

CONSUMERS' DIETARY PATTERNS AND DESIRES FOR CHANGE

Working paper no 31

March 1998

**CONSUMERS ' DIETARY PATTERNS
AND DESIRES FOR CHANGE**

Birgit Land
Roskilde University Centre

PREFACE

During the first years of MAPP, in the period 1991-1994, MAPP was organized as a network of 15 different research projects with researchers from several different institutions of higher education involved. One of these projects had the title 'The consumer as agent in relation to research and development in food technology;' it was carried out at Roskilde University Centre and was directed by Erling Jelsøe.

The present paper is a late outcome of this project. Within the project, a number of investigations into consumer food habits were carried out. These investigations were based on a sociological approach, using Højrup's 'ways of life' as a theoretical basis. A major survey investigation was carried out, and it was followed up by an in-depth qualitative analysis of food habits in 12 Danish families.

The paper presents the design and results of this qualitative analysis. We publish it in the new MAPP working paper series because we think it may be of interest to many readers. Even without the context of the project of which it was part and beyond the specific theoretical approach it starts from, we have here a thorough and well-conducted in-depth study of food habits in some Danish families. It shows the diversity of food habits which exist, and it highlights some of the determinants of these habits which MAPP has dealt with in other investigations.

Klaus G. Grunert

FOREWORD

This working paper presents the methodology and results of an in-depth qualitative analysis of food habits of 12 Danish families. The in-depth interviews were carried out in the spring of 1994 and therefore they do not show the food habits as they are right now. Some things have changed since then, but the majority of the results are still important. Concerning the discussion about organic food, however, quite a lot has happened since 1994 in the Danish market as regards the consumption of organic food. This was the year, in which various organic foodstuffs became cheaper and more consumers began buying these goods. This section in the working paper can be read as an important historical discussion about how some consumers thought about organic food before it was readily available.

I am grateful to the 12 families who gave their time to the in-depth interviews. Thanks are due to my colleagues, Associate Professors Kirsten Bransholm Pedersen and Erling Jelsø and Research associate Jesper Lassen for fruitful discussions and ideas concerning the working paper, to secretary Susanne Jensen for writing the interviews out in full, to secretary Birgitte Steffensen for completion of the manuscript and to Steve Churchill for the English translation.

Birgit Land

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The objective of this working paper is to analyse consumers' dietary patterns as reflected in shopping, meal patterns, eating habits, traditions, cooking and the content of the diet itself. These dietary patterns were analysed with regard to the connection to consumers' ways of life, family form and living conditions, in as much as cooking and eating food play an extremely important role in the structuring of everyday life.

2. The consumer analyses are based on 12 qualitative interviews concerning consumers' ways of life, daily life and dietary patterns. The consumers were selected on the basis of the results of a questionnaire survey (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen, 1994), so that their ways of life, age, number of children, distance to shops, etc., were known in advance. Their dietary patterns, as revealed by the questionnaire survey, had no influence on the selection.

3. Not unexpectedly, the questionnaire survey showed that, in a number of respects, there were marked differences between families with dependent children and families, whose children had left home or families without children. We therefore decided to incorporate these differences in the interview survey by selecting half the families with children living at home and half where the children had left home. In order to illustrate how dietary patterns affect the various daily practices of different ways of life another important selection criterion was to choose four families within each way of life: the wage earner way of life, the career way of life, and the the self-employed way of life. Two other selection criteria were that the families should live close to shopping areas, so that they had several choices and that both spouses had a job, so that the time factor would be comparable.

4. The societal context of the analysis is Ziehe's (Ziehe & Stubenrauch, 1983) analyses of the cultural emancipation process during the process of cultural transformation that characterises capitalism. The starting point for Ziehe's work consists of two connected evolutionary tendencies that affect our cultural reality, and which partly destroy it and partly absorb and change it. We explain how Ziehe's work can be linked to changes in food consumption.

5. The in-depth interviews were analysed across the twelve families around eleven focus points:

- * division of labour in the family and the time available
- * economic resources
- * consumers' perception of quality
- * ecological products
- * consumer consciousness
- * use of shopping possibilities
- * the influence of traditions
- * children's influence on food
- * inspiration for food
- * do people eat fish
- * ways of life and dietary patterns

6. One of the important results we found was the ambivalence in the information about food. There is a lot of ambivalence among consumers about the kind and quality of information they want about everyday food. On the one hand, in order to be able to choose between products, it is important for consumers to have information about product ingredients, while on the other hand, only the most interested consumer can relate to this type of information. Consumers can't take any more information than they get at the moment, but this could be focused more precisely on the things consumers want to know.

1. Aim	1
Problem formulation	1
Analysis of everyday life and food habits	2
Sociological and anthropological studies on diet	3
Dietary studies with a nutritional perspective	5
Consumers' concept of quality	6
Communication between consumers, the retail trade and producers	7
Perspectives in the study of consumers' possibilities for influence	7
2. Consumer analysis by means of qualitative interviews	8
Discussion of method	8
Selection of the interviewees	9
Presentation of the 12 families	11
Design of the interview guide	13
The interviews	15
Interpretation of the material	16
3. Four accounts	17
4. Consumers' choice possibilities and actual choices	30
Division of labour in the family and the amount of time available	30
Economic resources	33
Consumers' perception of quality	36
Ecological products	44
Consumer consciousness	46
Use of shopping possibilities	47
The influence of traditions	48
Childrens' influence on food	51
Inspiration for food	54
Do people eat fish?	57
Ways of life and dietary patterns	59
5. Consumers' wishes and forms of expression	61
The consumer of the future	63
Appendix A	65
Interview guide	65
References	68

1. AIM

The aim of this working paper is to analyse consumers' dietary patterns as reflected in shopping, meal patterns, eating habits, traditions, cooking and the content of the diet itself. The intention is to analyse these dietary patterns in connection with consumers' ways of life, family form and living conditions, inasmuch as cooking and eating food plays an extremely important role in the structuring of everyday life. The ultimate aim is to obtain an overall understanding of individual consumer's everyday life, especially the role that diet plays in this, and, based on this, to formulate a number of consumer goals for production and development within the food industry.

The consumer analyses are based on 12 qualitative interviews concerning consumers' ways of life, daily life and dietary patterns. The consumers were selected on the basis of the results of a questionnaire survey (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen 1994), so that their ways of life, age, number of children, distance from shops, etc., were known beforehand. Their dietary patterns, as revealed by the questionnaire survey, had no influence on their selection.

Problem formulation

What is the importance of way of life, living conditions, family form and traditions for the dietary patterns of selected consumers and their desires and possibilities for influencing the development and production of food products? More specifically:

- How does family income influence which food products the family buys and eats and where they shop?
- What do consumers mean by quality, and what do they attach importance to in prioritising their purchases?
- Which consumers buy ecological products and why?
- Do consumers deliberately choose where they shop, and how and which reasons do they give?
- What is the importance of parents' dietary habits for the family's present dietary pattern?
- What influence do children have on the overall dietary pattern?
- Where do consumers get inspiration for everyday meals and meals for guests?

The above analyses of everyday dietary patterns reveal both the possibilities consumers have for influencing the development and production of food products and the qualitative desires and demands they have concerning the food products they use themselves.

Analysis of everyday life and food habits

The possibilities for and barriers to consumer influence on the development, production and supply of food products depend on various factors concerning consumers' material living conditions, cultural background and access to information. They also depend on the extent to which the food industry and retail trade can communicate with consumers and convert their wishes to specific product concepts. In order to analyse the relations between producer, retail trade and consumer, it is necessary to examine the given conditions for all three parties. This has already been done in two previous studies in which I was involved, namely the mentioned questionnaire survey (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen 1994), which is a quantitative study of the relationship between consumers' ways of life, living conditions and dietary patterns, and a case study of the Danish fishing industry, the aim of which was to examine how consumer influence makes itself felt in this industry (Lassen 1996). The fishing industry is analysed as a production chain analysis from catch to table, and has been selected as an example of a production chain.

This analysis is an elaboration of consumers' conditions and possibilities for influence. The analysis takes an in-depth look at the specific and unique conditions of various consumers, and also focuses on the similarities and differences between consumers.

A previous working paper (Land 1994) has discussed the societal context of the analysis, employing Ziehe's analyses of the cultural emancipation process during the process of cultural transformation that characterises capitalism (Ziehe & Stubenrauch 1983). In her research on changes in diet, Holm (1991) explains how Ziehe's work can be linked to changes in food consumption. The starting point for Ziehe's work consists of two connected evolutionary tendencies that affect our cultural reality, and which partly destroy it and partly absorb and change it. These are the tendency towards the technocratisation of different spheres of life and the tendency towards the destruction of traditions.

Cultural modernisation processes affect many spheres of life, eg ways of living, relationships to things in everyday life, leisure habits, time and food habits. The destruction of traditions should not only be seen as the destruction of "good old traditions and patterns of life", but just as much as a release of possibilities.

Ziehe does not deal with food as such, but many of the tendencies he describes can also be seen in the changes that have taken place in households and the food sector during the post-war period. The technocratisation of different spheres of life and destruction of traditions seen in the cultural emancipation process has also occurred in this area. Previously, food was largely produced within private households. But women's increasing entry into the job market has resulted in a rapid growth in food manufacturing. This in turn has released resources that were previously tied to households. Women have been freed from a lot of work, bonds and restrictions, but at the same time households have also lost a lot of the knowledge and experience connected with the processing of foodstuffs and preparation of meals. Such emancipation is therefore a double emancipation, similar to that described by Ziehe in connection with cultural emancipation.

From her work with Ziehe's theories, Holm concludes that, among other things: "Ziehe's analysis of the cultural emancipation process, and the consequences it has for the individual's situation and orientation possibilities, allow for more differentiated categories which can be used to identify response forms in current food development. His theory enables us to see that the rapidly changing attitudes to food do not just reflect confused consumers who don't know what they want and who have an irrational mistrust of the industry. These apparent changes of attitude can perhaps more usefully be seen as an expression of genuine ambivalence resulting from the cultural emancipation process" (Holm 1991 p. 86). This understanding of the process of cultural emancipation also underlies our analysis of consumers' changed food habits and their wishes and demands concerning food production.

Sociological and anthropological studies on diet

Studies of the food habits and dietary patterns of different social groups are often carried out from both a sociological and anthropological point of view (Messer 1984; Murcott 1988; Prättälä 1991), which is also the approach we take in this analysis. Less common are dietary studies which take a more limited sociological approach (Beardsworth & Kiel 1990). In her thesis about a socio-cultural study of food habits among peasants, Eriksen (1994) constructs a model as starting points of the analysis, which can be seen as an example of how the structural and cultural background of a social group's dietary patterns can be analysed in a single context. Here, she distinguishes between the structural background, which consists of values, names and knowledge. These two background variables influence personal characteristics and individual preferences, which in turn determine the actual choice of food. She points out that culture is an important aspect of food habits.

Food habits can be studied as a part of traditions, as similarities or differences in taste, and by looking at the social importance of food. Another possible perspective is food as fashion. Food habits are created in a process involving several people or groups of people. It is therefore also important to study food habits from a relational perspective. The division of labour between the sexes is also central to food and cooking, and several aspects of food habits can also be seen from a gender point of view. This has not been the main focus of our study, however. But since the division of labour between the sexes is very pronounced in the food area, it will nevertheless play a role in explaining how food habits change.

Anthropologists Richards and Mead were already directing their attention and research towards food as early as the 1930s and 1940s (Murcott 1988), and are regarded as pioneers in the field. In Mead's view, sociologists and anthropologists can contribute to research by identifying the historical tradition that food is a part of, and by contributing to the cultural dynamism underlying food and the pattern of eating as it is practised in various societies (Eriksen 1994). In the 1960s and 1970s, sociological and anthropological research in food was dominated by the structuralist approach. The structuralists, of whom Lévi-Strauss and Douglas are the best known (Eriksen 1994), focused on the symbolic value of food, and saw food habits as cultural codes. At the beginning of the 1980s, researchers from the materialistic school began to criticise the structuralist approach. While not denying the fact that food has symbolic

significance or that it contains a message, they do not feel that these are the most important explanations for the development of food habits. In their view, practical and economic factors are more important in individuals' choice of food, and, together with symbolic value, form the basis of the meaning and communicative aspects of food. Menell and Goody have been two of the most prominent researchers adapting this criticism (Murcott 1988).

The 1990s have seen a number of Nordic studies of various social groups' food traditions and meal patterns, which are more or less based on the materialistic criticism of dietary patterns. While these studies have both a sociological and an anthropological starting point, they have a more limited nutritional aim. Ekström (1990) analyses food in relation to the division of labour and contribution to household chores. Dietary content (from Swedish *kosthåll*) is a very central concept in her analysis. According to Ekström, dietary content involves more than dietary habits, since it also contains division of labour and the actual work involved in making the food, while dietary habits relates more to nutritional value, and food habits focus more on food dishes and the composition of the meal.

Fjellströmm (1990) focuses on the concept of food habits, which she defines as the cultural, social and economic values of food, thereby differing from Ekström. Both the meal situation, food quality, preparation and composition of various food products, and the purchase of food are all factors in her concept of food habits.

In this analysis, we use the term dietary patterns which is almost identical with Fjellströmm's food habits, and which contains shopping, meal patterns, eating habits, traditions, cooking, and the actual content of the diet.

Eriksen (1994) concludes that, ultimately, food habits are an individual matter. Notwithstanding, the effects of social background and cultural influences modify and form the individual's choice of food. Food habits are the result of both social relations and individual preferences.

Numerous studies have been carried out about how cultural, social and psychological factors influence the diets of different social groups. Shepherd and Sparks (1992) discuss some of these and conclude that different preferences for the various factors cannot be explained independently, at least not in this type of analysis, but that the dietary pattern as a whole can be analysed from different analytic perspectives. Nobody can explain why A chooses to eat cereal for breakfast, why B is a vegetarian, or why C eats peanut butter and mayonnaise sandwiches. Cultural and social dietary analyses thus strive to describe diet partly in terms of a coherent dietary pattern and partly in connection with everyday practice concerning food.

