goggins & Rau (2016) show in their research that companies which recover their waste can make great savings. Hence connecting the three pillars as this reduction would lead to economic savings for companies, less plastics in the ocean and thus a reduced risk for biodiversity, less health problems and improved animal welfare.
6.4.2 Descriptions
Although all participants but one had heard of sustainable food consumption, there seemed to be a lack of knowledge amongst consumers regarding how food products can be sustainable to consume. This is illustrated by participants during the interviews as they had difficulties describing what sustainable food consumption was.

Their descriptions however, were at large in line with the theoretical framework when combined. Organically labeled food, diets and waste were all mentioned or the answers could be directly connected to them, however, Fairtrade was not mentioned at this stage. The pillars mentioned were the environmental pillar and the social pillar, which is in line with Wilson’s (2015) claims that sustainability consists of the three pillars. However, the economic pillar presented by Wilson (2015) was not clearly mentioned or described by the interviewees. This seems to be fairly in line with the participants prioritization of the pillars in where the economical aspects was in the bottom and the environment and social were in the top. None of the respondents mentioned all of the pillars and the four aspects; organic, fairtrade, diets and waste, instead the participants seemed to have mixed understandings of sustainable food consumption.

6.4.3 Knowledge Construction
It is evident that sustainability has been understood by the most participants during the last five years, while some had been familiar with the subject for a longer time. Discussions with peers and parents, as well as learning through different medias seemed to be common platforms for building their images. A large share of the participants stated that they had built their understanding of sustainability through their education, or through their line of work.

These findings are interesting, although they could not be related with the existing literature in the theoretical framework. However these responses were used for analyzing and drawing connections to the participants’ descriptions of sustainable food consumption, as well as to recommend a direction for future research.

6.4.4 Recognition
When the participants were asked to describe how they recognized a sustainable food product, all of the four aspects discussed in the theoretical framework were brought up;
organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets and waste. Locally produced was also a common way to recognize a sustainable product.

However there were also plenty other ways to recognize a sustainable product, which were not mentioned in the theoretical framework, but which were brought up by consumers during the interviews. Many participants seemed concerned about their own health and looked at the amount of chemicals and pesticides the products contained, which can the be connected to the social pillar (Goggins & Rau, 2016). There also seemed to be a common distrust towards foreign food, meat in particular, which could not be connected to the theoretical framework.

All in all, the descriptions differed substantially and there seems to be several heuristics which consumers use to evaluate whether food products are sustainable. Labels such as locally produced, organic and Fairtrade were commonly mentioned but there seems to be a lack of a common way for consumers to decide whether a product is sustainable and worth buying.

A common understanding on which products were deemed more sustainable than others were plant based diets, eating less meat or at least choosing Swedish meat, which could be connected to different forms of diets (Goggins & Rau, 2016; Graca, 2016) people can follow to be more sustainable. This seems to be in line with the previously mentioned high prioritization by participants when asked as to why they would engage in specific diets in order to be sustainable. Although as the waste aspect was deemed to be of the highest importance it is somewhat surprising that participants did not mention products which have been recycled or reused and which can reduce waste to a large degree. Thus, there is evidence that a lack of communication of how such products can be sustainable to consumers.

6.4.5 Prioritization
From the empirical data, it is noticeable that most participants did not consider all four aspects as equally important, although one interviewee did. Waste followed by diets, fairtrade and organic food was the main prioritization order when looking at how participants descriptions of what is important to include, in order to achieve a sustainable food consumption. Although their understandings were in some ways heterogeneous. This sequence of importance, as one could see it, could be explained by
a statement from one of the participants; it is easier to see the actual effects of waste and diets, compared to organic and Fairtrade products which are more abstract and where it is difficult to see the actual contribution.

