

Between lifestyle and the politics of sustainability Contesting milk alternatives in the media

Mette Marie Roslyng¹ , Lars Pynt Andersen² ,
Iben Bredahl Jessen³  & Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager⁴ 

1. Aalborg University
2. UCL University College
3. Aalborg University
4. Aalborg University

Abstract

Instigated by climate change and environmental challenges, the consumption of food and drinks has become an arena increasingly entrenched with identity and ethics. In this article, we examine the contested field of plant-based milk alternatives to consider how the cultural and discursive meanings of plant-based milk alternatives are represented in news media in relation to climate and environmental sustainability. Our theoretical point of departure is political discourse theory combined with sociocultural theories of consumption, and we apply these perspectives to our empirical data, consisting of 340 news articles from Danish newspapers across five years (2019-2023). The analysis shows a dislocation of the hegemonic understanding of what healthy and sustainable food is. Significantly, this takes place within a discourse of lifestyle where identity is negotiated as tensions in food culture.

Keywords

Plant-based consumption, media representation, hegemonic food discourse, environmental sustainability, food culture, sustainable lifestyle

Introduction

In the light of the environmental crisis, food and drinks have become battlefields for societal change amongst consumers, food producers, and political actors. An example is the debate around milk and plant-based milk alternatives, which has been described as a market of conflict (Koch & Ulver, 2022) and characterised by media campaigning that is sometimes confrontational (Krampe & Fridman, 2022; Roslyng, 2022). While plant-based milk alternatives have surged in popularity amongst some segments of consumers, e.g., the so-called “oat milk elite” (Korsholm, 2024), they have sparked intense debates in the media about milk, veganism, and how to live a healthy and climate-responsible life (Muller, 2022; Kristensen et al., 2011). Food culture is a field where cultural identity is performed and mediated, and Kristensen et al. (2011) found milk (anti-)consumption to be a highly moral and tension-filled field. Studies of activist marketing strategies related to plant-based drinks exemplify such tensions (Fuentes & Fuentes, 2017; Koch, 2020; Ledin & Machin, 2020). A study of US news media also shows the variety of meanings connected to plant-based milk alternatives and identified ‘trend’ (trendiness, new lifestyles), ‘taste’, and ‘health’ as dominant frames, while ‘environment’ and ‘animal welfare’ were the least common frames (Regusci et al., 2022).

Against the background of these studies, we adopt a sociocultural perspective on news media representation to understand how a field of consumption, such as plant-based milk alternatives, is negotiated and either rejected or adopted. Moreover, we consider how discursive moments related to plant-based milk alternatives (e.g., climate, sustainability, identity, lifestyle, health, animal welfare) are constructed in the media and how they interrelate. The combined sociocultural and discursive approach provides an insight into how the transformation of food consumption towards more sustainable options is negotiated in the media. We therefore argue that media play a pivotal role in framing public discourses of sustainability and understandings of environmental issues (Nisbet & Newman, 2015). In this article, we focus on the following research question: How are the cultural and discursive meanings of plant-based milk alternatives represented in news media in relation to environmental sustainability?

Research on news media coverage of environmental issues related to food and drinks includes quantitative content and framing analyses of topics other than plant-based milk. Combining content analysis and critical discourse analysis, several studies investigate the press coverage of links between meat eating, animal agriculture, and climate change across a variety of national newspapers (Almiron & Zoppeddu, 2015; Kristiansen et al., 2021). Kristiansen et al. (2021) find that the responsibility of reducing meat consumption is most often ascribed to consumers and to a lesser extent to governmental and industrial actors. Similarly, Fiala et al. present a quantitative framing analysis of the representation of organic farming in Austrian newspapers over time, revealing environmental issues as “a prominent but not a dominant topic” (2021, p. 502), and that organic farming was portrayed as mainly a method of production within the agricultural food system rather than

a driver of change. The presence and predominance of themes such as environmental concerns, food safety, and health are also explored in Cahill et al.'s (2010) content analysis of Canadian and US newspapers' coverage of organic food and agriculture, and Ronto et al. (2024) identify the prevalent themes discussed in Australian online news articles about sustainable and plant-based diets. The complexity of news media's coverage of environmental issues and food culture also shows in a study by Diaconeasa et al. (2022), identifying remarkable variations in discourses of sustainable food consumption in national German, Italian, Norwegian, and Romanian newspapers. In contrast, a content analysis of Australian, UK, and US newspapers' framing of sustainability and organic foods points to an often simplified representation of sustainability in the media, reducing it to a simple choice between oppositions (Lockie, 2006).

We expand on this research by investigating the possible conflicts in news media's representation of environmental issues and food culture beyond the identification of themes and by focusing on plant-based milk alternatives as a conflicting field of consumption not thoroughly discussed in a perspective of news media and public discourse in a Nordic context. The focus on plant-based milk alternatives is relevant also in a historical perspective, as dairy consumption rates in the Nordic countries are some of the highest in the world (Kovanen et al., 2024; Harwatt et al., 2024). Shaped by the tradition of dairy cooperatives from the end of the 19th century (Jönsson, 2005; Sharp & Lampe, 2019), milk production and consumption have played a significant role in Nordic food culture (Kristensen et al., 2011). From the beginning of the 1920s, milk propaganda associations were established in the Nordic (and other) countries to promote milk as a nutritious 'superfood' to enhance public health (Lindblom et al., 2024; Martiin, 2010; Koponen et al., 2025), and scholars have illustrated how milk has deep connotations to national identity, and it is perceived as natural, pure, and nutritious (Jönsson, 2005; Lindblom et al., 2024). In this historical light, it is important to understand how discourses around plant-based milk challenge or reproduce this hegemonic position.

We answer our research question by combining sociocultural theories of consumption (Douglas, 1996; Holt, 2004, 2006) with political discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Laclau, 1990). When examining the case of plant-based milk alternatives in the news media, this combined framework allows us to consider relations between media and the environment as closely related to consumption, identity, and politics. While social media provide an important scene for the construction, contestation, and negotiation of milk and plant-based milk alternatives (Olausson, 2017), we chose to analyse discourses of plant-based milk alternatives in traditional news media across a selection of Danish national newspapers. By analysing news media content in a variety of genres such as news articles, features, opinion pieces, political analyses, lifestyle articles, notices, and satirical pieces, we can include arguments and discourses from a range of different actors as well as media coverage of important social media debates. Besides including media coverage of cases and debates in which plant-based milk alternatives is the explicit topic, we thus

also include the more ‘unnoticed’ articulations of plant-based milk alternatives in media content about other (or related) topics. Hence, in the article we explore the communicative scope in mediating a food culture in transition and the tensions implied.

