

How are the problems related to animal production
discussed by NGOs?

A critical discourse analysis on how NGOs talk about animal
production in Finland

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This Master's Thesis studies how non-governmental organizations (NGO) in Finland talk about animal production and its problems. Because of the vast environmental problems, health concerns related to meat eating and the inhumane conditions to which animals are subjected, animal production is a hot topic and under criticism from several actors in society.

The objective of this study is to discover what kind of discourses NGOs use when addressing animal production, and whether the discourses can be considered to reproduce the dominant perception on animal production or to use more critical counter-discourses that oppose the oppressive language used to talk about animals. The main criticism in this study is directed to the use of discourse that reproduces the dominant power inequalities between humans and animals instead of trying to change them. Due to the linkage between discourse and society, discourse plays a role in changing not only the sociocultural structures (of how animals are perceived) but also the social acts (of how animals are treated).

The analysis is based on critical discourse analysis by Fairclough, focusing on the use of dominant and critical discourses. Through the language we use, we socially construct how animal production is understood and discussed in society. Combining discourses in new and creative manner is thought to result in social change, whereas more traditional combinations of discourses maintain the dominant discourse and social order.

The findings reveal that environmental NGOs use moderate messages and dominant discourses, whereas animal rights NGOs use more critical or mixed discourses. Most of the NGOs use discourses that fit with their core mission, although there are few exceptions. Despite of the health concerns of meat eating, the focus is rather on the 'normalization' of plant-based diets and not on highlighting the possible health benefits. The duality of discourse shows how the NGOs both sympathize with and blame different groups, mostly consumers, as if not wanting to take a too strong position.

According to Fairclough's theory, the more creatively mixed discourses are, the better chances they have on changing the dominant discourse. By using a variety of different discourses, even dominant and critical, may result in better audience reception, as the discourse appeals to a larger groups of people, even with different ideologies. This is why NGOs should use a mixture of several discourses, with a critical perspective, without being concerned about the strategic fit. Animalia, Maan Ystävät and Vegaaniliitto are considered more influential based on their critical heterogeneous discourses, whereas the environmental NGOs are considered to reproduce the dominant discourse and social practice of how animals are perceived. However, more research is needed to make a more reliable analysis on the the possibilities for NGO discourses to change the dominant discourse.

Keywords non-governmental organization, NGO, discourse, critical discourse analysis, animal production, sustainability

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Tämä Pro Gradu-tutkielma keskittyy siihen, kuinka kansalaisjärjestöt Suomessa puhuvat eläintuotannosta ja sen ongelmista. Keskustelu eläintuotantoon ja lihankulutukseen liittyvistä suurista ympäristöongelmista, terveyshaitoista sekä tuotantoeläinten epäinhimillisistä oloista jatkaa kasvuaan, ja on monien toimijoiden kritiikin kohteena.

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on ymmärtää, millaisia diskursseja kansalaisjärjestöt käyttävät puhuessaan eläintuotannosta, ja voiko näitä diskursseja pitää osana hallitsevia eläintuotantoon liittyviä puhekäytäntöjä vai ovatko ne osana kriittisempiä diskursseja, jotka vastustavat eläimiä alistavaa puhetapaa. Suurin kritiikki tässä tutkimuksessa kohdistuu diskurssiin, joka tukee hallitsevaa eriarvoista valtasuhdetta ihmisten ja eläinten välillä, sen sijaan, että yrittäisi muuttaa sitä. Johtuen diskurssin ja yhteiskunnan välisestä suhteesta, diskurssit voivat muuttaa paitsi sosiokulttuurisia rakenteita (miten eläimet nähdään), mutta myös toimintaa (miten eläimiä kohdellaan).

Analyysi perustuu Fairclough'n kriittiseen diskurssianalyysiin, keskittyen jakoon hallitsevan ja kriittisen diskurssin välillä. Käyttämämme puheen kautta muodostamme käsityksemme ympäröivästä maailmasta, myös eläintuotannosta. Diskurssien yhdisteleminen uusin ja luovin keinoin on ajateltu johtavan muutokseen, kun taas perinteisempien diskurssien käyttäminen tukee hallitsevaa diskurssia ja sen sosiokulttuurisia käsityksiä.

Havainnot osoittavat, että ympäristöjärjestöt käyttävät pääosin mietoja viestejä ja hallitsevia diskursseja, kun taas eläinoikeusjärjestöt käyttävät kriittisempiä tai sekoituksia eri diskursseista. Useimmat kansalaisjärjestöt siis käyttävät diskursseja, jotka sopivat niiden ydintehtävään, muutamia poikkeuksia lukuun ottamatta. Huolimatta lihan syömiseen liittyvistä terveysongelmista, painopiste on pikemminkin kasviperäisten ruokavalioiden 'normalisoinnissa', kuin terveellisyyden korostamisessa. Diskurssin kaksijakoisuus osoittaa, kuinka kansalaisjärjestöt sekä kritisoivat, että puolustavat eri ryhmiä, erityisesti kuluttajia, ikään kuin eivät haluaisi ottaa liian vahvasti kantaa vastuullisuuteen eläintuotannon ongelmista.

Fairclough'n teorian mukaan luovasti yhdistetyillä diskursseilla on paremmat mahdollisuudet muuttaa hallitsevaa diskurssia. Käyttämällä erilaisia diskursseja; sekä hallitsevaa että kriittistä, diskurssi vetoaa suurempiin ja erilaisiin ihmisryhmiin. Tämän vuoksi kansalaisjärjestöjen tulisi käyttää sekoitusta useista eri diskursseista. Tämän teorian perusteella Animalia, Maan Ystävät ja Vegaaniliitto ovat vaikutusvaltaisimmat järjestöt; ne käyttävät kriittisiä ja heterogeenisiä diskursseja, kun taas ympäristöjärjestöt tukevat hallitsevaa diskurssia ja sosiaalista käsitystä siitä, mitä eläimistä ajatellaan.

Avainsanat kansalaisjärjestö, diskurssi, puhekäytäntö, kriittinen diskurssianalyysi, eläintuotanto, kestävä kehitys

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In the 21st century with global warming, increasing world population and limited resources, sustainability is a hot topic that concerns many of us. Because of the increasing population and the limited resources of our planet, the scarcity of food and land to farm is a serious problem. Animal production involves many challenges and threats that may not present a clear linkage at a first glance. Problems linked to animal production relate mostly to industrial farming in which market pressures for efficiency create threats to animals, environment (Rossi & Garner, 2014).

There are several problems that can be linked to animal production, but in this study, I have divided these problems under three categories. I focus on animal rights and welfare, the unhealthiness of animal-based diet, and the drastic environmental consequences linked with animal production (Pew Commission, 2006). Laestadius, Neff, Barry & Frattaroli, 2014; Lerner, Algers, Gunnarsson & Nordgren, 2013; Oppenlander, 2012). These three problem-categories have been chosen, because they have dominated the animal production literature and the public discussion, and are used in previous studies on NGO discourse on animal production (Freeman, 2010; Laestadius et al. 2013; Maurer, 1995). Also some major international publications have included similar divisions or problems, such as the Pew Commission and the IPCC. Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production (Pew, 2006) agriculture and studies animal production-related problems in the United States, whereas Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2015) is a United Nations (UN) –based organization that studies climate change and publishes assessment reports that cover a variety of problems as well as mitigation possibilities, also including animal agriculture. Also other significant studies and international bodies such as FAO and IARC, discuss these problems, but often focus on only one of the issues. Naturally, there are several other issues related to animal production, but due to limitations of this study, I focus on these three ‘main problems’.

I am interested in the food industry, how commercialized it is today, and how little people know about what they actually eat and how that food is produced. I have long thought about reducing the amount of meat in my diet, but have always found excuses

for not having time to look into it. However, I have become increasingly aware of the various problems that overshadow the animal production industry, and thought that the project of my Master's Thesis could be used to benefit personal interests, too.

Despite of its century-long heritage that eventually led small-farm farming into industrialized animal production (McMichael, Powles, Butler & Uauy, 2007), the topic of animal production is currently experiencing 'buzz', especially with regards to its environmental impact, but also with regards to the health risks (Oppenlander, 2012; IARC, 2015). FAO's (Steinfeld et al., 2006) study *Livestock's Long Shadow* can be considered as a turning point in the conversation about animal production and its consequences, especially to the environment (Laestadius et al., 2014). In the study (Steinfeld et al., 2006), it is concluded that the farming industry emits over 18 percent of all CO₂-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, accounting for more than the entire transportations industry's equivalent emissions combined. More importantly, the study shows that the livestock sector is also "responsible for much larger shares of some gases with far higher potential to warm the atmosphere" (Steinfeld et al., p.xxi, 2006). An increasing number of studies and books that focus on the numerous environmental problems related to animal production have been published. The main arguments against animal production include deforestation due to logging for pasture and cropland, the high CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions from the livestock and production processes, and the waste and manure that result in more emissions, water contamination and ocean dead zones (Oppenlander, 2012; Steinfeld et al., 2006; McMichael et al., 2007). The UN Climate Change Conference in Paris was widely celebrated as an important step in the fight against climate change, as it is the next long-term contract between nations after the Kyoto Protocol (Ympäristöministeriö, 2015). However, what is worrisome is that the conference did not consider animal production in its goal setting for climate change mitigation.

In terms of health concerns, the recent 2015 fall report by World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC, 2015) of the risks that red meat and processed meat consumption can cause, created headlines across the world, and debates and discussions among social media users. The report (IARC, 2015) listed processed meat among the group 1 carcinogens along with tobacco, asbestos, arsenic and alcohol (IARC, 2015; BBC, 2015). This ranking was based on "sufficient evidence

in humans that the consumption of processed meat causes colorectal cancer” (IARC, p. 1, 2015). According to the report, red meat was also found to have some links to colorectal cancer, pancreatic cancer and prostate cancer, but these were not as clear as with processed meats. The suggestions given in the report propose reduced meat consumption, but not total abstinence (IARC, 2015). Other health-related concerns are linked with the pollution and waste from animal production farms that can cause health concerns for the workers and for the local people through air pollution and runoffs (Pew, 2008). Another health-related concern that has surfaced the news tabloids during fall 2015, are the concerns over antibiotic resistant bacteria (Mellon, Benbrook & Benbrook, 2001). Often antibiotics and other medicine is added to the feed in order to boost their growth and prevent disease that often spread among animals kept in confined facilities, although this is more restricted in the EU (Oppenlander, 2012; Mellon et al. 2001; Rossi & Garner, 2014).

Each year over 70 billion animals are raised and killed for food (Oppenlander, 2012). The ethically powered arguments against animal production focus on animal rights or animal welfare. Animal rights arguments are often linked with humans’ dominion over nature and with moral responsibility according to which intensive animal production is regarded unacceptable “from any reasonable moral perspective” (Rossi & Garner, p. 482, 2014). Animal welfare arguments are linked with the conditions and procedures to which the animals are imposed, especially in intensive animal agriculture (Rossi & Garner, 2014; Oppenlander, 2012).

In addition to formal publications and research papers, documentaries such as *Earthlings* (Monson, 2005) and *Cowspiracy* (Andersen & Kuhn, 2014) have brought the issues of animal production to the public’s ears and eyes, focusing on animal welfare and environmental destruction, respectively. In Finland, the most recent news related to animal production, was released in fall 2015 by Oikeutta eläimille ry (‘Justice for the Animals association’) including videos on farms and slaughterhouses in Finland (Kaihoavaara, 2015). The mistreatment and inhumane conditions to which the animals were subjected, caused a media frenzy, television debates, and the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira announcing that they would conduct check-ups in farms and slaughterhouses in Finland (Jokelin, 2015a). One of the slaughterhouses responded by saying that the problems would be examined and practices improved (Jokelin, 2015b).

In order to mitigate the problems related to animal production, scholars propose a number of different solutions, ranging from policy involvement, supply-side restrictions and innovations, to consumption changes (see Garnett, 2011; Dolan, Hallsworth, Halpern, King, Metcalfe, & Vlaev, 2012; Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013; Wirsenius, 2009). Many scholars argue that reduction of meat consumption is needed for the survival of the environment, although animal rights and health-related arguments are also considerable (Oppenlander, 2012; Carlsson-Kanayama & González, 2009; McMichael, 2007; Garnett, 2011; Goodland & Anhang, 2009; Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). Increasing knowledge about the issues related to animal production is considered important in achieving a consumption change, although, behavioral and sociocultural conceptions hinder the change towards more plant-based diets (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013; Oppenlander, 2012). Regardless of the ‘best’ way to mitigate problems related to animal production, the way we talk about animal production or animals in general, plays a big role in changing the situation. Through the language we use, we socially construct how animal production is understood and discussed in society. Therefore, it is important to understand what are the discourses on animal production and that by changing them, the social practice of how animals and animal production is understood, may be changed.

NGOs play an important role in shaping the discussion around animal production. NGOs are in the front-line when it comes to issues that relate to environment, health or animal rights, and they have diverse partnerships with key stakeholders; from governmental actors to companies and consumers (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). However, some scholars argue that NGOs are not addressing animal production enough in their campaigns and in their communication (Laestadius et al., 2013; Freeman, 2010). Recently, also more public channels such as documentaries like *Cowspiracy* have addressed the worry that NGOs are not really focusing on this drastic issue. Without a doubt, the discourses that NGOs play a role in shaping how animal production is discussed and understood in our society, and thus studying their discursive practices is important in the goal of mitigating animal production-related problems.

Discourse that opposes the taken-for-granted assumptions has an opportunity to change people’s mindsets and to be part of a larger change in society. In essence, discourse is a way of making sense and communicating the world around us. Also in the case of animal production, the perceptions and assumptions that prevail are often shared among

other people in a similar society or group. Discourse that happens in the public debate, media, interest groups and politics shapes the way we talk about a certain phenomenon and affects the meanings we give to it. In a time of social media, discourse has become an even more important power that influences many things. In a situation of controversial assumptions, as can sometimes be in the case in animal production, NGOs can have a great role in influencing and changing the way we see and talk about animal production. This happens through the discourse they use; how they perceive animal production and how they share this perception to their members and audiences.

Problems related to animal production are not only about methane emissions or increased risk of cancer. The discourses that shape how we understand animal production and its problems are born from various different discourses, used by different groups to promote different goals (Hilhorst, 2003; Stibbe, 2012). Also the discourses that NGOs use when talking about animal production are likely to be constructed of different discourses. This study aims to find out how NGOs talk about animal production and how their discourses relate to the discourses of other NGOs. Therefore, my Thesis focuses on the discourses that NGOs use when communicating on animal production.

1.2 Research Problem and Gap

Knowledge shapes how we form our opinions and beliefs on animal production and on animals in general, and affects how we treat them (Stibbe, 2012). It has been argued that knowledge is shared among members of different groups and this creates social cognition (van Dijk, 1988, as cited in Stibbe, 2012). The way in which these social cognition structures are shared from one member to another happens through discourses (Stibbe, 2012), to which individuals are exposed either personally (in contact with such groups) or through media (van Dijk, 1988, as cited in Stibbe, 2012). As will be discussed in more detail later, discourses are not only the language that these groups use to talk about a certain issue, but also the way in which the issue is understood, essentially shaping how we see the world (Fairclough, 1995).

Non-governmental organizations (NGO) are an important player both in the public and political field and can have a major role in increasing awareness on sustainability issues and influencing different stakeholders (Kong, Salzmann, Steger & Ionescu-Somers, 2002). One of the main ways to do this is through communication. NGOs' discursive

choices are therefore tools to criticize the power structures and the existing beliefs in a society. Eventually, discourse is a way to make a change in a society by changing the way we talk and think. From a discourse standpoint, there is a lot of research on animal production-related topics, focusing on the discourses that media, general public, animal science literature or the industry itself, use (Stibbe, 2012; Schillo, 2003; Cole, 2011; Freeman, 2009; Glenn, 2004). However, despite of NGOs' role in shaping the conversation and perceptions around animal production, only few studies focus on the NGOs' role in the matter, and even fewer focus on discourse. These previous studies rather look at NGOs' overall communication strategies and actions with regards to meat consumption or climate change (Laestadius et al., 2013, 2014a; 2014b; Lerner et al., 2013). However, this perspective is rather narrow and excludes various other problems related to animal production.

There are also some previous studies on rhetorical discourse in support of meat-eating and vegetarianism (Butler, Weatherall & Wilson, 2004; Fox & Ward, 2008). However, these studies focus on the consumer perceptions and their reasons behind choosing animal-based foods or vegetarian food options. Textual or linguistic discourse analysis on NGOs' communication or actions relating to animal production is limited and focuses only on environmental NGOs or vegetarian groups (Freeman, 2009; Maurer, 2002). For instance, Freeman's study looks into US environmental NGOs' discourses especially on vegetarianism, but in reality the study includes many discourses that can be linked to animal production. The data is gathered from NGOs' websites, and is therefore not as in-depth than what I will hope to gather from my face-to-face interviews. Maurer's (2002) study presents an overlook at vegetarian groups' discourse that includes arguments and concerns over environmental, health, and animal rights problems, but eventually still focuses on a narrow group of NGOs.

More specifically, these previous studies suggest that when talking about vegetarianism or meat reduction, environmental NGOs are reluctant to use arguments that include animal rights or health reasons (Freeman, 2010; Laestadius et al., 2014b), out of fear of alienating their supporters, not being consistent with their strategy, and even because of unfit with NGO members' personal values (Laestadius et al., 2014b). Interestingly, however, ethics and health reasons are the main motivators for people to become vegetarians (Butler et al., 2004; Fox & Ward, 2008). Also the majority of studies that focus on animal production discourses, either from the literature, media, or public

debate, mostly emphasizes the animal rights or animal welfare discourse, and not the environmental or health-related discourses (Freeman, 2010; Glenn, 2004; Stibbe, 2012). If mentioned, these are often rather used to support the oppression of animals, by discursively constructing less environmentally burdening and healthier meat options as ethical and tasty (Cole, 2011). Therefore, it is interesting to see, what are the differences and similarities between the discourses of the NGOs in this study, and whether they can be accounted for their organizational background or mission.

Moreover, critical discourse theories, that are also the theoretical focus in this study, typically focus on the discourse that the powerful groups use. Although powerful, NGOs are often an intermediary in the discussion between powerful and less powerful groups (Hilhorst, 2003). Although it cannot be argued that NGOs would only use counter-discourses that aim to oppose the dominant discourse, it is likely that their discourses are a mixture of the two. This is because NGOs often criticize the dominant groups and support the oppressed ones. Counter-discourses are much less prevalent in theories or previous research, as scholars studying the dominant discourse often give only suggestions as to what kind of changes should be done. However, researchers argue that no discourse is hegemonic (Hilhorst, 2003; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) and that the level of intertextuality in discourses are an indicator of their possibility to influence the societal practice (Fairclough, 1995). Because of this, studying the discourses and counter-discourses that NGOs use, give a basis for future research on the possibilities for different NGO discourses to influence the societal practice.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The main research question is: How are the problems related to animal production discussed by NGOs in Finland? However, to allow for a more detailed analysis, the following sub questions were formed to guide the research:

- ‘What are the problems (of animal production) that are raised by the NGOs and how are they discussed?’
- ‘What differences are there in terms of discourses between different types of NGOs?’
- ‘To which dominant discourses or critical counter-discourses do the NGO discourses relate?’

As NGO discourses are thought to play an important role in either maintaining or shaping the social meanings and power inequalities prevalent in society, studying NGO discourse on animal production is an interesting and needed perspective to study what kind of discourses NGOs use or should use. This study aims to grasp the discourses that NGOs use to talk about animal production, by including all the three major perspectives; environmental, animal welfare and health/food. Also NGOs from all of these categories are included in the study, as their influence can be considered meaningful on these topics. Hopefully, this study will also help NGO management in understanding that they have a critical role in shaping the understanding and eventually also actions of people through their discourses, and encourage them to embrace this possibility.

In essence, the goal is to understand what kind of discourse the NGO discourse on animal production supports; and evaluate their intertextuality; whether that discourse is more supportive of the current dominant discourse or is rather considered as counter-discourse. However, although counter-discourse is regarded more likely to influence social change, more research will be needed to understand the possibilities of counter-discourse to influence the society.

1.4 Definitions

Animal production in this study includes both intensive and extensive animal production, including ruminants, swine and poultry, but excluding fish, dairy and game, although similar problems are linked to those types of animal production.

Critical counter-discourse is the opposite of dominant discourse and strives to use language and word choices in a different way to oppose the dominant discourse (van Dijk, 1997). In the case of animal production, animal rights-based terminology such as ‘human animal’ and ‘non-human animal’ are examples of more equalitarian way of describing humans and animals (Stibbe, 2012).

Critical discourse analysis focuses on the unequal power relations and examines how discourses are used to reproduce the power and maintain the status quo (Fairclough, 1995).

Discourse is the way of talking about a phenomenon. In this study I use the definition of discourse as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jorgensen & Phillips, p.1, 2002).

Discourse practice is “the production, distribution and consumption of a text” (Fairclough, p. 135, 1995). This refers to how a discourse is formed, which can be analyzed from the coherence within the text and its connections to other texts.

Dominant discourse is the way the majority of people talk about a certain topic (Fairclough, 1995). In the case of animal production, dominant discourse portrays animals as objects and inferior to humans.

Interdiscursivity is a form of intertextuality; the mixture of previous discourses from different groups and ideologies, that are combined to form any one discourse (Fairclough, 1995).

Social practice is the way a phenomenon is understood and discussed by groups of people or the society in general (Fairclough, 1995).

2 Discourse theories

This chapter introduces the theories that will be used in this study to help make sense and analyze the findings. As I study the language that the NGOs use and the meanings they give when talking about animal production, discourse theories are the focus of this chapter. More specifically, critical discourse analysis theories are discussed, since they focus on social problems and power inequalities, that can be also linked to animal production. Critical discourse analysis fits well with the study of NGOs, since NGOs use language as a mean to persuade their diverse audiences and to meet their strategic goals, but at the same time to influence and construct the social meanings associated with their causes.

2.1 Discourse

Discourse is a term that is understood and applied differently in different fields and studies (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Alvesson and Karreman (2000) argue that the vague concept of discourse may be due to the difficult choice that researchers must make between focusing on language or meaning. This division between studying text and language apart from meaning or as a way to structure and understand meanings behind a larger phenomenon, is one of the biggest differences between research on discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). Although language is an essential part of discourse, discourse is often considered to highlight the cultural meanings attached to texts (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Through these meanings that are reproduced through text and talk, discourse also influences how people perceive and think about things (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Because of the important element of meaning, in this study is I use the definition of discourse as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jorgensen & Phillips, p.1, 2002).

The varying concepts and discourse theories are put together in a model by Alvesson and Karreman (2000), portrayed below. The focus in this study is on the ‘long-range/macro-system context’ –level, which is described to emphasize the use of language as a way to construct and shape reality or a larger phenomenon. On the other end, ‘close-range interest’ discourse refers to studying the text and language in a specific and narrow context, often without generalizable patterns or an emphasis on meanings attributed to texts (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). ‘Discourse determination’

versus ‘autonomy’ on the horizontal line in the model, refers to the level of discourse coupling. I focus on the ‘discourse determination’, in which discourse is thought to be linked with social consequences and meaning that exists beyond a specific text. The other side would be ‘discourse autonomy’; discourse that is rather loosely coupled to the social phenomenon and meaning existing in relation to a specific interaction (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). According to Alvesson and Karreman (2000), “the long-range/determination interest in discourse assumes that discourse, subjectivity and practice are densely interwoven” (p. 1138). This is considered the most appropriate approach to study discourse in this study, because of the focus on how NGOs talk about animal production, and to which larger discourses they are related.

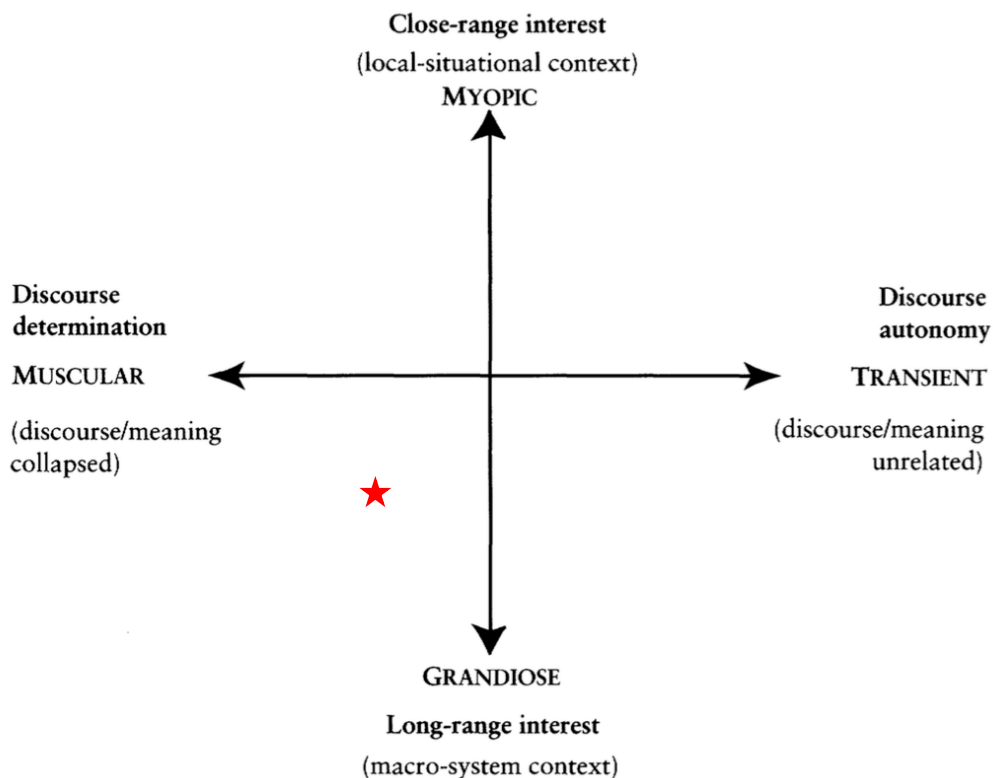


Figure 1: Two core dimensions in discourse studies by Alvesson and Karreman (2000)

Discourse is closely related to the study of society and social problems (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). In the study of animal production discourses, the link between discourse and society is considered relevant, as animal production involves so many societal actors from NGOs to politicians, consumers and producers, and their discourses are considered important in shaping the understanding and the general discourse about animal production and its problems.

Power relations and power abuse are argued to be closely related to the study of discourse and society (van Dijk, 1997). In the study of discourses, power is often referred to as the social power that different groups have, and which is often rather mental and intangible, instead of coercive and physical (van Dijk, 1997). Power is exercised through discourse as a way to control others, and is often divided unequally between more powerful and less powerful groups (van Dijk, 1997). Often groups strive to maintain or improve their position by using discourses that portray them or their goals in positive light (van Dijk, 1997). The notion of hegemony is often linked to the discussion of social power; when adhering to hegemonic discourse, people often do not realize that other discourses and social practices exist, but act as if the hegemonic discourse is natural and taken-for-granted (van Dijk, 1997). In terms of animal production, the producers, consumers and politicians can be considered as the powerful groups, and essentially animals themselves as the oppressed group. Moreover, the power that these powerful groups have over farmed animals is both intangible and coercive. Although it is unlikely that entirely hegemonic discourses exist (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), there are certain taken-for-granted language structures such as the use of pronoun 'it' instead of 'he'/'she' to describe animals, that essentially supports the oppression of animals (Stibbe, 2012). The different groups' discourses on animal production are discussed more under chapter 3.

Ideology is also linked to the relationship between discourse and society. Discourses are a way to reproduce ideologies and simultaneously often strengthen the power inequalities in a group or society (van Dijk, 1997). As discourse relates closely to producing and reproducing meanings, beliefs and making sense of a certain concept or of the world (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), adhering to certain discourses means that individuals take part in sharing and shaping the ideology behind the discourse. Moreover, through the use of specific discourse, individuals can be seen to identify with a certain group and its ideology (van Dijk, 1997; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). However, individuals are argued to have various different groups and ideologies with which they identify, making the link between ideology and discourse complex (van Dijk, 1997). Furthermore, there are different levels of commitment that group members can express towards an ideology or group; through the study of discourse, the strength of the commitment can be evaluated, as more ideologically-driven statements are likely to emphasize group goals and desires instead of individual opinions (van Dijk, 1997).

These aforementioned concepts are also essential and apparent in critical discourse analysis, which will be introduced in the next chapter.

2.2 Critical discourse analysis

Although all discourse analyses study language, it is not the main focus. Language is however an essential part of discourse studies, as written and spoken texts are used to form and communicate the discursively shared meanings that are at the center of discourse analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In contrast to conversation analysis, discourse analysis does not study talk that occurs in interaction, but rather the meanings behind texts (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Critical discourse analysis is part of a larger field of discourse analytical theories. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) includes theories and methods that focus on the use of discourse in the study of social problems (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). However, there are no set of specific methods or analytical guidelines that can be used to define critical discourse analysis, as the field is broad and includes theories that have both similar and distinct features (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). There are some main attributes that are shared among these different theoretical approaches, which will be the focus of this chapter. After the more general overview of the qualities of CDA, I will focus more on Norman Fairclough and his colleagues' view, which "combines linguistic analysis and ideological critique" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, p. 234, 2008). Fairclough's version is also argued to be the most developed theory and method in the field of critical discourse analytical literature (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). I use Fairclough's model as a basis for my theoretical framework. The sources used here are both from Fairclough's (1995) book 'Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language', Fairclough and Wodak's chapter on critical discourse analysis in an edited book 'Discourse as Social Interaction' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), as well as from a few edited collections of critical discourse analysis books. These collections are used because of the limited availability of some of the original sources, and because they combine various studies from same authors into one opus.

2.3 Five common features of critical discourse analytical theories

Five common features that can be used to describe critical discourse analytical theories are presented below. They follow the summary of Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) in SAGE journals' 'Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method', but have many similar

features with Fairclough and Wodak's eight principles of CDA (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Discourses forming social and cultural processes

Discursive practices are part of critical discourse analysis, including both the creation of the text and the reception and interpretation of the text (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). In CDA, discursive practices and language are viewed as a form of social practice (how meanings are shared and understood) and seen essential in creating, maintaining and changing social constructions, identities, and relations (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Thus, the focus in CDA are the discourse of both individuals and groups, through which the social conceptions are formed, maintained and changed (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Discourse is Both Socially Constitutive and Constituted

As said, in critical discourse analysis, discourse shapes social practices, that "both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices" (Jorgensen & Phillips, p. 61, 2002; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Thus, discourse is influenced by other social constructions, but at the same time, discourse also shapes their social structures (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The dialectic relationship between discourse and society is an important aspect of the Fairclough's approach, which notes that socially shared conceptions shape discourse, but that discourse also shapes and changes socially shared conceptions (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Language use should be empirically analyzed within its social context

Studying discourse structures, social structures and the relationships between the two, CDA is too complex of a field to be narrowed down into few specific theories and methods, and essentially is not a method in itself (van Dijk, 2001). Instead, scholars have argued that multidisciplinary theories and methods need to be considered, that provide the most thorough and critical examination of a chosen social problem (van Dijk, 2001; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Nevertheless, most critical discourse analysis uses linguistic textual analysis to examine the how discourses are used in a certain social context (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). In addition, context-related theories are argued to be needed to ground the CDA to its social context (van Dijk, 2001).