The reasons for why waste and diets are at the top of the prioritization could be explained by (Graca, 2016; Goggins & Rau, 2016) who say that there are plenty of benefits of eating less meat such as better health and that it is often cheaper to eat less meat, as well as helping the environment, while Cicatiello et al., (2016) talk about how consumers’ economy improves with a reduction of waste. Thus through diets such as eating less meat, and reducing waste consumers can actually save money, compared to Fairtrade and organic products which are sold at a premium price according to Lien, Hardaker & Flaten (2007) and participants in the study. Thus, the fact that Fairtrade and organic products might affect an individual's economy negatively, suggests an underlying reason for the prioritization. This is further illustrated by some of the participants who stated that the major reason to consume sustainably would be if they could see the outcomes or if it was beneficial for themselves, as well as if they could afford it.

There was a homogenous view amongst the participants when it came to the prioritization between the three pillars in relation to sustainable food consumption, with just slight differences. Some interviewees commented that all three pillars were equally important, while some prioritized certain pillars over others. Amongst the participants who thought that all three pillars were important to consider together, some thought that the social pillar was most important, while others thought that the environmental pillar was most important. These findings are in line with the theory that says that in order to be sustainable all three pillars must be present (Elkington, 1998; Wilson, 2015). Thus, these participants had a similar understanding to the literature, that sustainable food consumption needs to consider all three pillars of sustainability.

However, there were some participants who did not mention more than one pillar in regards to this question. Among those, more than a quarter of the respondents thought that the environmental pillar was the most important pillar to consider when it comes to sustainable food consumption. As both Elkington (1998) and Wilson (2015) claim that the environmental, the social and the economic pillar needs to be considered when discussing sustainability, these findings are not in line with the theory. Additionally,
there were a few of the interviewees who thought that the economic pillar of most importance and did not mention any of the other pillars. Similarly one of the respondents viewed the social pillar to be most important and did not mention the other aspects. Consequently, this is not in line with the reviewed literature, and suggests a lack of knowledge among consumers about the importance of understanding the three pillars. Since Elkington (1998) highlighted the three pillars as important aspects when discussing sustainability, the pillars have continued to be investigated as the core stones of describing sustainability in different context.

6.4.6 Reasons for Sustainable Consumption
The reasons for why the participants would engage in sustainable food consumption differed somewhat, the largest group consisted of participants who would engage due to moral or ethical reasons, thus to aid farmers which can be connected to the social pillar (Wilson, 2015). Others would engage if they could see benefits for themselves and could afford it, and others would if they could feel better physically, which can be connected to the social pillar, as Weingaertner & Moberg (2011) say that under the social pillar, consumers health and physical status is included. A quarter of the participants would engage due to concerns for the environment which is clearly connected to the environmental pillar of sustainability (Wilson, 2015).

Thus, this suggests that a majority of the participants would engage in sustainable consumption both for moral reasons and for self-interest, mostly connected to the social pillar of sustainability. Thus the economic pillar is rather absent as it can only be connected to consumers ability to afford to engage in sustainable food consumption.
7 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summarization and a framework of the main findings in this study. It further presents implications and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for further research followed by the authors’ reflections.

7.1 Conclusion

As the literature review shows, sustainability is built upon three pillars; environmental, social and economical. Furthermore, the theory of sustainable food consumption is often described in terms of four different consumption choices; organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets and waste. Thusly, participants in this study have been asked questions revolving around these subjects and it is upon that base which the findings are built. Naturally, comments were very scattered and interviewees had very different opinions regarding many aspects and outcomes of food consumption. These individual opinions without noticeable patterns, were hard to explain, therefore the major patterns found in consumers descriptions are of more relevance.

To conclude, the environmental aspects were considered to be of higher importance than the other aspects of social and economical sustainability when it came to food consumption. However, all three pillars were further deemed to be of importance, and in some cases of equal importance. Most descriptions as to why one would choose to consume more sustainable food regarded social reasons such as ethical considerations and health, followed by environmental reasons. In regards to the four aspects of food consumption studied in this paper, a reduction in the waste produced from one’s food consumption was described as the most important aspect, followed by sustainable diets, Fairtrade and lastly organic food.