Theory: Contested food between lifestyle and political discourse

To understand how the meaning of food and drink is negotiated in the media, we use a two-tier analytical approach combining sociocultural theory (Douglas, 1996) with political discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Based on existing literature, we argue that hegemonic understandings of food culture are increasingly politicised in highly polarised public debates about dairy and veganism (see Muller, 2022; Kristensen et al., 2011). This discursive disruption regarding food concerns both political issues of food production and consumption as well as sociocultural questions of lifestyle and (consumer-)identity, and previous research has found that these dimensions are closely intertwined (Korsholm 2024; Koch & Ulver 2022; Ostrowski & Krogager, 2016; Muller, 2022; Kristensen et al., 2011).

It is a basic tenet in lifestyle- and consumer culture theory that the fields of lifestyle and consumption are driven by cultural tensions and hostility (Holt, 2004, 2006; Douglas, 1996), rather than respectful dialogue on rational choices. As Douglas puts it: “consumption behaviour is continuously and pervasively inspired by cultural hostility” (1996, p. 81). In extension, these dynamics are performed through the use of symbolic markers of *negative* identification:

The questions have been about why people want what they buy. Whereas, most shoppers will agree, people do not know what they want, but they are very clear about what they do not want. (Douglas, 1996, p. 83)

For the sociocultural dimensions of food sustainability, we draw on Swidler’s conceptualisation of culture as “a tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems” (1986, p. 273). These perceptions (and thus also the media representations) of food that problematise environmental impact, risks, and identities always occur on the background of social and cultural organisation (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Holt (2004) uses a narrative myth perspective to understand why some brands (and product categories) become particularly meaningful and significant as markers of identity; for example, Holt (2006) analyses the brand genealogy of how Jack Daniels whisky has been inscribed in American mythology as a symbol of freedom and ‘gunslinger’ masculinity, being appropriated by certain consumer segments as an ‘iconic brand’ infused with national Wild West mythology (Holt, 2004, 2006). Following Holt, we explore the cultural tensions around how milk and plant-based drinks as a product category may be propelled to obtain an iconic, symbolic status (Kristensen et al., 2011; Koch & Ulver, 2022; Koch, 2020).

Within the political dimensions of food sustainability, we argue that media become a site for the discursive construction of political frontiers (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Laclau, 1990). We analyse how debates about plant-based milk alternatives, their health or climate benefit, or lack thereof, enter the public sphere in struggles relating to either maintaining or challenging hegemonic understandings of food. Hegemony is conceptualised as a discursive process “which partially fixes the meaning of the social in an organized system of difference” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 135). The hegemonic food discourse, therefore, structures the way we think about food consumption and production (Roslyng, 2011), as seen with the dominant role traditionally played by dairy in the Danish diet. We examine how media contestations over plant-based drinks become antagonistic struggles which can be seen to divide the social field. These frontiers are constituted by the discursive articulation of signifiers related to milk and plant-based milk, such as national identity, sustainability, or health, that are *tendentially empty* and work to provide a (partially) fixed centre in the discourse (Laclau, 1990). Empty signifiers are articulated in connection to equivalential relations by which meaning is constituted negatively. In a divided social field in which meaning becomes dislocated, sustainability emerges as a central signifier in environmental discourse (Davidson, 2010), and this will be a central focus for our analysis.

Methods and data

The research design is based on archival data retrieved from the database *Infomedia* that surveils and collects news from a wide variety of Danish editorial media. The sources used for the analysis are nine national newspapers, across tabloid and omnibus outlets, which are all distributed as both digital and print editions: *Berlingske* (BER), *B.T.* (BT), *Børsen* (BØR), *Ekstrabladet* (EB), *Information* (INF), *Jyllands-Posten* (JP), *Kristeligt Dagblad* (KD), *Politiken* (POL), and *Weekendavisen* (WA). We used the search string: ‘plantemælk’ [‘plant milk’] OR ‘plantedrik’ [‘plant drink’] OR ‘havremælk’ [‘oat milk’] OR ‘havredrik’ [‘oat drink’], and a period of five years, from 2019 to 2023, as these constituted the last full five years at the time of analysis. Also, initial results indicated that this period saw a rise in popular interest and commercial investment in the product category (Koch, 2020; Koch & Ulver, 2022). The sample consists of 340 total results: 68 results in 2019, 58 results in 2020, 97 results in 2021, 71 results in 2022, and 46 results in 2023. The results derive from news articles, features, opinion pieces, political analyses, lifestyle articles, notices, and satirical pieces.

The first step of analysis was to register the following: title, media, date, genre (the above mentioned), actors mentioned in the articles (e.g., politicians, celebrities, company CEOs), contexts/cases (e.g., annual meeting in a political party, declining market shares for producers, taste test of plant drinks), and conflicts/discourses (e.g., identity issues, discussions of sustainable consumer practices), as well as the visuals (if any). The year 2023 was registered in collaboration between the four researchers to ensure alignment throughout