Borda and Lundin (1986) deal with Bourdieu's construction of social space and lifestyle space. Bourdieu, a sociologist, constructs a picture of the class structure in society. Social space, which is controlled by an "economy", is inhabited by various class factions and groups. Bourdieu argues that the strategy of these groups is to increase their capital (which is not necessarily material), and with it improve their social position. Efforts to improve social position involve, among other things, the use of strategies which express taste. People's taste is captured in lifestyle space through preferences for food, music, art, cars, leisure activities,

etc. Bourdieu relates lifestyle to social position, thereby attempting to rank groups in a socio-cultural hierarchy. According to Bourdieu, this hierarchy consists of a vertical continuum, ranging from upper-class possession of a considerable cultural capital in the form of taste and appreciation of good (in Bourdieu's understanding: highbrow) art, through the aspirations of the *petit bourgeois* to the same art without ever really succeeding, to the total disinterest in this type of art among the lower classes. Like us, Borda and Lundin question whether there is such a continuum. However, in his studies of especially the French upper class, Bourdieu shows that people with roots in one class retain their original intellectual make-up even after their economic situation improves. This is also true in the case of food, where taste, dietary habits and meal patterns are anchored in the original social basis, ie the individual's social background and living conditions in youth, and there will therefore be many different consumption patterns and levels at the same income level. What this study is interested in finding out is the extent to which tradition and social basis play a role in later dietary patterns.

Featherstone (1990) also argues that food consumption, even short-term consumption, can reflect membership of a particular class, inasmuch as food products and dietary patterns can be more or less prestigious. However, he is not unaware of the fact that some products do not necessarily continue to have the same prestige. Warde (1990) also deals with the connection between the consumption patterns of different social groups and class structure, and finds that, among other things, families in the same social group have similar expenditure on particular consumer goods.

Our study of the ways of life and dietary patterns of 12 families is based on Højrup's (1983) ways of life, our aim being to find out whether ways of life influence the families' meal patterns. We already had a suspicion that people's ways of life permeate the way they live and work, and will also be reflected in their choice of food and meal patterns. This was also the starting point of the questionnaire survey, but it has been difficult to confirm or refute, since the use of the way of life analysis in a quantitative analysis has been beset by a number of methodological difficulties (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen 1994). We have supplemented variables from the way of life analysis with demographic variables such as education, income level, and type of dwelling, since we feel that these, together with the way of life, play an important role in consumers' dietary patterns.

Dietary studies with a nutritional perspective

Official interest in studying the connection between the food consumption of different social groups and the spread of diseases which could be related to nutrition has been justified by a desire to be able to influence the nutritional level of the population. In 1985, the National Food Agency of Denmark carried out a study of Danish diets, the aim of which was to find out where the biggest nutritional problems were and subsequently draw up a plan of action to improve the health of the population via nutrition (Haraldsdóttir, Holm, Jensen & Møller 1987). The study was carried out through interviews with 2242 respondents between the ages of 15-80 about their daily dietary habits. One of the results of the study was that, though it was possible to find differences in diet between well-off and badly-off groups, the differences in nutrition were extremely small.

The survey therefore failed to identify any particular social groups in noticeably poor health. The study also showed that, irrespective of whether the population was classified by sex, age, geographical distribution, income, social groups or education, there were differences in diet, but without any one group being at risk of poor nutrition.

It was not the aim of the study to explain these differences, but our interest in this connection is that it uncovered clear differences in food consumption in the different groups.

Another, smaller study was carried out in England (Calnan & Cant 1990), in which a small number of families in different social classes were interviewed about their food consumption and the consideration they gave to nutritional aspects of their diet. Apart from the class differences, the study also enquired about educational background, ethnic background, employment and marital status and age. Calnan and Cant examined consumption patterns in food purchases, cooking, the serving of food and the meal itself. The aim was to give a general description of these patterns, but they discovered that the biggest divergence between the various social classes occurred when they went into depth about different product groups, such as flour, milk and sugar. Here, they found that the higher the social class, the more people bought wholemeal flour and bread, low-fat margarine and milk, and brown sugar instead of refined. They also found a tendency to buy more fresh vegetables in the higher social classes.

Consumers' concept of quality

One of the aims of our interview survey is to incorporate consumers' concept of and demands on quality in our consumer objectives. Holm and Kildevang (1994) have carried out an interview survey which focuses especially on consumers' and producers' concepts of quality. The aim here is to illustrate the apparent conflict between attitudes to food quality among ordinary consumers and among the food industry and experts.

The two authors found that consumers who were positive about food products attached most weight to the personal experience of eating or cooking the food, while those who were negative about food products attached most weight to how they were produced. Food producers claim that it is difficult to make good quality products in the Danish food market, because price is the main competitive parameter. There are clear conflicts of interest between producers and retailers, with producers complaining that supermarkets are a hindrance to product development, while supermarkets claim that many Danish producers are not interested in producing or developing quality food products.

Lassen (1993) has discussed different understandings of quality within the food industry in a previous working paper. In this, he argues for a broader understanding of quality, in which traditional quality parameters such as taste, smell or non-sprayed products are supplemented with immaterial aspects such as how and where the product is made and, for example, the social or environmental consequences of production. This broad concept of quality is used in this part of the analysis.

Here, the focus is on consumers' quality perceptions and wishes regarding food quality, but ultimately it is also a question of communication between consumers, the retail trade and producers. Product information is an important condition for being able to choose between different products. Consumers need reasonable, reliable and relevant information about products before they choose those that suit them best. Much of the information about food products comes from the industry itself, via adverts on TV and in weekly magazines, together with product labels. Longfield (1992) examines how useful this information is to consumers in an article about consumers' relations to adverts and product labels. She cites a large number of studies which show that, on the one hand, people say that adverts have a big influence on consumer choice, but, on the other, that they don't have any perceptible influence on their own choice. Longfield also mentions the fact that every year, more than 10,000 new products come onto the European food market, of which less than 10% will exist for more than a year. Many products will be new variations on a familiar theme, or merely a new name for a well-known product, some will be produced according to a new product concept, and some will actually be new products. What kind of information should be provided about these products is discussed, among other things, in relation to EU legislation in the area.

Straughan (1992) discusses information in relation to the principle of free consumer choice. He asks whether it is alright for harmful products to be marketed as long as consumers have been given sufficient information about them. Where should the line be drawn between really toxic products and those which are pretty suspect? And should some production methods be banned for ethical reasons, or should consumers decide themselves, based on information about product content and production methods? It is probably impossible to lay down unquestionable rules governing which products can be marketed and which can be safely left to consumers' own judgement. But the discussion could result in the provision of more and more open information about product content and production methods. We will return to this discussion about information at the end of the paper.

Perspectives in the study of consumers' possibilities for influence

Summing up this section, this analysis of consumers' dietary patterns and desires and possibilities for influence on the development, production and distribution of food products consists of the following frameworks and perspectives:

- In identifying social groups, we take a starting point in consumers' ways of life and supplement them with other important demographic variables. The extent to which there is a connection between ways of life and dietary patterns is examined.
- The societal context of the analysis is a permanent process of change that is a mark of our time, and which is characterised by a tendency both towards the technocratisation of various areas of life and the destruction of traditions, and can as such constitute a process of cultural emancipation. We examine the extent to which this process of change occurs in the area of food.

- The identification of dietary patterns is based on a definition of the concept which includes shopping, meal patterns, eating habits, traditions, cooking and the content of the diet itself.
- The study of consumers' quality perception is based on a broad concept of quality, containing both the material and so-called immaterial aspects of the product.
- Based on the survey of consumers' desire for product information, we discuss the extent to which it is both possible and reasonable to fulfil these wishes.

2. CONSUMER ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Discussion of method

In analysing the dietary patterns of families and the lives and everyday practices of both individuals and families, we chose a subjective point of departure and decided to use individual-oriented, qualitative research interviews, thereby making use of the phenomenological-hermeneutic frame of understanding developed by, among others, Kvale (1990). One of the aims of this type of interview is to focus on individuals' everyday practices and self-perception, and interpret and understand the meaning systems in which they are embedded.

From a phenomenological point of view, these patterns in social reality are regarded as being a man-made, subjective order, which is acted out, experienced and preserved by individuals or groups (Andersen & Enderud 1990).

The important thing is to develop new concepts and frames of understanding in which data can be interpreted, often with an emphasis on the overall picture. As in a previous working paper (Land 1994), we use a theoretical frame of reference which makes it possible to maintain what Giddens (1979 1984) calls "structural duality". Individuals are seen both as being formed by social structures and institutions and as independent agents who form their own lives through their actions. Thus, we try to preserve this duality throughout the analysis by describing the interaction between the objective and the subjective, and between individuals' practices and the social frameworks which define their conditions of life.

The interviews in our survey are a variant of the life story interview, with a focus on specific topics related to dietary patterns and consumer behaviour. The theoretical-methodological basis of the life story interviews is connected to the relation between individual and collective practice and social change, and also to the analysis of action in a specific context. In carrying out and interpreting the interviews, we have attached more importance to practices and the understanding of these than to psychological individuality and attitudes, our starting point being a theoretical understanding of "meaning" as being created through practice (Simonsen 1993). We also attach importance to turning points and significant events in a person's life, since, in our view, it is in connection with these that norms, life strategies, and change can best be reflected and identified.

Kvale (1990) describes six stages in carrying out and interpreting the qualitative research interview. In the first stage, interviewees themselves describe

their life world without interpretation either from interviewer or interviewee. In the second stage, interviewees themselves discover various connections and meanings in their own actions and practices without any prompting from the interviewer. In the third stage, the interviewer tries to summarise and interpret what the interviewee is describing and “throws it back” to the interviewee, who can then react to the interviewer’s interpretation. In the fourth stage, the interviewer only interprets the completed interview, which has now been carried out and transcribed. This stage in turn consists of three levels. At the first level, the interviewer summarises and formulates what the interviewee understands by the meaning of the connections focused on in the interview. Here, the level of interpretation is more or less limited to the interviewee’s self-perception. At the next level, interpretation goes beyond the interviewee’s self-perception to an interpretation between the lines, a more critical, common-sense interpretation. At a third level, the interviewer can draw on more theoretical interpretations, and here, writes Kvale, interpretation probably goes beyond the interviewee’s self-perception and common-sense, and its validity will depend on a more general theory.

A fifth stage in the interpretation will consist of a re-interview, which takes place after the interviewer has interpreted the completed interview and shown this to the interviewee, who then has the opportunity to adjust and elaborate the interviewer’s interpretations of his/her answers. A possible sixth stage would be to expand the analysis to also include actions, either by the interviewee daily acting on the basis of the new insights s/he has acquired through the interview, or in the form of action research, where both the researcher and interviewees act on the basis of the experiences and insights about a situation which has surfaced during the interviews.

This study employs only the first four of Kvale’s six stages. In the interviews, the interviewees describe their life story, focusing mainly on the more important events and changes in their lives, and on the diet-related topics that have been outlined. The interviewees have themselves reflected on the experiences and connections that have emerged during the interview. We have interpreted during the interviews in order to make sure we understood what was meant. The transcribed interviews were then analysed on all three levels. The report was later sent to the interviewees, though not for the purpose of re-interviewing them. Thus we do not go further with stages 5 and 6 of Kvale’s methodology. But Kvale does not make this a condition for using it, either. In one sense, the interviewees go through stage 6 themselves, by reflecting on their own actions, either during the interview or later, and changing their behaviour as a result.

Selection of the interviewees

Not unexpectedly, the questionnaire survey (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen 1994) showed that, in a number of respects, there were marked differences between families with dependent children and other families, whose children had left home or families without children. We therefore decided to incorporate these differences in the interview survey by selecting half the families with children living at home and half where the children had left home.

From the start, a central aim of the study has been to examine whether ways of life had any influence on dietary patterns. In the questionnaire survey this has only proved to be significant in a few areas, which can be due to many things. In part, it has proved difficult to operationalise the way of life analysis so that it can be used in a quantitative questionnaire analysis (Hjorth Andersen 1991 and 1993), and in part Højrup and Rahbek Christensen's version of the way of life analysis (Højrup 1983; Rahbek Christensen, 1987) turned out not to have any great explanatory value for dietary patterns (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen 1994).

We nevertheless wanted to develop this perspective in the interview survey, partly because a major part of the aim of the whole study was to test this method, and partly because we believed that the way of life analysis would prove to be more applicable in the qualitative part of the study because it is itself based on a qualitative analysis. It might be expected, for example, that the planning and cooking of meals was more integrated in the self-employed way of life, where the family "lives with the firm", eg a trade firm, where the office adjoins the house (or is perhaps part of it), and where the wife looks after the books and the phone. Such a family might also conceivably eat some meals together, especially those in the middle of the day. Another example could be that of career families, or families with firms where it is customary, for business purposes, to invite guests around for meals.

In order to illustrate how dietary patterns affect the various daily practices of different ways of life, we have chosen four families within each way of life: the wage earner way of life, career way of life, and the self-employed way of life. We have tried to select "pure" families, ie where both spouses represent the way of life concerned, which we have succeeded in doing for wage earners. This has unfortunately not been possible in more than five out of eight families in the other two categories. In the other three cases, we have chosen interviewees where one of the spouses represents the way of life in question. In all three cases, this has been the man, unlike in the questionnaire survey, where it was the woman's way of life that showed the most marked correlation with the family's dietary patterns (Jelsøe, Land & Lassen 1994). The corresponding results from the interview survey will be discussed later. Two families in each category are families with children living at home and two where the children have left home. The way of life has thus been the second selection criterion.

We also had a third selection criterion, namely that the family should live close to shopping areas, so that, as far as shopping was concerned, they had several choices. In other words, we mainly wanted to select interviewees who live in a suburb or a town in the metropolitan area. However, there were so few self-employed families that we had to select one of these families with dependent children from the southern part of Zealand.