Discourse Functions Ideologically

Critical discourse analysis sees that discourses create and maintain the social structures that support unequal power relations between different groups (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Examples of such social groups can be based on differences in gender, race, ethnicity, age etc. (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Ideologies are thought to be embedded in these different discourses and to be reproduced by the members of a group that identify with the group (van Dijk, 1997; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Finally, CDA has an ideological perspective in examining the unequal social and political power structures and domination that are created and recreated through texts and talks, and strives for a social change that would empower these minority groups and change the commonsense assumptions linked to them (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In essence, CDA focuses both in how discourses shape the social world as well as how these practices maintain the power inequalities in society (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Because of this inherent moral stance (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), CDA can be regarded biased (van Dijk, 2001). However, CDA should not be criticized because of its biased nature, as such accusations would only support the interests of the dominant groups and affirm the need for critical research (van Dijk, 2001).

Critical Research

CDA is often described to be more than other discourse analysis, even playfully labelled as “discourse analysis with an attitude” (van Dijk, p. 96, 2001). CDA assumes a critical perspective on social problems and inequalities, taking a supporting role of the minority and/or dominated groups and striving to support their fight against discrimination and inequality (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2001; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). This criticism is done through examining how the powerful and dominating groups and institutions produce power abuse in a society through discourse by creating and maintaining taken-for-granted beliefs and socially shared conceptions that are dominant in the society (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2001).

Many discourse theories share the idea that the way we talk is not a neutral representation of the reality but creates and recreates ideas, beliefs and assumptions on a variety of topics (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Similarly, the approaches of critical discourse analysis are not neutral, but boldly support the oppressed groups and strive to

give them more power, eventually aiming for social change (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Because CDA studies the prevalent and dominating, taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs, it is very likely that the researcher is part of the culture he or she studies (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). One challenge of CDA study is therefore the shared understandings and assumptions with the researcher, the actors or groups under study, and the overall society (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). This is why researchers need to remain distant from the culture they examine and focus on the level of language and meanings (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

2.4 Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory

In a similar fashion to other CDA approaches, the approach developed by Fairclough sees discourse as an important part of social practice that shapes the shared meanings within a society, but is also socially constructed and constrained by prevalent social structures (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Fairclough's main focus is to criticize and study discourse's role in creating, sustaining and changing power relations and inequalities in society (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). In several aspects, such as the notions of the relationship between discourse and society; power relations; and ideology, Fairclough's approach share many features with other critical discourse analyses. However, in this section the features that are more distinctive to Fairclough's approach are discussed.

Social change

According to Fairclough's view, CDA strives to find a link between texts and on the other hand, social and cultural structures and practices. This is argued to be best examined by looking at the larger discourse to which the text is part; how different discourses and genres are represented in the text and especially how they differ compared to what and how discourses have traditionally been represented (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). For example, in terms of NGO discourses this could mean the inclusion of more animal-centered talk in addition to the more traditional animal production-centered discussion. Therefore, the link between texts and society is not direct, but is mediated through different groups that talk about certain issues (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) argue that through the study of CDA, social actions can be studied and changed. These social actions are seen in the discourses that powerful groups use, and CDA studies have indeed been able to

change discourse and social actions towards less discriminatory or oppressive.

Examples of successes include improved material in school books in terms of racist discourse and guidelines for improved behavior to reduce the dominance of doctors over their patients, for instance (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Social change through interdiscursivity and heterogeneous texts

Closely related to social change, the historical linkage between other discourses is highlighted in Fairclough's approach. Namely, these are referred to as intertextuality or interdiscursivity, meaning the interconnected nature of discourses (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Other CDA approaches discuss the importance of context in order to ground the research to the social context of the chosen social problem, but do not discuss intertextuality *per se* (Fairclough, 1995). Interdiscursivity is part of intertextuality, which suggests that all communication is based on some previous communicative events. In short, this means that all discourses are connected to both previous, coexisting, and future discourses (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

The historical linkage is further explained by the concept of intertextual chains, which are developed when texts from different groups or social domains use elements from other texts to produce their own discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Following Fairclough's CDA terminology, these different actors can also be referred to as 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough, 1995). However, in this paper, I have used the term 'social domain' to refer to larger social groups or institutions with similar operations and interests. Examples of social domains can be universities, media, politics, NGOs. Although the individual groups within these social domains (e.g. WWF) can use different discourses, together these groups shape how the specific social domain (e.g. environmental NGOs) talks about a certain issue (e.g. animal production).

Through this interconnectedness of different discourses, these social domains shape each other and their boundaries with other social domains (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Combining discourses in new and creative manner is thought to result in social change, whereas more traditional combinations of discourses maintain the dominant discourse and social order (Fairclough, 1995; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Therefore, when studying the social change happening through changing discursive practices, the discourse relations within and between different social domains need to be examined (Fairclough, 1995).

More specifically, Fairclough (1995) discusses heterogeneity and homogeneity of textual forms and meanings and link them to social change. Intertextual analysis is deemed necessary in order to evaluate the homogeneity and heterogeneity of a text (Fairclough, 1995). Homogenous text described as “consistent semantically and formally” and thought to reproduce the social practice and discourse, thus not taking part of sociocultural change (Fairclough, p.8, 1995). The consistency can be seen in the consistent use of modality, meaning the speaker’s or text producer’s commitment to their argument. Heterogeneous texts on the other hand, “may construct text producer-audience relations in diverse and contradictory ways, partly realized in inconsistent and clashing modalities” (Fairclough, p.8, 1995). Because of the social contradictions, heterogeneous texts are thought to be an indicator of sociocultural change (Fairclough, 1995). The heterogeneity and homogeneity of discourse can be studied both at the level or textual and intertextual analysis, as explained in the theoretical framework.

Ideology maintaining or changing power relations in society

In terms of ideology, Fairclough’s approach follows closely the other CDA approaches and sees that more than only a representation of how reality is perceived, ideology is connected to the creation of group identity, described as “a process which articulates together particular representations of reality, and particular construction of identity, especially of the collective identities of groups and communities” (Fairclough & Wodak, p. 276, 1997). Therefore, discourses can have an impact in maintaining or changing power relations in society (Fairclough 1995; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). However, in Fairclough’s approach, it is seen that the ideologies to which people adhere can be competing and even create and support competing discourses. This is due to individuals’ distinct interpretations of texts and other discursive practices, and their unawareness about the ideologies they support through their discursive practices. Because texts can have several, contradicting meanings that are produced during the interpretation process, it eventually depends on the receiver, how the meaning is understood (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Hegemonic struggle to achieve power over society

The notion of hegemony is closely linked to power and ideology, because of the constant struggle of different social forces striving to achieve power over society (Fairclough, 1995). Although rarely discussed in detail in the other CDA approaches, Fairclough’s approach emphasizes the notion of hegemony, that is realized through the

study of power and ideology, essentially CDA (Fairclough, 1995). In essence, hegemony is a situation of dominance in different aspects of society, in which the ideologies of the most powerful group(s) become commonsensical through the use of certain discourses and through integration of and concessions on different interests (Fairclough, 1995). However, due to the large variety of ideologies and the power struggle between different groups, forces and ideologies, permanent hegemony is difficult to achieve (Fairclough, 1995; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Nevertheless, it can be argued that more powerful groups have better chances of spreading their ideology and thus influencing the dominant discourse that surrounds their topic of interest. Fairclough's approach links hegemony in the study of CDA, as from a perspective of hegemony, focus needs to be put on both local and global processes, which is essential in CDA study (Fairclough, 1995). The problem of ideology, expressed through the use of discourse, is of great importance and can be studied by focusing on discursive change and how it affects wider social change (Fairclough, 1995).

Language appropriateness and critical language awareness

The last aspect discussed here relates to the notion of appropriateness that is often linked to dominant discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Appropriate discourse is usually thought to be commonsensical and essentially supporting the use of dominant, 'appropriate' discourse. Because the powerful discourses are thought and taught to be the norm and appropriate use of language, they essentially limit the critical evaluation of language use and social change (Fairclough, 1995). According to Fairclough (1995), people should be able to use the normative, appropriate language when necessary, but to be aware of the more creative and unconventional use of language, and to understand the linkages that exist between the discourses and social practices that are maintained through the use of language (that they are part). Moreover, people should understand their role in contributing to reproducing or changing the sociolinguistic order of the society or groups they are part of, through their discourses (Fairclough, 1995).

All in all, social change is more likely to happen when using diverse discourses, both dominant and critical, that are combined in creative ways. Moreover, understanding various discursive choices opens up new possibilities and helps "understanding which are preconditions for meaningful choice and effective citizenship in the domain of language" (Fairclough, p.252, 1995).

2.5 Summary of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach in relation to this study

Interdiscursivity and intertextual chains suggest that no discourse develops in a vacuum and without influence from other discourses. Different discourses have different levels of power to influence other discourses and the society. For instance, discourses used by people in everyday life, are likely to gain more popularity than academic discourse used by universities (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). On the other hand, individuals interpret discursive practices differently and may even support competing ideologies. This causes a hegemonic struggle in the society, where different ideologies compete through social practices, influenced by discourses, and contribute in creating and changing power relations (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Therefore, the animal production discourse is built from texts and other discursive practices from several different social domains that incorporate features from each other and produce the dominant discourse. In the case of NGO discourse on animal production, NGOs' form one social domain and are part in the formation of animal production discourse, which is formed by several different social domains, such as media, politics, science and meat industry.

In the case of animal production, animals can be seen as the oppressed group, whereas the industry and people in general, have a significantly more powerful role. The main criticism in this study is therefore directed to the use of discourse that reproduces the dominant power inequalities instead of trying to change them. Due to the linkage between discourse and society, I believe that discourse plays a role in changing not only the sociocultural structures (of how animals are perceived) but also the social acts (of how animals are treated).

Because of the altruistic and moral background of NGOs, it can be assumed that most of the NGOs would not support the unequal power structure, however, it is not clear whether this is seen in their discourses. The ideology and background of the NGO can be thought to shape the discourse that the members of the NGOs use, as the ideology often is linked to the group identity. However, there may be differences in how the individual members understand and socially construct the meaning of animals and animal production, despite of their NGO's official view. These individual perceptions

can influence the responses and thus require a close evaluation of the findings to distinguish the personal views from the NGO discourses.

Interdiscursivity is likely to appear in the study of NGO discourses; NGOs may take influence from other NGO discourses, or discourses from other groups such as media, research and industry. Based on Fairclough's view, the more heterogeneous, diverse and innovative the discourse combinations are, the more likely a discourse is to make a change in the social practice, instead of reproducing the dominant discourse (Fairclough, 1997; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Therefore, in order to evaluate potential influence that NGOs can have in terms of changing how animals and animal production is perceived, both the text and the interdiscursivity need to be studied.

2.6 Fairclough's three-dimensional framework on CDA

According to Fairclough's model, discourse is a combination of three dimensions (Fairclough, 1995; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). At the first level, it looks at the language; both spoken and written texts. At the second level it focuses on the discursive practices by focusing on how the texts are produced, distributed and consumed. At the third level, discourse's role as part of a larger social practice is contemplated. Although this third level of analysis is out of the scope for this study, it is presented here to provide a coherent idea of Fairclough's framework. This framework is based on the idea that "significant connections exist between features of texts, ways in which texts are put together and interpreted, and the nature of the social practice" (Fairclough, p.74, 1995). Fairclough's approach also emphasizes sociocultural change through the three-dimensional CDA framework. Moreover, the aim of the framework is to combine micro and macro analyses in order to study the discourse and discourse change. Here micro analyses are understood as specific discourse samples on which the textual analysis dimension focuses, whereas the macro analyses relate to the discursive practice dimension, evaluating the more long-term context and relations between social domains (Fairclough, 1995). The micro and macro analyses are interdependent given the pursuit to study both discourse and discourse change through textual and intertextual forms and meanings (Fairclough, 1995).

I use this framework as a basis for the theoretical framework in this study. In the following section, Fairclough's framework is presented in more detail using both his own book 'Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language' (Fairclough,

1995), as well as a qualitative methods and discourse analysis method books that summarize Fairclough's work (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

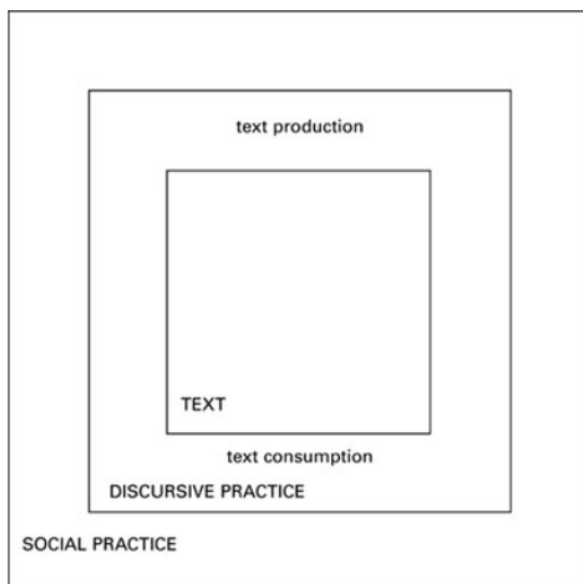


Figure 2: Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002)

Discourse-as-text

On the first level of analysis, the focus is on the linguistic aspects of the written or spoken texts, in order to start the process of discovering the ideological basis and social practice behind the text (Fairclough, 1995; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). In essence, the analysis includes both the texture/form and the content of the text (Fairclough, 1995). Therefore, the analysis should include also textural properties of the text and not only focus on the content (Fairclough, 1995). This calls for systematic analysis on the “choices of words, patterns in vocabulary (wording, metaphor), grammar (modality), cohesion of the text and text structure” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, p. 236, 2008). A classic example would be the news media's use of passive verbs which blurs the subject's role and essentially protects them against criticism (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In addition to examining what is in the text, also the absence of concepts is important to evaluate, since both of these can provide insights for sociocultural analysis (Fairclough, 1995). Furthermore, the text may include implicit meanings that can imply that they are commonsensical, and also suggest towards an ideological background; “for ideologies are generally implicit assumptions” (Fairclough, p. 6, 1995). Also on a level of textual analysis the concept of

heterogeneous or homogeneous text forms is important; texts are argued to have both repetitive and creative properties; repetitive suggesting reproduction of the dominant discourse and creative linked to the use of new combinations of discourses and thus, pointing to a sociocultural change (Fairclough, 1995). The changing discourse is thought to leave traces in heterogeneous texts, in the form of co-occurring contradictory forms, such as “mixtures of formal and informal styles, technical and non-technical vocabularies, markers of authority and familiarity, more typically written and more typically spoken syntactic forms” (Fairclough, p.78-79, 1995).

Because of the multifunctional aspect of text, textual analysis needs to be analyzed at different levels, demanding time and rigor, which are often considered its disadvantages and which is why textual analysis is often overlooked (Fairclough, 1995). However, a thorough textual analysis is considered an essential part of a discourse study (Fairclough, 1995). The importance of textual analysis lies within the idea that social and cultural practices, relations and change can be examined from text, and strengthened by intertextual analysis, which is the second dimension of the framework (Fairclough, 1995). When tied with intertextual analysis, findings from textual analysis provides a much stronger support than what the intertextual analysis could achieve on its own (Fairclough, 1995). However, textual analysis is not sufficient on its own, as the discursive practice and social practice analyses provide a connection with the context, with other discourses, and with the sociocultural ideologies behind the text.

Discourse-as-discursive-practice

On the second level, the actions that are essential in creating discourse practice are analyzed. These include the production, consumption and distribution of discourses in the form of texts and talk (Fairclough, 1995; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). The analysis focuses on “speech acts, coherence and intertextuality, all of which situate talk and text into its context” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, p. 236, 2008). Mainly, this means that as the text draws from earlier discourses and genres, their interconnectedness is analyzed. The analysis can also include the receivers and how they use other discourses to interpret the given text (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Discourse practice is seen as a mediating dimension between the text and social practice; the production process is thought to shape the text, but also shape and being shaped by the social practice (Fairclough, 1995). Therefore, analyzing the discursive

practice is needed to understand the connection between the text and the social practice behind it.

Context is seen as an important feature of CDA, and in Fairclough's framework this is divided into two different aspects under the discursive practice dimension. The first feature that is analyzed is 'manifest intertextuality', which refers to how discourse is represented, and how it links to its context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). The second one is 'constitutive intertextuality' or 'interdiscursivity', in which the relations and similarities to different genres and other discourses are analyzed (Fairclough, 1995; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). By analyzing the interdiscursivity, the historical linkage between different texts is evaluated (Fairclough, 1995). According to Fairclough's model, high level of interdiscursivity is linked to a social change, especially when the discourse is connected to other discourses in new ways (Fairclough, 1995; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). As discussed earlier, heterogeneity or homogeneity of texts can be analyzed through interdiscursivity, in which the linkages between different texts and groups are evaluated (Fairclough, 1995). Because of the interest towards sociocultural change, texts that include aspects that suggest changes between different groups are deemed important (Fairclough, 1995). In essence, analyzing interdiscursivity is a way to bring the focus from textual analysis towards the social context (Fairclough, 1995).

Discourse-as-social-practice

On the third level, the impact that discourse can have on the ideology, hegemony and social practice is analyzed. Fairclough uses the term hegemony to mean power that is gained by forming alliances between groups through consent (Fairclough, 1995). The analysis contemplates on the discourse's possibilities to change the social practice through changing the existing dominant discourse. If the discourse opposes on the existing dominant discourse, it may shape the social practice, but if the discourse supports the dominant discourse, the current social practice will be strengthened. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

In this study, this third dimension is not analyzed, because of limitations of time and scope. As more specific context-related theories and more research would be needed to accomplish a sufficient analysis of the social practice dimension, my analysis provides only suggestions of the possible implications that discourse can have on social practice.

3 Different ways to talk about animal production

There is no one discourse on animal production that could be summarized here to give an overview on how animal production is talked and understood by the majority of people. Any discourse is comprised of several smaller discourses, used by different groups, as described earlier in the theoretical part. Therefore, when studying a specific phenomenon such as animal production, several discourses need to be considered in order to get a holistic picture of how the phenomenon of animal production is socially constructed through these discourses. In this chapter I have summarized several studies that focus on animals, animal welfare/rights, ‘better’ or ‘happy’ meat, vegetarianism/veganism, environmental and health discourses or counter-discourses. These dominant discourses and critical counter-discourses provide an overview on the beliefs, assumptions, and viewpoints that can be linked to animal production and help in making sense of how the phenomenon is constructed and also reconstructed by different groups and discursive strategies. First, the discourse that is the mainstream way (dominant discourse) to talk about animal production is presented, after which counter-discourses (critical discourse), that criticize the current discourse, are discussed, as it is likely to form a part of the NGO discourses that are studied in this paper.

I used several studies to construct a coherent view on the rather dominant discourse that surrounds animal production and that can be thought to shape our understanding of it. These studies focus on discourses used by a variety of social domains, from public discourse, industry literature, the media, animal scientists, to the animal production industry itself (Stibbe, 2012; Freeman, 2009; Schillo, 2003; Glenn, 2004; Cole, 2011). The edited book that consists of various articles on animal discourse by Stibbe (2012), studies discourse on animal production by analyzing both dominant discourse that occurs in society, based on his personal observations, dictionaries and grammar books, as well as by analyzing animal production industry discourse, based on industry magazines and professional articles, available for public. The article by Freeman (2009) focuses on the North American news media’s discursive practices when discussing animal production-related topics. Schillo (2003), on the other hand, studies animal production discourse from a critical perspective, analyzing the language and meanings that animal science textbooks use when talking about animals. Glenn (2004) focus on the animal production industry’s own, internal, discourse that is not always visible to the public and therefore can have lower impact on the construction of animals in

society. This data is based on the animal production insider literature (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004), discussed and analyzed further by Glenn (2004).

In addition to these studies, environmental discourses are presented as they also are thought to form one part of the dominant discourses, supporting the continued animal production. These discourses are mostly based on the study by Austgulen (2014) that looks into how various social domains, mainly environmental NGOs, government, media, consumers, and academia discuss meat consumption from an environmental perspective. This is done by studying articles and discussions on several articles on Norwegian newspapers during a period of ten years. At the end, discourses on meat is presented shortly in order to provide an idea of how meat is discussed. This summary is based on the study of Heintz and Lee (1998), that mostly focuses on the symbolism and rhetoric behind meat texts, and Allen and Baines (2002), who studied Australian consumers' perceptions of meat. Also a study on discourse that Swedish students use when addressing meat by Bohm, Lindblom, Åbacka, Bengs and Hörnell (2015) is included. Finally, the animal welfare discourse is presented as dominant discourse, because it is thought to support the dominant discourse and practice, despite of its purpose of improving animal lives. Francione's (2010) study provides a theoretical perspective by summarizing various theories and viewpoints to animal welfare discourse. Cole's study (2011) is an example of an animal welfare-based discourse, and uses a rather theoretical overview of the discourses that animal-centered welfare science literature uses in constructing an image of 'happy meat'.

3.1 Dominant discourses reproducing the meaning of animals and animal production

Basically, because the discourses that different institutions and individuals use, shapes our understanding and the society around us (van Dijk, 2001), we as citizens determine what is acceptable or unacceptable (Stibbe, 2012). This also applies to animal production, in a sense that the way in which we socially construct the meaning of animals, results in the way we treat them (Stibbe, 2012). These culturally constructed meanings are dependent on the language and discourse that is used to describe and talk about them (Stibbe, 2012).

CDA often is used to support or fight for the rights of oppressed groups, and this is true in the case of animal production as well. As animals are obviously unable to use

discourse to reconstruct the way they have been discursively constructed by humans, they can be considered the oppressed group without a voice and say (Stibbe, 2012). Often CDA deals with ideological oppression instead of coercive oppression, since the focus is on hegemony (van Dijk, 1997). In the case of animals, coercive power is part of the oppression, as animals are subjected to power abuse not only through discourse but in real action that is part of the animal production industry (Stibbe, 2012). Not all people are part of animal production practices, but can be considered accountable for the treatment of animals through the action of buying animal-based products and thus, supporting the mistreatment (Stibbe, 2012), and also other problems such as environmental pollution related to animal production. Essentially, this consent can be taken away through boycotts of some, or all animal products (Stibbe, 2012). Thus, when talking about animal production, the actors are not simply humans and animals (oppressor-oppressed), but different groups of people. The role of discourse comes into picture when we give consent to such practices through the language we use to describe them (Stibbe, 2012).

In an increasingly urban society, the distance between consumers and farm animals has resulted in misinformation on how the meat on your plate is produced (Freeman, 2009; Stibbe, 2012; Cole, 2011). Some scholars (Freeman, 2009) accuse the news media for not educating people enough on the topic of farm animals and the conditions in which they are raised, but the discourse is not only on the shoulders of the news media, but also other societal actors. Because of this, discourse studies from various actors or groups are summarized below to give a perspective on how the animal production is discussed and constructed in the Western society. Overall, these discourses can all be linked to speciesism. Speciesism is an ideology that views humans distinct from all other animals, because of consciousness and the concept of souls (Freeman, 2009). Speciesism has often been compared to other discriminative views, such as racism or sexism, which also include divisions between the superior 'us' group and the inferior 'others' group (Freeman, 2009).

Commodification of animals

According to Freeman's study on American news media's discourse on animal agriculture, American news media promotes the specieist (species discriminating) viewpoint by using discursive methods that portray animals as objects and as invaluable individuals without feelings. Through the language and grammar that we use, most

animals, but especially those that are used for human benefit, such as farmed animals, are often portrayed as objects. This limited portrayal of farmed animals is often labelled commodification, since the economic and profit-oriented perspective that describes animal agriculture links farmed animals to mere commodities that are sold (Freeman, 2009). This commodification often occurs through the language and word choices that we as a society, as well as the news media, use (Freeman, 2009; Stibbe, 2012). The discourse can be argued to shape our understanding of animals and reinforce the status quo.

News media and naturally the industry itself are shown to support the agribusiness perspective and reinforcing the status quo of how farmed animals are socially constructed in society (Freeman, 2009; Glenn, 2004). Farmed animals are often labelled by their end-product names (Glenn, 2004), for instance “livestock, beef cattle, pork, dairy cows, veal calves, poultry, or seafood, instead of more essential references to them as living beings, such as cow, pig, bird, or fish” (Freeman, p. 89, 2009).

Tabloids and articles in (the North American) media also support the status quo through the portrayal of animal-borne diseases as only economic losses, as described by Freeman (2009). Even though epidemics such as the foot-and-mouth disease that are not fatal to animals, nor pose threat to human health, the result was that the infected animals were slaughtered in masses, as their meat was no longer sellable (Stibbe, 2012). Moreover, dining articles that describe how to raise fish or meat in order to ensure a premium-taste and flavor, reinforce this idea of farmed animals as commodities; “because the news media frame these stories around product quality and not animal welfare, it implicitly encourages consumers to make product choices based on self-interest instead of ethical values” (Freeman, p. 90, 2009).

Disregard of animals' emotions

In addition to commodification, the discourse of media disregards the emotional and personal characteristics of farmed animals, again, rendering them as objects that can be possessed, without any inherent value of their individual lives (Freeman, 2009). The language that the news media uses, often also describes only the bodies of farmed animals, not their personalities or emotions (Freeman, 2009). The impersonalization appears also in the portrayal of animals as a mass or a group entity, denying them individual traits or personalities (Freeman, 2009).

Also, when reporting on situations, in which animals are hurt, killed or injured, the media discourse rarely uses expressions that describe the animals as individuals or sentient beings (Freeman, 2009). Instead, the language and word choices “tend to neutralize any sense of injustice, compassion, or mourning for the animal victims of mass slaughter” (Freeman, p. 91, 2009).

This is similar to the industry discourse, that uses euphemisms to hide the brutal practices to which animals are subjected (Glenn, 2004). Example of such euphemisms include words like ‘euthanasia’ to describe the killing of piglets by “slamming their heads against the floor” (Glenn, p. 70, 2004). Through the language, the industry workers and farmers dilute the value of animal lives and portray them as part of a machine and farm practices (Glenn, 2004). These include specially developed words to describe certain farm practices or diseases that show them in a more neutral and even positive light compared to the actual practices that take place at factories (Glenn, 2004). Industry practices related to marketing are another point of disregarding animals’ value as individuals and sentient beings (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004). For instance, the way in which meat producers portray cows as grazing freely on an open grass field, is argued to be painting a lot prettier picture than what the real conditions in factory farms are (Glenn, 2004). Marketing campaigns that show images of happy cows, help maintain the perception that that is the way cows live, and support their use as commodities. On the other hand, these euphemisms and marketing campaigns help in distancing the consumer from the industry, thus relating to the next discourse category of distancing humans and animals. However, Dunayer’s study argues that good living conditions are unfortunately not a pre-requisite for a productive animal (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004).

Distancing humans and animals

In English, but also in other languages, we strive to differentiate between animals and humans, but also distance the living animal from the animal production processes and end-product that we consume, in one way or another (Freeman, 2009; Stibbe, 2012). The words ‘hide’ (not skin), ‘pork’ (not pig), and ‘slaughter’ (not murder) are examples of words that are used to distance our understanding of animals as individuals and to differentiate them from humans (Stibbe, 2012). Moreover, metaphors and expressions that have an inferior tone, are another example of how our language represents animals as lower-value objects, also shaping our shared understanding of animals in general

(Stibbe, 2012; Schillo, 2003). Pigs are a common part of insults and negatively connoted expressions (Stibbe, 2012). Pigs can be referred to as bad-mannered, obnoxious, greedy and filthy (Stibbe, 2012), in both English and Finnish. There are also more positive expressions, such as wild animals that appear in more appraising expressions (Stibbe, 2012), but as Stibbe notes “there are exceptions to this pattern, but the pattern is clear: the closer the relation of dominance of a particular species by humans, the more negative the stereotypes contained in the idioms of general discourse” (Stibbe, p. 24, 2012). By this, he means that pet and companion animals are portrayed in better light compared to livestock and farm animals.

There are also other occasions of language usage that treats animals differently from humans. For example, the grammar we use to describe dead animals is mass nouns (‘some chicken’) instead of count nouns (‘a human’), as is the case with humans (Stibbe, 2012). Moreover, the use of the pronoun ‘it’ and the verbs describing ownership, portrays animals as objects and property, both in the general discourse as well as in the studies of media (Stibbe, 2012; Freeman, 2009).

The way in which farmed animals are portrayed in the media and the meat industry’s marketing campaigns, as in the case of ‘happy cows’ (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004), drives the distance between humans and food animals, and helps in “avoiding feelings of guilt, attachment, identity, or injustice regarding humans’ common practice of farming other animals for food” (Freeman, p. 97, 2009). In animal production industry literature, the use of euphemisms such as ‘agriculture’ instead of ‘factory farm’ support the idea that animal *agriculture* is a good and natural thing, and not a bad industry (Glenn, 2004), creating distance between the taken-for-granted belief and ‘reality’.

Human’s dominion over animals and nature

Studies on animal science and animal industry discourse support the notion of humans’ superior role over animals (Schillo, 2003; Glenn, 2004). The animal science literature supports the taken-for-granted power-relation between humans and animals by clearly putting humans at the superior position and animals at the inferior position, a division which is determined by humans (Schillo, 2003). Moreover, in the animal science literature, humans are viewed as a separate entity from nature, and the only moral being, and that animals are “morally significant” only when they serve a purpose for human

needs (Schillo, p. 2883, 2003). The view that humans dominate nature and control other living organisms, is also referred to as the mechanical view. Humans as active subjects and nature and animals as passive objects ('the machine') is a characteristic of the mechanical view, existing especially in the Western culture (Schillo, 2003; Callicott, 1999). According to the mechanical view, world is seen as a mechanical system that functions according to scientific laws of classical mechanics (Callicott, 1999).

In a similar manner as the industry discourse that disregards the inherent value of animals' individual traits and lives by using euphemisms (commodification), it uses language to portray animals as lower in value (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004). Industry discourse therefore relates to the concepts of commodification, distancing humans and animals, as well as to humans' dominion over animals.