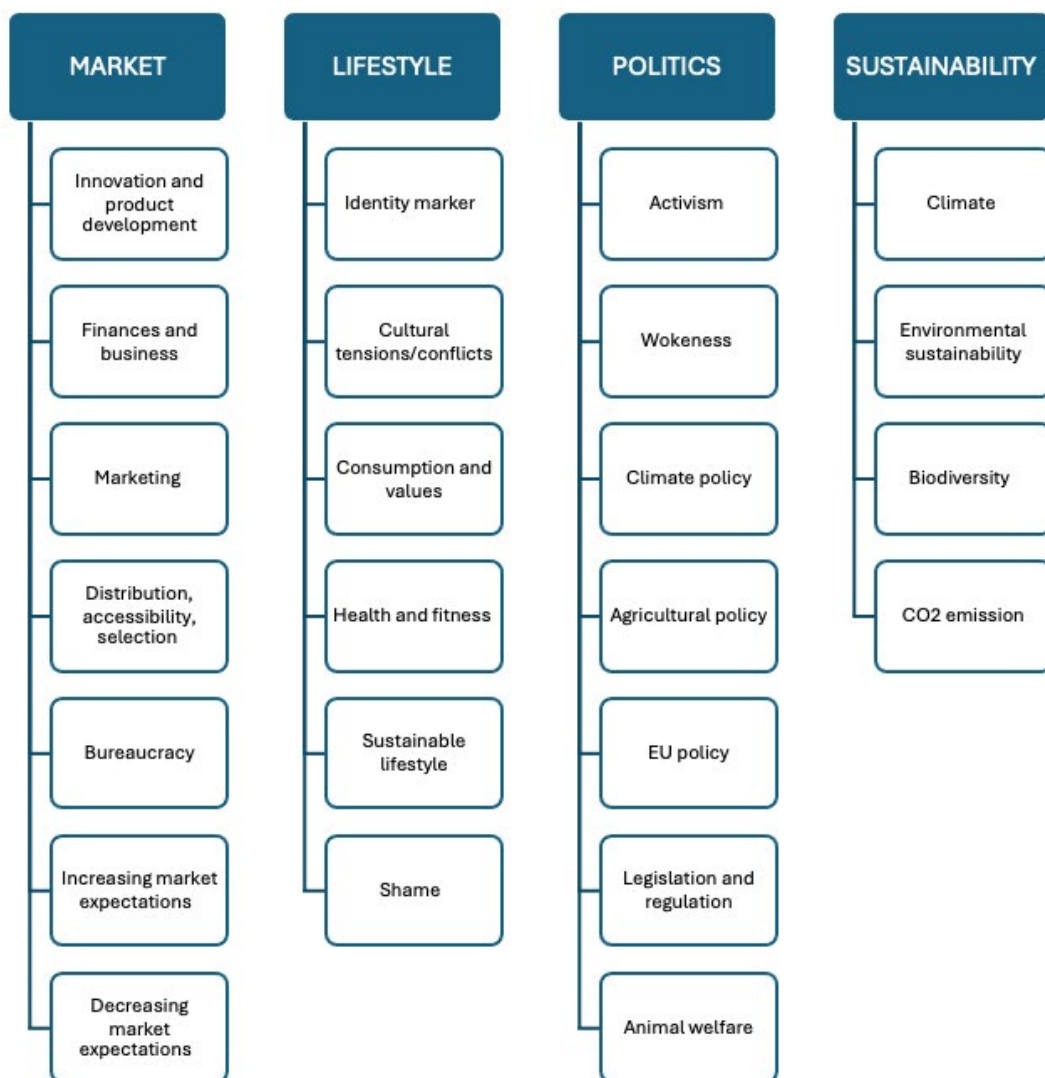


Table 1: Categories and codes.

the registration of the remaining 294 results. Through this joint registration process, the first codes also emerged, and these were further developed throughout the remaining registrations. Having all 340 results registered, we went through the codes again to ensure accordance among the researchers. Through this collaborative process, the codes were combined in four overall categories: Market, Lifestyle, Politics, and Sustainability, as illustrated in Table 1. With an overview of the four overall categories, we then performed a close reading of the articles and conducted a closer qualitative analysis of the negotiated meanings and discourses of each article. We organised these in summary documents of preliminary analysis that were the basis for subsequent discussions between all four authors. The initial coding of categories answers the questions of how the transformation of food consumption towards more sustainable options is negotiated through certain

dominant frames, and the qualitative analysis informs on the complex performances and negotiations of cultural tensions in the media representations.

The four categories are by no means mutually exclusive. For example, an article can be registered as both Lifestyle and Politics if it is about activism and identity. This also means that in 77% of the sample, Lifestyle is present, 26% of the sample is categorised as Market, and 22% as Sustainability, which sums up to more than 100. Registering and categorising the material in this way makes it possible to include arguments and discourses from a range of different actors as well as representations and contestations of plant-based milk alternatives and the contexts and conflicts they are present in.

In our registration, we also noted visuals for all results. However, going through the material, the visuals and photos did not seem to supplement the text and coding with substantial additional information, and the satirical pieces were mainly verbal, such as personal commentaries and op-eds (not supplemented with, for example, a relevant cartoon). Most often the visuals were photos of one of the professional actors or celebrities mentioned in the articles or photos of dishes from a reviewed restaurant. Thus, after carefully considering the notes on visuals, we have excluded visuals in our analysis.

The study is set in a Danish context and thus limited by this specific cultural perspective. Furthermore, the empirical sample frames the analysis and results. However, we consider the media genres that we have worked with as illustrative of discussions across several types of media. For example, social media is remediated and referred to in our sample of news media articles. In this way, our findings may have a more general cogency in terms of mediated discourses.

Analysis

From our coding of the material, it is evident that Lifestyle is by far the most prevailing category, with 77% of the articles somehow framing lifestyle. Politics is the least frequent category, with 17% of the articles treating issues related to politics. 26% of the articles are categorised as Market, and the second least recurring category is Sustainability. While our coding and thus our numerical overview frame Sustainability as a less important category, this immediate insight is turned upside down in the qualitative analysis of the different categories. In many of the articles that are categorised as, e.g., Lifestyle, we see an implicit validation that frames plant-based milk alternatives as justification of climate issues and environmental sustainability.

The media representation of milk and milk substitutes indicates that the choice between milk and plant-based alternatives is never trivial or non-significant. It rather shows a dislocation of a hegemonic understanding of what a healthy and proper Danish diet consists of, involving an increased focus on environmental issues (Jessen, 2024). It thus indicates notable tensions in public discussions about what Danish food culture is

and should be. The tensions are mainly expressed implicitly on the level of lifestyle, but they are also sometimes explicitly politicised.

A central frontier emerges in the data where, firstly, a dietary lifestyle change towards plant-based drinks is linked to urban culture and performing the 'good life', e.g., as 'cool', healthy, or sustainable. This appears to be less confrontational: a symbolic gesture of belonging to a progressive, well-educated elite. It is, however, accompanied and supported by an activist anti-dairy position that is confrontational and explicitly political regarding climate impacts and animal welfare. Despite these differences in articulation, sustainable food still emerges as a central signifier with a call for change in food culture towards more sustainable goals, and plant-based milk alternatives are central to this cultural change. Secondly, this emerging new food culture is met with resistance against change within a discourse that exists primarily to defend the consumption of milk and meat and thus becomes an advocacy for the 'traditional' hegemonic food culture. This discursive position often draws on either a subtle ironic or a direct satirical tone of voice and constructs a frontier between (illegitimate and pretentious) food elites and food traditionalists, underscored by discussions of generations, gender, and centre-periphery divisions. While this position does not emphasise food sustainability, it nevertheless easily ends up as an argument against change towards a more plant-based food culture and pointing to the freedom to choose one's own food habits. However, on the other side of this frontier, we also find (sometimes subtle) satirical portrayals of the food traditionalists' reactions to plant-based drinks. In the following, we illustrate these tensions by selected examples (translated by the authors).