A final criterion was that both spouses had jobs, so that the time factor would be comparable, ie both spouses would be pressed for time daily. One of the female respondents became unemployed during the interviewing period, however. Since both spouses have jobs, none of the interviewees were at the bottom of the income scale, but ranged from DKK 3-400,000 to over DKK 700,000. One of the self-employed families possibly lies under this.

Presentation of the 12 families

K1: Anette and Mads are both 35 years old. They have two daughters, aged 11 and 4. Anette is a trained educationalist and runs a day nursery. She works just under 35 hours a week. Mads is a geologist in an engineering consultancy. Anette often brings work home with her. This is most often mental activity and planning to do with the future of the institution, relation to parents, and the content of her work with children. Mads often brings work home too, though this is more concrete. He works in another town and is dependent on a car pool arrangement, and also has to be home to pick up the children on the days Anette has to stay behind to lock up the day nursery. So he brings his work and computer home and works when the children have gone to bed. He leaves for work at 7.15 a.m. and is home around 5 p.m. It is Anette who does the shopping and has an overview of the housekeeping, ie she knows what's in the kitchen and what needs to be bought, and also has an idea of how much time it takes to cook, though they often take turns doing the cooking.

K2: Lise and Steffen are both 37 years old. They have three children, aged 11, 9 and 5. Lise is a nurse, and works a 32-hour shift at a county hospital. Steffen is a doctor at another hospital, and in principle works a 37-hour week. They both have mixed shifts, but try to make sure that they don't overlap so that one of them can always be with the children. Sometimes Steffen works on an article or his thesis, but usually at night, after the rest of the family has gone to bed. Lise does the shopping and has an overview of the housekeeping, but Steffen often cooks too.

L1: Malene is 34 and Søren 36. They have three children, aged 9, 6 and 1. Malene works in a bank in another town, has about 45 minutes transport time, and works 37 hours a week. Søren, who also works 37 hours a week, is a salesman in a firm that sells timber products; his district is the whole of Zealand. Søren doesn't have fixed hours, so he takes the children to and from kindergarten, school, etc., every day. It is Malene who does the shopping, has the overview, and cooks every day.

L2: Birthe is 35 and Peter 37. They have two children, aged 4 and 7. Birthe is a physiotherapist and works at a county hospital 34 hours a week. Peter has a clerical education, has been on several supplementary courses, and is now a project manager in a consultancy firm. Peter travels a lot, 1-3 days at a time. It is Birthe who has the overview. They have one big shopping day a week, which they do together, while Birthe buys anything else they need during the week. They take it in turns to do the cooking.

S1: Lone is 35 and Anders 50. They have their own consultancy firm, where Anders teaches and gives lectures, and Lone looks after the phone and the accounts. Apart from this, Lone also works as a demonstrator for a temp agency. Lone has a 13-year-old son from a previous marriage. Anders travels about 160 days a year, but is not so busy when he's home. It is Lone who has the overview and does the cooking. Anders helps occasionally with the shopping, but mostly in order to spend some time together with Lone.

¹ When we quote interviewees we refer to them as K1, K2 etc. K stands for Karriere (career way of life), L for Lønarbejder (wage earner way of life) and S for Selvstændig (self-employed way of life). 1 and 2 are families with children and 3 and 4 are couples where the children have moved away from home. K1 therefore is a career family with children living at home. All names have been changed for the sake of anonymity.

S2: Charlotte is 28 and Jørgen 29. They have two children, aged 6 and 4. They have a flooring firm, where Jørgen does the flooring and Charlotte takes care of the accounts and the phone. There are no other employees in the firm. Jørgen leaves around 6.30-7.00 a.m. and doesn't get back until around 6 p.m., sometimes later, depending on how busy he is. It is Charlotte who has the overview and does the shopping and cooking.

K3: Anne is 54 and Jens Peter 55. They have two children, aged 25 and 28, who have both left home. Anne is a medical secretary and works for a GP, where she works 20 hours a week. Apart from this, she is very active in politics. Jens Peter was trained in the financial sector, and started his own firm about a year ago. Apart from himself, he only has a few students to help him. He is also a member of several boards of directors. Jens Peter works very long hours, leaving home about 7.30 a.m. and not getting back until about 6-8 p.m. He often brings work home, where he has both a computer and a fax. It is Anne who has the overview and does the shopping and cooking.

K4: Mette is 51 and Bent 48. They have two children, aged 27 and 24. Mette and Bent are both middle managers in a large public company. Mette works the most irregular hours, staying at work until she is finished, and sometimes not coming home until 6-7 p.m. Bent is more dependent on the trains, and tries to get home by about 5 p.m. It is Mette who has the overview and does the cooking, while Bent helps with the shopping.

L3: Else and Hans are both 55. Else, who has a 31-year-old daughter from a previous marriage, is a secretary, and works 26 hours a month. In addition to this, she devotes a lot of her time to a handicap organisation. Hans is a ministry porter, and works 37 hours a week. It is Else who has the overview and does the shopping and cooking. Hans also sometimes shops for special offers and lends a hand in the kitchen.

L4: Nina is 49 and Erik 44. Nina has a 27-year-old daughter and Erik a 22-year-old son from previous marriages. Nina is a trained catering manager, but worked as an assistant educationalist for 19 years. At the moment she has quit her job to spend more time with her daughter and small grandchild, and devote more time to other activities. Erik is a dental technician and works 37 hours a week. Now that Nina is unemployed, she does most of the shopping and cooking, and she also has an overview of the housekeeping. When Nina was working, Erik did more shopping and helped more with the cooking.

S3: Anne-Marie is 48 and Peter 45. Anne-Marie has two sons aged 25 and 27 from a previous marriage, but who have lived with Peter since they were small. Peter is a chef and Anne-Marie a trained auxiliary nurse. They have their own restaurant, which is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. They close earlier on Sundays, and during winter they are not open on Saturdays. Anne-Marie is in charge of the stocks, shopping, part of the kitchen and trains the kitchen staff. Peter also works in the kitchen and, in addition, does the accounts. They have nine part-time employees to help in the restaurant and a small kiosk. It is Peter who does their private shopping, does the cooking, and has an overview.

S4: Kirsten is 49 and Ole 51. They have two children, aged 25 and 27. Kirsten runs a town hall department dealing with day care centres, with 55 employees

under her. Kirsten works a lot longer than the normal 37 hours a week – more like 50-60 hours, plus transport time of 35-45 minutes each way. Ole is a graduate engineer with his own consultancy firm, where he sometimes works just as long. It is Kirsten who does the shopping, cooking, and has an overview.

Five of the families with dependent children are in their mid-30s, and have children between the ages of 1-11, though one family is just under 30, but has children of the same age. The only exception is family number 6, with one teenage child. Three families had two children, two families had three children, and one family had one child.

The couples living on their own all had children who had left home. Their age ranged from the late-40s to the mid-50s, with children in their twenties. There is thus no great spread in age between the two groups.

Design of the interview guide

The interviews with the 12 women were to be about the women's own and their families' present situation, also including a look back at their childhood and adolescent years, the starting of their own family, and, for some, the time when their children left home, and, in connection with this, changes in diet and meals. It has been important to get an idea of the family's everyday life as a whole, both in order to understand the possibilities they themselves see for consumer influence and to identify any barriers to this. A further clarification resulted in the following topics, on which the interviews have been based:

1. The man's and woman's age, occupation, place of work, children, children's age, and parent's occupation. The aim here is to get an idea of the work and family situation of family members.
2. The man's and woman's life story as regards
 - education and work
 - marriage
 - children
 - dwelling

Here, the emphasis is on confirmed important events and changes in their lives, thereby enabling us to describe the family's way of life and focus on changes in diet in connection with these events.

3. The man's and woman's everyday routine

- an average day for both spouses
- which times are fixed

The aim here is to get an idea of the family's chores and activities throughout the day, partly to find out how much time there is for shopping, cooking and eating, and partly to discover more about how the family usually goes about cooking and eating their meals.

4. The family's meals

- daily meals and weekend meals.

The emphasis here is on the framework of the meal itself, the priority the family gives to the meal as a social focus, and any barriers there may be to such prioritising.

5. The family's shopping

- where they shop
- how often they shop
- who does the shopping

The aim here is to discover the family's shopping patterns and attitudes to shopping possibilities and product range, and the degree (if at all) to which they are self-sufficient in some products.

6. Economic resources

food budget

What we want to find out here is how much the family can afford to spend on food and evaluate whether their budget is too tight in relation to the food they want to buy. We also want to find out whether the family wants to expand its possibilities.

7. The food itself

- what the family eats and when
- food for guests
- time consumption
- who does the cooking
- changes in diet
- perception of food quality
- desire for change
- parents' diet

The aim is to find out what the family eats, evaluate how changeable or tradition-bound it is, its perception of the quality of individual product groups and the diet as a whole, the time it takes to cook on weekdays, at the weekend and when they have guests, their interest in cooking, and, finally, to discover whether there are any conflicts over what the family eats.

8. Fish

- does the family eat fish, and if so which
- non-processed/frozen/cooked

Here, we want to disclose the family's traditions as regards fish, and where they buy fish – or whether they catch it themselves. We focus on fish since this is a general theme of the whole research project.

9. Ecological products

- does the family choose ecological products
- which
- why

Here, we want to know more about the family's considerations, decisions and actions concerning the purchase of ecological products. We especially want to know about the family's considerations and evaluations in order to clear up the patently exaggerated answers in the questionnaire survey.

10. The respondent as consumer

- how is knowledge obtained about the products
- influence on product content and quality
- influencing the respondent

The aim is to identify the channels through which the respondent tries to exert influence on food products, either on the retail trade, the producer, or elsewhere. In addition, we want to find out what it is that influences people, eg national campaigns about salmonella, TV documentaries about food production, newspaper articles or other influences. Finally, we want to investigate respondents' possibilities of determining the quality of food products.

11. The quality of life through food

- inspiration through food
- eating out
- guests
- serving food

Our aim here is to get an idea of how food enters into the overall quality of life and the importance the family attaches to this element.

An interview guide was designed on the basis of these criteria, and the interviews were carried out as open, semi-structured interviews. The interview guide is reproduced in full in the appendix.

The interviews

The interviews were carried out in the interviewee's home, and lasted about an hour. In all the interviews, it has been important to ensure that the person being interviewed is also the one mainly responsible for the housekeeping. However, we have not insisted that the spouse could not also participate if desired. In eight interviews, only the person mainly responsible was present, while in four both were present. The fact that the person not mainly responsible for the housekeeping was present did not, in our view, either distort the "truth" or make the person mainly responsible hold back information. On the contrary perhaps. We found that, in several of the two-person interviews, the interviewees discussed several of the topics between them, which has perhaps resulted in a more nuanced account.

In 11 of the interviews there were two interviewers, and in the last only one. We feel that, in the type of interview we wanted to do, it was an advantage to be two. It has made it easier to sum up, and we have been able to cover the topics more thoroughly and supplement them with additional questions. It enabled one of us to think while the other asked questions. But it has clearly been an advantage that we knew each other well and were familiar with the way the other person thinks, etc. We didn't get the impression that the respondents were "overwhelmed" by two interviewers suddenly turning up on their doorstep. There was an open and accommodating atmosphere in all cases.

The interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed verbatim. Before interpreting the interviews, they were summarised thematically in order to give a better overview.

Interpretation of the material

The analysis includes three different perspectives of the material. In the first, four different dietary accounts are selected and presented. These revolve around a description of the everyday practices and routines that characterise the family and the practices specially related to the family's diet. The accounts lie as close to the interviewees' statements as possible. The idea is to present a coherent narrative of the person's life context, everyday routines and dietary patterns as formed by a combination of general and unique social conditions and the person's own background. We let the accounts speak for themselves, since in this way they will serve as a presentation of the families and the material on which the subsequent interpretations are based.

In another perspective, the material is analysed across the 12 interviews within a number of themes in an attempt to identify common features and dissimilarities. This perspective is more interpretative and exploratory, and looks for identification points and respondents' own perceptions and interpretations of the importance of diet as health-giving, social focus, cultural identification, etc.

The third perspective interprets the families' dietary patterns and choices within selected topics, resulting ultimately in a set of consumer objectives.

The same information about the families can be used in all three perspectives. This is because an analysis of the three perspectives using the same material gives an overlapping dimension which is also a part of the same total life, but seen from different angles.

3. FOUR ACCOUNTS

The four families which we present in this section have been selected according to the dietary pattern that characterises the family. The dietary patterns of all 12 families were more or less different, and the reason for selecting these four is that they represent opposite poles of the overall pattern. At the start of each account, we have included a few characteristics of the family's dietary pattern that led to their being selected.

Anne and Jens Peter (K3)

Anne is experimental, lets herself be inspired, often makes new food, thinks healthy, and does not reject ecological products out of hand.

Anne is 54 and Jens Peter 55. They have two children, a son aged 28 and a daughter aged 25, both of whom have left home.

Anne is a medical secretary and works for a GP 20 hours a week. In addition, she is politically active in one of the parties to the right, and holds several honorary positions which she spends a lot of time on. Jens Peter has a background in the world of finance, and until a year ago worked in a financial firm, which he left to start his own consultancy firm. Apart from himself, he has only a few students to help him. He is also a member of several boards of directors. Jens Peter works very long hours, and often brings home work, where he has both a computer and a fax. His work is his main interest, so there is no real distinction between work and leisure.

Their son also has a small firm, a specialist travel agency. He is also completing his M.Sc. (Econ) at the Copenhagen Business School. Their daughter is studying environmental chemistry at the University of Copenhagen.

Anne and Jens Peter have known each other since they were in school, became engaged in 1960 and got married in 1963. Anne was 24 then, and Jens Peter 25. Their two children were born in 1966 and 1969.

Anne's father was a butcher and her mother a cosmetologist, and she also held a high position in the Danish Women's Voluntary Army Corps. She was often away from home giving lectures. Her mother worked in her father's butcher shop for a while, but then started her own business, a tobacconist and off-licence. She later became a zonal therapist. She was very interested in new religions and meditated in colours. Anne thinks her mother was extremely intelligent and ahead of her time in many things. But she was never at home. Anne wanted to do things differently when she had children herself.