Although the commonsensical language oppresses animals could be linked to religious arguments that support humans' dominion over animals, the animal production industry uses science to make oppression look a natural process, or as a result of evolution (Stibbe, 2012). These kind of discursive strategies represent humans as predators, but exclude the immense differences that remain between a wild animal hunting its prey and the intensive animal farming with controlled processes over the animals' entire lives (Stibbe, 2012). Finally, by categorizing nature with animals and opposing them with humans, clearly shows that environment is constructed as a lower-level interest that is, similarly to animals, needed only to support human needs and desires.

Powerful symbolism linked to meat

Meat eating is regarded as a status symbol and a trend, and its consumption is thought to increase as people's income level rises (Steinfeld et al., 2006; Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). This kind of nutrition transfer can be described as a shift towards an increased use of animal products and a decrease in the use of plant-based foods, following an improved economic situation and standard of living (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). Although the consumption would need to decline worldwide, the status of meat eating is likely to have formed based on the lifestyles of people in the developed countries. Therefore, meat consumption is linked with the idea of improved standard of living, and thus regarded desirable. The discursive practices and symbolic meanings that are used to socially and culturally construct meat as a desirable and appropriate choice of food, are presented below in more detail.

The increasing popularity of meat consumption is linked to its symbolic meaning (Heintz & Lee, 1998). Meat is part of our lives that is often taken for granted and not questioned. The symbolic meanings often linked with meat include masculinity, high social status, tradition, strength, health, and human dominion over nature (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Allen & Baines, 2002). Heintz and Lee (1998) argue that this is due to ‘commodity fetishism’ that “silences the slaughter and disassociates the meat product from the living animal” (p. 96). For instance, meat is referred to as delicious food, a form of entertainment and linked with the concept of meal and as the only appropriate protein for meals. Furthermore, its role in the United States is regarded traditional, and as a source of pride. Even the health discourse portrays meat in a positive light, referring to ‘better meat’ options, such as lean meats, or less fat meats that support health perspective. However, concern is expressed in terms of lack of taste when eating healthier meat products. (Heintz & Lee, 1998.)

In the study on Swedish students’ discursive practices on meat (Bohm et al., 2015), meat has a central role in people’s minds and it is often linked to sensory, social, cultural viewpoints as well as considered convenient, tasty and healthy. Meat has both positive and negative linkages to health; on one hand, it is seen an essential part of nutritious and healthy diet, but on the other hand it is deemed threatening to health. However, in most cases, meat is considered a healthy choice and described as nutritious and almost irreplaceable as a source of protein. The authors link this finding to beauty and fitness, because Sweden is not really a country where insufficient intake of protein is an issue. Also from sensory, social and cultural viewpoints, meat is considered tasty, important and as the appropriate food. Students are shown to consider meat eating as a social act, by not wanting to reduce meat consumption out of the fear of being subjected to bullying. Moreover, meat is considered as an easy choice; easy to buy, prepare and enjoy. The emphasis on the convenience of meat eating is thought to suggest that plant-based foods are regarded as difficult and less enjoyable. (Bohm et al., 2015.)

The only negative associations discussed in terms of meat are related to the unprepared and uncooked meat that was considered disgusting, pointing to the distance constructed in people’s minds between the animal and the end product. Even when discussing health and environmental reasons that would demand meat reduction, meat is considered too important from cultural and enjoyment aspects to be reduced. (Bohm et al., 2015.)

These associations have developed over time, often based on gender inequalities linked with hunting, and the belief that ‘humans are meat eating animals’, and should remain so (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Allen & Baines, 2002). However, in addition to the traditional perspective, other symbolic and discursive constructions are used to maintain meat’s superior status. First of all, the modern consumer is being distanced from the animal production processes and the food animals by using words such as ‘beef’, ‘meat’ or ‘ham’. Heintz and Lee (1998) label these symbolic constructions as ‘silencing the slaughter’ and ‘de-animalizing the food animals’. Accompanied with discourse that promotes meat as a powerful, healthy, and tasty food with the society being formed around a meat-eating culture (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Bohm et al., 2015), the symbolic meaning has enabled the increasing consumption of meat at the expense of the environment, human health and animal lives (Heintz & Lee, 1998). This has resulted in a society where in general, not eating meat is considered more difficult (Bohm et al., 2015). Meat is considered as a normal and appropriate food (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Bohm et al. 2015). Although these symbolic meanings may have evolved since the study by Heintz and Lee (1998) was made, the similar findings by Bohm et al. (2015) suggest that the centrality of meat in various aspects of people’s lives and identities still exists.

Environmentally sustainable meat consumption

According to Austgulen (2014), there are two very different discourses on environmentally sustainable meat consumption that results in a ‘discursive confusion’. The first being ‘environmental discourse’, that talks about reduction of meat consumption, and the second being ‘agriculture discourse’ that promotes locally and organically produced meat as a sustainable alternative. The study argues that this lack of consensus about the problem is the reason why in both of these discourses the responsibility is put on consumers in terms of regulating environmentally sustainable meat consumption, but argues that action is unlikely to happen due to the conflicting views that affect also consumers’ understanding. (Austgulen, 2014.)

Environmental NGOs, academia, and government representatives and politicians are the three most active groups that discuss environmentally sustainable meat production in the five newspapers studied by Austgulen (2014). The environmental organizations mainly put responsibility to governmental actors but also highlight the role of consumers. From the environmental organizations’ perspective, increasing consumers’

awareness on “the environmental consequences of their actions” is vital (Austgulen, p. 57, 2014). The organizations depict eco-friendly lifestyles and strive to portray these lifestyles as easy to adapt. The main goal that is discussed is to reduce the overall consumption, but especially to reduce meat eating. (Austgulen, 2014.)

The discourse that the academia uses, is more diverse compared to the environmental NGOs’ discourse. Through their discourses, the responsibility is put on the government, arguing that even though consumers can have an impact, government action is crucial in facilitating the change. Government representatives on the other, put responsibility on consumers and also to lesser degree to retailers in terms of focusing on organic products. The discussion surrounds the need to reduce meat consumption, but does not offer many concrete solutions that would incentivize consumers and producers to reduce meat consumption and to increase the consumption of environmentally sustainable meat. (Austgulen, 2014.)

Although overall, the different social domains (environmental organizations, academia, government, media and consumers) use discourse to shift blame of unsustainable consumption practices on to consumers, instead of producers or policy-makers, they have conflicting features, too (Austgulen, 2014). These are environmental discourse and agriculture discourse, presented below.

The ‘**environmental discourse**’ focuses on the environmental problems that are linked to animal production and suggests that reduction of meat consumption is “the most environmentally sustainable alternative” (p.61). However, the criticism is mostly directed at red meat, whereas white meat (also including pigs) is considered better alternative in terms of environmental consequences. Red meat is linked to higher CO₂ emissions compared to white meat and vegetables and argued to be energy intensive. In terms of land use, the environmental discourse sees that the lands used for grazing is not efficient. The environmental discourse uses also health arguments to support the meat reduction message, although these are not specifically discussed in Austgulen’s (2014) study and can be argued to play a supporting role for the otherwise market-oriented discourse. Overall, the relation between efficiency and environmental costs is prevalent in the environmental discourse, which does not oppose the production and consumption of pork and poultry, due to their lower environmental costs and higher production efficiency in terms of numbers of animals produced. This type of environmental talk is

rather market-oriented (economic interests) and overlooks the ethical aspects. (Austgulen, 2014.)

The other discourse, labelled as **'agriculture discourse'**, mainly talks about the environmentally friendly aspects of meat production and consumption. Examples for this type of discourse are the promotion of locally and organically produced meat that is depicted as a sustainable alternative. Also increased domestic and local production are mentioned as "the most environmentally friendly solutions" (Austgulen, p. 54-55, 2014). The emphasis is on the benefits that livestock production can bring, such as the opportunity to use large land areas for grazing (related to context being in Norway), which is considered better than not using them (by humans) at all and importing meat elsewhere. (Austgulen, 2014.)

Agriculture discourse does not focus on the environmental problems, but takes a production perspective that supports animal production. In this discourse, issues such as global food crisis is used to support the idea that domestic production needs to increase to take part of the responsibility of global food production and produce more meat. Moreover, because of the food crisis, domestic production is depicted preferable to import meat from areas that may suffer from hunger already. Domestically produced is also described to be safer, in terms of additives, and environmentally friendlier in terms of transport emissions and production practices. (Austgulen, 2014.)

These environmental discourses are considered part of the dominant discourse, because of their lack of criticism towards the animal production practice. Compared to animal rights discourses that oppose the use of animals for any human needs, these environmental discourses do not strive to make radical changes, but rather focus on instrumental improvements that will still support the use of animals for food production.

Animal welfare or 'happy meat' discourse

The animal rights counter-discourse, discussed later, considers animals morally relevant, whereas the animal welfare discourse, uses still the instrumental view of animals, similar to the dominant discourse that oppresses their rights. Animal welfare discourse is based on the view that animals can be used for human purposes as long as they are treated well and their killing is done 'humanely' (Bentham, 2000). Bentham's (2000) and Singer's (1974) views on animal welfare are based on the idea that animals

have a capability of suffering, similar to humans. However, the animal welfare perspective is argued to support the idea that there are “morally relevant differences between humans and nonhumans that make the use of animals by humans morally justified” (Francione, p. 31, 2010). The animal welfare has even been argued support speciesism by discriminating animals due to their species (Francione, 2010). Even though animal welfare discourse can have sincere aims at improving the lives of the animals, in essence it supports the dominant discourse that oppresses animals and agrees with the use of animals for human needs (Francione, 2010). The arguments that animals live only in the present and cannot therefore be concerned for their lives, is central to the animal welfare discourse by Bentham and Singer and is considered a reason for continued use of animals for human needs (Francione, 2010).

‘Happy meat’ discourse is an example of animal welfare discourse that portrays animals as satisfied with fulfilling their destiny as food items. Cole’s study (2011) on ‘happy meat’ focuses on the discursive methods that the animal-centered welfare science uses in order to reconstruct the image of animal production away from treating animals as objects, and towards a more ethical discourse. According to Cole, this development is due to the rising awareness of the sentience of animals and the worry of consumers about animal welfare.

‘Happy meat’ is described as “the belief that it is possible to raise and kill animals in such a way as to remove the ethical problems associated with the ‘machine’ discourse of ‘factory farming’ – to hear the expression of the animal” (Cole, p. 84, 2011). The actors that raise these happy food animals are described as small farmers and their lifestyle pastoral, as a clear distinction from factory farms, which are considered evil (Cole, 2011). In this way, the ‘happy meat’ discourse can be thought to present an aspect of the environmental discourse, as producing less but better or using organic or pasture-cattle can be seen to preserve environment. This depicted higher-moral status of the small farmers includes the belief that they know what is best for their livestock and thus, their animals are happy and satisfied with their lives. The ‘happy meat’ discourse emphasizes the assumed win-win scenario of animal production; it is better for the animals and it tastes better for consumers. Therefore, consumers choosing ‘happy meat’ have the moral and appetite-related benefits for choosing a more expensive, but ethical and tastier option (Cole, 2011). This discourse is considered a response to the unethical

concept of ‘animal machines’ that is linked to the dominant discourse on animals or animal production.

However, the ‘happy meat’ discourse is not morally superior to the ‘animal machine’ discourse. ‘Happy meat’ discourse strives to reconstruct animals as happy with their living conditions, and to make the killing more acceptable (Cole, 2011). However, this perception fails to acknowledge their emotions and species-specific behavior that they are unable to follow during their short lives in factory farms. Moreover, calling the farmed animals as ‘happy *meat*’ further reduces their value as sentient animals and portrays them as products, *meat*. From a discursive viewpoint, the efforts to portray farmed animals in a win-win scenario only furthers speciesism; farmed animals are continued to be seen as commodities whose main quality and value is based on their tastiness. Moreover, such discourse reaffirms the belief that animals are inferior compared to humans, since the happy meat discourse brands animal production as non-exploitative suggesting that “animals exist only to provide meat” (Cole, p. 94, 2011).

Moreover, these efforts to improve the image of animal production do not have a real impact on the practices, or even the discourse, at farms, but is done merely to reassure and comfort consumers into believing that buying ‘happy meat’ is more ethical than buying meat from traditional factory farms (Cole, 2011). In practice the ‘animal machine’ idea still exists as the majority of animals are still subject to inhumane conditions of intensive farming and cannot be considered ‘happy’ (Cole, 2011).

3.1.1 Summary of the dominant discourse on animal production

Traditionally, the animal production discourse has relied on the ‘animal machines’ belief, in which animals are thought to be only subjects and property of the superior human race and thus, a required part in the food industry (Cole, 2011). In this belief, the linkage between the farming practices and the end product have been blurred in order to distance the cruel process from the product that is sold to consumers. These examples that focus on discourse, grammar and use of language, conclude that these prevailing social constructions “portray nonhuman animals as objects, machines, or inferior beings, and so contribute to the moral licensing of otherwise unconscionable levels of cruelty to animals” (Stibbe, p. 52, 2012).

These type of discourses and the language we use shapes the way people understand humans' and animals' role in the world. This ideology that humans control the nature and animals is thus taken for granted by the majority of people. Given animals' central position in the discourse on animal production, it is no surprise that the dominant discourse mostly focuses on animals, or rather uses language to disregard the ethical and moral issues behind animal production. However, through humans' dominion and separation from animals, environment or nature is often categorized as the same oppressed party with animals. This suggests that these discourses strive to make a distinction between nature and the human-habited areas, as well as portray human as the leader of the entire planet, also nature. The conceptual framework that is evident from these discourses, and that is meant to shape our understanding of the world, is that "nonhuman animals exist to serve humans" (Schillo, p. 2883, 2003).

The dominant discourse on animal production is mostly linked to maintaining the belief that humans are entitled to use animals for their needs, and essentially does not support animal rights perspectives. The environmental discourse criticizes animal production in some aspects, such as the high emissions, and energy and land use, but the overall solutions do not oppose animal production *per se*, but only present reduction as an appropriate and sufficient solution. Also the agriculture discourse rather glorifies the animal production's role in providing food for everyone, diminishes the importance of environmental problems, totally disregards other problems like animal welfare or health, and highlights domestic production as a better alternative in terms of environmental consequences. Therefore, both of these discourses support the dominant discourse on animal production through the use of discourse that highlights economic interests of the groups responsible.

Environmental, animal welfare and health arguments are apparent in the 'happy meat' discourse, and are used to support the oppressive dominant discourse. This support is shown through framing animals as more ecologically produced, healthier, or tastier option (based on better living conditions leading to satisfied animals, less pollution and improved meat quality) as opposed to factory farm-based meat product. Therefore, the dominant discourse, including also environmental, animal welfare and health arguments work against animal rights perspective, as they support the continuing use of animals for human needs. Another aspect of the dominant discourse on animal production is the

social and cultural importance of meat eating that is linked to high status, tradition, good health, and appropriate food.

3.2 Critical counter-discourses to reconstruct the meaning of animals and animal production

The overview of the dominant discourse on animal production presented above, includes the rather popular assumptions and beliefs that we as a society have, which through our actions (buying) gives consent for the animal production industry to operate as it does (Stibbe, 2012). However, in studying the discourses that actors such as environmental, health, or animal rights NGOs use when talking about animal production, it is necessary to have an overview of the ‘counter-discourses’ that the critics of animal production may use. Such discourses can include similar sub-discourses as were discussed in the previous chapter, but they use the discourses in an opposite manner compared to the oppressive use. Counter-discourse can also include key terms that are often used when talking about animal production, such as diversity, ecology, morality and so on.

Counter-discourses use critical approaches that oppose the dominant discourse (van Dijk, 1997). However, as the dominant discourse on animal production and animals is the prevalent discourse that is used throughout social domains, the studies that focus on counter-discourses are rather limited. Nevertheless, some examples of counter-discourses are summarized here to provide a perspective into what kind of arguments and key terms the literature uses to reconstruct the way in which animals and animal production are discussed. First, the discourses that strives to portray animals in better light is viewed, after which a more critical discourse follows that focuses on the three categories of criticism; animal rights, health and food, and environment. However, these are not by no means inclusive summaries. This chapter is meant to provide an idea of what the counter-arguments to the mainstream discourse are, because in this study some NGOs are likely to use some of these perspectives rather than support the dominant discourse. Moreover, because the dominant discourse is the prevalent way of understanding and talking about animal production, there is not much research available on the existing counter-discourses. This however does not mean that the dominant discourse on animal production is hegemonic, but that these smaller counter-discourses have not yet been studied extensively.

The counter-discourse studies that relate to the phenomenon of animal production often focus on topics such as food, vegetarianism or veganism. The studies that are discussed here were chosen based on their relevance to my Thesis topic. The study by Maurer (1995) focuses on the rhetoric that the vegetarian social movement uses, but cannot be regarded very up-to-date anymore. Nevertheless, the study gives a good basis to the study of counter-discourses and is supported by a more recent study (Maurer, 2002). Although the studies by Maurer focus on the vegetarian side of the literature, I consider them applicable to my research because they also focus on environment, health, and animal rights perspectives when addressing counter-discourses that the vegetarian literature uses to support plant-based diets. Furthermore, social movement advocates, who form a part of the vegetarian discourse, are likely to use similar counter-discourses to support plant-based diets or reduction of meat, as NGOs with similar ideologies would use. In the first study, Maurer researched 20 vegetarian books and two academic journal periodicals. The second, more recent source used in this chapter is a book on vegetarian movement, also by Maurer (2002). In the book Maurer refers to several books and articles that discuss vegetarianism, and uses them to form a description of vegetarian discourse. Other sources are the ones used in the previous chapter (Stibbe, 2012; Schillo, 2003; Glenn, 2004; Freeman, 2010b), since in addition to the dominant discourse they also discuss the counter-discourses to some extent. However, these studies do not focus on the use of counter-discourses by different actors in society, but are rather theoretical in nature.

Animal rights-based counter-discourse

In addition to discourses that support the dominant view of animals and animal production, there are also counter-discourses that strive to develop a more balanced relationship between humans and animals (Stibbe, 2012). Most of the studies that focus on discourse that supports the dominant social practice, and were summarized in the previous chapter, address also counter-discourses. Counter-discourses naturally use arguments that are at the opposite end compared to the discourse that supports the dominant beliefs. Such counter-discourses relate to “animal liberation, animal rights, ecology, and the environmental movement” (Stibbe, p. 52, 2012). These counter-discourses therefore promote respect towards animals and their lives and their natural behavior (Stibbe, 2012). The animal rights-based counter-discourse is based on the

ideology that all animals are sentient beings and in essence their value is intrinsic to themselves and thus valuable (Francione, 2010).

The studies on dominant discourse on animal production that were summarized previously, all promote counter-discourse alternatives as a way to restructure the way we treat animals through changing the way we think about animals. The most notable aspect in using counter-discourses is changing the language we use to talk about animals, by giving them more rights and individuality compared to presenting them as mere objects and consumable products that is the way in the dominant discourse (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004). Furthermore, using subjective nouns rather than objective nouns when talking about animals is another way to promote their rights (Glenn, 2004). Another aspect that needs changing is the inequality between humans and animals. This also appears in linguistic terms, counter-discourses such as animal rights discourse uses the word ‘nonhuman animal’ to describe animals and ‘human animal’ to describe humans (Stibbe, 2012; Glenn, 2004). Also Freeman’s (2010b) study on the terminology that the literature uses to describe humans and animals argue that non-speciesist terminology that would address both humans and animals as equal beings is needed. Some suggestions for more equal terminology are ‘nonhuman animal’ and ‘sentient being’, but ‘human animals’ to replace the commonsensical term for ‘human’ is argued to be a better alternative (Freeman, 2010b). However, including humans in the same label with animals is often considered an insult (Freeman, 2010b). In order to truly appreciate and treat animals equally, people need to start identifying themselves with animals and discursively construct (Freeman, 2010b). In addition to terminology, animal advocates are said to compare speciesism to other forms of unjust treatment of oppressed groups of people, comparing the mistreatment of animals to the mistreatment of humans (Freeman, 2009). Moreover, as the dominant discourse often uses language that strives to distance the end products from their origins and also humans from the processes of animal production, the counter-discourse should use language that reflects the true nature of such practices, instead of hiding them behind neutral and process-sounding words (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004).

The two most notable counter-discourses apparent in the vegetarian literature relate to ethical and health arguments (Maurer, 1995). The ethical perspective is linked to the animal rights influenced perspective, which emphasizes “freedom, choice, liberation, while it condemns attitudes and actions that are discriminatory and unjust” (Maurer, p.

146, 1995). In the vegetarian literature, not only the animal production is criticized, but the by-products such as dairy and eggs are discussed as immoral choices (Maurer, 1995). Peter Singer is often described to be one of the first authors who addressed animal welfare (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002; Stibbe; 2012). His ideology is based on the same idea as the earlier study by Bentham, who considers animals, although in other arguments labelled dissimilar in their capacity of feeling emotions as we know them, similar to humans in their capacity of suffering and feeling pain (Bentham, 2000; Singer, 1974; Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002). Furthermore, criticism towards human's superior position is noted in Singer's philosophy, which argues that humans' unnecessary needs are fulfilled by denying animals from their basic needs (Singer, 1974).

The vegetarian literature's counter-discourses follows similar line of thought. It compares animal emotions and suffering similar to those of human's, and thus supports animal rights-based view and opposes speciesism, comparing it to other types of discrimination or prejudice (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002). In this counter-discourse, animals are often referred to as 'non-human animals' and put on a similar level with 'human animals', as opposed to non-living and –feeling objects, such as rocks (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002). This is due to the fact that people find it easier to stop eating animals that they consider similar to humans (Maurer, 1995). People are said to first stop the eating of red meat and then step by step discontinue eating poultry, fish, dairy and eggs (Maurer, 1995). The authors in vegetarian literature often strive to portray all these different animals as similar to each other, in order to communicate that eating any kind of meat or using any form of animal (by-) products, is not morally right (Maurer, 1995). Other linguistic features are distinct in the counter-discourse; in addition to semantic parallels between human and non-human animals, some literature uses 'he' or 'she' instead of 'it' when talking about animals (Maurer, 1995). Moreover, terms such as 'liberation', 'oppression', and 'suffering' (Maurer, 1995) are used to link vegetarianism to moral conscience.

Safety and superiority of plant-based diets

Counter-discourses that are concerned with animal rights and health, or in other words, the safety of plant-based diets (as opposed to animal-based diets), are the two main argumentative categories in vegetarian literature. Counter-discourses that relate to health are mainly concerned with providing information on the superiority of plant-

based foods, and on the other hand, noting the disadvantages or threats that consuming animal-based foods pose to humans. This type of counter-discourse focuses on personal health and safety, and especially threats to it. Personal health arguments are most often prioritized in the discourse; the health arguments point out that vegetarian diet is safe and nutritious and that it can even be healthier than a carnivorous diet. Similar to today's vegetarian literature, in the 1990's the counter-discourse strove to use claims supported by scientific research that supported plant-based diets. (Maurer, 1995.)

In the vegetarian literature (Maurer, 1995), the focus is mostly on assuring why meat is not needed from a nutritional perspective. This relates to the problem of protein, which is highlighted as a major topic within the vegetarian literature. The common belief that animal protein is needed to secure the daily protein intake of people is contradicted in the vegetarian literature, which suggests that meat is not a healthy protein option and may pose threats to human health (Maurer, 1995). Vegetable protein is promoted as a better and healthier protein source compared to animal protein (Maurer, 1995).

Moreover, the discourse links overconsumption of protein with meat eating, thus suggesting that excluding meat from your diet will also balance your protein intake (Maurer, 1995). Vegetarian literature links animal-based diet with an increased risk of several medical conditions and diseases, such as “cancer, kidney disease, gout, arthritis, digestive and elimination problems, hypertension, asthma, anemia, gallstones, ulcers, hypoglycemia and diabetes” (Maurer, p. 149-150, 1995). On the more positive end, vegetarian diet is promoted as an energy booster and increasing the quality of life (Maurer, 1995), but also as a lower risk diet in terms of variety of diseases that are linked to meat-based diets (Maurer, 2002). Some authors also strive to distance the word vegetarian from meaning merely vegetables, but instead point out the Latin origin of the word, which means “whole, sound, fresh, and lively” (Bargen, 1979, as cited in Maurer, p. 150, 1995).

Finally, some vegetarian authors refer to the ‘meat is dead’ and ‘you are what you eat’ sayings, that link meat to both unhealthy and unethical qualities (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002). As opposed to plant-based food that is described lively and fresh, consuming violently killed meat is described to include the same pain and aggression that the animals felt when they were killed (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002). Therefore, nonviolent diet is described to create nonviolent people and behavior (Maurer, 2002).

Critical counter-discourses on environmental problems of animal production

Ecocentrism is a moral theory that could be seen to influence counter-discourses. In ecocentrism, ecosystems and species are seen to have intrinsic value and needed to be protected and treated with moral principles (Callicott, 1999). Based on the ecocentric view, environment should be treated with respect and not as a resource for human needs. Although protecting environment and sustaining healthy ecosystems can be considered good for our own sake, according to the ecocentric view, ecosystems need to be protected because of their intrinsic value (Callicott, 1999). Although not directly linked to animal production, critical counter-discourses are likely to include ecocentric viewpoints that highlight the importance of ecosystems. This is because counter-discourses use language that oppose the negligence on the environment caused by animal production and to strive for changing the practice altogether.

As opposed to the dominant discourses, in some counter-discourses humans are described as part of the environment, instead of dominating it (Stibbe, 2012). However, still many environmental counter-discourses use language that distinguishes between humans and the rest of the world (Stibbe, 2012). Similar to the animal rights-based counter-discourse, environment-based counter-discourse should include changes in the language describing the environment. However, the majority of counter-discourses have not adopted linguistic changes, but continue using language from business and economy when describing our planet and its natural organisms as resources, thus supporting the dominant discourse (Stibbe, 2012).

In vegetarian literature, the most notable counter-discourses with regards to the environmental aspect relate to the problems such as the loss of natural resources and the environmental damage caused by animal production (Maurer, 1995). Vegetarian literature describes meat eating as endangering the life of the individual, the society, and the environment (Maurer, 1995). However, in 1995 the focus was not too much on the environmental problems in general; vegetarian literature emphasized the problem of loss of resources more than the advancement of climate change and environmental destruction, for instance (Maurer, 1995). It may be that the argument on the endangerment of the environment may have gained more popularity among different groups in recent decades, given the increased scientific literature on the environmental problems related to meat production (Steinfeld et al., 2006; Laestadius et al., 2014). This is evident in Maurer's second book (2002), which describes animal production-

related environmental problems in more detail. Depletion of water supplies, fossil fuel, forests and erosion, are among the arguments that more recent counter-discourses in vegetarian literature discusses (Maurer, 2002). Through these arguments, the environment is presented as the victim of human actions. As mentioned earlier, also the ‘environmental’, ‘agriculture’ and ‘happy meat’ discourses can be thought to present an aspect of the environmental perspective, as producing less but better or using organic or reducing the consumption of red meat can be seen to preserve the environment. However, essentially they do not oppose the dominant view on animal production, but are concerned with the environmental and economic consequences.

3.2.1 Summary of the critical counter-discourses on animal production

In the case of animal production, discursive practices produce and reproduce power inequalities at the expense of animals, through the so-called commonsense assumptions (Stibbe, 2012). However, the large environmental problems related to animal production and our dependence on animals suggest that these discursive practices maintain power inequalities at the expense of humans, too (Stibbe, 2012). Thus, these discursive practices may change, because people are unlikely to support a power inequality at their own expense, making the discursive practices related to animal production less common (and leading to a social change) (Fairclough, 1989, as cited in Stibbe, 2012). This can suggest that not only animal rights counter-discourses can be influential in changing how animal production is understood, but that environmental discourse can play a role in making people understand the effects that this uneven power relation has also on them. However, as discussed under chapter 2, the most influential discourses are likely to be the ones that include and combine various discourses and thus appeal to a larger audience in a more acceptable manner.

There are much less studies on counter-discourses than there are on dominant discourses on animal production. However, I used studies that discuss the philosophy behind animal production and the way humans treat animals, and studies that suggest how we should discursively change how animals are socially constructed in society. Discourses used by vegetarian literature are the more specific and real-life examples of how discursively animal production can be opposed.

The three main counter-discourses that are visible in the vegetarian literature are discourses that promote animal rights, supports plant-based diet as a healthier option,

and also better for the environment. Both animal rights and health/environmental perspectives are included in the counter-discourses of vegetarian literature, but often the health and environmental perspectives are emphasized more. The health discourses mostly relate to the argument that a vegetarian diet does not negatively impact a person's health, but instead can even improve it, along with environmental benefits. The environmental discourse is often used to support the health or food discourse by highlighting the problems that animal production causes on the environment. The animal rights discourse on the other hand focuses on depicting animals as sentient individuals and equal to humans. (Maurer, 1995.)

Although the health arguments are the most often used arguments to support plant-based diets (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002), the vegetarian social movement leaders often emphasize the three-tier arguments in their counter-discourses, since using health, environment and animal rights-based arguments together are likely to support each other (Maurer, 2002). However, other studies argue that animals and empathy are often missing and are rarely the central focus in counter-discourses that focus on environment and ecology (Stibbe, 2012).

Although Maurer's study was conducted in 1995, it has similar features with regards on the conversation that surrounds vegetarianism today. Given the increasing scientific basis that supports plant-based diets over meat-intensive ones and the increasing data on problems that the animal production industry creates, the critical counter-discourses today are likely to emphasize the notion of healthiness, environmental destruction, but also the sentience and feelings of animals. Compared to the discussion around vegetarianism and meat eating today, the health discourse is likely to be even more prominent, given the increasing nutritional research that supports plant-based diets, and on the other hand the medical research that argues that the use of animal based foods can increase the risk of certain diseases (IARC, 2015).

4 Discourses shaping and being shaped by NGOs

This chapter presents the linkage between non-governmental organizations (NGO) and their use of discourses to communicate their causes and legitimize their operations in a society with diverse social forces. The first part discusses more generally how discourses appear and influence NGO operations, using studies by Carmin and Balsler (2002), Meyer, (2004) and Hilhorst (2003), NGOs' tactics, communication and discourses, respectively. The second part introduces previous research on the discourses that NGOs use when talking about animal production. These are based on studies by Laestadius et al. (2013; 2014a; 2014b) who have studied how environmental NGOs discuss meat production and consumption in the U.S., Canada and Sweden, and Freeman (2010), whose study focuses on how U.S. environmental NGOs discuss vegetarianism.

4.1 The multiple realities of NGOs shaping how they use discourse

NGOs are independent groups that work on a voluntary basis to improve or change the injustice or other problems in the world or in the society in which they operate (Anheier, 2014). According to the common view, NGO is an organization that is “doing good for the development of others” (Hilhorst, p.7, 2003). The number of NGOs, as well as their importance and influence have increased significantly within the past 30 years, on a local level as well as on a global level (Anheier, 2014). The formal relations between NGOs and international organizations like World Health Organization or World Bank have increased, improving the scope of NGOs' and their role in international decision-making (Anheier, 2014). Several NGOs, such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Red Cross, have established organizations of a great scale and scope in terms of budgets, political influence and responsibility (Anheier, 2014).