The initial understanding of what sustainable food consumption is, was mainly described as unclear due to lack of knowledge. However, both organic food, sustainable diets and waste were mentioned when initially describing a sustainable food consumption. The social and environmental pillar were further mentioned, but not the economic pillar. This is fairly in line with the prioritization of the pillars, where the economy is not particularly prioritized either, concluding that to the consumers participating in this study, environmental and social aspects were of higher importance and more connected to sustainable food consumption.
When differentiating between different food products, consumers pointed out that organic, Fairtrade, packagings and the type of product were good indicators, thus indirectly or directly mentioning the aspects studied in this paper. Moreover, plant based products, locally produced products and Swedish meat, were foods which the respondents viewed as sustainable, as well as food considered to be healthy for them.

Those patterns found in regards to environmental, social and economical outcomes of food consumption, which were more than simply individual opinions and which were seemingly more general opinions are concluded in the table below.

**Table 3: Framework of Consumers’ descriptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organic</strong></td>
<td>- Better than non-organic</td>
<td>- Improved health</td>
<td>- Higher prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Less/no pesticides</td>
<td>- Less toxins in bodies and for workers</td>
<td>- Worse personal economy for consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Less/no artificial fertilizers</td>
<td>- Feels better, better conscience</td>
<td>- Would pay premium price to a degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Less/no CO2 emissions</td>
<td>- Improved animal welfare</td>
<td>- Less resource efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Wastes less natural resources</td>
<td>- Better taste and look</td>
<td>- More money to farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Less/no chemicals</td>
<td>- More natural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- There is still transport which is bad</td>
<td>- Raises awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fairtrade</strong></td>
<td>- Less/no toxins and chemicals</td>
<td>- Better working conditions for farmers</td>
<td>- More money to workers and producers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- More sustainable transport</td>
<td>- Better for developing countries</td>
<td>- Benefits smaller farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Opportunities for more sustainable equipement</td>
<td>- Better living conditions for farmers</td>
<td>- Affects the economy positively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not necessarily better than non-Fairtrade</td>
<td>- No dangerous work environment</td>
<td>- Higher prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Diets</strong></td>
<td>- Less methane and CO2 emissions</td>
<td>- Feels better, better conscience</td>
<td>- Worse personal economy for consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- More efficient use of natural resources</td>
<td>- Helps to create equal conditions</td>
<td>- Would pay premium to a degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Waste Reduction | - Less toxins  
|                | - More efficient use of resources  
|                | - Less CO2 emissions  
|                | - Cleaner air  
| Less transport emissions | - More awareness on healthy food leads to a healthier society  
| and small societies | - Higher quality  
| if benefits are clear | - One’s choices do not matter if many people do not make the same choices  
| Higher quality | - More resource efficient  
| One’s choices do not matter if many people do not make the same choices | - Worse personal economy for consumers  
| Cleaner air | - Better personal economy for consumers  
| - Less to recycle | - Better economy for firms producing less packaging  
| - Less consumption | - Could mean less production and consumption  
| - Much uncertainty in regards to these outcomes | - More resource efficient  

**7.2 Research Implications**

The contribution of this research is a clear framework of consumers’ descriptions of sustainable food consumption, in relation to the three pillars of sustainability. Thus, new insight into consumers’ descriptions of sustainable food consumption has been provided, and compared against existing literature in order to see where these descriptions correspond and where they do not. Hence, this research have explored the three pillars of sustainability and their connections to the four food aspects; organic, Fairtrade, dietary choices and waste, from consumers descriptions, which had, to the authors’ knowledge, previously not been investigated.