Jens Peter was born on a large farm with many employees, so he was raised by a nanny. But the farm was not a success, and the family went bankrupt several times. The family later moved to a provincial town, where they had a tyre business. Jens Peter's father had a lot of hunts in the neighbourhood, so they often had game from these.

Anne qualified as a medical secretary at the beginning of the 1960s. After qualifying, she first took a job at a small hospital, but because it was so far away switched to an office job in the town hall close to where they lived. At first, she worked full time, but went down to half time when they had the children.

Jens Peter was an assistant accountant when they got married, and, after attending evening courses at the Copenhagen Business School, qualified as an accountant in 1970.

When Anne and Jens Peter got married, they first lived in a small flat not far from their parents, but quickly moved to Copenhagen, first to a small flat and later to one a bit bigger. They also bought a weekend cottage. They sold this when their second child was born and bought a house in the suburbs. Anne became politically active after they moved here, and this took up a lot of her time.

Within about four years, the suburb where they lived grew from being a small town with 3600 inhabitants to a medium-sized dormitory town of 16,000 people. They got fed up with this, and in 1974 moved to another town and to the house where they live today.

On weekdays, Anne and Jens Peter get up at 7 a.m. The days are very different, depending on whether Anne has to go to work. On Mondays and Fridays, she starts work at 7.45 a.m. and gets home at 4 p.m., she gets off work at noon on Wednesdays, and doesn't work at all on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Anne goes to political meetings every Monday at 5 p.m., and if there's time, plays bridge until 7 p.m. She plays golf every Tuesday morning (in the summer), and every other Tuesday afternoon she has a political meeting and plays bridge in the evening, this time together with Jens Peter. She also has a political meeting every other Wednesday afternoon, and again plays bridge in the evening if she has time. Every Thursday morning, she plays badminton for about an hour, cleans the house, and does other things she hasn't had time to do on other days. On Fridays, Anne and Jens Peter often go to concerts, private gallery viewings, meetings or courses. At the weekend they often have guests, or the children come home.

Jens Peter leaves for the office every morning at 7.30, and is busy with different things all day, writes articles, makes contacts, holds meetings, is chairman of a shareholders' association, and is a freemason and member of the Rotary Club. He usually gets home again around 7-8 p.m.

Anne and Jens Peter always eat breakfast together – often standing up and very quickly. They never eat lunch, not even at weekends. If they get hungry, they just make a sandwich.

The couple give high priority to dinner. They don't eat at a fixed time since they both have a lot of meetings. Anne has usually prepared the meal, so when Jens Peter rings from his car phone she can start on the rest and have the meal ready by the time he comes home. They usually sit at the table for about half an hour. They never watch TV while they eat. Sometimes they listen to the news on the radio, otherwise preferring to chat over their meal. Likewise, they try to arrange things so that they can go to leisure activities together, namely golf and bridge.

Anne didn't work when the children were small, and always made sure she was home when they got back from school. She thinks it was important for the children's sake, though not particularly stimulating for her. There was too much gossip with the other wives and too few activities outside the home.

Anne shops in Netto and Favør, which are both nearby. Anne likes Netto because she thinks they have good-quality food, especially fresh food. Netto doesn't have a very wide range, but she can easily get the other things she needs elsewhere. Sometimes she also shops in other supermarkets, but these are further away, which she needs a car for, it being too much of a hassle to lug a lot of carrier bags around by bus. Anne has her own car, but often lends it to the children. Anne also shops in specialist shops, fishmongers, cheesemongers, and in a Turkish shop. She is not entirely satisfied with the choice of specialist shops where she lives.

Anne does a bit of shopping every day. She makes a shopping list, but doesn't use them systematically. If she sees something that looks delicious or is a good offer, she buys it and keeps it for another day. The exception is fish. She generally buys fresh fish and eats it the same day. Previously, Anne often went into Copenhagen, and went shopping for food in, for example, Irma in Illum's (a department store). But she much prefers going to shops where she knows where things are, so likes to do most of her shopping closer to home. When there was an Irma nearby, she also went shopping there, but she never goes to Brugsen. She thinks it's too expensive and the quality too poor.

Anne and Jens Peter have a greenhouse where Anne grows tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, parsley, etc.

Anne and Jens Peter earn a lot, but spend it, they don't save it. Their salaries go towards the home, the two cars and the children. They have also paid for holidays abroad for the children since they have grown up. When they were small, the whole family always went to Greece on holiday.

Anne has never had an actual housekeeping budget, but thinks herself that she is economical. Gets good value for money. She has never had to look at prices, but does so anyway. If she sees a good offer, she buys it.

Anne and Jens Peter have white bread with cheese and jam and a cup of coffee for breakfast, plus a glass of juice and a vitamin pill. Sometimes an egg on Sundays. They never eat lunch.

They always have only one course for dinner, and afterwards a cup of coffee and home-made cakes.

They often have pasta dishes. This is relatively new. Sometimes, for example, they will have fresh pasta with prawns, mussels, tuna fish, lemon and parsley. Other times with ham. They also often have chicken and rice. They have fish about once a week, eg flounder, plaice or salmon. In summer they also have eel. The salmon is served with small potatoes, a hot and cold sauce, and some greens.

Anne and Jens Peter don't eat much meat any more, but when they do, they prefer veal. Often with white potatoes. The children didn't like this much, so when they lived at home they had hasselback, home-made chips (oven fried

potato boats, with thyme, salt and pepper), or baked potatoes. The fact that they don't eat much meat any more has nothing to do with price – Anne sees it more as a sign of age. They just don't feel like big steaks any more. But they still regularly eat beef patties.

Anne thought that, once the children had left home, she would make some of the old, traditional dishes they both like so much, eg brunkål (a dish with cabbage) and skibberlabskovs (a kind of stew), but it never seems to come to anything now that there are just the two of them, and besides, it also takes such a long time to make.

Anne doesn't plan meals more than one day at a time. As a rule, she takes what they are going to have for dinner out of the freezer in the morning. Sometimes she phones Jens Peter and asks him what he'd like to eat, so it is often him who decides. Sometimes Anne makes food for several days, which she then freezes in smaller portions which Jens Peter can heat up in the microwave oven when Anne is away on trips.

Before Anne and Jens Peter had children, they weren't much interested in what they ate. This changed totally after the children were born. By "proper food habits" Anne means sitting down at the table to eat together. Not grabbing something on the way out, or watching TV while you eat. And it has to be good food, made from proper ingredients. And it must be home-made. Anne doesn't care much for ready-made meals, nor eating out for that matter. But Jens Peter enjoys eating out, so they do occasionally go to a restaurant.

When Anne thinks back on her parents' dietary habits, she remembers that they also put a lot of effort into making everything themselves. But they never ate pasta, and they only had rice a few times a year. It was mostly Anne's father who did the cooking. Her mother wasn't much interested in cooking, and, according to Anne, was very sloppy in the kitchen.

Anne is concerned that they eat healthy food. They don't eat as much butter as before, and she always uses sunflower oil for frying. This is because of the cholesterol. They also take care to eat a lot of fibre-rich food – there are always bananas and other fruit in the house. And they always have a salad with their dinner.

Anne doesn't set great store by health-food shops. Their products are not labelled, and she has heard that some things are downright dangerous, eg some varieties of tea. On the other hand, she does think highly of ecological products, and often thinks she can see that they are better, eg vegetables. But it is still a bit of a jungle, so you have to take it on faith, she says.

Anne says that she doesn't speculate a lot about whether the products are sprayed, or whether they are ecological, but still..... She buys eggs from a farm because she wants to be sure that the hens haven't been cooped up in batteries, and she doesn't spray the fruit and vegetables in her own garden. And she wouldn't dream of making marmalade from oranges that have been sprayed. So she does think about it to some extent.

Anne spends at least 45 minutes a day cooking, a lot more if they have guests or the children are home, often the whole day. And she often serves three courses

on these occasions. Anne doesn't buy magazines, but often reads the recipes in the newspapers. She also often makes up her own recipes and gets recipes from friends if they've made something particularly delicious. She wouldn't hesitate to buy a cookery book, either, if it looked inspiring. She already has a lot, but the one she uses most is "God Mad" (Good Food). She also uses the Karoline series of cookery books.

Anne thinks that the quality of Danish meat has deteriorated a lot. In her view, this is agriculture's fault for producing so many pigs for export. They pollute, and the quality is not as it was. The meat is poor because everything has to go so fast. And she doesn't think there are so many nutrients in the meat any more, either. However, she admits herself to buying meat if it is cheap. Therefore, she doesn't think the individual consumer should be allowed to choose. She says there should be rules for how much farmers can produce on how much land in a given period. And the price must be set accordingly. She admits that this isn't Venstre's (a liberal political party) policy, but adds that we have done ourselves no good by focusing exclusively on money.

Anne thinks that consumers can influence the choice of goods by not buying particular products. She also thinks that consumers lack information, and that different interests combine to withhold information from or misinform consumers. People in South America and southern Europe live much more healthy lives and demand a much higher quality. We often tend to look down on them, but Anne says that they are miles ahead of us as far as food is concerned.

Anne-Marie and Peter (S3)

Anne-Marie is tradition-bound, loves good traditional food, especially with a good rich gravy, doesn't attach much importance to health, and doesn't experiment much.

Anne-Marie is 48 and Peter 45. They have two sons, aged 25 and 27, who have both left home. Anne-Marie is a qualified auxiliary nurse and Peter a trained chef, but has worked most of his working life in a large retail warehouse. They now have a small restaurant, which they own and run jointly.

Anne-Marie grew up on Bornholm, and after completing secondary school went to Copenhagen to train as an auxiliary nurse. She had planned to be a nurse, but after working as an auxiliary for a few years, decided to stick with that.

Anne-Marie's father was a bricklayer and her mother a stationmaster (the definitive closing of the railway coming later). She later ran a post office, which Anne-Marie's father took over after she died.

Anne-Marie has been an auxiliary nurse for 25 years in all. She got married and gave birth to her two sons in 1967 and 1969. At the time she was working nights, but wanted to change to the day shift. When she found she couldn't, she quit. She then got a job as a warehouse employee in a large central depot, where she stayed for 5-6 years. This was totally different from the hospital where she worked before – a completely different atmosphere, different people, and differ-

ent relations between employees. Anne-Marie says she learnt a lot during her time at the depot. When she finished there, she applied for a job at an old people's home as an auxiliary nurse, because she wasn't sure how much things had changed at the hospital since she had last worked there. But the old people's home was not really her cup of tea, it was a bit boring.

In the meantime, Anne-Marie got divorced and met Peter. Both they and the children did a lot of sport, and were at the football club nearly every evening. This gave them the idea of leasing the cafeteria at the club, which was open every evening. This was in 1984.

Peter comes from south Zealand, where he did his "O" levels and later trained as a chef. Peter's father was a labourer and his mother worked at the telephone exchange. After qualifying as a chef he started his national service, but was rejected for health reasons, and was on the dole for several years, until he got a job at the warehouse. At the time, he didn't much feel like using his training as a chef.

Peter gets up at 7 a.m., makes coffee and eats his breakfast while he reads the paper. He then goes out with the dog and begins in the restaurant, which is next door to where they live. He wakes Anne-Marie at 9 o'clock and goes out to buy Ekstra Bladet (a newspaper), taking the dog with him. When they get back, Anne-Marie drinks a cup of coffee over the paper. They both enjoy having the mornings to themselves. Being able to sit quietly over a cup of coffee and the paper. Peter goes back to the restaurant, and Anne-Marie comes later at 11 o'clock, when they open.

Anne-Marie and Peter share the work between them. Anne-Marie is in charge of the kitchen, does the stock accounts and orders the stock, and trains the kitchen staff. Peter is also in the kitchen sometimes, serves the meals, and does the accounts. They have 9 part-time staff. They have a lot of customers around lunch-time. When the main rush hour is over, Anne-Marie orders the things they need, tidies up in the stockroom, and fills the shelves up. Sometimes she also finds time to go next door and do the washing, cleaning, or other jobs. This is especially during the winter, when they're not so busy, and she has more time to leave for a few hours in the afternoon. It's more difficult in the summer. Sometimes Peter goes home as well to do the accounts. He also does their private shopping.

When they start to get busy again during the evening, they are all at work. They close the restaurant at 10 p.m., and have an hour's cleaning and tidying up before the staff go home at 11. Peter then goes home, while Anne-Marie stays behind to check the stocks and see what's needed. She also does the last bit of cleaning if they haven't managed to finish before the staff go home. Anne-Marie often stays a bit longer in the restaurant when she's finished, relaxing with a jigsaw puzzle or just sitting and staring into space. She can't just go home to bed. It's generally around midnight before she gets home.

Anne-Marie and Peter eat very few meals together. As mentioned above, they both like to eat breakfast alone. They eat during the day when there's time, and they are rarely able to sit down together. During the winter, they are closed on Saturdays, so then they eat dinner together and make it a special occasion. If there's time, Peter sometimes makes a large mixed stew, which they eat at the

restaurant together with the staff. It is usually on Tuesdays, which is a quiet day, he has time for this. They seldom eat one of the restaurant's dishes when they eat together. What they eat during the day differs a lot. A cheese sandwich, some paté, or leftovers from the restaurant. Sometimes they are so busy that they don't get to eat all day. In which case Anne-Marie makes sure she drinks some sugared water – otherwise I'll pass out, she says. Sometimes, after one of these busy days, they'll lock up right after closing time and sit in the back room and eat. The staff help with the cleaning up afterwards, even though it's overtime. Anne-Marie thinks this is a good arrangement.

During the winter, when Anne-Marie and Peter eat at home on Saturdays, they like to eat meat, a rissole or steak and potatoes, and a good thick gravy. Neither of them like vegetables. But always a thick gravy, especially one made with cream and mushrooms. They eat very unhealthily, says Anne-Marie. But they have the same taste and like the food they eat a lot. Sometimes they also have an omelette, and in summer kærnemælkskoldskål (a kind of soup made with cold buttermilk) with lashings of eggs and cream. Anne-Marie thinks it's great to gorge themselves like this. But they rarely eat fish. Anne-Marie comes from Bornholm, where they ate a lot of fish, and she still likes to, really. But Peter can't stand the bones. But if Anne-Marie fixes a plaice for him, he'll eat it because he knows there are no bones in it. They never go to the restaurant to get food on their time off. There are a lot of things in the restaurant Anne-Marie doesn't like at all. For example, she never eats chips.