NGOs are part of multiple realities; different actors in the society push and pull NGOs in different directions (Hilhorst, 2003). In addition to the variety of outside forces that influence NGOs, also their members with varying values, beliefs and opinions, shape how NGOs operate (Hilhorst, 2003). This is reflected also in the social constructionist perspective, often linked with discourse analysis, according to which reality is constructed of shared meanings (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Grant et al., 2004). Because of these multiple realities for NGOs, meanings are not formed by a simple decision-making process, but the above mentioned forces influence how the NGO

perceives certain topics, and also how it addresses them (Hilhorst, 2003). The variety of actors that NGOs deal with, poses a challenge for their communication to these different stakeholders (Hilhorst, 2003). They have to convince their legitimacy to their members, the political arena and the public in general, and in some cases also to funding agencies (Hilhorst, 2003). Given the limited resources that NGOs have, the success of their missions are highly dependent on communication, both to their supporters, to the general public as well as to decision-makers. Therefore, discourses play a critical role in the legitimation process of the NGOs; how they talk influences greatly the way they are perceived and accepted by different stakeholders. This may mean that NGOs that focus on a rather narrow topic or group of people, may be able to use more radical means and discourses compared to NGOs that deal with political actors and have a wider and diverse public to convince on their legitimacy.

Following this philosophy, studying the language that NGOs use when communicating on animal production will shed light onto how they perceive the ‘reality’ and also how they strive to shape it. Their different tactics and messaging choices may result from the multiple realities they need to consider, their different views on what the phenomenon is, how other groups and discourses perceive and communicate it, and how they can influence the understanding of their audiences or even shape the shared meanings (Hilhorst, 2003). This interpretation of both internal and external environments is not necessarily always completely shared among the members of an NGO (Carmin & Balsler, 2002; Hilhorst, 2003). The employees’ personal views may also shape the messages they construct in the organizations or vice versa (Grant et al. 2004; Hilhorst, 2003).

Due to their power and status as philanthropists and ethical actors and their diverse stakeholder networks, many NGOs can have a strong influence on the society around them, and thus, the language they use is important to study. According to critical discourse theories, discourses play a role in shaping people’s values and beliefs, as we are continuously in the flux of information from different groups with different ideologies. The notion of interdiscursivity, a form of intertextuality (Fairclough, 1995), relates to this, since the beliefs and values that the NGO members have and the messages they construct to share these beliefs, are all part of intertextual chains developed over time through discourse. In a similar fashion, the discourses that NGOs

use, shape other discourses and thus have a possibility of changing the dominant discourse on animal production.

As the tactics that NGOs use are influenced by the NGO's "experience, values and beliefs, and political ideology" (Carmin & Balsler, p. 384, 2002), discourses can be argued to have a great impact on what action NGOs take (Meyer, 2004). Although NGOs often use several different tactics that vary depending on the situation, they often have a selected few tactics that they prefer (Meyer, 2004). NGOs identify themselves with these preferred core tactics, and through time become known for these (Meyer, 2004). The organizational identity, shaped by its members' and leaders' values and beliefs is the backbone of an NGO and determines the missions and tactics that the NGO uses (Meyer, 2004). Therefore, although NGOs' core tactics may vary from protests to more moderate communication, they are unlikely to change over time, "because doing so is incompatible with their organizational identity and may threaten organizational success and survival" (Meyer, p. 183, 2004). Similarly, also the language that NGOs use in their communication can be thought to adapt according to situations and audiences, but in overall remain consistent and portray their ideology.

Also with regards to mitigating the impacts of animal production, NGOs use variety of different tactics to influence their chosen cause. In relation to government-led change on animal production, some NGOs use lobbying or other tactics to strive to impact the decision-makers, whereas others focus on raising consumer awareness and consumption patterns towards less harmful behavior. Yet some NGOs can prioritize cooperation with companies and try to have them improve their practices, for example. Many NGOs use several tactics and have overlapping causes on which they focus. Nevertheless, the one combining factor that can be studied regardless of the tactic, is the language that NGOs use to communicate their beliefs.

There is not necessarily one hegemonic discourse that is used by different groups in a society (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Fairclough, 1995). However, often there are few powerful discourses that shape the way the majority of people see and talk about things. In the case of animal production, the discourse that objectifies animals and portrays them as inferior to humans (Stibbe, 2012; Schillo, 2003; Glenn, 2004; Freeman, 2009) can be considered the dominant discourse in society. However, groups that oppose the dominant view may use other types of discourses, which can be called counter-

discourses and counter-hegemonic groups (Freeman, 2009). The aim of counter-discourses is to oppose the current prevalent discourse and to change people's beliefs and eventually behavior through relanguaging strategies (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004). These relanguaging strategies, as discussed earlier, involve changing the way animals and animal production is understood and linguistically communicated in society (Glenn, 2004). Because of the linkages between different discourses (interdiscursivity), the discourses that NGOs use are likely to be a mixture of the dominant discourse and critical counter-discourses. Because discourses both shape the identity and beliefs and are shaped by the shared identity and beliefs of NGO members, studying NGO discourses can help in understanding how certain issues are viewed within NGO and to which larger discourses they belong.

Although it is out of the scope of this paper to study how critical counter-discourses can change the dominant discourse, I will discuss this shortly here in order to give an idea of the possibilities that NGO discourses can have. There are mainly two processes through which discourses can become dominant. The first is as a response to a threat from political processes that pushes the opposing groups to a single counter-discourse, and the second is a longer process emerging from various different discourses (Hilhorst, 2003). However, it needs to be restated that even dominant discourses are usually not hegemonic (Hilhorst, 2003; Fairclough, 1995), and thus even though animal rights discourse would turn dominant, there will be less prevalent discourses that oppose it. Moreover, based on Fairclough's perception (Fairclough, 1995), heterogeneous discourses that combine different discourses in new fashion, are more likely to compete or change the dominant discourse.

From a strategic viewpoint, it is important for the NGOs to be aware of the discourses that they use and the possibilities that those discourses can have to make a change in society. Many NGOs rely on communication to get their message through, so understanding how their discourse situates among other NGOs and being aware of the potential, could have strategic benefits for the NGO. Understanding how they want to discursively position themselves in the organization scene could help them have more holistic and effective messages both inside and outside of the NGO.

4.2 Previous research on how NGOs talk about animal production

Because there has been criticism in previous research as well as via public documentaries on the actions and messages that NGOs take and use when talking about animal production, I wanted to study the topic further. Instead of focusing only on environmental arguments (or the lack of), I strive to include a wider spectrum of problems of which NGOs are likely to be concerned. These categories are environment, health/food and animal rights/welfare, and were determined by a careful study of major research papers and institutions, that use similar topics and divisions. Although critical discourse analysis is often done to reveal the unjust power inequalities that occur in groups or societies through discourses, in my study, NGOs are not the focus because of such doubts. NGOs are unlikely to be considered as the villains of the problems behind animal production, but they have considerable power in influencing people's knowledge and beliefs of things they support or oppose.

Here I summarize four studies that specifically focus on the communications and discourses that NGOs use in order to achieve a change in meat consumption patterns and to promote vegetarianism. Moreover, these studies focus on several different type of NGOs; animal protection, food-focused, and environmental, which make them very interesting to look at given the similar focus of my study.

Laestadius et al. have conducted three studies, in which they discuss different NGOs' actions, messaging choices and reasons behind these decisions in relation to meat production. Their studies focus on the issue of reducing meat consumption, but focus on the climate change viewpoint. In the first of these three studies, 'Meat Consumption and Climate Change: The Role of NGOs', Laestadius et al. (2013) include animal protection, food-focused, and environmental NGOs in their study. They focus on NGOs in these three sectors operating in the United States, Canada and Sweden, and studied how they address meat consumption with regards to climate change in their website and other materials, combined with interview data. Their study discovers that despite of the vast amount of research and facts about animal production's impacts on climate change, environmental NGOs are not making efforts to reduce the consumption of meat, even though they discuss it on their websites. Some animal protection NGOs are found to promote the abolition of meat consumption altogether, whereas other type of NGOs strive for more modest reductions. Animal protection and food-focused NGOs had more

formal reduction campaigns and more often linked animal production to climate change compared to environmental NGOs. This is surprising given the vast environmental problems related to animal production. (Laestadius et al., 2013.)

The second and third studies by Laestadius et al. (2014a; 2014b) focus on the factors that affect NGO decision-making on addressing meat consumption by interviewing NGO members. They discover that NGOs considered three aspects when deciding their messaging strategy for meat consumption; the strategic fit, interpretations of the evidence of environmental damage, and employees' own willingness to address the issue (Laestadius et al., 2014b). In general, the NGOs opted for more subdued messages that would call for minor reduction or changes to grass-fed ruminant meat, instead of using stronger messages, mostly due to the misfit with their strategic goals (Laestadius et al., 2014b).

In 'Meat's Place on the Campaign Menu: How US Environmental Discourse Negotiates Vegetarianism', Freeman (2010) discovers how 15 environmental NGOs in the United States communicate the use of meat and plant-based diets and what solutions they provide to consumers and producers alike. The alternatives that the NGOs in Freeman's (p. 263, 2010) study propose were "(1) replacement of much industrial food with local, organic, and/or sustainable animal or plant foods, (2) reduction of animal products, and, to a lesser degree, (3) vegetarianism". The NGOs clearly emphasize consumer preference over the need for change, arguing that consumers need to be able to choose what they want to consume and then select the most environmentally friendly option to fulfil this preference. This kind of consumption- and marketing-driven outlook supports the belief that there is no need to make drastic changes (Freeman, 2010).

Austgulen's (2014) study, previously introduced in chapter 3, is also restated in terms of the environmental NGOs' discursive practices. The study focuses on the discussions of environmental NGOs on newspaper articles in Norway, and has different findings than these aforementioned studies. In Austgulen's (2014) study, the environmental NGOs are found to address meat reduction and consider consumers an important part of the consumption change.

First, the discourses of animal protection, food focused, and environmental NGOs are presented based on the studies by Laestadius et al. (2013), Freeman (2010), and

Austgulen (2014), after which the factors influencing NGO decision-making are shortly discussed, based on the study by Laestadius et al. (2014a; 2014b).

4.2.1 Animal rights NGOs talking about meat-free diets and meat reduction (dominant-critical)

All animal protection NGOs discuss meat consumption, but the ‘radicalness’ of the messages vary greatly from meat-free, vegetarian and vegan discourses to more modest reduction messages (Laestadius et al., 2013). Animal protection NGOs have more formal reduction campaigns and more often link animal production to climate change compared to environmental NGOs. The majority discuss the high GHG emissions as a problem of the animal agriculture, and especially intensive factory farming (Laestadius et al., 2013).

Given their formal campaigns for meat reduction or for more radical goals, they are also active in influencing consumer behavior (Laestadius et al., 2014a). Although these NGOs have campaigns that include meat reduction, they also argue that meat consumption from the climate change perspective should be addressed by environmental NGOs (Laestadius et al., 2014a). This follows closely the idea that NGOs need to focus on the topics that fit their strategic missions, discussed later in this chapter. However, some animal protection NGOs do not consider the lack of strategic fit as a problem, since the climate change evidence is thought to reinforce the message of meat reduction from an animal protection perspective (Laestadius et al., 2014b).

All of the different type of NGOs show concern over maintaining credibility if they were to go against the public opinion of meat consumption, and thus opt for more socially acceptable messages (Laestadius et al. 2014b). Especially some animal protection NGOs that had goals linked to reduction of meat consumption decided to use weaker messages, despite of their long-term goal of meat-free diets. This is regarded as a sign of social intelligence; the NGOs are aware of the meat-centric consumption and that radical messages would be taken negatively by the public (Laestadius et al., 2014b). This notion is supported by another study by Freeman (2009), in which the strong messages from advocacy groups are sometimes labelled as propaganda and manipulation, and thus may be regarded as simplistic and narrow-minded. However, unlike food-focused and environmental NGOs, the discourses that animal protection

NGOs use do not include promotion of ‘better’ meat alternatives such as ruminant meat, because of their animal protection interests (Laestadius et al., 2014a).

The NGOs are also found to limit their actions and subdue their messages because of their perception that climate change is not a popular topic. Therefore, animal protection NGOs will continue to address meat reduction, but will not emphasize its effect on climate change, as long as they view that it does not interest the general public. (Laestadius et al., 2014a).

The messages that animal protection NGOs use are the only examples that can be considered to use critical counter-discourses, although some of them use modest, socially accepted messages that are likely to be part of the dominant discourse.

4.2.2 Food-focused NGOs talking about meat reduction and better meat alternatives (dominant)

Food-focused NGOs have many similar features and discourses with animal protection NGOs, but some differences naturally exist. Similar to some of the animal production NGOs, the majority of food-focused NGOs promote reduction of meat consumption and some even meat-free diets, and link animal production to climate change and high GHG emissions (Laestadius et al., 2013). The majority also has formal reduction campaigns for consumers. As animal protection NGOs, also food-focused NGOs feel that environmental NGOs are the ones that should be focusing on meat consumption from the climate change perspective (Laestadius et al., 2014a).

Given their overlapping missions, food-focused NGOs promote multiple messages. They simultaneously strive to address meat reduction and increased consumption of more sustainable meat alternatives, namely grass-fed ruminant meat, which is considered better compared to factory farm meat (Laestadius et al., 2013). Moreover, some food-focused NGOs do not agree that grass-fed ruminant meat produces higher GHG emissions compared to factory farm produced meat, but highlight the environmental advantages of grass-fed ruminants, such as biodiversity (Laestadius et al., 2014b). Because of these reasons, some food-focused NGOs support the consumption and production of grass-fed ruminant meat (Laestadius et al., 2013; 2014a).

Also food-focused NGOs do not want to go against public perception and the dominant discourse on animal production and meat eating and used rather modest messages. Moreover, the lack of popularity of climate change is considered a reason for not talking about the climate change when talking about animal production, even if food-focused NGOs link high GHG emissions to animal production.

4.2.3 Environmental NGOs talking about environmental problems and meat reduction (dominant)

Overall, environmental NGOs talk about meat consumption, but mostly from the reduction and sustainable meat perspective, instead of talking about meat-free diets. Despite of the vast amount of research about animal production's impacts on climate change, the majority of environmental NGOs in the U.S., Canada and Sweden are not discussing the environmental problems of animal production nor campaigning to reduce the consumption of meat (Laestadius et al., 2013). This is surprising given the vast environmental problems related to animal production. However, in Norway, environmental NGOs are found to both discuss and have campaigns on meat reduction (Austgulen, 2014).

The lack of strategic fit with the NGOs' missions is argued to be one of the reasons why environmental NGOs do not want to address issues related to animal production, although from the climate change perspective it would be more fitting than other type of NGOs talking about it (Laestadius et al., 2014a). Environmental NGOs rather expect animal protection and food-focused NGOs to target issues related to animal production, and are not committed themselves to have active campaigns that strive to reduce meat consumption (Laestadius et al., 2014a). Many environmental NGOs found it problematic in light of their strategies to use even modest messages (Laestadius et al., 2014b). As mentioned earlier, the fear of being labelled as propaganda and manipulation shadows stronger messages from NGOs (Freeman, 2009).

In Freeman's (2010) study, environmental NGOs in the U.S. are found to address the environmental problems related to animal production more, but either as a separate issue, or linking them to climate change, oceans, green living/consumption, or forests. While many environmental NGOs in the U.S. acknowledge that veganism is the most sustainable option, they are still reluctant to promote it. Instead they portray it as the ultimate, but an unlike and unrealistic choice, which consumers are not required or

likely to take. The NGOs rather support meat reduction or more sustainable meat replacement messages. Because of these moderate messages, NGOs are argued to believe that even minor changes in food choices and diets can have a sufficient impact on reducing the environmental impact, and therefore they are seen to undermine the extent of the environmental problems of animal production. However, given the severity of the environmental crisis, more drastic measures are needed, and the issue should be addressed under several topics, since it touches so many issues. (Freeman, 2010.)

The study on Norwegian environmental NGOs gives also positive findings. Environmental NGOs are found to discuss eco-friendly lifestyles and strive to portray these lifestyles as easy to adapt (Austgulen, 2014). The main goal that they discuss is to reduce the overall consumption, but especially to reduce meat eating (Austgulen 2014). However, vegetarianism or veganism is not part of their discourses either.

Despite of the importance of climate change, the NGOs have overlapping missions that often means that climate change achieved equal, or lesser importance compared with other environmental problems. Because of the variety of their missions, many NGOs used ‘the middle road approach’ in their messaging choices, to be able to address these different missions. However, this often resulted in contradictory messages. An example from the study of American, Canadian and Swedish NGOs is the aim to decrease the consumption of factory farm produced meat and increase the consumption more sustainable meat option, such as grass-fed ruminant meat, and white meat over red meat. This indicates a concern over other problems than climate change, mainly biodiversity and sustainable farming. Similar to some food-focused NGOs, also some of the environmental NGOs do not acknowledge the higher GHG emissions that are argued to be linked to grass-fed ruminants compared to factory farm produced meat. (Laestadius et al., 2014b.)

The environmental NGOs’ moderate messages can be appropriate in the light of the environment and human health-related issues, and to some extent on the welfare of farm animals (Freeman, 2010). Nevertheless, the moderate messages are not consistent with animal rights issues, considering the continued killing of sentient individuals that is accepted in the ‘reduction’ message. Freeman also questions the moral consistency of environmental NGOs that choose to protect “endangered, or charismatic mega-fauna”, such as tigers, elephants and whales, but ignore the suffering of farm animals (Freeman,

p.271, 2010). Freeman calls for ideological consistency from the NGOs, requiring them to include animal rights as a reason for choosing a plant-based diet. This would be a more holistic approach and would support their “anti-exploitative stance” (Freeman, p. 272, 2010). According to Freeman, vegan diet is a logical message from animal rights NGOs, but that it should not be regarded as too radical by other type of NGOs either. This ethical consideration remains valid despite of the improved environmental sustainability that some animal production may be able to achieve. Thus, the environmental consideration should not be the only decisive factor in the food discourse (Freeman, 2010).

The studies used here have contradictory findings in terms of which societal actors they blame and on which they place responsibility: One emphasizes the role of the government as well as consumers (Austgulen, 2014), whereas others highlight the role of the supply-side (Laestadius et al., 2013; Freeman, 2010). As discussed earlier in chapter 3, in a study on Norwegian environmental NGOs’ discourses, NGOs put responsibility mainly on governmental actors, although the role of consumers is also highlighted (Austgulen, 2014). From the environmental organizations’ perspective, increasing consumers’ awareness on “the environmental consequences of their actions” is vital (Austgulen, p. 57, 2014). However, in another study on environmental NGOs in the U.S., the criticism is directed on the supply side, whereas governmental and consumer responsibility is minimized (Freeman, 2010). According to that study, NGOs emphasize the role of the supply-side, criticizing them more than the demand-side as part of the problem (Freeman, 2010). The way in which these NGOs communicate the issues of animal production, can result in the belief that supply-side is where most change is needed (Freeman, 2010). Therefore, these NGOs are argued to underestimate the position that consumers and their purchasing choices can have on the matter (Freeman, 2010).

4.2.4 General reasons for not communicating about problems of meat production

Two of the studies by Laestadius et al. (2014a; 2014b) discuss the possible reasons for NGOs lack of communication on meat consumption, climate change, environmental problems of animal production, or the linkages between these. These are related to strategy, interpretations of the damage, and individuals’ own values (Laestadius et al., 2014a). With regards to *strategy fit*, NGOs perceive that they need to maintain their

strategic focus. However, ironically all three NGO types in the study by Laestadius et al. (2013), mention this as a problem for not including environmental problems of meat consumption in their messages. Environmental NGOs view that animal production-relates topics and meat consumption should be discussed by animal protection and food focused NGOs, whilst animal protection and food focused NGOs see that environmental problems of animal production are essentially part of environmental NGOs' agenda (Laestadius et al., 2014a).

NGOs are also seen to limit their actions and subdue their messages because of their perception that climate change as not a popular topic (Laestadius et al., 2014a). Due to the social norms that make meat consumption acceptable and desirable, NGOs are forced to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of taking a stronger stance in promoting mitigation of meat eating (Laestadius et al., 2014b). The second study also found out that the NGOs were worried about *maintaining credibility* if they were to go against the public opinion of meat consumption, and thus opted for more socially acceptable messages.

Employees' willingness to address the issue may negatively affect the construction of meat-free messages (Laestadius et al., 2014b). Whereas the reverse was not regarded as a determining factor in addressing the issue, employees' individual behavior and NGO's implicit culture supporting meat eating is considered limiting the messaging choices for plant-based diets. This is considered an obvious factor, given the importance of people's meat-centered lifestyles. On the other hand, this third finding is rather controversial, as it is difficult to separate cultural influence from strategic decisions (Laestadius et al., 2014b).

Regarding the aim to change consumption behavior, NGOs may *not be willing to change their preferred tactics*. Often NGO tactics are aimed at institutional change, making the consumption change new and a strange that requires adaptation (Laestadius et al., 2014a). Additionally, NGOs' resources can be a limiting factor, especially when there is no public or political acceptance (Laestadius et al., 2014a). Laestadius et al. (2014a) also found out that some NGOs were afraid that active campaigning would link GHG emissions with animal agriculture, and possibly result in more intensification. This fear is not invalid given the suggestions by some international agencies (Steinfeld et al., 2006; IPCC, 2014).

4.3 Summary of NGO discourses on animal production

The majority of the NGOs in these studies acknowledge the link between animal production and environmental problems, such as GHG emissions, but do not emphasize it to the same extent. In terms of climate change, which was the focus in most of these studies, NGOs do not focus on climate change when addressing meat consumption and on the other hand, that meat consumption is not a focus when addressing climate change (Laestadius et al., 2013). Although the climate change is the focus of the majority of the studies summarized here, these NGOs use also other messages, such as other environmental problems, personal health and animal protection motivations, to support the meat reduction message. However, given the focus of the studies by Laestadius et al. (2013; 2014a; 2014b), these are not included in their studies and cannot be summarized here.

The great majority of the NGOs in these studies use dominant discourses when talking about animal production, meat consumption and climate change. Some animal protection NGOs can be argued to use more critical counter-discourses due to their vegetarianism and veganism messages, but their messages include also modest reduction-type options. What is similar in all of the discourses of the environmental NGOs, is the use of rather modest (meat reduction) and sometimes overlapping (promoting sustainable meat but also meat reduction) messages, which is thought to implicate their contradictory missions as well as their reluctance to be seen as a radical and against social norm of meat eating. Promoting several, sometimes overlapping causes, makes it difficult for the NGOs to create focused and clear messages (Laestadius et al., 2013).

NGOs consider three aspects when deciding their messaging strategy for meat consumption; the strategic fit, interpretations of the evidence of environmental damage, and employees' own willingness to address the issue (Laestadius et al., 2014b).

Norwegian NGOs are seen to focus more on the government- and consumer-initiated change and changing consumption towards less meat intensive diets. However, the environmental NGOs in the other studies (Laestadius et al. 2013; 2014a; 2014b; Freeman, 2010), put responsibility on the supply-side instead of consumers, which are thought to be free to choose what they want to consume, but preferably choose the most environmentally friendly option of these products (Freeman, 2010).

As most of these aforementioned studies focus on how NGOs communicate the mitigation of climate change in relation to animal production, the perspective is rather narrow and excludes various other problems related to animal production. If animal problem is viewed only from the environmental point of view, the animal rights and health related issues are being overlooked. When looking at the discourse on animal production or more specifically, on vegetarian discourse, the environmental aspect is not being regarded as most important motivator to choose or to support a vegetarian lifestyle, neither by individuals nor the literature. Rather, the health and morality are seen to be the major reasons that support the reduction of meat eating. This suggests that environmental NGOs may not be the appropriate channel to argue for reduced meat consumption, at least if they only use environmental arguments. As the study by Freeman (2010) notes, animal rights and health reasons should be included in the environmental NGOs' strategy to reduce meat consumption, at least for moral consistency, but also to achieve greater change. The environmental NGOs' moderate messages were considered not sufficient enough to affect such a large scale problem. Also from the motivational perspective, it could be wise to include these aspects (health and morality) that are the greatest motivators for vegetarians (Maurer, 1995; Butler et al., 2004; Fox & Ward, 2008). As discussed in Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework, inclusion of various discourses is thought to create more powerful discourse that can influence the dominant discourse (Fairclough, 1995).

Table 1: NGO discourses by NGO type based on previous research on meat consumption

	Animal-focused NGOs	Food-focused NGOs	Environmental NGOs
<i>Dominant discourse</i>	Meat reduction	Meat reduction Sustainable meat	Meat reduction Sustainable meat
<i>Critical discourse</i>	Meat-free diets	(Meat-free diets)	-
<i>Focus of solution</i>	Consumption	Consumption	Supply-side (Consumption)

5 Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology used in this study and clarifies reasons behind these choices. First, the theoretical and methodological basis of the study is restated. Next, the sampling choices are introduced, and data collection methods explained in detail. Finally, I will discuss the data analysis methods, and provide an evaluation of the study.

5.1 Critical discourse analysis as a theory and method

Critical discourse analysis is the basis for both theory and methodology for this study. As critical discourse analysis was discussed in detail under the section 2.2., it is now only briefly summarized.

Discourse analysis is an important research methodology in qualitative studies. It studies cultural meanings that are expressed through the use of language. These meanings and their consequences can be studied by evaluating the language and the discursive practices linked to it (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As discussed earlier, discourse analysis does not only focus on the language but the cultural meanings that are attached to it and reproduced through text and talk (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Discourse analysis differs from conversation analysis in that “conversation analysis focuses on the study of talk in interaction and discourse analysis explores meanings that are produced and mediated textually” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, p. 228, 2008). Critical discourse analysis especially focuses on the reproduction of power inequalities in society through discourse (Fairclough, 1995). What makes the research approach critical, is the ideological standpoint that usually opposes the powerful groups and their ways of reproducing the predominant social order through the use of certain discourses (Fairclough, 1995). Therefore, critical discourse analysis is often supportive of the minority or oppressed groups (van Dijk, 2001).

In this study, critical discourse analysis was considered an appropriate theory and method given the inability for the oppressed group (farmed animals) to speak for themselves and for the predominant discourses that objectify and commodify animals, reproduced and reinforced by several players in the society (as discussed in more detail under chapter 3). Critical discourse analysis often criticizes the powerful groups and their use of discourses, however, in this study the focus is on NGOs. Although

powerful, NGOs are often an intermediary in the discussion between powerful and less powerful groups (Hilhorst, 2003). Although it cannot be argued that NGOs would only use counter-discourses that aim to oppose the dominant discourse, it is likely that their discourses are a mixture of the two. Therefore, the criticism is directed at the use of dominant discourse that can be expected to support the oppression of animals. Counter-discourses are much less prevalent in theories or previous research, as scholars studying the dominant discourse often give only suggestions as to what kind of changes should be done. However, researchers argue that no discourse is hegemonic (Hilhorst, 2003; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) and that the level of interdiscursivity in discourses is an indicator of their possibility to influence the societal practice (Fairclough, 1995). Because of this, studying the discourses and counter-discourses that NGOs use, give a basis for future research on the possibilities for different NGO discourses to influence the societal practice.

Previous studies and critical discourse theories suggest that discourse can have a major role in influencing the societal practices through different use of language. According to Fairclough's approach, new combinations of different discourses are likely to be most influential in changing the dominant discourse (Fairclough, 1995) Therefore, I suggest that NGOs that use discourses that both critically articulate animal production and its problems and also use the common taken-for-granted terms are more aware of the power of discourses, and could even be able to influence the dominant discourse.

5.2 Sample

I started with the most known NGOs in the field, based on their size and media coverage. After contacting these organizations, I gained referrals that led to more contacts. Furthermore, to assure the relevance of the NGOs on the topic, I made a research on the organizations' websites in advance to verify that the chosen or suggested NGOs indeed included animal production issues in their campaigns or online content. However, the size and level of organization of the interviewed NGOs varied a lot; some were based only in Finland and some had international head offices abroad; some had very structured operations and others were based on voluntarism. Given that this research is focused on the NGOs' operations in Finland, only the Finnish offices and operations were studied.

These selected NGOs were first contacted via email that was acquired from their

websites or through email referrals. More specific arrangements were discussed via email or phone. All contacted NGOs agreed to be interviewed. These NGOs were Animalia ry, Dodo ry, Greenpeace Finland, Maan ystävät ry (Friends of the Earth Finland), Oikeutta eläimille (‘Justice for the Animals Association’), Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto ry (‘The Union for Finnish Animal Protection Associations’), Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto ry (the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation), Vegaaniliitto ry (The Vegan Society of Finland) and WWF Finland. Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto ry and Oikeutta eläimille appeared not have official English translations for their names, and their websites are only in Finnish. The official and unofficial translations for these NGOs however are used here to describe the nature of the organizations and to provide better initial understanding for the non-Finnish readers. Of these nine NGOs, Dodo, Greenpeace, Maan ystävät, Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto, and WWF, can be included in the sector of environmental NGOs; Vegaaniliitto as a food-focused NGO, and Animalia, Oikeutta eläimille and Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto (SEY) as animal-focused NGOs. These divisions were made based on the NGOs’ own mission statements and website content, but naturally their operations include also overlapping themes. Despite of the lack of food-related NGOs in Finland, many of the participating NGOs have also operations related to food, notably Animalia, OE, Maan ystävät and WWF.

I interviewed the either the executive directors or active members of the organization that worked on topics related to animal production, making the total amount of interviews 12.

Table 2: Information on participating NGOs

NGO name	Translation in English	Abbreviation of the name	# of people interviewed	NGO type
<i>Animalia ry</i>	-	Animalia	2	Animal rights
<i>Dodo ry</i>	-	Dodo	2	Environmental
<i>Greenpeace Finland</i>	-	Greenpeace	1	Environmental
<i>Maan ystävät Finland</i>	Friends of the Earth	MY	2	Environmental
<i>Oikeutta eläimille</i>	‘Justice for Animals’	OE	1	Animal rights
<i>Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto</i>	‘The Union for Finnish Animal Protection’	SEY	1	Animal protection
<i>Suomen luonnon-suojeluliitto ry</i>	The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation	SLL	2	Environmental
<i>Vegaaniliitto ry</i>	The Vegan Society of Finland	Vegaaniliitto	1	Nutrition and food
<i>WWF Finland</i>	-	WWF	1	Environmental

5.3 Data collection

Primary data was gathered from these face-to-face interviews with NGOs, and they were the main source of information, as the study is constructed around their discourses. The interviewees were informed about the topic of the interview, and the interviews were kept semi-structured in order to allow the interviewees to express their opinions in a freely manner, but also guiding the conversation according to the pre-designed template questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). Also, due to the comparative nature of the study, semi-structured interviews provided data that was easier to compare (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). These face-to-face interviews took place at the NGO’s offices or public locations such as cafes, all of which are located in Helsinki. This was done to allow for a familiar and safe environment in which the interviewees would feel relaxed to state their opinions.