Challenging the dairy hegemony: From lifestyle to politics

While many of the collected articles do not have milk or plant-based alternatives as their main topic, references to plant-based drinks nevertheless show up as subtle descriptors of persons, situations, and everyday routines. "Oat milk", in particular, shows as a central signifier in descriptions of 'types', e.g., with reference to models of consumer segmentation as the "the type who drinks oat milk" (KD, 02.09.22 [feature]) or in 'food biographies' of writers who "drink coffee latte on oat milk" (POL, 22.06.21 [opinion]) or "always order pizza with cheese, but only drinks her cappuccino with oat milk" (POL, 17.09.21 [column]). In several portraits and interview articles, the use of "oat milk" (and not milk) in the coffee is mentioned to describe the interview situation. For example, it is highlighted that the interview takes place at a coffee bar while drinking "flat white with oat milk" (BER, 10.08.19 [portrait]), or that the interviewed students drink coffee with "the cheap oat milk" from the supermarket (POL, 27.07.21 [feature]). That "oat milk" is a signifier with an underlying meaning also shows in a journalist's recount of the opening dialogue with the person interviewed: When the journalist asks for milk for the coffee, it is noted that the answer, "only oat milk", is said "with a light diabolical smile" (BER, 20.10.20 [portrait]). In this example, oat milk is not only mentioned as an accompaniment to the coffee (and,

in the overall context of the portrait article, as a signifier of lifestyle change), but also involves the journalist's interpretation of the respondent's facial expression (which, again, is open for the reader's interpretation). Moreover, in articles featuring the lifestyle habits of featured persons, "oat milk" is emphasised as something that is "always in the fridge" alongside foodstuff and drinks such as fruit, vegetables, and champagne (e.g., BT, 18.07.20 [lifestyle]; 25.07.20 [lifestyle]; 19.12.20 [lifestyle]) or always consumed for breakfast or used in the coffee (e.g., BØR, 05.02.21 [lifestyle]; 19.02.21 [lifestyle]; 17.09.21 [lifestyle]). In these examples, "oat milk" serves as an identity marker and a signifier of lifestyle, most remarkably as conceptions of healthy lifestyle in several articles under the recurrent theme "MY HEALTH" (in BT), as an 'ingredient' in having a "Good weekend" (a recurrent theme in Børsen), or as a marker of relaxation and 'slow living' as in the following example: "What are we so busy with? Why not make a cup of coffee and skim some oat milk and sit in the sun and drink it and just sit there..." (POL, 26.04.20 [column]).

However, more explicit articulations of "oat milk" in connection with climate discourses are also found. In an article about the tiny house movement, oat milk is mentioned as part of a sustainable lifestyle and as an example of consumption framed as ethical: "We feel good about making climate choices. We have reduced the consumption of meat. We drink oat milk" (JP, 25.07.21 [feature]). The climate choice is, though, not always easy. In another article, the transition towards more 'green' dishes on the menu is metaphorically described as "a journey" which requires new habits and adaptation: "I still drink cow's milk, but I will definitely drink more oat milk in the future" (JP, 28.09.21 [portrait]). And, sometimes, climate considerations appear to be challenging. In a lifestyle article addressing food and health, it is stated: "I also try to have meatless days and drink oat milk instead of cow's milk. But always thinking about the environment can be hard" (BT, 19.06.19 [lifestyle]). Moreover, climate concerns are followed by considerations of interpersonal relations when showing consumption habits to others. As stated by a foreign correspondent interviewed about her weekend routines, the choice of oat milk in Nespresso "is only about getting less scolded by my Parisian friends, when I do not drink cow's milk" (BØR, 06.03.19 [lifestyle]). Similar worries of disagreement and shame show in an article about climate change and psychological effects, in which the visible consumption of oat milk is articulated as an indicator of climate concern. Drinking cow's milk in company with friends drinking oat milk is thus related to uneasiness: "When I am together with them, I sometimes get nervous about if they think I do not care about our planet" (INF, 27.10.21 [feature]). Relatedly, oat milk also appears as an important marker of political identity, especially in descriptions of political parties with a climate agenda. A left-wing politician describes her choice of oat milk in the coffee as something that "sounds super Enhedslisten [party name]-like" (INF, 26.01.19 [feature]), and, in a portrait article about the leader of another left-wing party (Alternativet), the interview situation is described as a meeting over "a cup of coffee with all the plant milk one could wish for" (BER, 20.05.23 [portrait]). Likewise, in a political commentary using food metaphors to

describe the political landscape in Denmark, left-wing parties are described as a “red army wanting oat milk” (JP, 13.08.23 [opinion]).

Closely connected to the topic of lifestyle, a commercial theme in the media coverage shows how dairy alternative products provide new market opportunities and respond to new consumer demands as the products are branded as healthy, sustainable, and climate- and animal-friendly: “The sustainability wave can open new business areas” (JP, 08.02.19 [news]). Under the headline “Green is the new black” (EB, 20.04.19 [feature]), a tabloid newspaper cites studies to show the health, climate, and environmental benefits of oat milk. The rekindled interest in the company Naturli’ in 2019 is articulated in solely positive and unconflictual terms in the context of the “milk war”, and combines the central moments in the debate: “Give the cow a day off and buy an almond- or oat-drink instead. Then you will do something good for nature, the animals, the environment and each other” (POL, 19.01.19 [news]). Naturli’ is presented in the news as an innovative actor that will transform consumption of animal proteins to plant proteins, thus becoming the self-proclaimed “Tesla of plant-based food” (POL, 19.01.19 [news]). The representation of an up-coming and successful plant-based food industry shows an optimism and reliance on new food technologies that can provide sustainable green transition as well as financial expansion into new markets, with an emphasis on developing plant-based milk alternatives that appeal to consumers. The technological innovations emphasise new ways to adapt milk alternatives to consumer tastes so that they look, feel, and taste as neutral or milk-like as possible (JP, 04.08.19 [feature]; BØR, 15.08.19 [news]).

The commercial articulation of plant-based milk alternatives in the news in many ways complements the lifestyle focus, as seen in recipes suggesting plant-based alternatives to milk, or when celebrities conspicuously mention milk alternatives as part of their (attractive) lifestyle (e.g., BT, 18.07.20 [lifestyle]; 25.07.20 [lifestyle]; 19.12.20 [lifestyle]). The two positions merge as a new sustainable food discourse in which technological innovation in the food industry (market discourse) and changes in consumer habits (lifestyle discourse) provide a coherent answer to all the concerns regarding milk antagonisms: Plant-based transformations address both individual and structural concerns for health, climate, and the environment. The change towards a more sustainable consumer behaviour and lifestyle is identified as a viable solution and is supported by innovative product development and marketing. Plant-based milk alternatives are therefore presented as a solution to any underlying antagonisms that may be identified regarding milk production (e.g., animal suffering, environmental depletion, and climate change). Sustainability, exemplified by plant-based milk alternatives, becomes a tendentially empty signifier that gains meaning by overcoming food antagonisms. Therefore, while neither the commercial nor the consumer lifestyle discourse articulate food culture as political, they nevertheless articulate a discourse of sustainability that contributes to a dislocation of some of the hegemonic myths and understandings of food culture in Denmark. This furthermore indicates that cultural orthodoxy is continually being challenged by innovative cultural

expressions being offered by marketers (e.g., as brands, product categories) (see Holt & Cameron, 2010; 2012).