Anne-Marie and Peter never buy ecological products. They think it's stupid, and also think there's too much of it around. It's getting to the point where it's hard to find something that's not ecological, they say.

Anne-Marie misses meals with the children, who have left home. During the summer, they don't actually have time to eat with the children. This gets Anne-Marie down a bit. They bought the restaurant after the children had grown up, and felt that now was the time to do what they wanted. But Anne-Marie never thought that they would be so tied down by the restaurant that they'd never have time to be with the children. All their friends are falling away too, because they've never got the time to see them. They are only together as a family on birthdays and at Christmas, Easter, etc. Anne-Marie looks forward to the day when they haven't got the restaurant any more. Then she'll start making her own food again and invite the children over for some good meals. The eldest is especially fond of her cooking, while the youngest eats more vegetables and other dishes which Anne-Marie and Peter don't like much.

The pattern of meals hasn't always been as it is today. It was different when they both had 8-4 jobs. Then, the children went to sports in the afternoons after they had all had coffee together. Afterwards, Anne-Marie would cook the dinner, and they'd all eat together when the children came home again. Later, Anne-Marie and Peter went to their own sports. Peter was the boys' coach when they were small, so he also went with them in the afternoons.

When they leased the cafeteria at the football club, Anne-Marie was still on night shift at the old people's home. She got off work at 7 a.m., and Peter used to stop off there on his way to work, and they'd eat breakfast together. Then he'd go off to work, and she'd go home, take the dog out and send the children to

school. Then she went to bed until they came home again, chatted with them over a cup of coffee, then went out shopping and opened the cafeteria at 4. Peter made the food when he got home, and took it to the cafeteria, where they all ate together. They stayed there the rest of the evening until Anne-Marie went to work. Peter locked up, and he and the children went home to bed.

Sometimes, Anne-Marie organised larger arrangements at the cafeteria, eg weddings, silver wedding anniversaries, and “round” birthdays (30, 40, 50, etc.). She liked doing that. Anne-Marie says they earned a lot then – they both had double jobs. When they gave up the cafeteria, they had saved enough for a whole month’s holiday for the four of them on Gran Canaria. It was the holiday of a lifetime.

Now that they have the restaurant, it is usually Peter who does their private shopping. He goes to Brugsen or Favør. It’s easy to park there and there are usually no queues. Anne-Marie doesn’t go shopping very often. Sometimes during the winter, on Saturdays, when the restaurant is closed. But she usually buys other things, and lets Peter buy the food. He’s also more price-conscious, she says. If she has set her mind on roast beef, she’ll buy it whatever it costs. She decides at home what she’s going to buy, and then buys it, even if there are other good offers right next to it. Previously, when they lived in a smaller town, Anne-Marie liked to shop at the butcher’s, where she could just go in and order a piece of roast beef for 15 people. Then she was sure of getting enough and that it was of a good quality. She says she misses having a butcher’s like that where they live now. Peter always comes home with a good piece of meat, he’s good at that.

Both their respective families ate more or less as Peter and Anne-Marie would have done if they hadn’t had the restaurant. Anne-Marie’s parents were to some extent self-sufficient in eggs, potatoes and fruit.

Anne-Marie doesn’t read labels. Practically the only thing she takes notice of is the eat-by date on the bread. She says that it’s up to people themselves how much fat they eat or whether they mix fruit or vegetables in the salad.

Peter doesn’t use cookery books. But Anne-Marie has some which she once collected – at the beginning of the 1970s. She uses them a lot. Peter only makes dishes he knows, while Anne-Marie likes to try something new.

Lise and Steffen (K2)

Lise experiments with food, thinks a lot about health, and consistently buys ecological products, putting her “money where her mouth is”, so to speak.

Lise and Steffen are both 32. They have three children, aged 11, 9 and 5. Lise is a nurse, and works 32 hours a week at a county hospital. Steffen is a doctor and, in principle, works 37 hours a week at another county hospital. They both have mixed shifts. Lise has four late shifts a month, with the rest being day shifts. This arrangement lets her work two days in a row and then have three days off.

Steffen’s shifts are organised in such a way that he works an average of 37

hours a week over an 8-week period. But within this period, he can risk having to work for a week at a stretch, being on call for the whole weekend, and then having to work the whole of the following week as well. But being on call for a whole weekend also gives him almost a week's time off in lieu. Steffen and Lise give high priority to organising their shifts so that at least one of them can always be with the children, and this is not usually a problem, says Lise.

Lise grew up in north Schleswig, where her father worked in a factory and her mother was a housewife until Lise was 12-13 years old. After finishing school, Lise was a maid for a year on the island of Funen, where she also did her "A" levels (the Danish higher preparatory examination). She started at nursing school in Copenhagen in 1977 and qualified in 1981.

Steffen comes from Copenhagen, where his father had a lot of different jobs, eg poured concrete for paving stones and as a janitor, and his mother was a housewife. Steffen passed his "A" levels in 1975 and trained as a vet for a year before switching to medical studies, which he completed in 1983.

Lise and Steffen met in 1980, started living together at the end of the year, and had the children in 1982 1984 and 1988.

The family has two different kinds of day – the days when they all have to go to work, school, etc., and Lise's days off. When they all leave in the morning, they get up at 6.45 a.m. Lise helps the two youngest get dressed while Steffen has a shower. The eldest child gets herself ready and then they eat a quick breakfast, after which Steffen leaves at 7.20 and Lise at 7.40, dropping off the youngest at kindergarten and the two eldest at school on her way to work. She sometimes does the shopping on the way home from work, and other times comes home first and goes out shopping later. Lise does the cooking as a rule, but Steffen also makes the food now and again. After dinner, the children watch children's hour on TV while they help to clear the table. They play, talk and bath until 9-9.30 p.m., when the children go to bed.

Lise and Steffen don't do anything in particular during the evenings, since their shift work makes this difficult to organise, but Lise has several girlfriends who she often sees in the evenings.

Steffen has periods when he is either writing articles or working on his thesis, but he mostly does this after the rest of the family have gone to bed.

The family don't eat lunch together. The two eldest have lunchpacks, the youngest eats at the kindergarten, and Lise and Steffen each eat in their respective hospital canteens.

Lise and Steffen have had a food club for many years, where they eat together with three other couples twice a week. Recently they have cut this down to once a week. When the others come over to their house to eat, Lise and Steffen take it in turns to do the cooking. Apart from the food club, they also have a lot of friends around to eat. But now they've started to cut down on this too, because they feel the five of them don't eat together often enough.

Since Lise doesn't work such long hours, she's the one who usually does the shopping. They'd rather spend what time they have together doing other things. Steffen usually takes the car to work, so Lise shops in Brugsen, which is nearby. When Lise has the car, she often shops for more things in shops further away from home. Usually, though, this is only when there's a birthday or other special occasion coming up. Then she'll probably go to one of the big hyperstores, Bilka or OBS. She did this more often before, but can't really be bothered any more. She says she can buy what she needs in SuperBrugsen. Lise also used to shop for special offers, but now that the family is earning more, they only try to keep to a budget when they're saving up for something in particular.

Lise generally goes shopping every day – for dinner too. She often asks the children what they'd like to eat, and unless it's rice pudding for the third time that week, they usually get what they want. She spends about an hour a day cooking. Lise also tries to get the children to make the food, which is not hard because they like doing it. The eldest would like to have one fixed day a week when they make the food, but Lise's and Steffen's shifts make this difficult. But sometimes she goes shopping and does the cooking herself.

The children can choose between oatmeal, porridge, cornflakes, A38 (a fermented milk product), toast or crispbread for breakfast. A few years ago they also had sugar crispies and more sugary cereals, but when they realised what was in them, they stopped buying them.

Lise sometimes has a hot lunch together with the patients, while other times she goes to the canteen and either has a salad or just some fruit she's brought from home.

They eat a lot of different things for dinner. They eat potatoes with about 3/4 of the meals, otherwise rice or bread. They most often eat bread when they only have a salad, or when they have guests. They always make sure to have lots of vegetables. This can vary from raw shredded vegetables, carrot salad, raw white shredded cabbage, a green mixed salad, or boiled vegetables.

They don't eat meat every day. Steffen and the children aren't too keen on 100% vegetarian dishes, but that's what they get sometimes, especially in summer. They eat more meat dishes in winter. The children would like more traditional dishes, such as rissoles, steak or meatloaf, so they get their way now and then. Otherwise, they get various flans with salad, and they often have chicken. They don't often have pork chops, because Lise doesn't like it much. If they have pork at all, it's usually in stews or rissoles, or sausage dishes, which the youngest likes. Lise mostly makes food she knows the children like, but now and then also food which she knows they'll turn their noses up at. Then they'll only eat a bit of it, but she makes them eat rice and potatoes.

Lise can't say for sure how much their food habits have changed since they started living together, but she thinks a lot is due to the children. Now and again they've made family decisions about food, eg breakfast, which they changed for health reasons. This was how they started buying ecological milk when it became cheaper a few years ago. They don't mind paying a bit more to get "purer" products.

Friday is the one day they make something special for dinner. They are usually out or have guests on Saturdays, and on Sundays it is usually pot luck as far as food is concerned. Lise can't be bothered to plan more than three days ahead, so they often get something out of the freezer, eg "Saturday chicken" (oven-ready chicken portions).

Apart from Saturday chicken, they never buy ready-made meals or gravies. Lise likes making food from scratch, and she also likes to bake, though she only bakes bread for birthdays.

In periods, the family eats a lot of fish. Lise's father catches fish himself, and they get plaice, cod and eel from him. Or else they go to the fishmonger's, where they buy, for example, cream of fish, plaice, mackerel and garfish. Lise also buys frozen fish in Brugsen, whole salmon or cod fillets. Never ready-made meals or breaded fish.

Lise enjoys trying new dishes. She gets inspiration for new things at her "girl evenings", where they eat very exotic food, or when they eat at friends'. Lise also likes the Karoline series of cookery books, and reads the recipes in magazines. She hasn't bought or been given a new cookery book for ages.

Apart from this, she doesn't often read articles about food – how it's produced or how many additives they put in it.

Lise's mother didn't like cooking, and so didn't make very exciting food. It was a never-ending circle of rissoles, mettwurst and steak. But Lise learned to cook when she was a live-in maid at a catering manager's, where she also learnt to cook for up to 20-30 dinner guests. This has inspired her to experiment with new dishes, but when she has a lot of guests she still uses a cookery book just to make sure it turns out right.

Generally speaking, Lise doesn't give much thought to the quality of every single thing she buys, but there are some things which she and Steffen have chosen to buy consistently, eg ecological products. This is both because they think ecological products are purer and out of consideration for the environment. TV documentaries about battery chickens have also made an impression on her.

Lise and Steffen have gone through periods where they have focused on the fat content of food. When their youngest son was 4, he was, as Lise puts it, a bit stout. So they bought skimmed milk and dropped butter on sandwiches. When they become aware of a problem with or possibility for changing their dietary habits, they talk it over and often do something about it.

Malene and Søren (L1)

Malene loves cooking and gives it a high priority but hasn't much time for it. She is a bit tradition-bound, and lets herself be inspired. Environmental awareness is only slowly put into practice. Price plays an all-important role.

Malene is 34 and Søren 36. They have three children, aged 9, 6 and 1. Malene is a dealer in a bank and works 37 hours a week. Søren is a salesman in a firm that sells timber products. His region is the whole of Zealand. Neither of them have anyone under them.

They both grew up on Zealand, where Malene's father was a baker and confectioner, but who now works in a plastics factory. Her mother is a trained hairdresser, but now works in an old people's home. Søren's father is retired, but was previously manager of a transport firm. His mother was a housewife. She has also been a relief teacher at a school and a kindergarten.

Malene left school at 16 and went to commercial college for three years. Søren trained as an ironmonger, and also worked in an ironmonger's for several years before becoming a salesman in a wholesale firm. Malene and Søren moved together in 1982, when they were 23 and 27 respectively. Their three children were born in 1985, 1988 and 1992.

On weekdays, they both get up at 6.15 a.m. Søren takes a shower while Malene gets the two youngest ready. Malene eats breakfast together with their youngest child, and Søren eats his breakfast with the other two. Malene leaves for work at 7.40, cycles to the station, and takes the train to Copenhagen, where she starts work at 8.30. Søren leaves at 8 o'clock, dropping the eldest off at school, the middle child at kindergarten and the smallest at the crèche on the way to work. Søren doesn't start work at a fixed time or fixed place. It can be anywhere in Zealand.

It is also Søren who picks the children up again between 4-4.30 p.m. Malene gets home at ten past five. Malene does the shopping, usually during her lunch hour, otherwise on the way home, but this is only for odds and ends. She starts cooking straight away, and they all eat together at 6 p.m. This is a fixed routine Mondays to Thursdays. On Fridays, they don't eat until 8, after they've put the youngest to bed. Then Malene and Søren can enjoy their meal together with the two eldest. On weekdays, the children only take about 15 minutes over their meal, while Malene and Søren sit a bit longer at the table. But they wait until later, when the children have gone to bed, before they chat about their day. After dinner, they clear the table and clean up in the kitchen. As quickly as possible. This is the way it's been ever since their last child was born. He gets tired and makes a lot of racket, making it hard for the two grown-ups to sit quietly and talk with the two eldest. Things only quieten down when he's put to bed at 7.30. The two eldest go to bed at a quarter past eight and 9 o'clock respectively, after which Malene and Søren can watch the news and chat. Søren goes to sport once a week and Malene also meets with her girlfriends once a week.

Malene eats lunch in the canteen every day. Søren doesn't eat at all until he gets home. Sometimes he stops at a hot-dog stand, etc. The two eldest have a packed lunch, and the smallest eats in the crèche.