When starting the interview process, the theoretical framework was not decided, which is why the interviews focused on broader topics around animal production, and questions did not focus on discourse specifically. Because of this, the findings can be regarded less biased, as the interviewees were not paying too much attention on their word choices. Based on previous literature, the objectives of the interviews were to discuss the operations and actions taken by the NGOs, their decision-making and other factors influencing campaign selection, and their opinions on the issue of animal production. In each NGO, the interviews were conducted with either the executive directors and/or possibly with one or two staff members, but these interview sessions were done separately to allow for individual expression of ideas without interference, and to allow for more confidentiality (Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). The director and staff members were chosen based on their knowledge on the problems of animal production and how their NGO is or has been approaching the issues. Due to the decision-making factors that would play a role in NGO operations and when selecting on which problems to focus, the knowledge from the leaders and members that worked closely with topics that surround animal production, was thought to be of importance. Also, in most cases, the staff members were the head of operations or in charge of animal-related issues within the NGO, making their opinions equally interesting.

More than one interview was thought to bring more depth and value for the study. However, due to the limited time and scope of this Master's Thesis and those of the participating NGOs, I was not able to include more interviews per NGO in the study, and focusing even more on the depth was decided to be unnecessary. Nevertheless, this study provides sound data on the selected NGOs' current views on animal production.

The face-to-face interviews lasted from 45 minutes to one hour, allowing the interviewees to talk openly and share examples to describe their views and experiences. Due to one NGO's wishes, their interviews was done via email. All interviewees in these eight other NGOs gave their consent to audio record the interviews. The interviews were conducted and transcribed in Finnish, which is the native language of all participants. For the purpose of presenting the findings and the analysis, some parts were later translated into English. The analysis method is explained next.

5.4 Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework

This section provides information about the chosen data analysis method, and how the analysis was conducted. In this paper, the theoretical framework follows closely Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The findings on animal production-related content of the interviews are analyzed through the first two dimensions. Due to limitations of this study, the last dimension was excluded from the analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study was to provide more generalizable findings that explain the phenomenon of animal production at NGOs, thus falling into a category of theory building (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Yin, 2003). The themed approach (Silverman, 2006) was chosen due to the lack of previous research on how problems related to animal production are addressed by NGOs. The themed approach was also thought to be suitable in finding similar patterns in multiple NGOs. A systematic coding process is an essential feature in analyzing qualitative data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) and conducting a textual analysis in critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), and was also used in this study. In the coding process, both deductive and inductive methods were used in order to link the findings to previous studies, but to also allow for more varied findings that were not bound to previous research or literature (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

To start the analysis, I analyzed NGO transcripts based on *talk about animal production and its problems, solutions offered, and criticism towards actors*, as these were the main categories that arose from all interviews. This was done individually for each NGO to provide data for a general description of the NGO that would be formed before further analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). When summarizing the findings of all NGOs, based on the topics that they discuss, more specific topics arose (*animal rights, animal welfare, environment, health, plant-based diets, meat reduction, better meat*), that were used as the starting point for the analysis based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework.

In the first, *discourse-as-text* dimension, I initially coded statements based on the seven topic categories presented above. In this textual analysis, the formal linguistic features of statements were examined, including grammar, word choices, metaphors, emphasis of certain concepts, criticality etc. in relation to how NGOs talk about animal production and its problems, and propose solutions to them. The focus was especially

on transitivity, nominalization and modality; transitivity referring to the connectedness of different actors, nominalization to reducing causality or blame and emphasizing the action, and modality referring to the respondent's commitment to the statement (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). This was done separately for each NGO, but the analysis is presented thematically in order to compare the findings. However, as the analysis progressed, I revised and increased the codes, creating more specific categories for different statement types (the categories are the titles in textual analysis chapter 7.1.). For instance, the division between dominant and critical discourses was done based on the textual analysis that looked into the meanings behind the statements.

At the second level of analysis, *discourse-as-discursive-practice*, the coherence and interdiscursivity of the NGO discourses was analyzed; meaning that the coherence of the individual NGO's talk and the relations to other texts and discourses were examined, respectively. Mostly this was done by comparing the findings between different texts in the sample. In the discussion part, these findings were compared with the animal production discourse literature. The aim was to find out which other discourses may have shaped the NGO's discourse and how it relates to them. If possible, I also suggested what implications these NGO discourses could have on social practice. However, because of the limitations of this study, the Fairclough's third level of analysis including the more general implications to the society at large were out of the scope of this study. Further research is needed to examine how the NGOs' discourse on animal production is likely to influence the social practice.

When moving along in the analysis process, the predesigned categories and research objectives mentioned earlier were referred to in guiding the analysis further. This refers to sensitizing concepts, which allows for better understanding and sense making of the findings based on previous theory or concepts (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Detailed analysis of the NGOs themselves was not necessary, as the focus was not on the organization as a whole, but on the language they use to talk about animal production and its problems.

Finally, the draft of findings was sent to the NGO participants for comments. This was done to increase the multifactorial aspect and the construct validity of the study (Yin, 2003; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009).

5.5 Considerations of the quality of the study

Quality in qualitative study research is often linked with issues of construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2003; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). Moreover, ethical concerns are especially important in critical studies, which are shortly discussed in the end of this chapter.

Construct validity means the researcher's ability to choose correct research methods and the subjectivity of these choices (Yin, 2003). To overcome the issue of construct validity, methodology literature suggests multiple data sources and data triangulation (Yin, 2003; Silverman, 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). Triangulation refers to crosschecking findings from different sources (Yin, 2003; Silverman, 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). This was partly achieved by asking the interviewees to review the draft of findings and to make comments, after which the new comments were crosschecked with the findings. This method is suggested to improve the construct validity of the study, as the participants are able to verify if the information they have provided is correctly presented (Yin, 2003; Silverman, 2006).

Internal validity refers to the lack of 'proof' that causality offers in quantitative studies (Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). According to Yin (2003), these issues can be overcome by analyzing the data using pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations or using logic models. In this study, internal validity has been improved by using thematic analysis, similar to pattern matching.

External validity refers to the generalizability of the findings to other contexts (Yin, 2003). In qualitative research generalizability is a common debate, to which Yin suggests that replication logic is used to increase external validity. In this way, each NGO was initially treated as a single case and studied more in-depth, but in accordance with the research objectives. This increases the generalizability and quality of the study, when similar patterns are found in several NGOs that have been treated with the same rigor (Silverman, 2006).

Reliability refers to the replication of the data; ideally, if the study was to be repeated, the same results would be obtained (Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009). Transcripts were used to increase reliability, as they provide a careful documenting of collected data

(Silverman, 2006).

Ethical concerns

All of the participating NGOs agreed that I use the organizations' names instead of acronyms when presenting the NGOs. However, the individual respondents' names or specific positions in the organization are not disclosed in the study. The summaries and quotes of NGOs were sent to the interviewees for a revision, after which I made corrections accordingly.

6 Interview findings

This findings chapter will present the general findings of the interviews; first summarizing each NGOs' overall perspectives about the problems that they link to animal production and what type of solutions they propose. After the overview of the NGOs' individual responses, the findings are summarized by NGO types and the main topics.

6.1 Overlook at how NGOs address animal production-related issues

This section will introduce the general findings of each NGO, based on the interviews. The summaries are divided based on the core missions of the NGOs; animal, environment, and food.

6.1.1 Responses of animal-focused NGOs

Animalia ry

From Animalia ry (Animalia) I interviewed two representatives, whose answers did not differ much. Overall, Animalia focuses on animal rights, animal welfare, and food perspectives and their approaches are mostly political or consumer-oriented, including promotion of plant-based foods. Animalia influences the political decision-making by being part of the legislative process; participating in government-led groups that discuss animal welfare (e.g. the new animal protection law) to have better laws and restrictions that in the short-term try to decrease animal suffering and in the long-term try to change how animals are perceived (subjects, not objects). They also try to influence decision-makers through citizens; by making citizens aware of the problems, the pressure for the political level to participate becomes stronger. In addition, they do lobbying and contact ministers to discuss animal welfare matters in light of upcoming political decisions. One of the respondents also described a big victory that was recently achieved, when animal

welfare and animal rights issues were added as topics in the national education plan in Finland, meaning that all school children will learn about these topics during their school time.

Although one of the respondents emphasize the role of political action and argue that consumers should not be the only ones to make a change, the other one emphasized the role of consumption change. According to her, bigger impact is achieved through consumers (as compared to politicians), because “when consumers decide to do something big, bigger impacts can follow”. They both mention that it is important to increase awareness on animal production, because people do not necessarily understand what is the ‘actual reality’ and may think that things are better in Finland. The goals of their consumption-based solutions are to increase discussion of the relationship between humans and animals, to promote consumption of vegan foods, and to notify on the international progress on animal rights and welfare topics. They organize school visits, write blogs, organize documentary viewings, and share research and literature from around the world.

Oikeutta eläimille – Justice for Animals

The interview with Oikeutta eläimille (OE) was the only one that was done via email. The organization’s main focus is on animal rights, but they sometimes include also environmental, animal protection and health factors. They try to bring the animal rights and animal production problems -discussions to the mainstream discussion, and ultimately to change how animals are seen by humans. Some of their tactics include releasing videos from the conditions and actions happening at animal farms and slaughterhouses and campaigning around them, as well as grass-root activities like lectures, school visits, leaflets, info stands and demonstrations. Their reasons for the videos is the need to increase people’s awareness of the practices (both legal and illegal) that take place at animal production facilities. Although the industry and production side actors often are provoked by OE’s messages, their goal is not to have a conversation with them, but to bring their viewpoint to the public discussion: “we don’t mean to blame individual producers of defects, but to focus on the causes behind the problem, which is that in industrial animal agriculture animals are seen as machines instead of feeling individuals”. In addition to increasing awareness and discussion on animal rights, they also promote plant-based diets as a more animal-friendly lifestyle option and organize the Vegan Challenge campaign together with Vegaaniliitto.

Suomen Eläinsuojeluyhdistysten liitto ry - The Union for Finnish Animal Protection Associations

Suomen Eläinyhdistysten liitto ry (SEY) describes their main focus being on animal welfare issues and their main goal to improve the lives of all animals, also farmed animals. They apply different viewpoints, including political action, consumption-based and production-based views. They limit their focus to animal welfare, because it is their organization's mission. One of their tactics is to influence legislation to achieve minimum standards and "how the bigger animal masses are kept". Currently they are involved in the animal protection law reform. One of their approaches is to inform and educate people on how to treat animals right, mostly through media. They also communicate this to pupils at school, through materials and 'animal week'-campaign, as it is "easier to influence the younger generation". In terms of more concrete tactics, SEY has animal protection advisors that can be contacted to inform about mistreatments and who can then visit these places.

6.1.2 Responses of environmental NGOs

Dodo ry

The simultaneous interview with Dodo ry (Dodo) was done with one member of the organization and one who worked in their project called Haarukanjälki ("Fork Print"), which they considered to be their most closely linked activity to animal production. The problems of animal production are seen in Dodo's work mostly through the sustainable food production topics, under which projects like Haarukanjälki and city farming belong. They also offer vegan food at their events (both inside and outside of organization), but this is considered a taken-for-granted custom, not really an aim to change people's behavior. Eating vegan or vegetarian food is rather a consequence of their members' behavior, because many people don't consider meat as ecological or environmentally friendly choice. Also the ethical part is described to be an important factor for individuals but not part of Dodo's focus. Instead of highlighting the problems and increasing awareness of the population as a whole, Dodo rather focuses on empowering young adults through positive messages and experimentation that give them tools to work with. Instead of waiting for political decisions, they want to activate people to act on their own. However, they suggest that taxation could be an option to support plant-based foods by making meat products more expensive. They focus on the

topics that are currently most interesting. Sustainable food production and food safety is one of their long-term topics that relates to animal production.

Greenpeace Finland

Greenpeace Finland (Greenpeace) views that they need to focus on few things in order to have an impact and also because of limited resources and expertise. According to the interviewee, in their climate change campaign they have focused on energy production, “because it is the main cause of pollution, even though there are others as well”.

Therefore, they do not have campaigns or communication against animal production, but some of their campaigns do touch upon the same problems (e.g. rainforest clearance). Traditionally they do not focus on consumption awareness because they see that other means can provide quicker solutions to their selected campaigns. Greenpeace sees that political and systemic change is what they try to achieve, not individuals’ behavioral changes. Therefore, they do more specific campaigns with clear goals (laws, companies to stop using specific material, even consumer pressure to influence companies etc.) and not consumption awareness campaigns.

Maan ystävät ry - Friends of the Earth Finland

Maan ystävät ry (MY) was another NGO with which I conducted two separate interviews. Both of the interviewees emphasized that as a small volunteer-based organization, there is a vast diversity of opinions and perspectives that their volunteers have. This was shown also from their responses that varied between more radical and more moderate perspectives, and sometimes emphasized different issues. Although Maan ystävät describes itself as an environmental organization, in reality their repertoire includes also animal or food-related topics. Of all NGOs interviewed, Maan ystävät had the largest variety of perspectives they included in their view and tactics considering animal production and its problems. They criticize animal production and its problems, and argue that both consumption and production need to change. They mainly focus on talking about sustainable food and food production, and their approaches to promote it, including mostly consumer-based solutions, such as emphasizing vegan diet. They collaborate with other food and animal rights-focused organizations, like Animalia, Oikeutta eläimille and Vegaaniliitto. The concrete tactics they use to increase awareness, are sharing research, books and documentaries, writing blogs, organizing reading groups and lectures, participating and cooperating with other NGOs and bigger events.

Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto ry

From Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto ry (SLL) I interviewed separately two members. Their responses were very similar, describing their focus on environmental perspective and influencing politics rather than consumers. Even though they describe their goals as radical and ambitious, their solutions and approaches are rather modest, taking into consideration the reality and possibilities to make an impact. They both thought that SLL is a rather traditional and conservative mainstream NGO in terms of its ideology, tactics and followers, but agreed that in the future they are likely to become more ‘radicalized’, like their youth organization Luonto-Liitto (the Nature League), and include for instance more plant-based diet and animal welfare aspects in their messages.

According to the interviewees, in order to change consumer awareness to action and achieve behavioral change, more legislative and financial tools and measures are needed. For the future they suggest adverse tax on meat, directing agricultural subsidies to the right direction, and supporting organic production, for example. However, both interviewees stress that it takes a long time to achieve a change through political decision-making and that now it is not a good time to try to make progress in animal protection issues or environmental issues, because of the current government rather opposes increasing restrictions and supports more subsidies to animal farms. “In addition, there is economic crisis in agriculture, which makes it hard to make big reforms e.g. in the EU Common Agriculture Policy (CAP)”.

WWF Finland

WWF Finland (WWF) has worked on food topics for many years, but now that meat production is in the public discussion, they feel like it is even more important to focus on such topics. WWF has mostly consumer-oriented solutions and their main goal related to animal production is to reduce meat consumption and increase the consumption of more ecological meat options. In addition to environmental problems, healthiness and animal welfare are very essential parts of the food discussion relating to animal based foods, and because of this, also WWF includes them in their messages to certain extent. However, they are used mostly to support the environmental aspects, because they do not have expertise on health or animal welfare.

They are also part of shaping the food policies whenever such political processes are ongoing, but this is much smaller part of their work in terms of food-related approach.

The interviewee does not see that meat taxes would be a good solution, but mentions that political means could be used to encourage new type of food production and to try to make public procurement more responsible. If the public institutions would make sure that they reduce meat purchases and that the meat that they buy is responsibly produced, and that the feed and soy are responsibly produced as well. They have environmental education materials that they share at schools, also including food. They have a food guide, fish guide and an upcoming meat guide, which include the environmental impacts of food production, suggest more environmentally-friendly choices, and explain how you can make an impact with your food choices. Their messages include the effects of food production and what is the role of animal and meat production in it.

6.1.3 Responses of food-focused NGO

Vegaaniliitto ry - The Vegan Society of Finland

Problems on which Vegaaniliitto ry (Vegaaniliitto) focuses are the environmental consequences of diet, animal welfare and rights, and also health and consumption-related issues. The interviewee describes that they “equally emphasize the role of health, environment and animal welfare and rights when communicating about vegan diet”. This is said to be mostly due to their members’ interests. According to Vegaaniliitto, traditionally the animal perspective has been most dominant view in people’s minds, but now “increasingly more people want to come and talk about the environmental and health reasons”. Although, these different problems do not necessarily always emphasize the role of animal production, they are related to food and especially vegan nutrition.

They specialize in vegan nutrition, which is something that “nobody else focuses on”. Vegaaniliitto’s solutions include approaches that are meant to increase awareness but also to encourage people to try plant-based foods. Their main approach is to help people, who are interested in trying or finding out more about vegetarian and vegan diet, nutrition and cooking advice. Rather than using negative messages, emphasizing the reasons and problems of animal production and making people lose their hope in the matter, Vegaaniliitto provides solutions and helps consumers to imagine the alternatives and encourages people to take action. Their main tactics include grass-root activities such as talking to people at events, screening documentaries, having lectures, and

organizing different events, like Veg Fest-festival or the Vegan Challenge. They also have a nutritional therapist that can be contacted to assist in nutrition related questions. The Vegan challenge that they organize in collaboration with Oikeutta eläimille is described as the more “radical” campaign that combines awareness and consumption topics, and encourages people to try veganism.

6.2 NGOs’ different perspectives on animal production

The different perspectives given by the NGOs on animal production and how to address it are numerous, but some general findings are evident from the sample. As could be expected, NGOs are inclined to focus on the topics that are part of their mission and expertise. Lack of expertise, resources or fit with their organizational goals, or the existence of other NGOs, are described as the reasons for not addressing topics that are not directly linked to their core mission. However, there are some exceptions, such as Maan ystävät, Dodo and WWF, that have more varied perspectives and include animal welfare and food topics even though their main focus is environment. Also Vegaaniliitto can be seen to extend its focus outside of food, as they include animal rights and environmental points in their messages. Despite of the lack of focus over certain topics, the majority of NGOs agree that in the future they could do more or collaborate with other NGOs to include messages that are currently not in their agenda. Animal-focused NGOs are the ones that stick to their core missions, also within their category, as OE is most radical, SEY the least, and Animalia in between.

The problems that the interviewees from the nine NGOs describe as relating or being caused by animal production include examples from the environmental, health, animal rights, and animal welfare viewpoints. Also few other perspectives are mentioned, notably meat reduction, better meat and plant-based diets, which relate to health perspective, but are distinguished as separate categories by the interviewees. In general, the environmental problems are emphasized by environmental NGOs and the animal rights or animal welfare problems are emphasized by animal-focused NGOs. Health problems are not emphasized by any NGO, but are often regarded as an added advantage to following plant-based diets. In general, food topics are mentioned with varying emphasis by all NGOs from different specializations; animal rights, environmental, and naturally also food. Overall, several topics go beyond the NGO-specific scopes, although fewer NGOs include these non-traditional topics in their

actual operations. Here I will present a more detailed outlook on the major problems and perceptions described by the NGO representatives.

When addressing problems, the production-related issues, including environmental and animal rights or welfare issues were mentioned. However, when talking about the suggested solutions, the emphasis was mostly on consumption change and political involvement. Increasing awareness was not viewed as the best approach to changing behavior. Some NGOs suggested political involvement or production-led change, whereas some argued that more action-driven projects, like campaigns that encourage people to try plant-based foods, are more likely to have an impact. However, as the focus of this study is not the different approaches that NGOs use, these different tactics are not analyzed in detail.

6.2.1 Perspectives by NGO type

Animal-focused NGOs

All of the three animal-focused NGOs addressed animal or meat consumption in their interviews. The views of Animalia and OE could be regarded mostly more radical, as their ultimate goals are to end all animal abuse and change the human – animal relationship and people’s conception of animals. Although both Animalia and OE agree with the animal rights perspective, Animalia’s messages and tactics are more moderate and include more emphasis on animal welfare improvements. This is due to their perception that achieving a more radical change is rather unrealistic and also because they try to influence political decision-making, which can be considered more conventional arena. The linkage to food is emphasized by both of these NGOs, and they advocate the consumption of more plant-based foods, mostly because of the animal rights or welfare problems. SEY has a more moderate perspective and although focuses on animal welfare improvements, does not address animal rights nor meat reduction *per se*. Instead, SEY encourages people to pay attention to the origin of their food products and on how much they consume.

The animal-focused NGOs mainly use their core missions to support their views, stating that animal rights or animal welfare views are the reason why plant-based diets should be adopted or at least pay attention to where the meat is produced. Animalia and OE, which both promote veganism, emphasize the positive aspects of the diet and lifestyle. Although the animal-focused NGOs acknowledge the environmental problems related

to animal production, they do not really talk about them, only mention them if they support their core messages. Similarly, the health aspects of food are mentioned as a ‘possibility’ with plant-based foods, but are not emphasized as a separate issue.

Environmental NGOs

The findings of the five environmental NGOs are quite diverse. Overall, the majority focuses on the environmental aspects of animal production, if they include them in their agenda at all. All of the environmental NGOs link high GHG emissions to animal production, even though only SLL has formal operations to tackle especially environmental problems. Surprisingly, the emphasis is on sustainable and ecological animal production that is promoted by the majority of the environmental NGOs.

However, only two NGOs; MY and WWF, have specific food divisions. WWF has the more moderate perspective and promotes meat reduction and better meat alternatives, whereas MY has a rather radical and critical view compared to other environmental NGOs. MY promotes consumption of plant-based foods and includes a more animal rights perspective in addition to environmental reasons. Also Dodo discusses animal production from the ecological perspective and promotes plant-based foods in their messages, but does not have much formal operations or campaigns with regards to sustainable animal production or meat reduction. For Dodo, the focus is rather on sustainable food, not necessarily plant-based food. SLL does include meat reduction in their consumption messages, but does not have specific campaigns on it. They are also one of the few NGOs to include health reasons in the reasons for meat reduction.

Overall, compared to animal-focused NGOs, environmental NGOs have more moderate and supportive perspectives, some supporting animal production if it is more sustainable and ‘hopefully also good for animals’. Pasture-based livestock farming is included in this description, whereas intensive farming, broiler and pig production are seen as less sustainable. The reasons for supporting small-scale livestock farming are naturally environmental, including biodiversity and the protection of certain traditional species.

Food-focused NGO

Although several other NGOs include food in their operations and messages, Vegaaniliitto is the only NGO that is discussed here under food-focused NGOs. The main focus of Vegaaniliitto is naturally the promotion of vegan nutrition and encouragement for people to try plant-based foods. The NGO includes environmental (land use, water use, and climate effects), animal rights and welfare, and health reasons

in their messages. However, as their mainly focus on the positive aspects of vegan diet and lifestyle, they do not necessarily discuss the problems, but highlight the advantages that can be gained when eating plant-based foods. Interestingly, health advantages are not emphasized, because it is people's own choice, what kind of vegan diet they want to construct. Essentially, Vegaaniliitto strives to make veganism a seriously taken diet and not just another food trend.

6.2.2 Perspectives by topic

Animal rights

Animal rights and health problems were not very prominent in the interviews, mostly animal-focused NGOs addressed animal rights issues. In terms of animal rights, only Animalia and Oikeutta eläimille gave detailed examples of the nature of the problems, mostly including objectification of animals, the relationship between humans and animals and the incapability of treating them as sentient, feeling and conscious beings. Also Maan ystävät mentioned 'animal rights' as a problem that influences their ideology, however they did not emphasize the topic when discussing their approaches and messages.

Animal welfare

Animal welfare as a term was mentioned by several NGOs, animal-focused, environment-focused, and food-focused, most of which however did not describe what they meant by animal welfare nor did include it in their messages or tactics. Animal-focused NGOs were the ones to talk and act more on animal welfare problems, Animalia being the one to use most detailed descriptions of painful procedures or abuse. Many NGOs mention animal welfare problems, but do not include them in their agenda mostly because of misfit with their core mission or because the existence of animal protection NGOs. In some cases, meat reduction is considered to improve animal welfare, as more attention and resources could be put on farming fewer animals. According to SLL animal welfare topics are not currently in their agenda but they wish to become known as more animal-focused NGO in the future.

Environment

The majority of the NGOs mention environmental problems to some extent in their responses. Especially climate effects, emissions, rainforest destruction/soy production, biodiversity, land use and water use were the most often described environmental

problems. All environmental NGOs as well as Vegaaniliitto discuss the climate effects of animal production. This was more prominent topic among the environmental NGOs compared to animal rights NGOs, that include environmental issues such as climate and land use when they support their core messages, but do not discuss them individually in more detail. However, also Vegaaniliitto, as the only entirely food-focused NGO, describes in more detail some of the environmental problems related to food production.

Health

The health problems were not emphasized by any NGO, not even by the organizations that had specific food-related operations and supported plant-based diets. These NGOs either didn't mention health reasons, used it as an additional benefit to support their messages on plant-based diets, or rather mentioned the possibility of eating healthier with plant-based diet, but left it to people's own choice to choose whether or not they want to eat in a healthy way. The reasons given for excluding health problems were lack of expertise in the topic and the fact that plant-based diets do not automatically mean a healthy diet. The NGOs that mentioned health reasons, mainly used it to support another argument.

Food

Overall, food-related topics are found to be emphasized by many NGOs; both animal-focused, environmental-focused, and naturally also by food-focused NGOs. All NGOs discussed plant-based diets or meat reduction to some extent in the interviews. The range of their perspective varies from offering plant-based foods at events and acknowledging that meat consumption is at too high level, to more 'radical' views that criticized the use of animals as food altogether. In the case of environmental NGOs, meat reduction or better meat messages are the most common. The arguments behind their food-related messages or views were closely linked to their NGO mission; environmental reasons such as sustainability, food safety and biodiversity were used to support their messages. From environmental NGOs, only Maan ystävät described animal rights as a reason to support plant-based diets. The animal rights NGOs naturally share this ideology. Dodo highlights the sustainability of food production, and thus does not specifically focus on plant-based foods, but the overall sustainability of our diets.

Plant-based diets

Vegetarianism, veganism or plant-based diets are discussed by several NGOs, irrespective of their organizational background. Many animal rights and environmental NGOs had food-related operations and even NGOs that do not have food-related campaigns, agreed that reducing meat consumption would be advisable. NGOs that have specific operations in relation to food, are Animalia, Maan ystävät, Oikeutta eläimille, WWF and Vegaaniliitto. Of these the majority is shown to promote specifically plant-based diets, and only WWF to campaign for meat reduction. Dodo and Greenpeace discuss plant-based foods as a part of their food servings or tastings at events, but do not have campaigns about these topics.

The NGOs that promoted plant-based diets did not emphasize the problems, but rather the positive aspects of eating plant-based foods and the portrayed it as a good, tasty and easy alternative and a choice for people to make for themselves. Instead of underlining the problems that are linked with animal production, many NGOs rather discuss the advantages that choosing a plant-based diet can bring, in terms of environment, health and animal welfare. However, the majority of NGOs that addressed plant-based diets do not emphasize health reasons, because vegetarian or vegan diets do not automatically mean healthier eating, but require planning just as any diet. Improved health was rather considered an additional benefit for choosing plant-based diets for other reasons.

Meat reduction

As a distinction from plant-based diet, some NGOs rather emphasized the importance to reduce meat instead of the more ‘radical’ view of adopting plant-based diets. SEY, WWF and SLL considered meat reduction either an important way to improve the production and product qualities, or reduce the problems linked to animal production. However, of these NGOs, only WWF has an actual campaign to promote meat reduction. SEY and SLL both agree that people should consider more carefully how they consume meat, and SLL sees that in the future they could do more campaigning to support plant-based diets. Moreover, SLL’s traditional pasture meat campaign supports small-scale livestock farming with reduced meat consumption and opposes intensive farming. Also Dodo notes that the current level of meat consumption is not sustainable and suggest insects as a possible alternative to meat.

Better meat

The same NGOs that support meat reduction were also the ones to discuss better meat and small-scale livestock farming as a positive development as opposed to intensive animal farming. SEY also mentioned that if the demand would decrease and people would be willing to pay more for the products, the meat producers would be incentivized to improve their practices. As described above, also SLL supports small-scale livestock farming because it protects biodiversity of certain traditional landscapes, but does not really talk about improving the quality of meat, but views that other types of meat production (broiler, pig) could be reduced. WWF encourages people to reduce meat but also to change to better meat products, that are sustainably produced and animal-friendly.

7 Analysis and discussion on how NGOs talk about animal production

Although these different viewpoints that were described in more detail in the previous chapter, can be considered to indicate different discourses and supporting the ideologies behind them, this assumption cannot be made without a more in-depth analysis of the texts and their interdiscursivity with other discourses. In this chapter the findings of the interviews are analyzed following Fairclough's three-dimensional framework on critical discourse analysis. The first part focuses on the analysis at the level of text; looking at which actors were highlighted or criticized, which actors were given responsibility, and how these were apparent from linguistic point of view. At the second level, the interdiscursivity and coherence of the NGO discourses are evaluated by comparing them to the animal production context. Finally, in the last part of this chapter, I compare these findings to the context and theories on animal production discourse and NGO discourse in general, and discuss the possibilities that these NGO discourses can have in influencing the society and people's perceptions.

Most of the interviewees that were conducted with two interviewees from the same NGO (Animalia, Dodo, Maan ystävät and SLL) had mostly quite similar use of language and terms, however differences appeared in their commitment to certain statements over others. In most cases the opinions were the same, but in some cases one of the interviewees would include their personal opinion, or emphasize one point over another, unlike the other interviewee. However, only the same viewpoints are included in the analysis.

7.1 Discourse-as-text analysis

Although the statements analyzed in this chapter have been translated from the Finnish responses, I have made sure that the verb structures are kept unchanged. However, as the Finnish language differs from English, evaluations from the use of some pronouns could not be evaluated, for instance. The texts were analyzed based on the grammar, sentence structure and word choices, in order to evaluate how the NGOs perceive and talk about animal production, their commitment to their statements, and their emphasis on certain actors and problems over others. The text analysis discovers eight topics per discourse category (16 in total) that are the most discussed and also clearly linked to animal production, its problems, or solutions. These topics include the main actors that

play a role in animal production; people, society, consumers, consumption, animals, production, plant-based diets, environment and health (or rather unhealthiness). For the sake of clarity, these topics are divided between dominant and critical discourses, as the second level of analysis and discussion is based on this division. The analysis of the statements is shown under each topic, with the NGO statements presented below. Summary of the findings is presented in the appendix, in table 4.