As this research was conducted at one university in Sweden, it is recommended for further research to study a larger sample, from more diverse populations as previous knowledge and perceptions naturally varies on geographical and demographical basis. Findings are then more likely to be generalizable as the sample studied would be closer to the everyday consumer. It would also be recommendable for further research to continue to investigate consumers’ understandings of sustainable food consumption through the three pillars of sustainability and in relation to the four food concepts, but through a quantitative approach in order to collect more generalizable and substantial data.
Additionally, the respondents had some difficulties connecting the food concepts to all three pillars, which indicates a lack of consistency between the consumers’ explanations and the existing literature. A clear example is the connection between Fairtrade and the environmental pillar, as both respondents and the reviewed literature were vague on what the environmental requirements of Fairtrade actually were. The only requirement mentioned in the literature was that there was a requirement for less pesticides in the production process, and as the majority of the respondents could not see a clear connection to the environmental pillar, there could be a connection to the vagueness of the theory on the subject. Therefore, for future research, it would be interesting to investigate environmental requirements for a Fairtrade certification, and the following environmental outcomes, in order to clarify whether Fairtrade is sustainable in regards to all three pillars.

An aspect which was mentioned several times by respondents was that of politics, and how they are connected to the outcomes of sustainable food consumption choices. While the political aspect was not part of the focus on this paper, it could disclose interesting contributions to the literature on sustainability and sustainable food consumption if further investigated.

7.3 Managerial Implications
This study of consumers’ descriptions can provide managers and marketers with a larger understanding of how to communicate with consumers in regards to sustainable food products. The scattered and heterogeneous understanding of food sustainability and its components, as well as the prioritization of the three pillars suggest that consumers seem to have different prioritizations and knowledge. However, there are also clearly visible patterns in their descriptions, which can be of importance for firms and managers.

For those companies and industries that focus on one or several of the aspects organic, Fairtrade, sustainable diets and a waste reduction, this study can provide a larger insight into the market, although the findings from the academic society can not easily be generalized they can give an indication on how consumers understand, react and
prioritize sustainable food consumptions, while also addressing their concerns and trust issues.

Participants barely mentioned any products which are connected to the recycling, reuse or reduction in waste, as products which are more sustainable than others, or as a way to recognize sustainable products. As participants further prioritized waste reduction over the other aspects, it is clear that they find it important. This indicates a lack of communication or a marketing opportunity to develop and communicate the benefits of food products with benefits in regards to reducing waste.

7.4 Reflections

When looking at the participants’ answers to the introductory question in regards to their initial understanding of sustainable food consumption in the study, compared to the final questions, the participants did not seem to have changed or altered their initial understanding and perspective. This is an interesting discovery as the participants were later asked various questions regarding the environmental, social and economical outcomes of organic, Fairtrade, a waste reduction and sustainable diets, which did not seem to manipulate the descriptions. This was deemed to strengthen the validity and credibility of the findings in the study, due to the fact that their answers and descriptions did not seem to have been influenced or changed due to any errors made in the interviews. Although, such errors can still not be completely ruled out.

Conducting the interviews at a time and location to the interviewees choosing, made the interviewees conversations broad and deep. At several interviews the conversations took longer than the authors expected, as the time-length, where most interviews were held at 30 min, and others were over an hour long. This contributed to deep empirical material and results.
References


Bonciu (2014)The European Economy: From a Linear to a Circular Economy


Jitmaneeroj, B (2016) "Reform priorities for corporate sustainability: Environmental, social, governance, or economic performance?". *Management Decision*, 54 (6), p.1497-1521,


97


Appendices

Appendix A Interview Guide in Swedish

Hållbar Matkonsumtion

1. Har du hört talas om hållbarhet? (hållbar utveckling)
   • Hur skulle du beskriva hållbarhet (hållbar utveckling)?
   • När hörde du först talas om hållbarhet? Hur har du byggt din bild av hållbarhet?
   • Från vilka källor/medier?