Malene usually does her lunchtime shopping in Irma, but she only buys special offers here, otherwise she thinks it's too expensive. She has a big shopping day every Saturday in a supermarket, which she thinks has good products and fair prices. If she goes to other shops, it's because of special offers, but then she'll buy the rest there too. She reads about the offers in a local paper for adverts, which

comes every week. But she doesn't always have time to buy all the offers she's planned to buy. She always does her shopping near where they live. She never goes to Bilka, OBS, or shops on the outskirts of town. There's a small grocery shop nearby, where Malene buys milk or bread if she's run out. She often buys vegetables from a farm just outside town.

Malene and Søren have a garden, where they grow apples, pears, raspberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, leeks, beans, chives and parsley. And they try one new thing every year, eg broccoli or carrots. Malene takes care of the vegetable garden and Søren the rest. They also had chickens once, but slaughtered them after a salmonella infection which Malene and the two eldest children caught from eggshells in a koldskål, and they haven't felt like having chickens again.

Malene and Søren don't have a fixed food budget. Malene is very price conscious, but doesn't feel that she needs to think about price as much as her parents had to. Still, she thinks they spend a lot on food.

For breakfast, the children can choose between yoghurt, A38 with muesli, corn-flakes or white bread. Malene eats A38 and white bread, while Søren has ryebread and white bread, and they both have coffee.

They always choose dishes the children like for dinner, such as rissoles with pasta or "French vegetables" (deep-frozen), spaghetti bolognese, mashed potatoes and meat, schnitzels with mixed rice and vegetables or hasselback potatoes, chicken, or a stew with rice. Sometimes they go out and buy a pizza from a pizzeria. They eat meat every day. Malene would like to cut down a bit on meat, but has been voted down by the rest of the family.

Sometimes they also have fish, usually frozen or fish rissoles. When Malene's parents have been to Bornholm, where they come from, they usually bring some fish back for them. Mostly cod or flounder, which Malene puts in the freezer. She doesn't buy fish at the fishmonger's, because she thinks it takes too long to prepare on weekdays, and at weekends they usually eat a roast or a casserole.

Malene never buys ready-made meals, such as lasagne, that you just heat up in the oven. She doesn't think the quality is good enough. And she never buys frozen pizza. They don't taste much good. But she'd try a partly ready-cooked meal, eg some of the new sauces or packets of frozen rice. Actually, she'd much prefer to make the whole meal from scratch, but since their last child was born she never seems to have the time.

Malene takes a lot of account of what the children want to eat, because she can't be bothered cooking if nobody likes it. But if there are enough leftovers to give the children one day, she's quite likely to make something else for Søren and herself. There are rarely conflicts with the children over the food, but then again, they mostly get what they want. They do complain sometimes, however, but she always makes them eat a bit and try something new.

Malene likes cooking, and if she had more time, would like to spend more time doing it. At the moment, she doesn't try new dishes very often, but she might if she had more time.

They always try to eat lunch together at the weekend. They make something delicious, and sit longer over the meal. They also have something a bit special for dinner on Saturdays, often a roast. They don't often have guests or eat out. They have a few friends, who they see a few times a year, otherwise it's mostly the family. Food for guests is usually a roast with vegetables. Previously, everything had to be home-made, but she doesn't have the time any more.

Malene says she makes less fatty food than her mother. Her mother makes more traditional food, with brown gravy and potatoes, but Malene and Søren eat more rice and pasta. Søren's parents eat very low-fat food. They never have roast pork or brown gravy. It's always turkey schnitzels or other lean meat. Søren's mother is very fussy about that.

For Malene, product quality is first and foremost a question of how fresh it is. Also about the fat content, on account of health. She also takes animal welfare into consideration, eg TV documentaries about battery chickens have made a deep impression on her. But she doesn't buy either ecological meat or eggs. They don't stock them where she does her shopping. Malene also thinks about the environment, but this hasn't influenced what she buys yet either. The night before, Malene saw a TV programme which made a big impression on her. It was about a lake in the USA where they had discovered that the alligators were no longer breeding, and that men's sperm had also deteriorated in the area. Until then, Malene hadn't paid much attention to ecological products, but she says that the older she gets, the more aware she becomes about these things, and that one day perhaps she will buy ecological products, especially if they get a bit cheaper.

Malene likes to read articles about food quality, and reads everything she sees in the papers and magazines about this. She also likes to watch TV programmes on the subject. She says she takes more and more notice of what they put in food and how it's produced. But it takes a while before what she finds out about such things is translated into action.

4. CONSUMERS ' CHOICE POSSIBILITIES AND ACTUAL CHOICES

The following section looks at the influence various factors have on the priorities of the 12 interviewed families as regards daily cooking. All 12 families are again referred to. These are the same factors that have been important in the design of the interview guide.

Division of labour in the family and the amount of time available

One of the selection criteria for the interview persons was that both the man and woman had jobs. Nevertheless, there is a big difference from one family to the next as to how much time they actually have and how much time they spend on cooking every day.

In four out of the six families with children still living at home, both have jobs outside the home, and in three of the families, the man has the furthest to go to work and therefore takes the car. In the fourth family, they both have far to go to work, but the man takes the car while the woman uses public transport. In

this family, the man picks the children up after work and looks after them until dinner, while the woman, who has longer to work, comes home later and starts cooking straight away, so that the food is on the table about 45 minutes later. The other three families have more or less the same pattern, ie the woman picks up the children and looks after them until the man gets home. Then they either share the cooking or one of them does it alone, but there is no daily fixed division of labour as regards children and food. Another thing these families have in common is that the man often comes home later because of shift work or overtime, so in practice often the woman must manage everything herself. In the two families with dependent children and their own firm, the pattern was different. Here, the wife helped out in the business and was home all day, and there was a more marked division of labour in both families, where it was the woman who was solely in charge of the housekeeping.

A characteristic of the families where the children had left home was that there was more flexibility as regards mealtimes. In all the families, the women had commitments, both in their jobs and outside, which meant that they often came home late and therefore put off dinner until later.

It is mainly the women who have an overview of the housekeeping, and they mainly do the shopping or make a list of what to buy. In the families with small children, they help each other with the cooking, while in the “grown-up” families it is also the women who do the cooking. The one exception was in a “grown-up” self-employed family, where it was the man who mostly did the cooking every day, including the shopping. Whether this is due to the fact that he is a qualified chef we don't know. In these older families, the man had a typical “lend-a-hand” function, to the extent that he helped in the kitchen at all.

On weekdays, the families typically spent between half an hour to an hour on cooking, and a bit more at weekends. The greatest difference was in the self-employed families. In the one family, which had a consultancy firm, where the man travelled a lot and the woman was an assisting spouse who looked after the accounts and the phone, the woman went to great lengths over the food, even on weekdays, spending up to three hours a day cooking.

“I typically make food 3-4 times a day. We all enjoy our food a lot..(.....) How much time do you spend on cooking? A lot. A couple of hours every day.” (S1)

In another self-employed family, where they jointly run a small restaurant, the amount of time, if at all, they had for cooking varied a great deal. Once or twice a week, the man made a big casserole, which they ate together with the staff. Apart from this, they ate snacks or sandwiches when they had time. Sometimes there was no time for eating at all, only to snatch a bit of something in the back room while they were doing something else. But the other families had a number of dishes which they could make in less than an hour, and if they knew there wouldn't be time for that, then they'd often planned to heat up something from the day before. Some families weren't all that keen on cooking, so they only set aside a limited amount of time for it every day:

“I once made a resolution that I'd never make anything that took more than an hour, and I think we pretty much keep to that. It takes a bit longer at the weekend, but it rarely takes us more than an hour to make what we eat.” (K4)

However, this was most often in the “grown-up” families, where the women also had long, irregular hours. Apart from two assisting spouses and one who recently went on the dole, all the families are tied to a strict timetable. But the impression was that they spent as much time on food as they wanted to on weekdays. Asked whether they would spend more time on cooking if they could, all except two said no.

Only one family planned meals more than one day in advance. All of them had a freezer, but a couple of families only used it for making ice cubes, a bit of home-made cakes, bread, etc., and fruit and vegetables they'd been given by family and friends. Most of them used the freezer as a larder, ie they bought things in bulk, sometimes when they were on offer, and took what they were going to eat for dinner out of the freezer in the morning. One family planned several days ahead.

The families generally rejected ready-made meals out of hand, and most wanted to be able to “make the food from scratch”:

“Do you ever eat oven-ready fish dishes eg stuffed plaice? No, never. Is this general for ready-made meals? Yes, we never buy them. We make things from scratch.” (L2)

“We have tried some of the sauces. But not that chicken dish (Chicken Tonight), but we'll probably get around to it sooner or later. I'd never buy a lasagne and put it in the oven. Why not? It's not the same. I tried it once, but it's nothing like proper lasagne. Is it the quality? Yes, absolutely. What about the price? I just don't buy ready-made meals, it's because of the quality. Even though they're cheap. I just don't. That's why we never buy frozen pizza. It's also because of the quality (.....). But after child number three arrived, we just had to find something that was a bit quicker. Is used to pride myself on making everything myself. Especially when we had guests.” (L1)

“Do you often buy meals that are easy to cook? Actually, only Saturday chicken. What about spaghetti bolognaise? No. Haven't you tried it to see how it tastes? Yes, we've tried it, but I can't remember when. We're not really in the habit of eating ready-made meals. I like to make food right from scratch. Cakes too, so we hardly ever buy anything ready made, apart from bread that is.” (K2)

“We never buy frozen pizza. We always buy a take-away one. If we buy frozen pizza, then it's because of Lasse (their 13-year-old son). If he's on his own at home he can just take it out of the freezer and heat it up himself. Is this general for fast food. That you don't buy it for dinner? No, it's only if his swimming gets in the way that we fall for it, or drive out to McDonald's. That's the only time we buy fast food. You don't buy ready-made meals? No, extremely rarely. Lasse and I might sometimes when Anders isn't home, but very seldom. We don't like it.” (S1)

“I think it's important to eat proper food. I don't think it's unimportant what you put in your mouth. And you know that what you make yourself is made of proper ingredients. I don't like ready-made food, and I don't care for eating in restaurants. I never eat out..... My husband would like to, and the children (who have left home) eat out a lot, but mostly pizzerias, they can't afford

anything else, otherwise I'm sure they would (.....) I think it's important for food to be home-made." (K3)

"..... No, not those Saturday Chicken things you buy in those aluminium trays. You never do that? As a quick way of making food. It depends on whether we like it. Now and then. We don't buy many ready-made meals, but once in a while we do. We usually eat things that don't take long to make, but which we make from scratch (.....) Stuffed plaice, that's the sort of thing we eat if I've forgotten to take something out of the freezer in the morning. It's quick to thaw. We use it as a sort of emergency food. Do you think that you'd ever try some of that breaded plaice? Not a lot. Perhaps once, but it's not something....." (K4)

"Ready-made meals, do you ever find yourself buying that? No, we never buy them. What about all those new sorts of sauces have you tried them? No. Well, yes. We've tried the hot sauces. Mexican! But it was only to try it. Otherwise we don't. It's not something you think you'd buy? No. They're too dear as well. (.....) We don't buy a lot of things like that. Proper ingredients, that's us – spinach, tomatoes, carrots. As for sliced meat, we never buy salami. We make it ourselves. So it's only proper ingredients? Yes, we make our own paté too, also when we have guests." (L4)

Everybody regarded ready-made meals as being of poor quality and as being hard to know what was in them. Most families had nevertheless tried them at least once or twice when they were in a hurry or when the children had to eat alone. Some families regularly, ie several times a month, eat ready-made meals. The reason they give is that they are quick and easy to prepare. None of the respondents differentiated between ready-made meals that were relatively cheap, and not of very high quality, and quality ready-made meals, such as fish first courses. It is especially important for most families to make food from scratch when they have guests. Nobody fell for a ready-made meal because it looked tasty or because they'd tried it at a friend's house, etc. The only reason for buying them was the time factor.

But for most families, "making food from scratch" meant buying meat, potatoes, rice or pasta, and vegetables, and making a meal from that. Only one or two families meant more by it than that, eg making paté or pastry themselves.

Attitudes to ready-made meals agree very well with the results of the questionnaire survey, where 70.9% say that they rarely or never buy ready-made meals.

Economic resources

Household incomes in the families we interviewed ranged from DKK 3-400,000 to over DKK 700,000. There is some uncertainty about a family that possibly earns under DKK 300,000. But even in families with the lowest incomes, we didn't get the impression that they had a tight housekeeping budget. None of the families systematically scoured the adverts every week for the best offers. What usually happened was that, if there was something on offer in the store they usually shopped in, they bought this to stock up the freezer. Even though none of them felt that they were squeezed by a very tight budget, most saw

themselves as being “economical”, but all also allowed themselves the extravagance of buying something they regarded as luxury now and then, when “they felt like something really good”.

Food producers and retailers have long been under the impression that Danish consumers think first and foremost in terms of price and are not very quality conscious at all. This is not the impression wholesale we have after having interviewed these 12 families, but this is probably because those we interviewed have relatively good salaries. Most think they are price conscious, though not at the expense of what they themselves regard as quality. We return to consumers’ perception of quality in a separate section.