The majority of NGOs discuss not only problems or blame certain the actors behind the problems of animal production, but offer also solutions. The criticism over certain actors is often not very specific, as using vague and large group labels to describe actors responsible for animal production issues help these groups evade responsibility. However also often these solutions would only improve the situation, instead of changing the way animal production is understood in society. These vague and improvement-oriented statements are included in the analysis but they are often considered to be part of dominant discourse, because of their lack of criticism and focus on changing the overall practice of animal production or the reason behind the problem; the way we think about animals. On the other hand, statements that discuss alternatives to current practice of eating animals (e.g. plant-based foods) are considered critical discourse. Overall, statements that are thought to be part of dominant discourse may well be very critical towards certain actors or problems, but if textually the statements are shown to implicate dominant discourse structures, the statements are depicted as part of the dominant category.

7.1.1 Discourses in support of the dominant discourse

Commodification of animals (dominant)

These next examples are from NGOs that describe animals with negative and critical style and portray animals as victims of suffering and abuse. Despite of the active verb forms in SEY's and SLL's statements ("they suffer"), the animals can be viewed as victims of some unspecified actor. However, because of this lack of emphasis on responsibility that is clouded behind "certain procedures" and "ethical problems at broiler factories", the criticism is not as strong as in the case of OE, that portray animals as objects of humans. Moreover, all NGOs that discuss animals or animal production procedures use words that can be considered to objectify animals. These are "bovine", "broiler", "production animal", "steak" and "meat". Although these statements criticize

the production and procedures, the way the statements are textually constructed, supports the dominant discourse, as animals are essentially the objects of human action or the responsible actors are not discussed.

Exhibit 1: Commodification of animals (dominant)

“Animals are produced in such masses and treated as non-individuals” (Animalia)

“Animals suffer at the farms from certain procedures and other things that happen” (SEY)

“...some ethical problems at broiler factories; that they are growing too fast or their bones are broken or that they suffer” (SLL)

“The ultimate problem is that people see animals as beings that can be considered

Humans dominating animals and nature (dominant)

Humans as a species was not discussed by many NGOs; mostly the focus is on people as consumers and individuals, as will be discussed later. However, animal rights NGOs, that have the most critical view on animal rights topics, like Animalia and Oikeutta eläimille, use rather negative and critical wordings when referring to humans as subjects that use animals or nature for their own purposes or cause them pain. From these examples, the responsible actor is clearly “humans” or “people”, and this is expressed with a use of active verbs that can be thought to emphasize and highlight the criticism and actions of the subject. Also the high level of modality of the claims is evident through the use of active verbs; these sentences are presented as facts instead of opinions. Although these NGOs clearly have an animal rights perspective and criticize humans using and abusing animals, from a linguistic point of view, these statements are more linked to dominant discourse. Some other dominant discourses may use more neutral tone when discussing the power relations, but even with such negative tone, these statements textually ‘support’ the dominant discourse.

Exhibit 2: Humans dominating animals and nature (dominant)

“Animal groups that people use” (Animalia)

“Human unilaterally abuses animals” (Animalia)

“Humans clearing nature areas for farming, pasture and livestock” (Animalia)

“The ultimate problem is that people see animals as beings that can be considered food or other resources” (OE)

Undermining people's responsibility and capability to obtain information (dominant)

The majority of NGOs use the word “people” to refer to individuals that are both described as active subjects; criticized for not being aware of the reality behind animal production and making a change in their consumption of animal-based products, but also as victims who should not be blamed for their shortcomings. The rather supportive outlook is presented by Animalia, SEY, and Vegaaniliitto, although these NGOs also use critical language structures. In the examples below, the level of affinity of the statements is low; the use of passive verbs evades responsibility and depicts people as victims of the ‘lack of information’. At the same time, information and knowledge are depicted as difficult and out of people’s reach. However, using the concept of “information” gives a neutral tone to these statements; as if it is nobody’s fault that people do not know enough.

Exhibit 3: Undermining people’s responsibility and capabilities to obtain information (dominant)

“It is not no surprise that people don’t know, because it would require a lot of studying” (Animalia)

“People don’t know enough, but it’s not their fault” (Animalia)

“I don’t think that many people, unless they familiarize themselves properly, knows how animals are kept” (SEY)

“Earlier there was a lot of talk about how in Finland things are so much better than anywhere else. That perception has outdated”. --- “I believe that nowadays it is better known that we are not the top level” (SEY)

“There is a lot of information available but it doesn’t reach everyone” (Vegaaniliitto)

Support for animal production and continued meat consumption (dominant)

The concept of “meat production” and even the most neutral term “production”, are dominant concepts that have a more neutral or collaborative perspective to animal production. Some NGOs, mainly SEY, SLL, and WWF use these terms or have a neutral and supportive tone in their statements about production and producers. This can be because they are all large NGOs that collaborate with different actors in the society; politics, producers and consumers which may hinder their criticism but also open doors to influence these other players. SEY’s examples talk about “production” and

“producers” and relate to their concern over consumption. Overall, none of these statements really take a side, but have a neutral and factual tone, which is achieved through the use of business-related words and the comparison of “Finnish production” vs. “cheap foreign”. Moreover, the use of passive tenses is used to reduce criticism and responsibility. However, WWF’s use of modal verbs reduces the perceived commitment to the argument; instead of a fact, the statement can be considered a suggestion. SLL and WWF highlight the environmental advantages and minor disadvantages of using “small scale” animal production. Overall, these statements sympathize with the production and depict them not as the reason for problems, but as actors, or even victims, that have to make changes because of changing consumption.

Exhibit 4: Support for animal production and continued meat consumption

(dominant)

“The consumption culture supports cheap production, so that producers find it difficult to invest in animal wellbeing, because they don’t get much money for their product” (SEY)

“One obstacle is, what producer organizations talk a lot, that when other countries operate at this level, that if Finnish production would get even more expensive, then in stores people would choose the cheap foreign” (SEY)

“There are certain traditional species, that maintain environmental biodiversity, some traditional landscapes and original species. So in a sense it is good, that there is some small scale animal production” (SLL)

“And of course we are aware that it (animal production) relates to benefits that are valued in this society; like jobs and food safety” (SLL)

“Actually we see that environmentally sustainable food production can include nature pasture meat, which is sustainably produced and hopefully also good from an animal welfare point of view” (WWF)

“We could build a system which involves animal production, but that would still be environmentally sustainable. The direction to which people will move their meat consumption would be nature pasture meat, which actually increases biodiversity” (WWF)

“The whole local food and other concepts will lead to the industry having to meet half way in many ways.” (SLL)

Reduction of meat consumption (dominant)

Despite of the support for animal production, several NGOs also address the need to reduce consumption from different point of views. Environmental reasons to reduce meat consumption are given by Dodo, WWF, SLL, that use arguments that link sustainability, big environmental effects and other environmental reasons to meat consumption. Furthermore, meat consumption is presented as too high in western countries and in Finland, with the suggestion that less meat eating would reduce the problems. The use of active forms (“it is not”, “they have”) in these statements emphasizes the factual status of the statements. However, WWF uses meat consumption as a nominalization, which reduces the responsibility and creates vagueness; meat consumption simply is something that exists and should be reduced, but who is responsible of this? Dodo’s and SLL’s statements that depict “we” or “Finns” as the eaters, clearly highlights more the responsibility that people have to regulate their own consumption. In all of the statements, “meat consumption” is the dominant description which can be considered to be a term that is part of the dominant discourse vocabulary. Moreover, reduction is an improvement and not a holistic solution including also animal rights perspectives that would challenge the dominant discourse. Animalia’s statement is also included here, because of its moderate perspective with “need to be reduced”, and “not everyone” referring to a dominant discourse in which reduction is seen sufficient. However, by using “animal products” and “right away” refers to the more animal rights-oriented perspective and the desire to end meat eating altogether.

Exhibit 5: Reduction of meat consumption (dominant)

“Good to promote that the use of all animal products need to be reduced, but not that everyone should become vegan right away” (Animalia)

“That overall it is not sustainable that people eat as much meat as we eat in western countries at the moment. When thinking about future” (Dodo)

“It is not very ecological or environmentally friendly to eat meat” (Dodo)

“The consumption of animal-based products needs to be reduced, because they have much bigger environmental effects” (WWF)

“In order to secure the nature protection interests that we have; that Finns would eat meat few kilos a year would be a suitable amount. Therefore, we have a big contradiction in terms of how much Finns now eat meat. In order to preserve the nature’s biodiversity, we do not need pigs or broilers”. (SLL)

Better meat alternatives (dominant)

In addition to statements that call for reduction of meat consumption, some NGOs propose “better” meat options. Mainly these suggestions are given by Dodo, SEY and WWF. SEY’s statement suggests people to “pay attention” to their consumption which would result in better quality and production as the smaller production amounts could allow for improved practices. The responsibility is put on consumers’ actions, however, the expected outcome (“better quality and production”) is rather modest and does not really meet the level of problems that animal production entails. Linguistically, the use of the structure “would enable to produce” again clouds the subject and thus also responsibility, and lowers the level of modality. The examples of WWF’s statements show how they link meat production as a cause of environmental problems and suggest that non-meat products are better. However, the use of “better” is vague concept and can include anything from less environmentally harmful red meat products to fish. WWF’s last statement emphasizes the importance of environmental reasons for WWF, and on the other hand, can be seen to describe veganism as an ultimately too distant and unnecessary goal for WWF.

Exhibit 6: Better meat alternatives (dominant)

“We encourage (people) to know where products come from and pay attention to their consumption, reduction is one factor, which would enable to produce better but smaller quantities” (SEY)

“We consider the environmental effects of meat production and tell consumers about better options” (WWF)

“Our main message is ‘less but better’” (WWF)

“And then public procurements are one thing where a lot could be done. Especially, to get more sustainable meat and make sure that the feed and soy are responsible” (WWF)

“We don’t see it necessary from an environmental point of view that everyone becomes fully vegan” (WWF)

Negative assumptions of plant-based foods compared to meat (dominant)

Although most of the discussion around plant-based foods is positive and considered critical discourse, some also criticize either the beliefs and prejudice that people have

against vegetarianism or veganism; the extremity, lack of seriousness or the difficulty of plant-based diets. Also the cultural connotations that people link to meat, and not to plant-based foods; myths of meat, protein intake, and easiness are mentioned. These statements are all very convincing due to the mostly active voice and strong word choices. Some statements still strive to more neutral tone by not clearly highlighting the role of people, instead using the concepts of “attitude”, and more passive voice. This suggests that some NGOs do not want to put responsibility on consumers, but rather discuss the prejudice as part of how things are. From a textual basis, these statements are considered dominant discourse because essentially they depict plant-based foods in a bad light, even though their overall purpose is the opposite. However, talking about the difficultness of plant-based diets does not support the use of alternatives to meat eating, but highlight the cultural and personal links to meat.

Exhibit 7: Negative assumptions of plant-based foods (dominant)

“Many people think that vegetarianism is something very extreme” (Animalia)

“There is still a lot of attitude that vegetarianism is a hippie thing, that it is not taken seriously” (Animalia)

“The myths related to meat eating; that you can’t get protein from anything else” (MY)

“The manhood and masculinity-related cultural connotations” (MY)

“For many people animal-based products are somehow culturally important” (MY)

“Meat – is a status thing, especially in developing countries” (Dodo)

“The challenge is that it [vegetarianism] is regarded difficult” (Vegaaniliitto)

“It is not yet as easy as some other diet. You can’t just walk in a shop and grab almost anything” (Vegaaniliitto)

“Many can feel it as a real threat that now their freedom to choose what they eat is being limited” (MY)

Emphasis on environmental problems and improving them (dominant)

The statements that discuss environmental problems are considered dominant discourse, because they focus mostly on the environmental side of the problems and suggest improvements that will diminish the environmental emissions. However, in order to achieve a radical change in how animal production and animals are perceived by

people, using only environmental statements is not enough. Overall, the majority of the statements are rather one-sided and only mention certain large problems that are linked to animal production (e.g. climate emission), whereas the more specific arguments direct attention to soy farmers and waste-reducing improvements. Furthermore, social injustice is depicted by one NGO. Because the majority use environmental problem-related statements, it can be argued that they do not want to specify and put responsibility on any specific actors or groups (e.g. soy producers).

Many NGOs mention several environmental problems that can be related to animal production. The majority uses the well-known concepts such as “climate change”, “climate effects”, “water use”, “biodiversity” etc. but only few discuss them in more detail or comment on how animal production causes these, which is why a text analysis is difficult to make. The majority of environmental NGOs; SLL, Dodo and Maan ystävät all mention the top three biggest sources of emissions; transportation, food and living. Greenpeace describes the energy-sector as the biggest polluter, and says that this is the reason why they focus on energy issues. SLL and Maan ystävät are the two NGOs that have the most statements related to environmental problems. Their choices of words are for most part very scientific or include well-known terms to describe environmental problems; “GHG emissions”, “ammonia”, “methane”, “eutrophication”, “water-intensive” and “natural resources”. However, even these statements use the language structures with passive voice and put responsibility on animal production as a whole.

The few examples of the more specific description are presented in exhibit 8.

Greenpeace and Maan ystävät are one of the few that do mention the causality when describing “soy production”, “illegal logging” and “rainforest clearance”. Also SLL’s statement below shows other solutions than reducing animal production, mainly bio energy solutions. Overall, it seems that SLL’s statement suggests that more specific, waste-oriented solutions could also be developed, that would reduce the environmental problems. Also Greenpeace’s statement is not suggesting the end of animal production, but rather changing the environmental problems of rainforest clearing. Although these examples below put responsibility on specific actors, the focus is mostly on improving

and diminishing the environmental problems of animal production, not the practice in general.

Exhibit 8: Examples of the more specific environmental problems and improvement solutions (dominant)

“Currently we are trying to find out about the so-called livestock production’s manure question, it is quite big of a problem. We are finding out about bio gas and bio energy” (SLL)

“There (in the Amazon) we have challenged the soy industry and illegal logging and livestock farming not to advance rainforest clearing” (Greenpeace)

“We demand them to stop clearing the rainforest, and if that happens, then of course it impacts so that the industry cannot spread indefinitely” (Greenpeace)

“Pressure on the rainforests, where the soy is being produced and the transportation” (MY)

“Soy production is devastating. Some have to farm for exports and starve themselves” (MY)

7.1.2 Critical discourses

The majority of the animal rights NGOs, especially Animalia, OE, and also Maan ystävät, use language structures that criticize animal production. The main characteristic of all the statements is the concept of “animal production” that is used as an active subject, although the industries that relate to animal production are not only one actor. However, using the concept of animal production can be considered a statement in itself, because the word is more morally-laden compared to “meat production” or even to the most neutral term “production”, which are used by some less ‘radical’ NGOs. The following section gives other examples of language use that can be considered part of critical discourses.

Non-human animals and animals (critical)

First examples portray the human-animal relationship of rather animal-focused NGOs, in which humans are literally considered similar to animals, using the description of “other animals”.

Exhibit 9: Non-human animals and animals (critical)

“Humans are animals too” (Animalia)

“A change to how people see other animals” (OE)

“We question that other animals could be regarded as food or resources” (OE)

“We remind in many occasions that in this lifestyle and diet eliminating or minimizing the abuse of other animals is very strongly present” (Vegaaniliitto)

Animals as individuals with emotions (critical)

Finally, in these last examples animal-focused NGOs, as well as Vegaaniliitto use adjectives, sentence structures and metaphors that depict animals as subjects, as individuals that have feelings. Animalia’s describes animals’ emotions with metaphors to humans; mother losing her child involuntarily; people suffering in prisons. Many of the statements use similar words that are used to describe humans’ emotions. These statements are strictly used by animal-focused NGOs and also by Vegaaniliitto, who in many cases identifies itself as promoting varying aspects of vegan lifestyle, naturally also including animal rights. Grammatically, the use of active forms and subject structure emphasize the animal rights notion of animals as individuals.

Exhibit 10: Animals as individuals with emotions (critical)

“Animal mother has a child and it is taken away” (Animalia)

“The individuals that languish in the farms and production” (Animalia)

“They are feeling and independent individuals who have own needs, and own social and cultural and cognitive abilities and skills” (Animalia)

“Knowledge from the abilities of different species; awareness, cognitivism, practical learning skills. There is so much information, but it is not really in the popular culture. It is slowly coming” (Vegaaniliitto)

“In intensive production animals are seen as machines and not feeling individuals” (OE)

“Animals as conscious and sentient beings” (OE)

“How animals experience things” (SEY)

Criticizing and blaming people for their lack of interest and action (critical)

While discussion of consumers' important role but their lack of understanding is deemed part of dominant discourse, the criticism directed at people and their lack of interest is considered critical discourse. The following sentences describe people with a more active role in the process of failing to obtain knowledge. With active verb forms, these examples portray people as actively refusing to seek information and to understand the realities of animal production, even with films on practices at animal production being covered in main media. These statements put responsibility on people,

Exhibit 11: Criticizing and blaming people for their lack of interest and action (critical)

"People don't want to see the reality" (Animalia)

"It is difficult to change people's perceptions to more realistic, when they don't want to see that animal production is the same kind of intensive production in Finland, as in anywhere else" (Animalia)

"But overall people our age are aware, but then how much they are willing to do about it or do they want to care about, is another story" (Dodo)

"With regards to meat production, many knows that it is an environmental act to limit it, but few are ready to do it" (Dodo)

"So many people don't make any decisions based on ethics (Greenpeace)

"Fine, you are aware, but does it lead to to some sort of behavioral change are two totally different things" (SLL)

"The animal rights activists' secret films that have been done continuously and that have continuously been in the main media so strongly that you must live in a box if you would not have seen that there might be some ethical problems even at Finnish animal farms" (SLL)

"The information doesn't come to people who don't look for it" (Vegaaniliitto)

"People have very little information of the practices in animal production. Every time we have released photos of animal production, it has caused shock, even though most of the things in the pictures are entirely legal and normal in animal production" (OE)

"Although there is information available, I feel that people don't welcome it, if they feel that it is a sore spot. They feel that they are being moralized" (MY)

whereas the more dominant discourse statements tend to distance people from responsibility by using vaguer concepts and sentence structures.

Criticizing the taken-for-granted conceptions in society (critical)

The power of society is criticized in some statements, although to lesser extent compared to “people”. The common feature seems to be that not only people as individuals or as a group are to blame but the society as a whole is seen as a force that affects how these individuals perceive things. Also the overall society is seen to support animal production. The concept of society is depicted as an entity that operates as a subject; has viewpoints of its own, can support or direct behavior and so on. These

Exhibit 12: Criticizing the taken-for-granted conceptions in society (critical)

“How the human-animal relationship impacts society at large” (Animalia)

“Animal abuse is so widely integrated in the society, that in almost every choice... what kind of shoes you buy, where you take your children, that do you take them to forest or zoo...” (Animalia)

“The ideology of our organization is based on criticizing and ethically evaluate the animal conception of the society” (OE)

“People will just behave as they have always done and behave according to how the society around them directs them” (SLL)

“To get the society to support” --- “If everywhere you hear that ‘you can’t do it’ ‘it’s not possible’” (Vegaaniliitto)

statements use active forms that show a high level of commitment to the statements. However, the use of “society” suggests a rather ideological perspective that criticizes the dominant use of animals in society, but does not really blame this on any actor, rather the “society” essentially entails all actors and therefore the criticism is a more ideological and against the public perception.

Taking away consent for animal production through consumption change (critical)

Despite of the mostly critical language that is used to describe people and their lack of interest in relation to improving the problems in animal production, several NGOs continue to stress the importance and possibilities of consumption-led change. Although the word ‘consumers’ refers to all people, and thus lacks more specific criticism, these statements do not sympathize with consumers, as was seen in the dominant discourse. Using active voice gives more commitment and support to these statements, which is

apparent in most of these examples below. These statements are made by both NGOs that include consumption-focused approaches in their operations and the ones that have lesser of a consumer focus. These examples show how consumers are described to influence by making consumption decisions and having the power to take away their consent to animal production by not buying their products.

Exhibit 13: Taking away consent for animal production through consumption change (critical)

“Bigger things are achieved through consumers, people, because decision-makers won’t do anything, unless they are being pressured. The harder the pressure, the bigger steps you can take.” (Animalia)

“Consumers are the ones, who decide what they buy at stores. Whether they buy meat or some plant-based foods. Consumer has quite a lot of power.” (Animalia)

“We criticize both consumption and production. Not only that consumers should change their habits or that only production should be better” (MY)

“That consumers would stop supporting it [animal production] and would put more demand on vegetarian things” (MY)

“Consumption choices have a big influence” (SEY)

Promoting plant-based diets through consumption and production change (critical)

Some NGOs emphasize the need to make a bigger change and increase the consumption and production of plant-based foods. These statements strongly criticize meat consumption and have a more critical tone compared to the dominant meat reduction messages. MY also mentions the need for a cultural change. The examples use morally-laden word choices, as the commonly used “meat consumption” is changed to the more active and critical “eating animals” statement. All of these statements address the need for a consumption change, or the need to increase more sustainable production to support consumption change. The need is expressed with high level of commitment, using active forms, whereas the solutions to encourage consumption are often combined with modal verbs, suggesting a more hesitant or wishful argument. There are both neutral and very critical tones used; Greenpeace’s comment is more neutral, whereas Maan ystävät uses a rather critical statement: “animal production would become more and more difficult”. These last comments highlight the importance of production side in addition to consumption change. Although WWF focuses on meat reduction, here its

statement is seen to support the critical discourse in finding new production and products that can replace meat production (even to some extent). Also MY's more neutral statements highlight the need to support plant-based production. Vegaaniliitto uses the term "entrepreneurs" to describe the producers of plant-based foods. However, given the use of pronoun "I" and modal verb "would", suggests a lower level of modality; this is rather an opinion or a wish. The role of politics is evident in the statements that discuss how important the financial assisting on one production over another is. Some NGOs suggest that more support should be given to plant-based production.

In the exhibit 14b, Dodo's statements provide a very innovative and trendy suggestion, as they consider insects as better alternative to meat, from an environmental and ethical perspective. These statements are very straightforward, including active forms and direct comparison between two very different sources of protein. However, the use of modals shows that this is rather a wish or a suggestion without much commitment to it.

Exhibit 14a: Promoting plant-based diets through consumption and production change (critical)

“Meat consumption needs to be reduced a lot and it’s better to get rid of it entirely” (MY)

“It is obvious that it [food production] needs a big change, more towards plant-based diet” (Greenpeace)

“We need cultural and structural change” (MY)

“How resources and benefits are shared has a huge impact on how public support can direct some production” (Animalia)

“That in Finland we could invest in broad bean, lupine, which are sustainable alternatives and much, much more environmentally friendly compared to animal production or animal protein” (MY)

“So that the public procurement and legislation would go to a direction in which animal production would become more and more difficult” (MY)

“I would say that one right solution is more political control means to encourage to a new kind of production, like ‘pulled oats’ (nyhtökaura)” (WWF)

“I see that the biggest potential is in the entrepreneurs’ side, so importers and product developers” (Vegaaniliitto)

“When there will be more products and competition, then I think that the consumers would start to demand more” (Vegaaniliitto)

Exhibit 14b: Alternative food solutions (critical)

“Insects are not as developed as organisms as other animals, so that pain could be minimized, as insects are not as easily sensing as mammals. That it could be more ethical” (Dodo)

“Insect would be an ecological and ethical choice to replace meat as protein. Or if not in the beginning for human food, then at least for feed” (Dodo)

Plant-based foods as easy, tasty, good – a good choice (critical)

The most prominent finding, which is shared by all of these seven NGOs, was the positive language and word choices that emphasize other than animal production-related reasons for choosing plant-based diets or foods. These positive words are used to change the public perception of vegetarianism. In these statements, presented below, the

adjectives used to describe plant-based foods are the same as commonly accepted descriptions of how good food in general is perceived: tasty, good quality, delicious, easy. Animalia’s statement that uses negation to convey that vegetarianism is not necessarily difficult, is not as powerful, as the verb structure “doesn’t have to be” suggests that it also can be difficult. Compared to the more positive statements, this falls short of modality. Most of these statements describe the positive change that is taking place; vegetarianism and veganism becoming more mainstream and accepted as a diet among others. Vegaaniliitto’s statement shows this clearly, highlighting their wish that in the future vegan nutrition would be taken more seriously.

Exhibit 15: Plant-based foods as easy, tasty, good – a good choice (critical)

“Vegetarianism doesn’t have to be giving up, and it doesn’t have to be difficult”

(Animalia)

“Tasty, good quality and diverse” (Animalia)

“How easy it is to be vegetarian nowadays” (Animalia)

“This food is good” (Dodo)

“Probably outside of Helsinki quite many have thought that no normal person can be a vegetarian, but it is rapidly changing” (Greenpeace)

“Encouraging people and making it easier for them to move to veganism” (MY)

“Vegan food is nutritious and good, delicious” (MY)

“Easy, tasty, and nutritionally good choice” (OE)

“To make everyday life easy” (Vegaaniliitto)

“I think that we live in a very encouraging atmosphere in which vegetarians are admired and thought like ‘oh wow you have managed to do that’” (Vegaaniliitto)

“Vegan nutrition would become a seriously taken thing” (Vegaaniliitto)

“Nowadays there is an incredible amount of vegetarian options” (WWF)

“Our goal is rather to excite people to eat more plant-based (...and then of course to prefer sustainable fish, according to our fish guide)” (WWF)

Undermining the healthiness of plant-based foods – normalizing the plant-based diets

The health aspects were not emphasized by any NGO to a great extent. Animalia, OE, Maan ystävät, and Vegaaniliitto mentioned the health aspects in relation to plant-based foods, but considered them as an added advantage or a possibility that depends on the individual's choices. Moreover, Maan ystävät use also ideological views that stops them from highlighting the health benefits. The word choices and the use of "if" stress people's individual choice, consider veganism as just another diet, and portrays the health benefits as possibilities instead of a direct consequence of eating plant-based foods. This could mean that NGOs want to discuss plant-based foods as part of normal diet and not something special and trendy, in order to make the change more permanent.

Exhibit 16: Undermining the healthiness of plant-based foods (critical)

"Even if you like junk food, there are all kinds of vegan junk foods" (Animalia)

"Plant-based diet may also have health-related advantages compared to omnivorous diet, but it is people's own choice whether they want to eat healthy" (OE)

"It (health) highlights values that are linked to the person himself and not the... kind of right and important reasons" (MY)

"We haven't talked about health so much, it is only a plus, if vegan or vegetarian food is healthy" (MY)

"It is not like 'now I'm vegan and everything is ok'" (Vegaaniliitto)

"Vegan diet is not a health diet" (Vegaaniliitto)

"We remind people that you 'feel just fine' as long as you eat well of course, but we try not to splash any big headlines" (Vegaaniliitto)

7.2 Discussion on the textual aspects of NGOs' dominant and critical discourses

This section provides a summary of the textual analysis of the NGO discourses. The coherence and interdiscursivity (linkages between different discourses) are discussed in the next chapter, as they are part of the second level of analysis, according to Fairclough's three dimensional framework.

The main reasons given for not doing or focusing on certain issues was the fact that the topic was not entirely part of the NGO's agenda or the existence of other NGOs that (should) be working on those topics. The level of commitment to their statements can be seen as an indicator of how well the discourse fits with the NGO's core mission. The

level of commitment is evident from the way NGOs build their arguments; using active verbs and referring to “us” or the NGO by name to emphasize that this is their mutual opinion. However, in some topics NGOs are more hesitant in taking sides or criticizing any actor in terms of animal production problems. This can be a characteristic of an NGO that does not have any concrete approach to animal production or is smaller in size and based on volunteerism and therefore has more diverse opinions than hierarchical and established NGOs. These kind of NGOs use a lot of “I” form when describing their views, distancing them from the more official, or unstated NGO perspective. Moreover, some NGOs show less commitment when describing topics in a critical counter-discourse style, which indicates that the critical counter-discourse may not be in line with their organizational ideology. In these cases, NGOs may use modal verbs, passive voice and words that diminish the strength of the statement (‘sometimes’, ‘to some extent’).

Linguistic characteristics of dominant discourses

All discourses focus both on the problems and solutions of animal production. Dominant discourses used by the NGOs in this study are mostly linked to sustainable food production and meat reduction perspectives. The focus is on improving both consumption and production in order to reduce the negative impacts that animal production has, mainly on environment, but also to animal welfare. These improvements are grass-fed livestock production, that is linked to biodiversity gains and reduced meat production levels. Also reduction of meat that is environmentally unsustainable and change to more sustainable meat and plant-based food alternatives are included in the dominant discourse.

The solutions to environmental problems are improving practices and reducing production through reduced consumption and in some cases higher prices, but overall, the terms that are used to describe the problems and culprits of environmental problems, are larger and well-known concepts (‘climate change’). The vague and large concepts strive for big change but include only reduction of the consumption and production of meat, which are not enough from animal rights perspective. More specific environmental actors and problems mentioned (‘manure problem’, ‘biodiversity’), but these are still not critical of the overall animal production issue, because the focus is on environment, and small improvements, and not the big change in mindsets. The more specific changes are not enough either because they focus on small improvement from

the environmental point of view, or because their larger consumption and production-related statements still support the continued use of some level of animal production.

The dominant discourse on animal rights-related topics is mainly concerned with the unequal power relation between humans and animals, the use of ‘animals’ instead of ‘non-human animals’, and the commodification of animals through the use of product-related words like ‘meat’ and ‘bovine’. Not all of these dominant animal rights discourses support the unequal power relation or commodification, but can be thought to use the dominant discourse to underline the problem. SLL is the only NGO to link better health aspects to plant-based diets. The food discussion is highlighted in the critical discourses, but in the dominant discourse statements it is rather negatively portrayed. Plant-based diets are for instance described as difficult and requiring a social and cultural change. This is interesting, given that the same NGOs also use critical discourses when talking about the increased easiness of following a plant-based diets. This duality of discourse is discussed more in the next section, but is thought to indicate a hesitation to take too strong stand for the change towards more plant-based diets.

Responsibility behind the problems is expressed but towards groups that are described in vague and large concepts, such as “production”, “animal/meat production”, “consumers”, which does not pinpoint to specific actors. The solutions that the NGOs using dominant discourses support, are mainly related to mitigating the problems caused by these actors, including consumption and production. However, often these solutions strive to improve the conditions or characteristics of the problems instead of changing the entire situation. For instance, in terms of consumption, the message is rather to reduce it instead of changing to plant-based foods entirely. Also, despite of putting responsibility on consumers, NGOs also sympathize with them because of the ‘difficulty to obtain information’ about animal production problems. On the other hand, one is left to wonder, whether most adults should already know from where their food comes. Also production-related dominant discourse solutions are concerned with improving the practices so that they are more environmentally friendly and take better into considerations the animal welfare. Because these improvements do not strive to change the overall practice of animal production, they are considered part of dominant discourse. The majority of the environmental statements are rather one-sided and only mention certain large problems that are linked to animal production (e.g. climate emission), whereas the more specific arguments direct attention to soy farmers and

waste-reducing improvements. Also in terms of environmental statements, the majority of NGOs do not specify nor put responsibility on any specific actors or groups, either because the problem is seen as too big to achieve a big change, or because the NGO lacks knowledge on the specifics of such large-scale problems. Moreover, the few that specify actors such as soy producers, or specific waste-oriented solutions focus on improving the production processes and not making a large societal change on animal production.