17% of the articles analysed include positions that are explicitly political in a way that both connects to but also goes beyond lifestyle concerns. The arguments are most often voiced by political actors such as activists, politicians, political parties, or interest groups, and make up a distinct discursive articulation which connects plant-based dairy alternatives to a confrontational discourse that emphasises the antagonistic dimensions in current food and drink practices and ties these to the structural barriers for sustainability. The media play an important role in discursively framing these actors and the discourse of sustainability that they represent.

The most visible political discourse is explicitly activist and is often represented in a way that accentuates its radicality and the activist traits:

The cows are enslaved due to their gender [...] she will be inseminated by force, go through an enforced pregnancy, she will have her baby removed after less than a day, and she will be put through the same ordeal again and again until her body is so worn out that it is no longer financially viable for humans to keep her alive. (POL, 08.11.23 [opinion])

The activists here draw on human compassion for animals and invite us to identify with cows and their plight, drawing direct parallels to human mothers and gender exploitation. This phrasing indicates a humanisation of the cows, with a deliberately provocative call for more equality between humans and animals. A Danish Vegan party member likewise draws on human compassion for animals with a call to “stop the blood bath” and goes on to underscore the positive consequences for humans as well: “But leave the milk for the cow, a new world will emerge for you with plant-milk made of nuts, grains, seeds, bean, and peas” (JP, 05.11.21 [opinion]). This new world of tastes and healthy living promotes a lifestyle which is seen as both trendy and upcoming, and which softens the confrontational line often adopted by animal rights activists: There is something to be gained for all involved. Presenting veganism as a viable and accessible alternative is thus also part of the activist discourse. The activist position, however, often emphasises that individual lifestyle change cannot stand alone. As stated by a student activist on climate strike: “We can do a lot as private consumers [...] but we cannot do it without the support of the politicians [...] oat milk costs the double of a litre of cow’s milk, which makes it hard to lead a climate friendly life (BER, 15.03.19 [news]).

The political discourse emerging from primarily left-wing/green political parties also speaks to a lifestyle change in a way that initially may appear to de-radicalise the political dimension. Within a sustainable food discourse, plant-based milk alternatives become connected to ethical concerns about animal welfare and to community oriented political values. This is apparent when left-wing politicians are interviewed about their own food lifestyles and subsequently define ‘left-wing food’ as: food from all over the world, everyday food, food that promotes community (e.g., communal eating), and food that

is produced in a way that is fair and organic (INF, 26.01.19 [feature]). Sustainable food choices are also linked to a wider left-wing political culture: “there is no mirrored hall, but there is coffee and tea with organic oat drink, and you do not pay, you donate [...] nature has rights and we need to reconnect with nature” (BT, 03.02.19 [portrait]).

Across activist and left-wing political culture, sustainable food is thus articulated in connection to moments such as: community, ethics, nature, economic, environmental justice, and democracy. The emphasis on the structural and ethical dimensions in food lifestyle calls attention to the antagonistic dimensions in food and drink choices. Unlike the commercial and consumer-oriented articulations of plant-based dairy alternatives, the sustainable food transition includes calls for a fundamental structural change of both food production and consumption. In the political-activist food discourse, sustainability remains an empty signifier, but it is articulated as a differential relation with moments that highlight, rather than hide, the antagonistic frontiers in food politics. The proponents for sustainable food, signified by plant-based milk alternatives, call for justice for humans and nature, for community, democratic political culture, and fairness in trade and production, and thus articulate structural factors and political inertia as a threat to true food sustainability.

Lifestyle conflicts and tensions

The new emerging sustainable lifestyle exemplified in the media coverage by plant-based milk alternatives, however, does not remain uncontested. The analysis therefore turns towards the cultural symbols that delineate lifestyles by invoking the tensions of urban/rural identities and questions of gender.

Coffee has a symbolic role in the present data, as coffee now has the added markers of being either with milk or plant-based alternatives, and it seems that the two fuse together in the data, becoming an even stronger cultural identity marker as coffee-milk/oat milk. Sometimes this is present in the data as a clear dichotomy of rural ‘coffee as just coffee’ versus the elaborate new choices of coffee culture in the city, and the use of oat milk becomes a new cultural code, adding to the complexity of choosing a coffee lifestyle. For example, in a review of the Danish movie *Hvor kragerne vender*, that translates to “Where the crows turn back”, already the title of this movie encapsulates the tensions of rural living ‘at the edge of civilisation’ (the English title is completely different: *Persona Non Grata*, directed by Lisa Jespersen, 2021) (BER, 22.06.21 [review]). In this review, escaping rural identity is described as coming from a place where coffee comes in only two variants – black or with milk (always percolated) – and becoming urban by “learning to pay 40 DKK for a cortado with oat milk – without flinching”. Likewise, in a feature from Hvide Sande in Jutland, the clash between locals versus the urban surfers is illustrated with coffee lifestyle: “in the raw lounge area you can get the first flat white of the West Coast – and it is even made with oat milk. The locals don’t give a damn about that, but the Berliners, the Copenhageners and the foreign surfers, they do...” (WA, 24.07.20 [feature]).

The general theme and framing in this feature are evident from the headline: “INVASION: Over the border”. “Over the border” in Danish, “over grænsen”, is a colloquial metaphor, indicating something transgressive, something outrageous and contentious, and coffee style and oat milk play into this global framing of conflict and cultural tensions between global urban lifestyles and local rural culture. Throughout this feature, the subtle ironic tone of voice paints the rural scenery using a *flat white with oat milk* as a symbolic point of reference, allowing the urbanites to be slightly pretentious and the locals to be down to earth, perhaps authentic. This irony may even be tinged with self-ironic layers to the urban readership of this paper (*Weekendavisen*). Furthermore, in the data, consuming coffee with oat milk is used as a symbolic marker of not just urban culture, but also sub-cultures and specific neighbourhoods in Copenhagen, particularly the affluent quarters of Vesterbro and Østerbro, known for a high concentration of cultural elites. In a portrait of a journalist living in Vesterbro, but originating from Jutland, his story of moving to the city of Copenhagen and becoming an urbanite is illustrated by the symbolic marker of oat milk: “here [in Vesterbro] he is finally so assimilated that he orders his cortado with oat milk” (POL, 15.6.23 [notice]).