“Do you think you have enough money for shopping? Yes, I do. Are you very price conscious? Yes, at least I am. It’s mostly me who does the shopping. Yes, I look at what it costs, but I also read the label, what’s in it. It’s not the money that holds us back, but I still think that I’m price conscious. I try to be.” (K1)

“I used to be more aware of offers before than I am now. This is because we earn more now. When we need to save up for something we do, otherwise we don’t think too much about it. (...) I remember we didn’t have nearly so much money when we moved here. Steffen still had a student loan to pay off then. We’ve been conscious about money for the past 1 1/2 years, but not in the same way, we haven’t had to, we can easily make things go round without worrying about every penny. And we give high priority to food. Steffen would probably say the opposite! But you do the shopping? Yes, I’m a bit more stingy than he is as far as food is concerned!” (K2)

“Where do you do your shopping? In Strandberg, always there. Are you satisfied with it? Yes, it’s cheap. You know where things are – yes, it’s cheaper. (...) Do you have a fixed food budget? No. Do you feel that you could do with more money for food? Do you have to think a lot about what you buy to make ends meet? No, we use a lot of money on food. I don’t really think I look at prices too much. Not when I think about my parents. We have a lot more money now than they did then.” (L1)

“Do you have a fixed food budget that you try to keep to? No, but I reckon on about DKK 1000 a week. And then there’s all the meat in the freezer. We buy a half cow or a half or whole pig. So we don’t go shopping for meat.” (L2)

“Do you have a fixed food budget or what? No, not at all. And you don’t feel that money’s tight? No, that is to say, I don’t often buy beef tenderloin. We’re not in that price class as regards food. We eat quite ordinary food. But I don’t worry about whether something costs DKK 20 or 40 (...) We eat meat for around DKK 30-50 a day, depending on what I make. Do you have any idea how much you spend on food altogether? I spend about DKK 100-200 a day. But then there’s all the other things on top of that – I don’t buy all the cleaning things at the same time, for example (...) About DKK 1000 a week. That’s about right.” (S1)

“You haven’t had to think about money? No, I haven’t had a housekeeping budget to keep. But if I say so myself, I’m pretty thrifty and get a lot of value for money. It’s not that I don’t think about where I shop or what I buy, but we

have always eaten more meat perhaps than others. More steaks. Not any more though, we don't eat anywhere near as much meat today. But that's probably because we're getting older. The children ate a lot of burgers and sausages and what else they liked. I've never had to count the pennies. But I have anyway." (K3)

"How big is your food budget? We've reached an age where we don't pay much on the house any more, the children have left home, and we earn a fair amount. There's nothing we need. (.....) We buy the food we want. We don't smoke and haven't got a car, so we haven't got those expenses either. Unlike a lot of others. So every evening we have a good bottle of wine instead, which we can enjoy. We attach a lot of importance to that. And once a year we go on a long holiday. We're never in the red. (.....) We try to be price conscious – as long as it's not too much bother, we can just as well save the money." (K4)

"I feel we are able to buy what we want. We really don't think much about it, we don't put money in a kitty and say this is for food. We buy what we feel like buying. We're both active and think that, if we're going to eat and enjoy ourselves, then we might as well buy exactly what we want. We don't smoke either. Do you often shop for offers? Yes, when I've got a mind to. My husband is better at it, I'm not so good. I can see that you can save a bit here and there, but it depends what it is, I've never gone shopping especially for offers." (L3)

"Do you have any idea how much you spend a week? Erik: It's funny you should ask that, because just before you came we were discussing whether or not we should start writing it down. Because we actually don't have any idea. At the end of the month, we've no idea how much we've spent. And that irritates me a bit. Nina: I've got a better idea than Erik. Erik: I'd be able to tell you how much we use on aluminium foil, is that right? Especially if we wanted to save a bit, or prioritise differently, then we could cut down a bit on this or that. So we're going to start keeping all our receipts from the 1st. onwards, and where we haven't got receipts, we'll write down what we've spent. Then we'll see at the end of the month how much it comes to. What we actually spend our money on. It can be surprising how fast it disappears. (.....) Do you feel there are things you don't buy that you'd like to buy? Is your food budget big enough? Nina: Yes, no doubt about that. We never deny ourselves anything we want to buy (.....) It's not too expensive, we don't spend that much, but it's more to see what we spend the money on. What we buy. It's curiosity to know exactly what we buy. We use about DKK 4000 a month." (L4)

"Do you have a fixed food budget? No. And yes. In the sense that we have different accounts, and that there's an amount I have for the housekeeping. But when that's used up, we just transfer more money. But it's not a budget in the sense that it's a maximum amount. It's DKK 5000 a month. We talked about it the other day, and I'd say we use about DKK 3000 a month just on food. The rest is other things, clothes, and a few presents." (S4)

"Peter usually shops for food because he's best at it. I'm not price conscious at all. If I decide to buy a roast on Sunday, I just go and buy one. And I buy the one I think is best, no matter what it costs. Peter will always shop around. He's price conscious. What if there's another good roast on offer right next to it, don't you consider that? No." (S3)

The fact that all the interviewed families have a generous food budget is probably due to the way we have selected the respondents. Not that they are generally well off, but that they give high priority to food and the meal as the family's focal point. They have both spent about an hour filling in the questionnaire and set aside another hour for the interview. It is not inconceivable that people who aren't particularly interested in food, and for whom price is the most important factor, wouldn't have been interested in answering the questionnaire, let alone being interviewed. The answers in the questionnaire seem to confirm this. Asked whether cooking is always something that must be got through as quickly as possible, 64.6% answer no and 18.7% yes. And to a question about whether they attach more importance to price than quality when doing the daily shopping, 58.9% say no, while 19.1% say yes. We interpret this as an interest in food of good quality, ie a subjectively perceived quality, among the great majority of respondents, and our guess is that, if, as retailers claim, a much bigger percentage of consumers prefer poorer quality at cheap prices, then they haven't answered the questionnaire.

We haven't been able to determine precisely how much the various households spend on food. In part this is due to the fact that only few have a fixed budget and in part because people can't separate food from other household items in the budget. The main conclusion, that the respondents felt they had what they needed for the housekeeping, is clear, however. Many compared their own situation with that of their parents in their childhood, which they remembered as being much tighter and without many possibilities for extravagances, and several also said that their budget had grown more ample in recent years. This can both be due to the fact that the selected families were earning more as they got older and had better jobs, and that food prices haven't increased much during the past few years.

In a study of German consumers' lifestyle-related food consumption, Grunert and Brunsø (1994) also conclude that income plays a minor role in the priority given to food, whereas the role which food and food products play in their lives is much more important.

Consumers' perception of quality

Our approach to consumers' perception of quality was based on respondents' attitudes to three particular products, namely eggs, butter and other spreads, and pickled herring. We brought along three cartons of eggs, viz. white eggs (from battery hens), barn eggs (also eggs from battery hens, but where there are fewer hens per cage), and ecological eggs, six packets of butter and other spreads, viz. margarine, fat, butter, ecological butter, Kærgården and Cheasy, and two jars of herrings, viz. one jar of rapidly-matured ordinary pickled herring and one jar of Icelandic herring, which was matured in the traditional way. We chose these products because we felt they would give us an opportunity to talk about health considerations, the environment, animal welfare, how the products were produced, and various taste preferences.

One of the products that is often bought directly from the producer is eggs, which a lot rarely bought in the shops. Recent years' TV programme on battery hens have made a deep impression on people, so much so that it has influenced

their purchase of eggs. But consumers are confused about the definition of the various eggs, especially of barn eggs, which most think come from free-range hens. Only four of the interviewees who chose ecological eggs or free-range eggs did so because they knew the difference between them.

“I alternate a bit. When I’m in Brugsen I buy ecological eggs or free-range eggs. I can’t when I go to Favør, because they haven’t got them. Why do you buy them? Because I’ve seen those programme about chickens, and I feel sorry for them.” (K1)

“I waited a long time before buying decent eggs, because there was such a big difference in price. Steffen always bought barn eggs when he went shopping, but now we also buy ecological eggs. We always do now, because ecological things have got cheaper. They have been for about a year I suppose. Before, especially if we had a lot of things to make, I tended to buy white eggs 30 at a time. What is it that makes ecological eggs more decent?The fact that they’re not from battery hens.” (K2)

“I buy barn eggs. I started after all that talk about battery hens. Otherwise it used to be white eggs. Have you tried the ecological eggs?No.” (L1)

“I seldom buy eggs. I get mine from my father-in-law, who has a weekend cottage where he keeps hens. What if you run out? Then I think I’d buy the ordinary white eggs.” (L2)

“Now and then I buy eggs at the local pub. A local farmer delivers eggs there. And I might buy them where we buy potatoes, because they have eggs too. And I can buy them at my grocer’s, it depends what he’s got. He stocks both ecological, free-range and white eggs. But he hasn’t always got ecological eggs. So I have to make do with barn eggs. Why do you prefer ecological eggs?It’s the same with meat. It’s a principle. (.....) I don’t like the idea of battery hens and I don’t like the thought of pigs being stacked three storeys high.” (S1)

“I buy eggs from a farm. But what if you were to buy them in a shop?Then I’d take the ecological eggs. I haven’t got much faith in those barn eggs. But I trust ecological eggs. (.....) We don’t use so many eggs that we can’t afford to buy the ecological kind. (.....) Yes, I think about them not coming from battery hens.” (K3)

“I buy barn eggs. (...) It’s because I think – to be quite honest, if you eat a fried or boiled egg, I don’t think you could taste the difference, but I feel, about the hens I mean, that they have a better life when they are free to go as they please instead of being cooped up. I also think the quality is better, even though I can’t taste the difference. (...) All that about battery hens, I don’t touch it with a barge pole. It’s also got something to do with the hens’ welfare. I’d rather pay more for eggs from hens which I think have been treated better.” (K4)

“I might well buy barn eggs. I buy farm eggs or barn eggs. Why? I don’t know really. Perhaps because I think they’re healthier. I don’t know whether that’s true or not. I don’t think I’ve ever bought ecological eggs. Why not?Probably because I haven’t seen them. It depends whether Brugsen has them or not.” (L3)

“I don’t think we’ve ever seen ecological eggs. We always buy those barn eggs. Because we feel they’re better. I don’t know whether you can taste the difference, but we always go after those barn eggs. It’s mostly for the taste then? Yes.” (L4)

“I either buy ecological eggs or free-range eggs. I’m a bit tired of the ecological eggs sometimes, because they’re not fresh and it’s close to the sell-by date.” (S4)

“I’d choose the white eggs if I was going to have soft-boiled eggs, which I love. If I was just going to have lemon mousse, I’d probably choose the barn eggs. Wait a minute though, on Bornholm we called them the rejects, because they had another colour or something. (.....) But does the hens’ welfare mean anything to you? No, I don’t think about the hens when I buy eggs.” (S3)

Most people think a lot about the hens’ welfare when they buy eggs. Next comes taste, which nobody is certain they’d pass a blindfold test on. A single interviewee also mentioned health as an argument for buying barn eggs, but was not quite sure how valid it was. Another said that white eggs were the best quality because of the colour. So if they were just going to be used in a cake or dessert, she’d buy brown barn eggs. She said nothing about the white eggs being the cheapest.

As regards what people use to butter their bread with, the following reason for choosing mainly Kærgården also covers most other people’s reasons:

“Kærgården. You don’t have to unpack so much, because I only use that one. (...) Why Kærgården? Probably because it’s easy to spread. It’s spreadable, and it’s probably also something to do with the container. It means I don’t have to put it in a butter dish. Otherwise it gets all over the place. And because you get used to the taste, I mean it always tastes like I think butter used to taste. When I eat butter now, I think it’s so fatty that I can practically taste the fat.” (K1)

But a couple of respondents also mentioned health considerations regarding the fat content:

“To start with, I never, ever use vegetable margarine. I’ve only got frying margarine, which I use very little, I use oil mostly. And then I use butter, preferably ecological (...) I don’t touch the other products. We were on Christmas holidays last year, and ordered breakfast and butter, and they brought us that Kærgården, and we went mad because we’d ordered butter. It’s not that it tastes awful, but I won’t have it on principle. Anders: It’s a con. A lot of people buy it because they think it’s low-calorie. But the only difference is that you can use it straight from the fridge, and it tastes something like butter, but there’s just as much fat in it.” (S1)

“I’d buy proper butter. I haven’t tried ecological butter. I might buy margarine. But that’s not sunflower. Why does it have to be sunflower? Because there are some enzymes in the oil. They’re more easily broken down than in ordinary oil. The oil in ordinary margarine is also fat. I’m not sure I’d buy it. I’d buy Kærgården though. It’s easier to spread and it has a lower fat content. It contains water.” (K3)

Like the above, others rejected Kærgården because of the taste:

“Mette: We both agree on that. Haven’t you brought minarine [low-fat vegetable margarine]? No, vegetable margarine, we normally eat vegetable margarine or minarine. It varies – on ryebread, otherwise butter. (...) I have an idea that I don’t like Kærgården. It tastes too much of margarine. Bent: I might use fat if I was going to have a herring sandwich or some salami. (...) But it’s not something we buy, it’s if we’re eating out.” (K4)

Considering the short time Kærgården has been on the market, it has become popular in a lot of homes. But there are doubts as to whether it is healthier than butter or not as healthy as vegetable margarine, despite the fact that it has been promoted on the basis of a health value. Families that tend towards ecological products have nevertheless taken to Kærgården, despite it not being ecological. The fact that it is spreadable straight from the fridge is what most people like about it, but if there was an ecological variety, some would prefer that.

Cheasy, which is a lower-calorie version of Kærgården, is still so new that nobody really had an opinion about it. Some confused it with a cheese product.

As regards the herring, most found it hard to choose between the two jars, unless one of them happened to be the brand they usually buy. Several said that they like this or that herring because it’s not so sweet, or because it is seasoned in a special way. In other words, it is mainly the pickle which determines whether they try or like a particular brand of herring. Some remark on how thick the herring is, and say that they often buy herring out of a barrel at the fishmonger’s. Some have a vague idea that the difference between them has something to do with the way they are pickled, but nobody knows precisely how they are produced. Some seem interested in knowing what the difference is, while others look as though they will keep on buying the brand they usually buy without worrying how they are produced.