As said, the environmental NGOs resort more to dominant discourses compared to animal and food focused NGOs. Still, even they seem to want a change, but have a more moderate view on how drastically things should change. This can be seen in the statements they use, asking for improvements and reduction, some even saying that reason is the challenging political and social environment that supports meat diets. Even though the problems of animal production are vast and are likely to require action from various actors, from governmental policies to consumers and production-led innovation, describing these various different actors with vague and large concepts is likely to confuse people about the problem and the possibilities to solve it. Although it is important to show the extent of the problems, not discussing them in a manner that can lead to more specific solutions.

Linguistic characteristics of critical discourses

The majority of critical counter-discourses involve plant-based diets and animal rights topics. Of the eight topics discussed in the text analysis, a total of five can be seen to include plant-based foods. Plant-based foods are described as “easy”, “delicious”, and “good”, and the appreciation and inclusion of plant-based diets is discussed to be increasing. However, interesting is that these same NGOs that praise plant-based diets, also want to portray the diet as not necessary healthy, unless successfully planned. Thus, health topics were almost nonexistent in the critical discourses, mentioned as an advantage of plant-based diets if one wants so. This could mean that the NGOs want to portray plant-based diet as ‘a normal’ diet instead of a trend that will pass eventually.

The animal rights-related critical discourses describe animals as sentient and individual beings, comparing them to people. Animal rights discourse also emphasizes the role of policies in incentivizing plant-based and sustainable food production, as well as consumers for changing their consumption habits. Overall, NGOs have a critical

outlook on people's willingness to obtain knowledge and information about animal production-related issues. Criticism is apparent also with regards to people's willingness to change their consumption; even informed people are portrayed as change resisting. Also society is blamed for creating an unsupportive environment where changing how animals are perceived is difficult, and also supporting the taken-for-granted conceptions. Although this kind of criticism is not striving to change the dominant discourse, it does put responsibility on people and their individual actions, as well as on an ideological change, instead of hiding their responsibility behind discussion on politics and production, or sympathizing with consumers. Environmental discourses are more fitting to dominant discourse, as they mainly focus on the environmental side of animal production and strive for modest changes, such as reducing meat consumption and improving how emissions are handled. Environmental discourses are therefore not included in the critical counter-discourses.

7.3 Discourse-as-practice analysis

The second level of Fairclough's framework includes evaluating the coherence and interdiscursivity of the texts in order to understand how committed they are to a certain discourse and how they are situated within other NGO discourses and in the overall context of animal production. This refers to the *practice* of how discourses are created and their interconnectedness with other discourses. According to critical discourse theories, discourses do not exist in a vacuum, but shape and are shaped by the groups that take part in a discussion. Also in the case of NGOs, discourses are a mixture of several discourses, that the NGO both knowingly and unknowingly uses and transforms into what they see fits their view the best. At the level of language, it is likely that only few NGOs pay attention to their word choices when addressing animal production topics. More likely, their main goals and preferred tactics influence what type of messages they use. This however does not mean that NGOs would automatically use discourses that are in line with their missions. By evaluating the level of interdiscursivity, a form of intertextuality, suggestions can be drawn about the possibility for the discourse to create a social change. These suggestions are given in the end of this section.

The text analysis shows that the NGOs with more critical and radical views on animal production, mainly referring to NGOs that talk about *animal rights perspective*, are

shown to use language that can be considered as counter-discourse. On the other end, *environmental* NGOs use more neutral and less critical language, taking part in the dominant discourses that rather supports animal production. However, some exceptions naturally exist, such as SEY and Maan ystävät, that have in some aspects different discourses than the other animal protection and environmental NGOs, respectively. However, it needs to be noted that the organizational focus of SEY is different from Animalia and OE, whose approach include also animal rights topics. Also the criticism expressed by an NGO is not directly linked to its position in the animal production debate, as will be discussed later. The only *food-focused* NGO Vegaaniliitto has a three-tier approach with animal, environmental and food-focus, but uses still mainly critical discourses. Other NGOs that are also focused on food matters within their respective fields, are MY, WWF and Dodo, OE and Animalia.

Overall, one conclusion from the findings and analysis is that the NGO's mission does not solely determine the discourse they use. The animal protection-focused SEY's word choices link its discourse mainly towards the dominant discourses, whereas Maan ystävät used more animal rights discourse, even though it is an environmental NGO. However, in some instances SEY's discourse was closer to animal rights discourse, and in some instances Maan ystävät used language that link it very closely to dominant discourse. These variations are discussed in this chapter and the different discourses to which NGOs' discourses relate are presented.

7.3.1 Coherence of discourses

The coherence of discourses that the NGOs use relates to how committed they are to a certain view and whether the other discourses they use support this view. Because of the criticism that can take the form of dominant discourse or critical counter-discourse, it is challenging to assess which discourses support animal production and which oppose it. However, overall all NGOs use both dominant and counter-discourses when addressing animal production and its problems. It is very interesting that even critical statements are linked to dominant discourse and still appear counter-discursive. For example, Animalia and OE discuss the dominant position of humans as opposed to animals, and are clearly against it, however by noting this imbalanced power relation, they need to use the dominant discourse that uses this power difference. Therefore, it may be required to use dominant discourses in order to reveal the problems behind a social

practice (e.g. how animals are perceived) and on the other hand, to help people to understand what you are talking about. These NGOs could have used more positive and counter-discursive style when talking about humans and animals, but instead they wanted to pinpoint the negative power imbalance by using dominant discourse. On the other hand, also the opposite is true, and more common than the aforementioned example. The majority of NGOs that use dominant discourse to criticize animal production, do not have a counter-discursive perspective to animal production, but focus on reduction and improvement messages.

In almost all topics the *duality of discourse* is evident; NGOs discuss one side of the problem but as they do not want to take too radical side, they also discuss the opposite views. For instance, in the case of plant-based diets, the majority discusses positive aspects (how it has become easier), but then feel the need to also state how difficult it still is and how much prejudice there is. This is thought to indicate a hesitation to take too strong stand for the change towards more plant-based diets. Although these NGOs support plant-based diets, they may not want to be perceived too optimistic or want to acknowledge that the change is difficult. Because of the duality of discourse, some NGOs are not seen to use very coherent discourses.

WWF, SLL and SEY are found to adhere more closely to the dominant discourse, whereas animal rights NGOs Animalia and OE, the more “radical” environmental NGO Maan ystävät, and Vegaaniliitto are among the NGOs that use more critical counter-discourses. However, there is a third group of environmental NGOs (Dodo and Greenpeace), that use dominant and critical discourses to the extent that no clear difference can be made. This is most likely due to the fact that these NGOs do not specifically address animal production, or do it through sustainable food topics (Dodo), or similar environmental issues with their other missions (Greenpeace). Dodo also brings entirely new concepts to the discussion, talking about insects as alternative food protein. Because of lack of evidence, the coherence of the discourses of these two NGOs cannot be fully evaluated, but given that Dodo mostly talks about food topics, its discourses are fairly coherent. For the other NGOs, the coherence is evaluated based on the dominant and critical statements that they use on animal production. The summary of the topics that each NGO use are found in appendix, table 4.

Coherence of NGOs using mostly critical discourses (Animalia, OE, MY, Vegaaniliitto)

A surprising finding is the great variety of different discourses that NGOs, irrespective of their organizational mission, use. Animalia tops the list of an NGO that discusses most of the topics depicted in the textual analysis, focusing more on the critical counter-discourse topics, but having a significant presence in the dominant discourse side, too. As discussed above, despite of the existence of dominant discourses, does not necessarily suggest that Animalia would be supportive of animal production, but that they use dominant discourses to get their more critical message through. Therefore, overall Animalia's discourses are only somewhat coherent, because some contradictions exist. Mainly the incoherency is seen through how they discuss both the (modest) need to reduce meat consumption, sympathize with unaware consumers, but on the other hand they mostly talk about the more radical goal of changing the relationship between humans and *other* animals and criticize people for their lack of interest. Some of this controversy is thought to exist because Animalia's focus is on political influence that requires more moderate approach, as well as the fact that Animalia's criticism is apparent even through dominant discourse.

The majority of what MY discusses is related to consumption of meat and criticizing both the consumers and the production. Similar to other NGOs addressing plant-based foods, also MY talks about the difficultness that is still linked to changing consumption to plant-based foods. True to its mission, MY also talks about the environmental problems and links them also to social injustice. However, although textually the environmental discourse is linked to changing animal production, this is seen to be less critical because of the emphasis on reducing emissions and using large and vague concepts, which are thought to reduce criticism and focus only on the environmental side. Overall, despite of MY's generally critical outlook and missions, the discourse it uses is so varied that it can be considered somewhat incoherent, too.

Also Vegaaniliitto uses various different discourses, although mainly from the critical counter-discourse side. The main focus is on vegan topics, including both positive and negative aspects of the diet and changing consumption. Moreover, the dominant societal conceptions about animal production are criticized which is controversial as Vegaaniliitto also sympathizes with consumers. Animal rights is another topic that Vegaaniliitto addresses, talking about *other* animals and the individual characteristics of

animals. Overall, Vegaaniliitto's discourses are quite coherent, as the only controversy appears when talking about consumers.

The most coherent discourses are used by OE, that talks about various animal rights-related topics as well as plant-based foods. Compared to these other NGOs that use mostly critical discourses, OE's way of talking about animal production is fairly straightforward and does not have controversies. The only dominant discourse topics that OE is found to use are linked to commodification of animals and humans' dominant role over animals. However, these statements are thought to still be critical towards the dominant discourse, but merely use the linguistic structure of dominant discourse to make the message through.

Coherence of NGOs using mostly dominant discourses (SEY, SLL, WWF)

Because the NGOs using mainly dominant discourses do not strive for big changes, and are therefore not contradicting their critical statements which are also modest, their discourses can be regarded quite coherent. Most of these NGOs use dominant discourses with the main topics including *meat reduction, better meat options and support for the production side*.

In addition to these aforementioned discourses, SEY also uses animal rights-related discourses that talk about commodification of animals, but not necessarily from a critical perspective, but more from a commonsensical perspective, talking about animals by using the product-related terms. The only incoherent aspect of SEY's discourse is highlighting consumers' critical role in making a change by changing consumption, but at the same time sympathizing with people's lack of awareness on how animals are kept. For the most part, these discourses are coherent.

SLL uses very varied discourses that include dominant topics such as commodification of animals, and environmental problems, as well as more critical discourse topics, such as plant-based foods, criticizing consumers for lack of interest and the society for taken-for-granted assumptions. Although overall SLL's discourses are rather dominant, and despite of the diversity of different topics, I see that SLL's discourses are quite coherent.

WWF has probably the most coherent discourses of the dominant discourse NGOs, as it talks mostly about meat reduction, better meat alternatives and the possibility to support

production for environmental gains. On the critical side, the topics include promotion of plant-based diets, but this is seen to support their main mission of meat reduction.

The findings can partly be explained by the different backgrounds and missions and also with the tactics used by these NGOs. Although NGOs that focus on political influence and on the other hand NGOs that do not take part in animal welfare discussion, use dominant discourses, also some NGOs that are not politically involved nor focused especially on animal welfare, resort to dominant discourses. However, the animal-focused NGOs themselves say that talking about animal rights is not in line with political action and that is one of the reasons why Oikeutta eläimille does not do political campaigning. Still, even though the situation is similar for Animalia which is involved in political action and has therefore had to campaign for much modest animal welfare improvements, Animalia's discourse is nevertheless part of the animal rights counter-discourse. Similarly, in the case of Maan ystävät which is an environmental NGO, their lack of animal-focused campaigns did not matter, as their ideological standpoint supports animal-rights discourses. On the other hand, their lack of political involvement supports a more radical discourse. Therefore, it seems that the discourses that NGOs use are linked to their tactics, mission and ideology.

7.3.2 Interdiscursivity of the NGO discourses

All of the interviewed NGO representatives agree that there are some problems linked to animal production. However, not all of the critical discourses that these NGOs use are necessarily counter-discourses; some can also criticize a specific issue about animal production (e.g. methane emissions) and strive for minor improvements (e.g. meat reduction) as opposed to changing how people think about animals, which can be regarded the most critical counter-discourse.

NGOs that clearly referred to other NGOs or groups and institutions could be seen to link their views and their discourses on some level to these groups. Especially the environmental NGOs mentioned animal rights NGOs in several occasions, mostly giving credit to the achievements done in terms of promoting vegetarianism and veganism. The videos from slaughterhouses and animal farms, released by Oikeutta eläimille were also mentioned by almost all NGOs as a reason why people are increasingly informed about the problems in animal production facilities. From a less supportive perspective, the animal rights or environmental NGOs were referred to as the

ones to take care of the animal rights perspective or environmental perspective, respectively, so that other NGOs can focus on other things. This was true in the case of most NGOs, that mention other NGOs already working on topics that the NGO in hand did not include in their operations. In addition to discourses used by other NGOs, also more general social domains can be linked to the findings. The main topics from text analysis (see table 3) are linked to these discourses on food production, animal rights, vegetarian/vegan, sustainability, politics, and consumption.

Table 3: Dominant and critical discourse topics

Dominant discourse topics	Critical discourse topics
‘commodification of animals’	‘human animals and non-human animals’
‘humans’ dominance over animals’	‘animals as individuals with emotions’
‘undermining people’s responsibility’	‘criticizing and blaming people for their lack of interest and action’
‘support for animal production’	‘criticizing the taken-for-granted conceptions in society’
‘reduction of meat’	‘taking away consent for animal production through consumption change’
‘better meat’	‘promoting plant-based diets through consumption and production change’
‘negative assumptions of plant-based foods’	plant-based foods as easy, tasty, good – a good choice’
‘environmental problems’	‘undermining the healthiness of plant-based foods’

The food production discourse is apparent mostly through statements that support animal production, but also the more critical statements that suggest policies to incentivize the production of more plant-based foods.

Animal rights discourse can be seen both in dominant and critical discourses, when discussing animals and the relationship between humans and animals. The way in which animals were addressed by the NGOs varied between two extremes; either animals were portrayed as subjects; individuals with feelings, or as objects that are used and abused by people.

Vegetarian/vegan discourse is linked to statements that discuss plant-based diets in a positive light, describing them as ‘easy’, ‘tasty’ and ‘good’, but also the more dominant discourse that talks about the difficultness of following a plant-based diets and changing one’s consumption habits. Also the ‘undermining the healthiness of plant-based foods’ topic is included in the vegetarian/vegan discourse, as it can be thought to strive for normalization of plant-based diets and depicting them as a good alternative.

Environmental discourse is seen from statements that talk about both the large scale problems such as climate change, the more specific problems and actors behind these problems, such as manure and soy producers, respectively. Moreover, the emphasis on reducing the level of environmental damage is inherent in the environmental discourse.

Sustainability discourse appears when talking about the environmental problems of animal production, and especially when arguing for meat reduction and less environmentally harmful meat products.

Political discourse relates to policies that are argued to incentivize more sustainable animal production or on the other hand, increasing production of plant-based foods.

Consumption discourse is linked to topics in which consumers’ important role in making a change through eating habits is highlighted, but on the other hand also in topics that sympathize with consumers’ lack of knowledge on the problems that are related to animal production.

However, not all of these discourses are directly linked to how animal production is perceived, but focus more on how it can be solved. The more in-depth discussion on the different discourses compared to literature review is presented in the next section, including also discussion of these discourses that focus on the solutions and responsible actors.

7.4 Discussion on the different discourses that NGOs use

After the second level of analysis, this section presents the discussion on the different discourses and compares them to literature and theory. The dominant discourses used by NGOs are found to be similar to what was discussed in the literature, but differences appear in the critical counter-discourses. Plant-based diets are much more prominently discussed by these NGOs than what was expected based on the literature. Also the

linkage between plant-based foods or meat and health is almost nonexistent in the findings of this study. In the end of this chapter, the other discourses that appear from the interviews but do not directly match with literature about discourses on animal production, are discussed.

7.4.1 Dominant discourses on animal production

In the case of animal production, I have considered dominant discourse to include language use that maintains the dominant way of speaking about animals, animal production and consumption of animal-based products. As discussed in the literature review, the dominant discourses on animal production have been studied to a great extent and it can include several aspects. Traditionally, the animal production discourse has relied on the ‘animal machines’ belief, in which animals are thought to be only subjects and property of the superior human race and thus, a required part in the food industry (Cole, 2011). In this belief, the linkage between the farming practices and the end product have been blurred in order to distance the cruel process from the product that is sold to consumers. These examples that focus on discourse, grammar and use of language, conclude that these prevailing social constructions “portray nonhuman animals as objects, machines, or inferior beings, and so contribute to the moral licensing of otherwise unconscionable levels of cruelty to animals” (Stibbe, p. 52, 2012).

In terms of food, the dominant discourses in the literature include the symbolic meanings often linked with meat; masculinity, high social status, tradition, strength, health, and human dominion over nature (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Allen & Baines, 2002). These are apparent also in some NGO discourses, that talk about the negative conceptions linked to plant-based foods, as well as the statements that critically note the common assumptions linked to meat.

Finally, the environmental discourses that NGOs use to talk about the problems and advantages of meat production are discussed and compared to Austgulen’s (2014) study that found conflicting views on animal production, but both putting responsibility to consumers. Meat reduction and ‘better meat’ discourses are closely related to these environmental discourses, and this linkage is further supported by the environmental NGOs themselves, that use these discourses simultaneously or linked to each other.

Commodification of animals and humans' dominion over animals

As was discussed in the literature review, through the language and word choices that we use, we differentiate between animals and humans, but also distance the living animal from the animal production processes and end-product that we consume, in one way or another (Freeman, 2009; Stibbe, 2012). For instance, farmed animals are often labelled by their end-product names (Glenn, 2004); “livestock, beef cattle, pork, dairy cows, veal calves, poultry, or seafood, instead of more essential references to them as living beings, such as cow, pig, bird, or fish” (Freeman, p. 89, 2009). This commodification of animals occurs through the dominant discourse that we as a society, as well as the news media, use (Freeman, 2009; Stibbe, 2012). The dominant discourse is thought to shape our understanding of animals and reinforce the status quo. The view that humans dominate nature and control other living organisms, is also referred to as the mechanical view. Humans as active subjects and nature and animals as passive objects (‘the machine’) is a characteristic of the mechanical view, existing especially in the Western culture (Schillo, 2003; Callicott, 1999).

Based on the findings from the interviews, all NGOs could be argued to belong to the dominant discourse on some level. The examples presented in the textual analysis show that often the role of humans is highlighted and dominated the sentence structures, whereas animals are most often portrayed as objects. Also the majority of discussion surrounded consumption change or political involvement, which could be regarded as reproducing the ideology that humans need to control everything, in good and bad. Moreover, word choices that depict animals as “bovine”, “broiler”, “production animal”, “steak” and “meat”, were used by all the NGOs, although to lesser degree by NGOs that emphasize animal rights. These process and product –related words essentially support the commodification of animals and the distancing of humans and animals. When using process words like ‘steak’, the animal behind the process is overlooked and forgotten. However, except for “meat”, the use of process words was limited. Even with the best of intentions, portraying animals as objects partly supports the superior role of humans. This was also the case when environmental factors were preferred over animal rights factors.

Although the NGOs that use these dominant discourses are mostly the animal-focused NGOs, it does not necessarily mean that they support this view. Most of the statements are very critical and seem to use the dominant discourse such as commodification

mostly to highlight the power inequality and may also enable people to relate better to the message. In some instances, using the critical counter-discourse such as ‘human animal’ instead of ‘human’, may be perceived in a negative way. Nevertheless, these aforementioned examples show that even animal rights NGOs use dominant discourses that oppress animals, even if it is to pinpoint the problem.

Negative assumptions on plant-based foods compared to meat

NGOs that are considered to use more critical and animal rights-based discourses are also found to talk about the negative connotations of plant-based diets and the assumptions linked to meat. Although they have a critical perspective and can be seen to oppose the dominant discourse in most cases, it is possible that they address these connotations because they are the current reality that needs to be changed. They criticize meat for its status symbol, its cultural connotations related to masculinity, and the myths of meat as a superior protein source. These are closely related to the discourse on the powerful status of meat, introduced in the literature review. According to that discourse, meat consumption and its continued increase is linked to meat’s symbolic meaning (Heintz & Lee, 1998). The symbolic meanings often linked with meat include masculinity, high social status, tradition, strength, health, and human dominion over nature (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Allen & Baines, 2002).

These statements are closely linked to the literature review in which dominant discourse portrays meat with a central role in people’s minds and it is often linked to sensory, social, cultural viewpoints as well as considered convenient, tasty and healthy (Bohm et al., 2015). Interestingly, only MY talks about the symbolism of meat and meat eating, whereas the other NGOs rather discuss it on the side, while addressing the negative assumptions on plant-based diets. This focus on rather discussing the negative associations linked to plant-based diets instead of meat, may be because the cultural importance of meat is why plant-based diets are still considered difficult, extreme and limiting people’s freedom of choice. Also in the literature, this is discussed as having resulted in a society where in general, not eating meat is considered more difficult (Bohm et al., 2015). Meat is considered as a normal and appropriate food (Heintz & Lee, 1998; Bohm et al. 2015).

Moreover, as is apparent from the textual analysis, these assumptions are criticized, but for the most part considered existing without being the fault of anyone. Although

naturally these connotations have evolved through time, they are human-induced and discussing them as phenomena maintains the power of these assumptions.

Environmental discourses supporting reduction of consumption and continued meat production

In addition to animals, humans' dominant role can be extended to include our relationship with nature. Although all the NGOs' discuss environmental problems of animal production, the discussion in general is not very diverse. Words like 'natural resources' and 'water-intensive' are process-related words that highlight that nature is a resources for people to use. Scientific and conceptual words such as 'environmental problems', 'biodiversity' and 'climate change' are considered to support the dominant discourse, as the way they were depicted lacked active voice and responsibility, essentially leading to situation where these concepts are regarded as too big to even comprehend, not to mention to take action. A study by Weber (2006) supports this notion, as people are not alarmed or scared by the discussion about global warming and have seized to consider it important. More specific and personal consequences are argued to be needed to make people take action (Weber, 2006).

NGOs' discussion on environmental problems is limited and mainly include statements that mention problems on a general level, but fail to discuss them in more detail or suggest actions other than reduction. The few statements that focus on specific problems such as manure, and the specific solutions such as bio energy improvements do not take the animal rights problems into account and therefore cannot be considered critical discourse. Overall, mostly consumption change is considered to impact the large environmental problems. Therefore, similar to Austgulen's (2014) study, connections between environmental discourses, meat reduction, better meat alternatives, and support for animal production were discovered, and are therefore combined and discussed here together.

According to Austgulen (2014), there are two very different discourses on environmentally sustainable meat consumption that results in a 'discursive confusion'. The first being 'environmental discourse', that talks about reduction of meat consumption, and the second being 'agriculture discourse' that promotes sustainably produced meat as a better alternative. The study argues that this lack of consensus about the problem is the reason why in both of these discourses the responsibility is put on

consumers in terms of regulating environmentally sustainable meat consumption. However, as Austgulen (2014) argues, the existence of these two contradictory discourses may result in lack of consistent information (discursive confusion) that hinders consumers' ability to take responsibility. This kind of 'discursive confusion' is found in many aspects in the NGO discourses, too. This is apparent also in terms of the NGO discourses, which portray consumption change essential to improve the situation. However, the responsibility is discussed more later in this chapter, as it is not only linked to environmental discourses.

Environmental discourse is concerned with reduction of high emission animal production due to environmental concerns (Austgulen, 2014), and can be seen from the discourses used especially by environmental NGOs. As discussed in more detail under textual analysis, most of the environmental NGOs that discuss environmental problems of animal production address the vast environmental problems and do not consider other solutions besides 'reducing animal production'. Therefore, it can be argued that NGOs that have statements focusing on the environmental problems often also support solutions that are not directly linked to environment, but rather on the production as a whole. This could indicate that these NGOs see that ultimately the best solution is to reduce meat consumption. Meat reduction discourse is used by the majority of environmental NGOs (WWF, Dodo and SLL), and to a lesser degree also Animalia, although they use rather the word 'animal production' and not 'meat production'. Considering the word choices, these environmental NGOs use words like 'meat production' and 'meat' that are linked to dominant discourse. Environmental NGOs are found to discuss meat reduction mostly due to its environmental problems; indeed, when looking solely from environmental perspective, the reduction of the consumption of animal-based products could decrease the problems. In addition to meat reduction, some of the NGOs mention the need to use 'better meat' products, that are more environmentally sustainable, and to choose sustainable fish and plant-based foods instead.

Closely related to meat reduction discourse, 'better meat' and 'less but better' statements that are discussed by WWF, SEY and Dodo, are considered to be part of both the environmental discourse and the 'happy meat' discourse that was introduced in the literature review. The 'happy meat' discourse can focus on many aspects from improved environmental to animal welfare situations, supporting the production of

small farmers with pastoral lifestyles, which are considered to offer better quality of life for the animals and result in better meat in terms of taste, ethics (Cole, 2011). The NGOs in this study are found to focus on either environment, animal welfare or both, when arguing for the need to change to ‘better meat’ products, but the majority highlights the environmental advantages of producing more sustainable and less environmentally harmful meat. SEY also talks about the possibility of improving the production level permitting smaller production quantities, that are linked to increased animal welfare. Dodo’s suggestions go beyond ‘better meat’, as they discuss replacing meat protein to insects. According to Austgulen (2014), health reasons can also be used to support the meat reduction message, but this was not apparent from the findings in this study. According to Austgulen (2014), health reasons can also be used to support the meat reduction message, but this was not apparent from the findings in this study. Health reasons were mostly omitted in the discussion, or were linked to plant-based foods as an added advantage of choosing it over meat. However, overall the health aspects are not included in NGO discourses, as will be discussed later.

As the goal of meat reduction discourse is not to support animal production as it is now, nor change the wider perceptions of animals or animal-based products (animal rights perspective), it is dominant discourse and supports the continued use of animals for human needs. Similar to the happy meat discourse that is regarded as part of the dominant discourse, the better meat discourse is also considered to be dominant. As was discussed in the literature review, the main achievement for ‘happy meat’ discourse is not to improve lives of animals, but to lessen the conscience of consumers and maintain the commodification of animals.

Agriculture discourse is different from the environmental discourse in that it does not focus on the problems, but on the advantages of animal production (Austgulen, 2014). In this study, mainly SLL and WWF talk about the need to maintain some level of animal agriculture for their environmental and economic benefits, such as maintaining biodiversity, some traditional species, and jobs and food safety, but also SEY has a supportive view on animal production. This type of statements is directly linked to the ‘agriculture discourse’, in which the environmentally friendly aspects of meat production are highlighted (Austgulen, 2014). In a similar fashion as in the agriculture discourse described by Austgulen (2014), the NGOs that appear supportive to animal production, highlights the need to maintain or even increase national production levels

and maintain the cheaper prices. The competition with cheaper foreign meat is mentioned as a problem that makes any improvements for animal welfare unlikely. Instead of putting responsibility on the production, in agriculture discourse the NGOs rather sympathize with the production and blame the consumption culture for demanding cheap prices, which makes it difficult for producers to invest in animal welfare.

Despite of the different focus between problems and advantages, some of the environmental NGOs use both of these discourses. This is done by agreeing that there are environmental benefits of grass-fed ruminants, but that other type of animal production, especially intensive factory farming should be reduced due to its lack of environmental benefits and on the other hand the various other problems linked to it.

These discourses definitely emphasize the importance of consumption change in terms of meat reduction and more sustainable meat alternatives. At the same time, producers are supported and in some way even victimized, as the overall situation is seen to 'force' them in a difficult position. However, this perspective includes mostly economic and ecological views and does not involve more ethical considerations, making it a clear example of dominant discourse that reproduced the power inequalities between humans and animals.

7.4.2 Critical counter-discourses on animal production

In the literature, research on critical counter-discourses is limited, as the dominant discourses are used by most people and groups. In essence, the counter-discourses are involved with the opposite of what the dominant discourses entails, and strive to change the prominent perceptions that people have about animals, animal production, meat and plant-based foods. In this study, all the NGOs use counter-discourses, but mostly this was done by animal rights and food focused NGOs. Counter-discourses are thought to include only the more critical animal rights perspective and not discourses that talk about more modest changes for animal production. Only two main counter-discourses are found to appear in the NGO discourses, the one that discusses animals as individuals and sentient beings, and the second that talks about plant-based foods. These two topics discussed here are similar to the literature about critical discourses.

Animals as individuals and sentient beings, equal to humans

As discussed in the literature, the animal rights-based counter-discourse is based on the ideology that all animals are sentient beings and in essence their value is intrinsic to themselves and thus valuable (Francione, 2010). Whereas in the dominant discourse humans are depicted as superior, in the counter-discourse, word choices that balance the division are used. The animal rights NGOs and Vegaaniliitto are seen to use this animal rights counter-discourses that focus on treating animals and individuals with rights, similar to humans. They use more equal terminology such as “other animals” and “humans are animals too”, to present the egalitarian perspective. This is very closely linked to the literature that talks about using the word ‘nonhuman animal’ to describe animals and ‘human animal’ to describe humans (Stibbe, 2012; Glenn, 2004; Freeman, 2010b).

Moreover, the NGOs use metaphors that compare taking a child away from human to taking a child away from “animal mothers”, as well as describing animals as “languishing” when kept at farms. Moreover, these NGOs, as well as SEY, discussed animals’ feelings, skills, social, cultural and cognitive abilities, portraying animals as sentient and conscious beings. Also this has a counterpart in the previous literature that describes animal rights-based view to compares animal emotions and suffering similar to those of human’s, and thus supports animal rights-based view and opposes speciesism, comparing it to other types of discrimination or prejudice (Maurer, 1995; Maurer, 2002).

In addition to animal rights NGOs, also other NGOs used emotional words and verbs to describe animals’ pain at the farms, however often the use of passive voice undermined the importance and responsibility behind the statements and resulted in the assumption that sadly ‘this is just the way things are’. Although in most part the dominant discourse objectifying animals was still present in the discourses of most NGOs, including also more critical and somewhat ‘radical’ new terminology is needed to create relanguaging strategies that can change how we talk about animals (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004).