2. Har du hört talas om hållbar matkonsumtion?

3. Hur skulle du beskriva hållbar matkonsumtion? Varför?

4. Hur ser du om en matprodukt är hållbar?
   • Är det några matprodukter som du tänker är mer hållbara än andra?
   • Vilka isåfall? Och varför?

Ekologiskt

1. Har du hört talas om ekologiska produkter?
   • (om ja) hur skulle du beskriva ekologiska produkter?
     • Hur tror du att ekologiska produkter påverkar miljön? Varför?

2. Hur tror du att ekologiska produkter påverkar samhället? (Med samhället menar vi sådant som påverkar människor omkring dig eller långt bort, samhällen, industrer och liknande)
   • Varför?

3. Hur tycker du att ekologiska produkter är prissatta jämfört med ej ekologiska produkter?
   • Varför tror du att det är så?
   • Skulle du vara villig att betala ett högre pris? Isåfall varför?
   • Hur skulle det påverka din privatekonomi att konsumera ekologisk mat?

4. Finns det någon koppling mellan hur ekologiska produkter påverkar miljön, samhället och ekonomin? Förklara!

Fairtrade

1. Har du hört talas om Fairtrade-märkta produkter?
   • Isåfall hur skulle du beskriva Fairtrade?


3. Hur tror du att fairtrade produkter påverkar samhället? Varför?

4. Hur tycker du att fairtrade märkta produkter är prissatta jämfört med produkter som inte har märkningen?
   • Varför tror du att det är så?
Skulle du vara villig att betala ett högre pris för en Fairtrade produkt? Isåfall varför?

Hur skulle det påverka din privatekonomi att konsumera Fairtrade-märkt mat?

5. Finns det någon koppling mellan hur fairtrade märkta produkter påverkar miljön, samhället och ekonomin? Förklara!

Hållbara Dieter
1. Vilken sorts diet-val kan man göra för att vara mer hållbar i sin konsumtion? Är det några särskilda dieter som du har i åtanke? *(om de inte förstår, förklara vad vi menar med hållbara dieter; vegetarian, vegan, närproducerat, ägg från frigående höns, etc..)*

2. Hur tror du att dessa diet-val påverkar miljön? Varför?


4. Hur tror du att special-produkter för dessa dieter är prissatta? Varför tror du att det är så?
   - Hade du betalat ett högre pris för att följa en särskild diet? Varför?
   - Hur skulle det påverka din privatekonomi att följa en hållbar diet?

5. Finns det någon koppling mellan hur dessa diet-val påverkar miljön, samhället och ekonomin? Förklara!

Avfall
1. Vet du vilka sorters avfall som produceras när man konsumerar mat? Ge exempel! *(Om de inte förstår, förklara att vi menar skräp från förpackningar kring mat, och även organiskt avfall)*

2. Finns det några sätt för människor att reducera avfallet som produceras från deras matkonsumtion? Förklara! *(Om de inte förstår, förklara att vi menar att sopsortera, leva en waste-free livsstil, kompostera, inte slänga rester utan frysa in, återvinna etc.)*


5. Påverkar det ekonomin om man minskar detta avfall? Hur? Varför?
   - Hur tror du det skulle påverka din privatekonomi om du valde att reducera ditt avfall från matkonsumtion?

6. Finns det någon koppling mellan hur avfallet/reduceringen av avfallet påverkar miljön, samhället och ekonomin? Förklara!
Avslutningsvis

1. Om du började konsumera endast hållbara matprodukter, vad skulle anledningen för detta vara?

2. Förklara modellen av the three pillars, fråga sedan respondenten: Tycker du att nån av dom tre kolumnerna är viktigare än någon annan? Tycker du att någon av dem är mer hållbar/viktig?

3. Om du jämför ekologiskt mat, mat som har en Fairtrade stämpel, minskat avfall till matkonsumtion och hållbara dieter, tycker du att någon av dem är mer hållbar och viktig? Varför?