Plant-based milk alternatives are also used for illustrating gender tensions, sexism, and homophobia. Traditional gendered eating patterns and mediated representations that place women and plant-food together (Adams, 2010; Ostrowski & Krogager, 2016) come into play in our sample as an ironic and condescending framing of femininity. In an interview with two significant Danish cultural personalities (BER, 11.12.22 [feature]), the concept of a ‘man-cave’ is framed as a sign of failure in a relationship, and so are men who accept moving into a ‘woman-cave’. One of the men is confronted with the following question: “When I visited you to do an interview, I had to take off my shoes and drink oat milk. Was that your decision?” Implying that a man would not make these choices, and a female home is where you take off your shoes and drink oat milk.

In a description of a television programme (EB, 24.03.20 [notice]), a male host meets up for a buttock’s workout with a group of mothers on maternity leave living in Østerbro in Copenhagen. The life of this group of women is framed as a secluded world, and the male host challenges himself to have a cappuccino with oat milk to assimilate into this group. As in the previous example, oat milk is feminised and used as a descriptor of a specific group of city women from a privileged middle-class.

In another example (INF, 17.03.23 [portrait]), two generations of comedians (a father and a daughter) discuss the status of the comedy genre in times of wokeism and privilege blindness. Besides doing stand-up, the daughter works as a carpenter, and when she states, “When one of my journeymen keeps on calling the oat milk that he drinks every morning gay milk or asks if I want sperm in my coffee”, it is so utterly absurd that it needs to be mocked. In this context, oat milk translates to derogatory sexualised and homophobic contexts that also inscribe women in an oppressed role in a patriarchal society, as she is asked to ingest ‘sperm’.

The last example of gender identity is a portrait of a young Danish Conservative business student who is also a homosexual (WA, 11.11.22 [portrait]). The article centres around the seeming discrepancies that are inherent in being a young male gay conservative, and the incompatibilities recur as oat milk is contrasted to CBS (Copenhagen Business School): “At a remote table over a cup of coffee with oat milk in the CBS canteen”. The ‘oat milk marker’ is used as a symbol, invoking the tensions of a gay conservative identity inherent in this portrait.

These conflictual representations show how the clash between new and traditional food cultures constitutes an antagonistic frontier in the media. The defence for milk is not really about milk (or even coffee), but plant-based milk alternatives come to represent a scepticism about urban elites which are perceived to be feminist, woke, left-leaning, and privileged (INF, 16.09.23 [satire]). These articulations make up a chain of equivalence in which all the characteristics of urban elites are tied together and become a threat to traditional food culture. Milk, therefore, comes to represent honest and proper food. The use of satire, often in the form of sarcasm, is abundant in the data of this study (e.g., POL, 29.05.23 [satire]; 10.03.19 [satire]) and plays an important role in conserving and defending traditional values. These discursive articulations draw on anti-feminist and anti-diversity values based on the more general ‘woke’ or ‘political correctness’ debates that are invoked, emphasising the strong tensions for entertainment value. However, they are rarely direct expressions of traditionalism or ‘anti-woke’ sentiments; on the contrary, they invoke ironic perspectives on urban and rural lifestyles, ‘woke’ or traditionalist positioning. For example, in the quote mentioned above (INF, 17.03.23 [portrait]), the comedian referring to the homophobic absurdity of ‘gay milk’ is relaying both these negative attitudes and ridiculing them, while at the same time cementing the symbolic significance of oat drink.

In our examples, we find that the daily satirical column ATS (‘At Tænke Sig’/‘To think...’) from the newspaper *Politiken* is the source of many satirical uses of oat milk as a shorthand for ‘urban wokeness’ or ‘moral panic’. For example, a satirical rant of a parent on the many health risks for children, avoiding plastic (chemicals) and cow’s milk, choosing glassware and oat drink instead, and the risks involved in daycare, where parents lose control of these all-important issues (POL, 10.03.19). A more elaborate example of the tensions of milk/plant-based drinks is an ATS vignette of a (fictional) 63-year-old man that was ex-communicated from his (woke) family for pointing out that “oat milk” is actually “deceptive labelling” that should be called “oat water” or even “oat-sap” (more derogatory in Danish: “-sprøjt”) (POL, 29.05.23). *Politiken* is one of the liberal-left and progressive newspapers with mainly an urban readership. Without going too much into humour theory, we only need a side-glance towards Freud’s ideas on jokes to know that satire and irony are also serious business and often play with strong, suppressed emotional tensions to work (Attardo, 2009; Booth, 1974). As Booth (1974) points out, satire and irony are most entertaining and interesting when it is semantically unstable and complex. We

should therefore also be careful not to reduce these examples of satire to one-sided ideological statements about milk or plant-based drink, wokeness, or anti-wokeness.

As the analysis has shown, coffee consumption is a highly symbolic field of consumption, firmly established as a lifestyle symbol, iconic in its “capacity to absorb new meanings and its heritage as a source of social value” (Triolo et al., 2023, p. 312). Spurred by popular culture phenomena, such as yuppie culture in the 1980s and TV dramas like *Sex in the City*, new forms of luxury coffee become a symbolic marker of urbanity (Roseberry, 2013; Kjeldgaard & Ostberg, 2007; Holt, 2004). Adding plant-milk to the mix as a marker of sustainability and left-leaning political values may indicate the emergence of a class of young urban progressives, using this product category as a taken-for-granted symbol of identification (aka. ‘the oat-milk elite’, Korsholm, 2024).

We suggest, that in this merging of coffee- and plant drink/milk consumption, the polarisation and performance of identities pose both a problem and a potential for the green transition. As a consumer object, coffee with/without (oat) milk constitutes a tangible objectification of quite abstract and complex value negotiations (McCracken, 1990, p. 131), or what Douglas and Isherwood (1978, p. 66) call the ‘visible part’ of otherwise intangible culture. In this way, the merging of coffee and plant drink/milk consumption into an even stronger iconic lifestyle discourse is also a potential for engaging audiences otherwise unlikely to take part in rational, scientific debates on sustainability dilemmas. While it may be inferred that coffee as one of the globally most traded consumer goods is fraught with sustainability issues, it is also an iconic symbol that is highly fluid and negotiated (Triolo et al., 2023). Therefore, it has also become a market of artisanal, sustainable, ‘humanised’ and ‘ethical’ consumption, as an expression of “a strong cultural desire for more equitable relationships with people and nature” (Triolo et al., 2023, p. 317), consuming less, better, and supporting local farmers (Purnomo et al., 2019). In parallel, consumers with little or no interest in scientific debates on nutrition, veganism, or sustainability may simply be attracted to plant drinks for the ‘cultural visibility’ of the symbol, perhaps learning something along the way. Hence, the ‘ethical’ choice and provenance of ‘shade grown’, ‘organic’, ‘fairtrade’ coffee now has another level of symbolic consumption when the latte is plant based. However, it seems that this cultural visibility of plant-based drinks is not happening simply by chance or because of politically motivated consumer activism.