Plant-based foods as alternative for animal-based foods

Plant-based food discourse is considered part of the counter-discourses, as it strives to change how people see animal-based foods and consume meat. In the literature, the

main source to understanding what plant-based food counter-discourse entails, was to look at Maurer's (1995; 2002) studies on vegetarian discourse. However, in comparison, the NGOs in this study use more limited topics when talking about plant-based foods. The vegetarian literature was seen to promote the safety and superiority of plant-based diets, but also to highlight the health problems of following a meat-intensive diet, such as cancer and diabetes (Maurer, 1995).

A big topic that arose from the findings is plant-based diet, which is discussed by the majority of NGOs from animal-, environment- or food-focused NGOs, and not only the ones that had campaigns around food-related topics. Animalia, OE, Vegaaniliitto, Dodo and MY use the words 'vegetarianism' and/or 'veganism' and are more committed to emphasizing the role of these diets as part of the consumption change, whereas WWF uses a more moderate way, by talking about increasing plant-based foods while reducing or improving the meat choices. All in all, the reasons why NGOs promote plant-based diets varied from animal rights outlook to environmental perspective and to meat reduction goals.

Both animal-focused and environmental NGOs talk about the need to increase consumption and production of plant-based foods to support the consumption change, and/or promoting plant-based foods through positive associations. Whilst the majority of environmental NGOs combine the discussion on plant-based diets with the meat reduction discourse and see that these complement each other, the animal rights NGOs, MY and Vegaaniliitto are seen to focus much more on changing people's perceptions on plant-based diets in general and to initiate a bigger societal change. Overall, the NGOs use positive associations, depicting vegetarian or vegan foods as 'tasty', 'good', 'easy'. This is linked to what was discussed in literature review, as vegetarian discourse is found to emphasize the 'safety' of plant-based diets, given the culturally inherent assumptions that highlight the superiority of meat (Maurer, 1995). Compared to the dominant discourse that supports meat as a status symbol and regards plant-based foods as difficult, this counter-discourse definitely tries to change people's perceptions.

Contrary to what was discussed in the literature review, the counter-discourse used by NGOs is not about health, even though it was the emphasis in Maurer's (1995) study on discourses used in vegetarian literature. In Maurer's study, both the link between certain diseases and meat eating as well as the safety of vegetarianism are used. In this study,

health reasons are mentioned by few NGOs that looked at them from an environmental perspective and that supported meat reduction because of these reasons. Against expectations, NGOs that promote plant-based diets from animal rights, welfare perspective or because of the overall superiority of these diets, do not address health reasons at all, or mention it as an added advantage of following a plant-based diet. Rather, the message is that plant-based foods can also be healthy, but it is people's own choice if they want to eat healthy. Vegaaniliitto, which was the only entirely food-focused NGO that focuses on vegan nutrition, used similar discourses as vegetarian literature in general, studied by Maurer (1995). These discourses include mostly environmental, and animal rights perspectives. The reason why the NGOs, even when striving for more radical change, do not highlight the health aspects are likely to be in the aim for increasing the popularity and positive opinions on veganism, so that it would not be regarded as a passing trend or on the other hand, a too difficult and limiting diet. Moreover, talking about the negative health reasons behind meat eating is likely to cause irritation and resistance from people, as an essential aspect of their lives is being criticized. The consideration for the appropriate and socially acceptable language is thought to be the reason why such statements are not used. More positive and modest messages may provide better outcome. The idea of 'normalizing' vegetarianism and veganism can also be thought to represent a long-term mission to change the consumption towards more plant-based foods by promoting plant-based diets rather as a 'normal' diet instead of as a moral or healthy choice.

7.4.3 Other discourses appearing in the NGO interviews

In addition to the discourses explained above, some specific discourses appeared in the NGO interviews that focus mainly on the taken-for-granted conceptions of plant-based diets and the responsibility of different actors in the animal production debate. These topics were not discussed in the literature, although in environmental and agriculture discourses, the responsibility is put on consumers or support given to the production, respectively (Austgulen, 2014). Also the commonsensical concepts of plant-based foods and meat are discussed and criticized as part of the dominant discourse, but not including the animal production nor society as a whole.

Closely related to animal rights discourse, mostly animal rights NGOs *criticize society*, and through that, the taken-for-granted conceptions in society. This is opposite of what

is discussed in dominant discourse, which focuses rather on the powerful assumptions that depict meat in a positive light and plant-based foods in negative light. In the case of societal criticism, the focus is larger, as the entire society is criticized for maintaining the conceptions that oppress and abuse animals, through food, purchase and entertainment choices. It is clear that this kind of criticism is ideological and more counter-discursive than dominant and mostly animal rights NGOs and Vegaaniliitto, that have more critical discourses overall, address this issue that exist on a societal level. The human-animal relationship is deemed to be the reason for why such practices that oppress animals, exist. Because of the power that society has to influence people and their choices, some NGOs argue that a big change is needed that requires a holistic support from the society. Although this discourse relates to several critical animal rights counter-discourses discussed in the literature, none of them specifically addressed the dominant conceptions in society. The taken-for-granted conceptions are the reason what counter-discourse strives to change, but in previous literature, they are mostly linked to conceptions of animals or plant-based foods. NGOs that discuss the taken-for-granted conceptions in society, however, talk about the overall conceptions of animal production, and is therefore considered to be a separate critical counter-discourse that is not prominently expressed in previous literature.

Although *consumer responsibility* is linked to some of the dominant and critical discourses, it was such a vast topic that it required its own section. The main groups that NGOs discuss in relation to their role in animal production problems, are consumers and society. Both are considered important in the pursuit of changing consumption, but the consumer responsibility, which is addressed by the majority of all NGOs, include much more controversial views. The role of consumers as part of the animal production debate is addressed by the majority of all NGOs, either in a more supportive manner, or very critical. Even within a single NGO, the discussion on consumer responsibility is controversial, as is the case with Animalia and SEY that both criticize and sympathize with consumers. NGOs that overall use critical counter-discourses depict consumers as important and their input needed to influence politicians, production, as well as the consumption, naturally. On the other hand, some NGOs, mostly animal-focused or food-focused, sympathize with people and argue that it is normal that they don't know about the problems of animal production, because they are so diverse and require effort. Yet some environmental NGOs talk about people's lack of interest to make a change,

saying that people actively refuse the information and change. The environmental NGOs point of view can suggest that they do not focus on consumption change and therefore perceive it negatively.

The *duality of discourse* is clearly noticed in how the NGOs both sympathize with and blame different groups, as if not wanting to take a too strong position. Moreover, the use of vague concepts suggests that NGOs do not want to appear too critical, nor do have clear view how the situation could be improved. This may be due to their lack of expertise or focus on animal production-related problems. Or then the NGOs are confused themselves, because of the variety of different factors that influence or are being influenced by animal production.

7.5 Critical counter-discourses becoming dominant

Discourses are never hegemonic (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Fairclough, 1995; Hilhorst, 2003), but are constructed from a variety of different discourses that take place in the society, other NGOs, and at the individual level. Despite of the variety of different discourses, often there are few powerful discourses that shape the way the majority of people see and talk about things. In the case of animal production, the discourse that objectifies animals and portrays them as inferior to humans (Stibbe, 2012; Schillo, 2003; Glenn, 2004; Freeman, 2009) can be considered the dominant discourse in society. However, groups that oppose the dominant view may use other types of discourses, which can be called counter-discourses and counter-hegemonic groups (Freeman, 2009). The aim of counter-discourses is to oppose the current prevalent discourse and to change people's beliefs and eventually behavior through relanguaging strategies (Dunayer, 2001, as cited in Glenn, 2004). These relanguaging strategies, as discussed earlier, involve changing the way animals and animal production is understood and linguistically communicated in society (Dunayer, 2001, as cited Glenn, 2004).

Although most of the NGOs in this study discuss the problems of meat production, the way they use language do not always match with their critical opinions, but instead show that they use also dominant language. This may indicate that they are not that aware of the power of discourse or are confused about the character of the problem. This may be due to the multiple realities of which NGOs are part; different actors in the society push and pull NGOs in different directions (Hilhorst, 2003). The linkages

between the different realities and their discourses (interdiscursivity) cause NGOs to use a mixture of the dominant discourse and counter-discourses. Because of the multiple realities surrounding NGOs, discourses play a critical role in their legitimation process; how NGOs talk influences greatly the way they are perceived and accepted by different stakeholders.

This is especially true for the large NGOs that are fairly rigid and bureaucratic organizations in which change happens slowly. They also have a large supporter-base, including variety of people and a much widely-known reputation. These factors can influence how the NGOs construct their messages and eventually what their discursive strategies are, since they have a larger audience to please. Also the older and more traditional people (both in and outside of organization) may influence how the message is constructed and essentially how animal production is even understood in the organization. Also Holt (2008) discusses the environmental side's limited consideration on more ideological topics, such as vegetarianism. Although more cooperation would allow for more varied discourses, environmental side has traditionally been reluctant to form such cooperation out of the consideration for their hunting and farming members (Holt, 2008). Similar statements were given by some of the NGOs in this study.

Especially traditional environmental or nature protection NGOs have long traditions and many supporters in the country side, who practice hunting and farming and who may not regard animal rights discourses as a good thing. On the other hand, especially these large NGO should adopt more critical discourses, form coalitions with other NGOs and strive for a bigger change, given their better possibilities of being heard and influence people.

In addition to the various stakeholders that may impact how NGO talks and operates, also NGO tactics, mission and ideology are thought to influence their discourses, and at the same time be influenced by the discourses (Carmin & Balser, 2002; Meyer, 2004). Moreover, because NGOs' often have preferred tactics that are argued to remain rather unchanged, also the discourses they use are thought to remain somewhat stable over time, although may adapt to different audiences and situations (Meyer, 2004). Therefore, discourses are an indicator of the ideologies that NGO have.

In this study, NGOs with more political involvement or environmental focus are seen to moderate their discourse or resort to more dominant discourse, whereas NGOs without

political tactics or with animal rights focus are seen to use more critical discourses. However, despite of political involvement, Animalia is one of the NGO that use most critical discourses, similar to MY, which as an environmental NGO could be seen not to have interest in animal rights topics. These exceptions indicate that in addition to tactics influencing the discourses, also ideology of the NGO can have a great impact.

From an environmental perspective, some NGOs discuss options that would reduce the environmental problems, notably reducing the consumption of meat and thus reducing the problems. However, from animal welfare perspective this is not feasible, as reducing the amount of animals that suffer cannot be considered a great improvement. Even more, from the animal rights' perspective, the problem cannot be regarded less harmful before the production is ended and people's perception of animals changed. Given the complexity of the problems related to animal production, the counter-discourse that can be regarded to include all of the different aspects is animal rights discourse. The goal of the animal rights discourse is to change the way people see animals and thus, strive for ending animal use and abuse by humans. However, even some of the NGOs regard this as unrealistic, and argue that more modest discourse and goals are needed to make any improvements.

Fairclough's (1995) framework suggests that using diversely mixed discourses, not modest and homogeneous discourses, can have the power to change societal practice of how animals and animal production are perceived. Therefore, if the critical opinions are stated by using both critical and dominant discourses, the end result may be critical from the change perspective. However, if the critical opinions are communicated through the use of dominant discourse structures, the result may be the reproduction of the dominant discourse and practice. Yet using only critical counter-discourses may not be optimal from the change perspective, because despite of the criticality, the discourse is coherent and homogeneous, and thus does not appeal to multiple audiences. Also, instead of using abstract and vague concepts that have been overused by the media (e.g. climate change), using more specific arguments on the side can make people see the problems as more reasonable and transformable. On the other hand, underestimating the gravity of problems cannot be regarded a successful way when radical change is needed. Therefore, using these side by side could have the biggest advantage. Judging by the the level of incoherence and high level of interdiscursivity, Animalia, MY and Vegaaniliitto have the most chances of making a change, because they use a variety of

different discourses, both dominant and critical, but overall strive to change the taken-for-granted conceptions of animal production. On the other end, some environmental NGOs are using very coherent discourse, mostly dominant, which does not strive to change how animals or animal production is understood by people. However, the contradictory way of both sympathizing and criticizing especially consumers, reflects a rather ambiguous view of the problem, which may hinder the understanding of the phenomenon and also any progress.

There are mainly two processes through which discourses can become dominant. The first happens as a response to a threat from political processes that push the opposing groups to a single counter-discourse, and the second is through a longer process that emerges from various different discourses (Hilhorst, 2003). In this study, the long-term process is regarded more realistic, as animal production topics involve so many stakeholders that even though a political process would increase the critical discourse among animal-focused NGOs, it is unlikely to happen throughout the NGO field. However, it needs to be restated that heterogeneous discourses are more likely to produce change in the dominant discourse (Fairclough, 1995), and therefore the best solution may not be to resort to single discourse. Moreover, even dominant discourses are usually not hegemonic (Hilhorst, 2003; Fairclough, 1995), and thus even though animal rights discourse would turn dominant, there will be less prevalent discourses that oppose it. In this sense, the discourses are subject to constant change that happens when they are mixed in new fashion to produce different combinations.

8 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine how environmental, animal- and food-focused NGOs in Finland talk about animal production and its problems. Attention was put especially on whether the discourses were thought to reproduce the taken-for-granted assumptions on animal production, or whether they were more critical and against the dominant discourse. This last chapter will draw together the main findings of this study as well as give suggestions for future research.

8.1 Research summary

Problems linked to animal production relate mostly to industrial farming in which market pressures for efficiency create threats to animals and environment (Rossi & Garner, 2014). Problems linked to animals, environment and health were chosen as the main problem categories, because they have dominated the animal production literature and the public discussion, and are used in previous studies on NGO discourse on animal production (Freeman, 2010; Laestadius et al. 2013 Maurer, 1995).

Regardless of the ‘best’ way to mitigate problems related to animal production, the way we talk about animal production or animals in general, has an impact on the approval that is given to animal production. Through discourse, we socially construct how animal production is understood and discussed in society. Discourse that opposes the taken-for-granted assumptions has an opportunity to change people’s mindsets and to be part of a larger change in society. Therefore, it is important to understand what are the discourses on animal production. NGOs role is important because they on issues that relate to environment, health or animal rights, and they have diverse partnerships with key stakeholders; from governmental actors to companies and consumers (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). NGOs can have a great role in influencing and changing the way we see and talk about animal production. This happens through the discourse they use; how they perceive animal production and how they share this perception to their members and audiences. NGOs’ discursive choices are therefore tools to criticize the power structures and the existing beliefs in society. From a discourse standpoint, there is a lot of research on animal production-related topics, focusing on the discourses that media, general public, animal science literature or the industry itself, use (Stibbe, 2012; Schillo, 2003; Cole, 2011; Freeman, 2009; Glenn, 2004). However, despite of NGOs’ role in

shaping the conversation and perceptions around animal production, only few studies focus on the NGOs' role in the matter, and even fewer focus on discourse.

Critical discourse theories, that are the theoretical focus in this study, typically focus on the discourse that the powerful groups use. Although powerful, NGOs are often an intermediary in the discussion between powerful and less powerful groups (Hilhorst, 2003). Although it cannot be argued that NGOs would only use critical counter-discourses that aim to oppose the dominant discourse, it is likely that their discourses are a mixture of the two. This is because NGOs often criticize the dominant groups and support the oppressed ones. Critical counter-discourses are much less prevalent in theories or previous research, as scholars studying the dominant discourse often give only suggestions as to what kind of changes should be done. However, researchers argue that no discourse is hegemonic (Hilhorst, 2003; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) and that the level of interdiscursivity in discourses is an indicator of their possibility to influence the societal practice (Fairclough, 1995). Because of this, studying the discourses and counter-discourses that NGOs use, give a basis for future research on the possibilities for different NGO discourses to influence the societal practice.

The main research question is: How are the problems related to animal production discussed by NGOs? With the following sub questions:

- 'What are the problems (of animal production) that are raised by the NGOs and how are they discussed?'
- 'What differences are there in terms of discourses between different types of NGOs?'
- 'To which dominant discourses or critical counter-discourses do the NGO discourses relate?'

In essence, the goal is to understand what kind of discourse the NGO discourse on animal production supports; and evaluate their interdiscursivity; whether that discourse is more supportive of the current dominant discourse or is rather considered as counter-discourse.

8.2 Practical implications

Given the lack of research about critical discourses on animal production, and the controversial findings of the previous studies on dominant discourses, only few findings in this study confirm some of the previous studies. After presenting the main findings of this study, the findings that were supported by existing research and the new or surprising findings are discussed.

The main findings of this study can be divided into four topics; *NGOs' core mission determining their discourse, the conflicting views on consumer responsibility, Animalia, Maan ystävät and Vegaaniliitto having more influential discourses, and the 'normalization' of the plant-based diets*. First and foremost, all NGOs were found to use both dominant and critical discourses, but their emphasis and coherence of statements determined whether overall they were considered to support the dominant discourse or oppose it. The animal production problems that they address can be divided under animal rights, animal welfare and environmental problems, as the health aspect was overlooked as an individual topic by the majority of NGOs. The findings reveal that the environmental NGOs use moderate messages and rather dominant discourses (although there are examples of more neutral and even critical discourses), whereas the animal rights NGOs, MY and Vegaaniliitto are the ones to use more critical or mixed discourses. Thus, most of the NGOs follow their core mission and use discourses that fit, however there are exceptions like Maan ystävät and SEY. Similar to previous studies, there is hesitance about responsibility, as most NGOs criticize and sympathize with consumers, and on the other hand some also support production. Another surprise is how plant-based diets are discussed. Despite of the health concerns of meat eating, the focus is rather on the 'normalization' of vegan diet and not on highlighting the possible health benefits or underlining the health concerns of meat eating.

- *NGO core mission determining their discourse*

The *dominant discourses* used mostly by *environmental* NGOs and SEY, include the commodification of animals, the negative assumptions on plant-based foods compared to meat, and environmental discourses supporting meat reduction, 'better' meat and continued meat production. The *critical counter-discourses* used mostly by *animal rights* NGOs, Maan ystävät and Vegaaniliitto, discuss animals as individuals and

sentient beings, plant-based foods as alternative for animal-based foods, and criticize the taken-for-granted assumptions on animal production.

- *Conflicting and hesitant views on consumer responsibility*

The role of consumers as part of the animal production debate is addressed by the majority of all NGOs, that both criticize and sympathize with consumers. NGOs using critical counter-discourses highlight consumers' importance in making a change. However, some NGOs, mostly animal-focused or food-focused, sympathize with people and do not want to blame them. Some environmental NGOs are most critical and talk about people's lack of interest to make a change. The duality of discourse is clearly noticed in how the NGOs both sympathize with and blame different groups, as if not wanting to take a too strong position. Moreover, the use of vague concepts suggests that NGOs do not want to appear too critical, nor do have clear view how the situation could be improved. This may be due to their lack of expertise or focus on animal production-related problems. Or then the NGOs are confused themselves, because of the variety of different factors that influence animal production.

Relation to previous research

In most cases, the division between dominant and critical discourses follows the NGO type and mission. Previous research conducted by Freeman (2010), Laestadius et al. (2013), and Austgulen (2014), confirm these findings. Similar to previous studies, in this study, the environmental NGOs are indeed using moderate message and rather dominant discourse (although there are examples of more neutral and even critical discourses). Thus, most of the environmental NGOs are considered to reproduce the dominant discourse of how animals are perceived. Based on previous research, it was expected that animal-focused NGOs would use critical discourses such as meat-free diets. This was confirmed by the findings of this study, that discover that animal rights NGOs are the ones to use more mixed discourses that are still mostly critical. In previous research, the discourses that food-focused NGOs have used have been mostly dominant, including meat reduction, better meat, and only in certain cases meat-free diets (Laestadius et al. 2013). Similarly, in this study, the food-focused NGOs (Vegaaniliitto) and NGOs with very distinctive food operations (Animalia, OE, MY, WWF), use a mixture of dominant and critical discourses. Vegaaniliitto and the animal-focused NGOs talking mostly about plant-based diets, whereas the environmental NGOs referring also to meat reduction and better meat options.

In this study, NGOs were active in talking about plant-based diets or alternatively the reduction of meat consumption. In Freeman's study, veganism is not promoted by the NGOs, as it is regarded too extreme and unrealistic. These type of explanations were also given by the NGOs in this study that did not highlight veganism as a solution. The NGOs that did discuss veganism did it from an ideological perspective; to change the society to more accepting of veganism and to change how animals are perceived by the society. However, change resistance of consumers was addressed by all of the NGOs in this study, although not always in relation to veganism, but even considering meat reduction or choosing better meat options. Overall, the role of the consumers was even more confusing compared to the previous studies. According to Freeman (2010), Laestadius et al. (2013), and Austgulen (2014), NGOs put responsibility on consumers and the production side. In this study, NGOs both criticize and sympathize with consumers, and some environmental NGOs also support production side. Although the majority of the previous studies focused on environmental NGOs, the findings have both similar and dissimilar qualities.

In previous studies, the reasons for sticking to the more modest messages and avoiding being too critical, especially in the case of environmental NGOs, and in some cases also food-focused NGOs, were the overlapping missions and concern over maintaining credibility if going against the public perception and the dominant discourse on animal production (Laestadius et al. 2014b). Given the similar findings of these studies, it can be argued that the NGOs in this study are aware of the dominant discourse and perception on animal production, and at least partly consciously make decisions to use more dominant discourse. The opposite can be true for animal rights NGOs, Maan ystävät and Vegaaniliitto, that use critical discourses, partly because of the fit with their mission, but also because they see that the public perception needs to be changed.

New knowledge created by this study

- *Animalia, MY and Vegaaniliitto having more influential discourses*

NGOs using dominant discourse have generally more homogeneous and coherent discourses, mainly on environmental problems, meat reduction and more sustainable meat, and support production. On the contrary, most NGOs using critical discourse have much more variety in their topics and include more dominant views also. It is surprising that these three NGOs, despite of their different core mission, are very similar from a

discursive perspective. This indicates, that these NGOs are not as hesitant about using more critical discourses, but also take into consideration that the dominant social conceptions do not support their view, and thus use also dominant discourse. This consideration for the appropriateness of language is important in order to be socially accepted but still strive for ideological change. According to Fairclough's theory, high level of interdiscursivity is linked to increased possibility to make a discursive change. Thus, I suggest that Animalia, Maan ystävät and Vegaaniliitto are considered the more influential ones based on their heterogeneous discourses, whereas some of the environmental NGOs are considered to reproduce the dominant discourse and social practice of how animals are perceived. However, more research is needed to make a more reliable analysis.

- *Normalization of plant-based diets*

As the previous research on NGO discourses do not focus on plant-based diets *per se*, the discourse that strives to 'normalize' plant-based diets, used by NGOs with critical discourses, is deemed new knowledge. The previous studies talk about meat-free diets or veganism as part of the solutions that NGOs suggest, but have a rather negative outlook (Freeman, 2010; Laestadius et al. 2013, Austgulen, 2014). In this study, plant-based diets are also not discussed as solution that will make everything better, but rather as a safe and good choice for a variety of reasons. The majority of NGOs mention plant-based foods as part of the solution, but what is interesting is the level of emphasis on the topic. I had expected much less talk on these topics, considering that only one of the NGOs was actually focusing only on food. However, from nine NGOs, five have campaigns or projects that are focused on topics surrounding reduction of meat or plant-based diets. These NGOs strove to use language that portray plant-based diets in a positive light, but simultaneously discussed the negative assumptions on plant-based foods that make it challenging to increase their consumption. This example of a more dominant discourse suggests that the NGOs perceive that negativity exists in terms of how plant-based diets are seen by people. Moreover, even with reproducing the dominant view in their own discourse, the NGOs are clearly seen to criticize this view, and because of that, use the positive tone when talking about plant-based diets.

Because of the aim to improve and 'normalize' plant-based diets in people's minds, the NGOs that focus on such topics do not specifically talk about the health aspects of the

diets, although they may mention them as part of their other messages. The lack of discussion between plant-based diets and health was definitely surprising, given the increased media coverage and publications on the problems of meat-intensive diets. None of the NGOs that have food operations highlight the health benefits because they see that eating healthy is an individual's own choice and not linked to plant-based foods. Interestingly, however, previous literature argues that health reasons are main motivators for people to become vegetarians (Butler et al., 2004; Fox & Ward, 2008). The reasons for choosing to exclude health reasons, may be linked to the sociocultural conceptions that people have about meat and plant-based diets. Talking about the health concerns behind meat eating whilst promoting plant-based diets is likely to cause irritation and resistance in people, as food is an essential aspect of their lives. The consideration for the appropriate and socially acceptable language is thought to be the reason why such statements are not used. More positive and modest messages may provide better outcome. The idea of 'normalizing' vegetarianism and veganism can also be thought to represent a long-term mission to change the consumption towards more plant-based foods by promoting plant-based diets rather a 'normal' diet instead of a more moral or healthy choice. Although vegetarian literature (Maurer, 1995) talks about 'safety' of vegetarianism, and thus is similar to the normalization discourse, the focus in that study was not on NGOs. However, this linkage is interesting and may indicate that the ideology behind plant-based foods is shared through the use of similar discourse by different groups in society.

The ideological consistency that Freeman (2010) mentions, is applicable to this study, too. Although veganism can be thought to be an appropriate message for animal rights NGOs, other NGOs should not exclude it either. As Freeman noted, it seems rather inconsistent that NGOs do not oppose all kind of animal abuse, given their altruist and development-supportive goals in general. This can be thought to be the case for all NGOs, but especially the ones that strive to protect nature and wild animals. For ideological consistency, it makes little sense why certain animal species are protected whereas others are abused. Often the argument for such nature protection NGOs was that they protect species and not individuals, but from a moral perspective all lives should matter. (Freeman, 2010).

According to Fairclough's theory (1995), the more creatively mixed discourses are, the better chances they have on changing the dominant discourse. Thus, the most critical

discourse is not necessarily the most effective, although several groups using a single discourse has been described as one way to make discourse dominant (Hilhorst, 2003). On the other hand, the discursive change that takes place over time (Hilhorst, 2003) can be linked to Fairclough's view on historical chains of discourses (interdiscursivity) that shape how discourses are combined. By using a variety of different discourses, even dominant and critical, may result in better audience reception, as the discourse appeals to a larger groups of people, even with different ideologies. In order to achieve a change in the agricultural system, these various problems related to animal production need to be understood by the multiple stakeholders, with possibly differing perspectives (Rossi & Garner, 2014). This is why I suggest that NGOs should use a mixture of several discourses, without being concerned about the strategic fit, or going against the public perception of animal production. Although different NGOs should have different missions, using discourses that shape the overall perception on animal production does not have to complicate that. Without someone starting to change what is deemed 'appropriate' language, no change will happen. And what a better time to start talking about plant-based foods than now, when the media is buzzing with news about new innovative pulled oat-product (Teräväinen, 2016) or a test run of vegan food in 20 child daycare centers in Helsinki (Rita, 2016).

8.3 Managerial implications

From a strategic viewpoint, it is important for the NGOs to be aware of the discourses that they use and the possibilities that those discourses can have to make a change in society. Many NGOs rely on communication to get their message through, so understanding how their discourse situates among other NGOs and being aware of the potential, could have strategic benefits for the NGO. Understanding how they want to discursively position themselves in the organization scene could help them have more holistic and effective messages both inside and outside of the NGO.

The findings of this study show partly a confusing picture of NGO discourses. Although it is understandable that NGOs with different missions use different discourses, they should contemplate whether the discourses they use are truly representing their ideology, not only their mission. In addition to the more specific discourses, the responsibility is put on many actors, but using vague terms and concepts, as if trying to avoid pointing fingers. NGOs should re-evaluate whether the hesitant approach is

suitable for them, as in essence NGOs have an important role in supporting the oppressed groups and pinpointing the injustice or other problems in society.

Hopefully, this study will help NGOs to see that they have a critical role in shaping the understanding and eventually also actions of people through their discourses, and encourage them to embrace this possibility.

8.4 Limitations of the study

When embarking on the research process, the theoretical framework had not been decided, which influenced the questions asked from the NGOs. Although this created an initial uncertainty about whether enough data would be gathered to make a critical discourse analysis, overall, the findings were rich and are not influenced by interviewees' acknowledgement that the language and word choices would be evaluated, and therefore the responses can be argued to be reliable and sincere. However, as only one or two people were interviewed in each participating NGO, the results are not necessarily representative of the entire organization or all of the discourses that take place there. Nevertheless, I argue that given the textual analysis, more personal opinions were separated from the statements that were clearly more in line with the entire NGO. Moreover, as the interviewees were in positions that would demand a thorough knowledge on how the NGO thinks about animal production, these responses are representative of the discourses that these NGOs use also in reality.

Due to limited time and resources, the analysis using the three-dimensional framework of Fairclough focuses on the first two dimensions, which limits the findings of the study as a critical discourse study. The third dimension is only discussed shortly in terms of possibilities and suggestions based on the first two analyses. Moreover, the findings and analysis were done and presented in English, although the language used in interviews was Finnish, as it was the native language of all participants. Therefore, this study is subject to questions of translation.

Naturally, there are several other issues related to animal production, but due to limitations of this study, I focus on these three 'main problems' that appear in previous literature as well as in publications on animal production. However, it is good to note that similar problems exist in terms of dairy farming and fish farming.

8.5 Suggestions for future research

This study forms a basis for future research on NGO discourses, especially on animal production. In the future, more research could be done to confirm the findings of this study, essentially by using a larger sample, and cross-analyzing the interview findings with the written texts on NGO websites. This would help in understanding more about how coherent the discourses are within the organization.

Although new combinations of discourses are regarded more likely to influence social change, more research will be needed to understand these possibilities. Therefore, it would be interesting to study how aware NGO are of their discursive possibilities, how their discourses change depending on their target audience, and if a more intertextually varied discourse is likely to have a bigger impact on the society. Studying the influence that discourses can have on the social practice would be extremely interesting, as eventually that is what needs to happen in order to change how animals are perceived and treated by people.

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Appendix

Table 4: Summary of discourses and topics that NGOs use

Dominant discourse	Topic	Animal-focused NGOs			Environmental NGOs					Food-focused
		Animalia	SEY	OE	Dodo	Greenpeace	MY	SLL	WWF	Vegaaniliitto
1	Commodification of animals	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-
2	Humans' dominance	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Undermining people's responsibility	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
4	Support for animal production	-	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	-
5	Reduction of meat	X	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	-
6	Better meat	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	X	-
7	Negatively perceived plant-based foods	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	X
8	Environmental problems	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	-
Critical discourse										
9	Non-human animals	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	X
10	Animals with emotions	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	X
11	Blaming people for lack of interest	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	-	-
12	Criticizing society	X	-	X	-	-	-	X	-	X
13	Taking away consent	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
14	Promoting plant-based diets	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X
15	Positivity on plant-based foods	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X
16	Undermining healthiness	X	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	X
Coherence/incoherence of the discourse (C/I)		I	C	C	(C)	(C)	I	C	C	C