Commercial actors such as Oatly have spent considerable resources on positioning their brand (and category) with conflict marketing, galvanising celebrities and consumers through PR and social media campaigns in an attack on the milk industry (Koch & Ulver, 2022). In moments that are ripe for cultural disruption, cultural marketing may alleviate some cultural tensions by offering a better alignment of myth, ideology, and identity value. Where technical product innovation by itself is likely to fail in the market, popular media and marketing sometimes align, and a landslide of the cultural landscape offers new ‘ideological opportunities’ for marketers (Holt & Cameron, 2010). However, since the influential work of Holt, more radical versions of cultural marketing have emerged as

purpose branding and corporate- and brand activism, where the marketing strategy is not based on offering 'better ideology' as coherence or alleviating tensions, but on drawing them out and amplifying activist discourses and tensions (Knudsen & Andersen, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020), which also involves marketers using all kinds of media to fuel conflicts and merge advertising, packaging, PR, and activist discourses. It seems that this has also been a clear strategy in the plant-drink category of the brand Oatly (Koch, 2020; Koch & Ulver, 2022).

Conclusion

As our combined quantitative and qualitative analysis has illustrated, discourses of plant-based milk alternatives are generally framed in lifestyle contexts, often in feature and portrait articles, and the tensions of milk versus plant drinks are important symbolic markers of identity, class, and residence. In the data, the urban cultural elite particularly situated in middle-class and hipster areas of Copenhagen drink plant-based milk alternatives, whereas people living in rural areas of Denmark drink cow's milk. In many of the analytical examples, this dichotomy is used to signify different identities and lifestyles, and, frequently, humour and satire are used as instruments to convey such contrasts. Applying humour, irony, and satire as stylistic devices also employs a 'filter' to the messages in the articles, and, in this way, humoristic and satirical presentations can be a way to reject and end discussions, but also be an invitation to reflect upon these tensions in a playful, less confrontational way (Booth, 1974; Knudsen & Andersen, 2024).

Even if sustainability only appeared as an explicit category in 22% of the articles included in the study, the discursive analysis shows that sustainability becomes a tendentially empty signifier in the Danish media representation of plant-based milk alternatives. Within the emerging new food culture, the lifestyle related to plant-based milk alternatives implies a concept of sustainability that encompasses health, fashion, and taste, as well as concerns for nature and the climate. This is particularly evident in the commercial articulation of the meaning of new plant-based products, which holds that sustainable food can co-exist with financial gain in new green markets. Meanwhile, the political articulations of plant-based milk alternatives more explicitly link the empty signifier of sustainability to concerns for nature, animals, and the climate, but also to fairness, community, and political culture, thus using sustainability in a broad sense. Sustainability is thus only a tendentially empty signifier because the meaning of the term is negotiated in the media. However, the articulation of plant-based milk alternatives as sustainable indicates a partial dislocation of the hegemonic understandings of milk as a central component in any diet. Within the lifestyle and political tensions of rural/urban and gender identities, as reported in the media, sustainability and the environmental effects of dairy production are not at first glance articulated as an explicit topic of concern. On the one hand, food traditions are defended in calls to preserve hegemonic understandings of healthy and wholesome

Danish food, exemplified by the iconic status of cow's milk. On the other hand, a new urban food culture emerges in which the ideological and political potential of new identity markers lead to novel ways of understanding urban lifestyle as also a performance of sustainable food culture.

The findings of this study therefore also lead to reflections on how negotiations of a more sustainable future are performed in the media, also in many subtle, tension-filled, and less explicit ways. Hence, taking these lifestyle discourses seriously as relevant modes of mediating sustainability is an important direction for further research, e.g., unpacking how audiences, marketers, celebrities, and political actors engage in lifestyle discourses to negotiate the meaning and values of sustainable food culture.

References

- Adams, C. (2010). *The pornography of meat*. Bloomsbury.
- Almiron, N. & Zoppeddu, M. (2015). Eating meat and climate change: The media blind spot – A study of Spanish and Italian press coverage. *Environmental Communication*, 9(3), 307-325.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2014.953968>
- Attardo, S. (2009). *Linguistic theories of humor*. de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111280332>
- Booth, W. C. (1974). *A rhetoric of irony*. University of Chicago Press.
- Cahill, S., Morley, K., & Powell, D. A. (2010). Coverage of organic agriculture in North American newspapers: Media: linking food safety, the environment, human health and organic agriculture. *British Food Journal*, 112(6-7), 710-722. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00070701011058244>
- Davidson, M. (2010). Sustainability as ideological praxis: The acting out of planning's master signifier. *City: Analysis of urban change, theory, action*, 14(4), 390-405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2010.492603>
- Diaconeasa, M., Popescu, G., Maehle, N., Nelgen, S. & Capitello, R. (2022). Media discourse on sustainable consumption in Europe. *Environmental Communication*, 16(3), 352-370.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2021.1999295>
- Douglas, M. (1996). *Thought styles: Critical essays on good taste*. Sage.
- Douglas, M., & Isherwood, B. (1978). *The world of goods*. W. W. Norton & Co.
- Douglas, M., & Wildavsky, A. (1982). *Risk and culture*. University of California Press.
- Fiala, V., Freyer, B. & Bingen, J. (2021). Environmentally sound agriculture between transformation and conformation: The changing portrayal of the growing organic farming movement in Austria's newspaper coverage. *Environmental Communication*, 15(4), 495-513.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2020.1866636>
- Fuentes, C. & Fuentes, M. (2017). Making a market for alternatives: marketing devices and the qualification of a vegan milk substitute, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33(7-8), 529-555.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2017.1328456>
- Harwatt H., Benton T. G., Bengtsson J., Birgisdóttir B. E., Brown K. A., van Dooren C., Erkkola M., Graversgaard M., Halldorsson T., Hauschild M., Høyer-Lund A., Meinilä J., van Oort B., Saarinen M., Tuomisto H. L., Trolle E., Ögmundarson O., & Blomhoff R. (2024). Environmental sustainability of food production and consumption in the Nordic and Baltic region – a scoping review for Nordic nutrition recommendations 2023. *Food & Nutrition Research*, 68. <https://doi.org/10.29219/fnr.v68.10539>

- Holt, D. B. (2004). *How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Holt, D. B. (2006). Jack Daniel's America: Iconic brands as ideological parasites and proselytizers. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 6(3), 355-377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2016.1199360>
- Holt, D. B. & Cameron, D. (2010). *Cultural strategy: How innovative ideologies build breakthrough brands*. Oxford University Press.
- Holt, D. B., & Cameron, D. (2012). Triumph of a better ideology. In J. Lannon (Ed.), *Market leader: New thinking, different perspectives* (Quarter 1) (pp. 24-27). Marketing Society. https://www.marketingsociety.com/sites/default/files/thelibrary/January-2012_17.pdf
- Jessen, I. B. (2024). Multimodal representations of health and science in Danish advertisements for dairy products and plant-based alternatives: A diachronic study. In L. A. O'Hagan, & G. Eriksson (Eds.), *Food marketing and selling healthy lifestyles with science: Transhistorical perspectives* (pp. 59-80). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003450276-5>
- Jönsson, H. (2005). *Mjölk – en kulturanalys av mejeridiskens nya ekonomi*. Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion.
- Kjeldgaard, D., & Ostberg, J. (2007). Coffee grounds and the global cup: Glocal consumer culture in Scandinavia. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 10(2), 175-187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253860701256281>
- Knudsen, G. H., & Andersen, L. P. (2020). Changing masculinity, one ad at a time. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.382>
- Knudsen, G. H., & Andersen, L. P. (2024). Pink sincerity: Post-postmodernism and double appropriation in marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 40(15-16), 1359-1383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2024.2426190>
- Koch, C. H. (2020). Brands as activists: The Oatly case. *Journal of Brand Management*, 27, 593-606. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-020-00199-2>
- Koch, C. H., & Ulver, S. (2022). PLANT VERSUS COW: Conflict framing in the ant/agonistic relegitimization of a market. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 42(2), 247-261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02761467221080442>
- Koponen, S., Lindblom, T., & Niva, M. (2025). Beyond meat reduction in the sociology of sustainable food consumption: The entrenchment of cheese in Finnish consumers' everyday lives. *Consumption and Society*, 4(3), 380-397. <https://doi.org/10.1332/27528499Y2025D000000051>
- Korsholm, S. L. (2024). Havremælseliten er kommet til byen. Med naturvin, deletallerkener og uden et sted at bo. *Politiken*, 12. oktober.
- Kovanen, I., Kytä, V., Kärklund, A., Tuomisto, H., Saarinen, M. & Kolehmainen, M. (2025). Advancing methods for comparative nutritional LCA of milk and plant-based milk substitutes. *International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*, 30, 462-476. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11367-024-02407-6>
- Krampe, C. & Fridman, A. (2022). Oatly, a serious 'problem' for the dairy industry? A case study. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 25(1), 157-172. <https://doi.org/10.22434/IFAMR2021.0058>
- Kristensen, D. B., Boye, H., & Askegaard, S. (2011). Leaving the milky way! The formation of a consumer counter mythology. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 11(2), 195-214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540511402449>
- Kristiansen, S., Painter, J., & Shea, M. (2021). Animal agriculture and climate change in the US and UK elite media: Volume, responsibilities, causes and solutions. *Environmental Communication*, 15(2), 153-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2020.1805344>
- Laclau, E. (1990). *New reflection on the revolution of our time*. Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. Verso.

- Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2020). Replacing actual political activism with ethical shopping: The case of Oatly. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 34, 100344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2019.100344>
- Lindblom, T., Lukkarinen, V., & Koponen, S. (2024). *Busting milk myths shakes the Finns' national identity* [blog post]. SmartDairy. <https://smartdairyproject.com/>
- Lockie, S. (2006). Capturing the sustainability agenda: Organic foods and media discourses on food scares, environment, genetic engineering, and health. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 23(3), 313-323. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-006-9007-3>
- Martiin, C. (2010). Swedish milk, a Swedish duty: Dairy marketing in the 1920s and 1930s. *Rural History*, 21(2), 213-232. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793310000063>
- McCracken, G. D. (1990). *Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities* (Vol. 1). Indiana University Press.
- Muller, S. M. (2022). Dairy pride: Hypocognitive rhetoric and the battle for dairy's name. *Environmental Communication*, 17(8), 975-990. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2022.2125547>
- Nisbet, M. C., & Newman, T. P. (2015). Framing, the media, and environmental communication. In A. Hansen, & R. Cox (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of environment and communication* (pp. 325-338). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315887586>
- Olausson, U. (2017). "Stop blaming the cows!": How livestock production is legitimized in everyday discourse on Facebook. *Environmental Communication*, 12(1), 28-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2017.1406385>
- Ostrowski, K., & Krogager, S. G. S. (2016). Media food and a rural ethos: The inclusion of agricultural skills in the gender negotiations of media food [Mediemad, køn og et ruralt etos: Inklusionen af agrikulturelle færdigheder i mediemadens kønsforhandlinger]. *STS Encounters – DASTS Working Paper Series*, 8(2), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.7146/stse.v8i2.135235>
- Purnomo, M., Daulay, P., Utomo, M. R., & Riyanto, S. (2019). Moderating role of connoisseur consumers on sustainable consumption and dynamics capabilities of Indonesian single origin coffee shops. *Sustainability*, 11(5), 1319. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11051319>
- Regusci, E., Meyers, C., Li, N., & Irlbeck, E. (2022). Exploring news coverage about plant-based milk: A content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 106(1). <https://doi.org/10.4148/1051-0834.2405>
- Ronto, R., Alves Lopes, C. V., Bogueva, D., Davis, B., Bhatti, A. J., Navarrete, P., & Chau, J. Y. (2024). Exploring Australian news media portrayals of sustainable and plant-based diets. *Nutrients*, 16(7), 996. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu16070996>
- Roseberry, W. (2013). The rise of yuppie coffees and the reimagination of class in the United States. In C. Counihan (Ed.), *Food in the USA: A reader* (pp. 149-168). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203951880>
- Roslyng, M. M. (2022). Between populism and popular citizenship in science conflicts. In H. Eslen-Ziya, & A. Giorgi (Eds.), *Populism and science in Europe* (pp. 207-229). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97535-7_10
- Roslyng, M. M. (2011). Challenging the hegemonic food discourse in Britain: The British media debate on salmonella in eggs. *Science as Culture*, 20(2), 157-182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09505431.2011.563574>
- Sharp, P., & Lampe, M. (2019). *A land of milk and butter: How elites created the modern Danish dairy industry*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 273-286. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095521>
- Triolo, F. A., Figueiredo, B., Martin, D. M., & Farrelly, F. (2023). Coffee: A global marketplace icon. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 26(4), 311-320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2023.2206129>

Vredenburg, J., Kapitan, S., Spry, A., & Kemper, J. A. (2020). Brands taking a stand: Authentic brand activism or woke washing? *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 39(4), 444-460.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915620947359>