“I’d choose them. Is that because they are traditionally matured? I’ve only just noticed that, but I might be tempted to buy if the label said traditional. Do you know what that means? I think it means that it’s produced according to a traditional recipe.” (K2)

“Herring is something I don’t know much about. I don’t usually buy it. I don’t eat them myself. (...) If it was my husband, he’d take that one. Because it’s traditionally matured. The fact that the label says traditionally matured is good enough for him. Then he’ll buy it. (...) I know what the difference is, but it escapes me at the moment.” (L2)

“I’d probably choose that one, I don’t know the other one. I was looking for Glyngøre herring, but you didn’t bring those. If I had to choose, I suppose I’d buy a traditionally matured Lund herring. (...) I don’t really know what the difference is, but I think it’s something to do with how they’re prepared.” (K4)

“I don’t buy any of them, I buy Glyngøre.” (L3)

“I’d choose the Icelandic one, because it tastes better and is thicker. We often buy our herring at the fishmonger’s. Proper salt herring.” (L4)

But respondents relate to quality in many other areas, too. One product group that is spontaneously commented on in many interviews is pork:

“Things like pork chops we don’t eat. That’s because I’m the one who does the shopping, and I don’t like it. Well, I like it, but I don’t think it tastes of anything unless it’s breadcrumbed, and I think that’s too unhealthy.” (K1)

“We don’t eat much pork, fried meat, eg pork chops, it’s more rissoles or casseroles. (.....) It’s because I’m the one who usually does the cooking, and I don’t like chops. They don’t taste of anything.” (K2)

“(.....)... I think I ought to make things myself, and I’m very quality conscious, for example I never eat mettwurst any more. I can’t seem to find a mettwurst that tastes properly. I prefer to make it myself. I don’t eat chops either, because they don’t have enough taste. (...) And the little bit extra an (ecological or free-range) pig costs doesn’t mean anything. If I go down to Føtex and buy “Porker” pork, it doesn’t cost any more than pork in the butcher’s, which isn’t even ecological (...) Plus they fatten them artificially, eg pump smoked saddle of pork. They just do it while they’re alive, that’s the disgusting kind of thing they do nowadays. That’s why I prefer things to be ecological (.....) We’ve also discovered that, with ecological meat, which has a more intense meaty flavour, we don’t need so much meat if it has a good taste. With pork chops, which I’ve mentioned a couple of times, we can typically eat four each, that’s no problem if I buy 20 at a time, then they don’t cost much, but if I buy three good pork chops, which are really good and have a strong meaty taste, that’s more than enough.” (S1)

“In my view, the Danish kitchen and Danish meat quality has really deteriorated, and it’s the farmers’ fault, because when you have four times as many pigs as inhabitants, and we foul up the place with all that liquid manure just to export to other countries, and all we get out of it is poor-quality production because the quality of meat in Denmark is substandard, and this also goes for poultry and chicken and eggs (.....) It’s exhausted everything because everything’s got to go so quickly. It’s the eating quality. But I don’t think it’s good to force things like that, because all the nutrients that are supposed to be in the food we eat disappear. (.....) I think they’ve gone too far.” (K3)

“We don’t eat pork, hardly at all. The only thing we eat is rissoles or meatballs, but hardly ever pork. Why not? Because we try to eat as much non-sprayed food as possible. That is, we eat lamb because it’s a young animal and lives its life in relatively clean fields, ones that aren’t sprayed, and we also eat poultry, turkey, and I know they’re not all equally non-sprayed, but I feel better eating light meat. (.....) But we’re not fanatical. If we’re invited out and they serve roast pork, then I’ll eat it, I won’t refuse to eat it or get nauseous if I do, and it’s not a religious thing. It’s just that I don’t like the way pigs are treated. It’s something to do with that.” (S4)

Apart from chicken and pork, no other concrete product is mentioned in connection with the discussion on food quality. Most connect quality with taste, and whether they themselves and the rest of the family like it. A mother of three says that she normally doesn’t think much about food quality, but that the family sometimes makes decisions which result in changes in what they eat. For

example, they have decided to buy ecological products to the extent they are available. This is both because she thinks ecological products are purer and out of consideration to nature. TV programme on battery hens have also affected the family's consumption of eggs, so that they now consistently buy ecological eggs. But this consistency doesn't quite extend to chicken yet, Saturday chicken still finding its way to the table now and then. They have also, in periods, paid more attention to the fat content in their food, their youngest son tending, as the mother put it, to get "a bit plump". This made them buy skimmed milk and do without butter. Breakfast was also eyed critically, and all the sugary products (sugar puffs, choko pop, etc.), which the children had to choose from before, were cut out. The family has perhaps more deliberately and systematically chosen to change its diet in a particular direction than the others. But the pattern is similar to the other families in the sense that many choose particular products because of taste, labelling, look, traditions or other things. And then they stick with that. Thus, most families were in no doubt as to what they would choose when presented with eggs and butter products, while a lot of them were unsure which herring product they'd choose, because we only brought along two jars. And if neither of them was the brand they usually bought, most families would prefer not to buy any of them. In practice, therefore, at some point or another, most make a conscious or unconscious decision about which products they are going to buy. And then they change it now and again. But the point is, they don't wander aimlessly from product to product each time they go shopping.

We didn't ask people to list quality parameters according to the priority they give them, but we did ask them what they attached importance to when evaluating quality. The way they said they prioritised and the order they put the quality parameters in was more or less the same for all 12 respondents:

- taste and freshness
- healthiness
- animal welfare
- the environment
- production considerations

Taste and freshness scored a clear first place. As regards the choice of, for example, ecological products, however, there was nevertheless the difference that some respondents would first check to see how fresh they were, and if they didn't look fresh enough, they bought other vegetables. Others bought the vegetables that looked the freshest, irrespective of whether they were ecological or not. Some households never bought ecological products.

In some families, the health criterion was linked especially to fat. Some, where either adults or children had a weight problem, limited the amount of fat they ate. Other families did as well, only not as consistently. One family was aware of the difference between the various types of fat in margarine, and preferred sunflower margarine. Apart from fat, there was also an interest in limiting the amount of pesticide residues, additives and other extraneous substances in food.

“Basically, our attitude is that if something isn’t necessary, why add it to food, eg before red sausages were banned, we always ate those without artificial colouring. So we can’t really understand why anyone should want a new red colour that was legal just to get red sausages, and even export them to Sweden. I just don’t understand it.” (K4)

“I want apples that haven’t been sprayed, for example, and that also look nice. When I buy apples, I’m not sure what they have been sprayed with. It irritates me that there’s no information about it, no sign or anything. You’d like non-sprayed apples Why? Is it because It’s because of ourselves. I’m a bit nervous about what these things can do to us without our knowing it, that they can affect us later.” (L2)

One family went to great lengths to tell us that they live an unhealthy life and that they have no intention of changing it:

“What about your meals what do you eat?We live incredibly unhealthily (.....) You wouldn’t believe how unhealthy. There’s a price to pay, I know. I never touch chips. There’s a lot I simply couldn’t stomach. We eat what we like. And that’s not vegetables. We definitely don’t eat healthy food. I’m dead conservative, so I always want potatoes and I want a proper gravy.” (S3)

The same family chooses food with a high fat content, because that’s what they like best.They eat butter, drink full-cream milk, and ignore low-calorie food:

“Something that really irritates me is, for example, when I can’t get my usual salad mixes without their being low-calorie, etc. There ought to be room for all tastes. Not everybody wants the ones that don’t taste of anything, eg horseradish salad. You can either get the low-calorie variety or with a lot of fruit in it, I don’t mix fruit in it! If I want fruit, I just want fruit. I get really mad when I can’t get what I used to get.” (S3)

This was the only family that directly rejected any thought of health when deciding what to eat. Most of the others would like to eat healthy food, albeit without being so fanatical that they denied themselves anything with a higher fat content or with additives.

Many respondents mentioned animal welfare in connection with chicken and eggs. Everybody had seen at least one programme on TV about battery hens, and all but one dissociated themselves completely from it. But their actions, based on this knowledge, were very different. A few stopped eating mass-produced chickens altogether, and started buying solely farm chickens; others reacted to the programmes at once, but nevertheless gradually started buying mass-produced chickens now and again;a third group preferred to buy chickens directly from the producer, so that they could see for themselves what they were getting. As for eggs, as mentioned above, while people preferred not to buy eggs from battery hens, there was some confusion as to which eggs came from which hens. A few were ambivalent, and mixed taste and attitudes to battery hens together, buying ordinary white eggs for baking and when they used a lot of eggs, and ecological eggs for making soft-boiled eggs on Sunday. But nobody claimed to be able to taste the difference.

The programmes about pig farming didn't have the same effect as with chicken production. Even though many said they wouldn't buy pork, it was more because the meat was poor and didn't taste of anything. Only one respondent commented on pigs' welfare.

One respondent also mentioned fishing methods in connection with animal welfare:

"To be honest, I've loved tuna for a long time, but I've gone off it completely after I found out how they catch them. So I don't buy it, and never eat it anymore. The thought of it makes me sick. Maybe it's a bit hysterical." (L4)

Directly asked, many said the environment was important. But it wasn't something, like a parameter, that made much difference to shopping. Those who chose to buy mainly ecological products, for example, do it mostly for health reasons and because they aren't sprayed. But one family, which we mentioned above, also chooses ecological products for environmental reasons:

"Ordinarily I don't give it much thought. We chose ecological products both to support the environment and to get products that weren't sprayed. (.....) Why do you think ecological products are important? Because they aren't sprayed, and that's good for us and the environment." (K2)

Another was well on the way to a more green consumption, though this had not yet been transformed into action:

"Do you ever wonder whether the vegetables come from farms which spray their crops, for example? I think about it, but don't do much about it. I'd like to, but it doesn't seem to get any further than thinking about it. What would give you a push do you think? Something like that programme on TV yesterday. I've thought a lot about it ever since (.....) It was about a lake in the USA where they suddenly discovered that the alligators weren't breeding any more. The numbers declined. It was also a lot to do with men's sperm quality." (L1)

But none of those who grew their own fruit and vegetables used insecticides.

In the discussion about food quality, nobody spontaneously mentioned anything about production conditions, apart from the environment. A couple had touched on production conditions in primary production in connection with animal welfare, but nobody said anything about how the meat was processed in the later production stages. A more indirect way of relating to product transparency was that many wanted "to make things from scratch". This can be interpreted as a desire to be a good cook and make good food, but can also be interpreted as a desire to know what they eat and an aversion to industrially-produced food.

One respondent mentioned another parameter after taste and freshness, namely a preference to buy Danish products. But if there weren't any Danish products, she bought foreign ones anyway.

Foster and Macrae (1992) reach a similar ranking of quality parameters in an English study of food quality. However, a guarantee that there is no risk from

eating the product is by far the biggest concern. Next come both nutritional value, whether the product is what it claims to be (eg the amount of meat in pork/beef sausages and fruit in jam), whether the labelling is correct, and finally, the sensory impressions (taste, smell, consistency and appearance). Lastly, production methods, the degree of preparation, and the exotic, new or luxurious are also part of consumers' concept of quality.

In a previously mentioned study, Straughan asks whether it should be up to consumers to decide about products produced under dubious animal welfare conditions, or whether they should be banned outright. He mentions that one supermarket in England has begun to label whether calves are free-range or confined to sheds. Unfortunately, it is rare to find labelling about poor breeding conditions for animals, producers being more inclined to provide information such as "free-range eggs" or milk from "cows that are put out to pasture".

Ecological products

There are big differences in attitudes to buying ecological products, ranging from not considering buying them at all to buying everything ecological if possible. One family was directly opposed to "these new fads", which they express as follows:

"Last Saturday, after we closed, I brought some ecological carrots home with me and he wouldn't damn well have them in his saucepan, he says. Why not? Peter: (.....) There's probably nothing wrong with them, just as long as I don't have to eat them that's all. Anne-Marie: I couldn't get any others. Peter: You shouldn't have to have them if you don't want them." (S3)

Another family weren't even aware that you could buy a lot of ecological products. Though to be fair, it must be added that conditions where they live do not favour ecological products. A visit to the local shops showed that milk was the only ecological product available, and this had a sell-by date that was four days less than ordinary milk.

In another family, they knew you could buy ecological products, but it wasn't something they considered doing:

"What about ecological products, is this something you buy or look for? Not at the moment, because none of the shops around here have them." (L2)

Characteristic of these two families, however, is that they buy a lot of their food from primary producers. This applies to meat, which they buy as whole or half carcasses, fish, which their parents or in-laws give them, and vegetables, which they also get from friends and family.

Several of the families have become more and more aware of the possibilities for buying ecological products, though this doesn't necessarily mean that they always buy them. The following puts it quite well:

"(.....) I buy real butter. I use it as a delicacy. Never ecological butter? No, I don't use it actually. I've never noticed that you could buy it to tell the truth.

What about eggs? It varies a bit. When I'm in Brugsen, I buy ecological or free-range eggs. But when I go to Favør I buy barn eggs, because they haven't got the ecological ones, at least not that I've seen. When you buy vegetables do you ever consider the ecological vegetables or..... Yes, I do. But I also check to see how fresh they are first (.....) It's also because of where I do my shopping, I think the ecological vegetables can often be too old. It's because they don't sell so much of them that they go off or get wrinkled, and that puts me off buying them. They have to be fresh. But the price should be reasonable, too. At the moment though, they're reducing the price of ecological products to try to get more people to buy them. At least in Brugsen, and now they've also started in Favør. That's a good start." (K1)

Or like someone else, who buys ecological products now and again, and found that she likes them better:

"Now and then it just comes over me, it has to be ecological, and then we discovered that it tasted better than the Lur brand." (S1)

Or:

"Do you buy other ecological products? Not consciously. If I buy something, it's with half an idea that it should be with as few additives as possible, but it's not as if I always go to the ecological section, it's partly a coincidence when we have something ecological." (K4)

At the other end of the spectrum, two families decided at one point that they would buy ecological products. Consistently in the case of milk and eggs, vegetables if they were fresh and not too expensive, and other products in other product groups are gradually being considered too. We mentioned one of the families above in connection with the discussion on quality. The other says:

"I started buying ecological milk when Brugsen began to sell it, and I've bought it ever since. It wasn't easy at first, because the deliveries were so erratic, but all that's been solved now, and it was also a problem at the beginning that it wasn't always fresh, you could only get old milk. But it's better today. (.....) I had a discussion about ecological things with my daughter. She only buys ecological flour and says it's good, and I've thought about buying it too, but I only bake ryebread, and it's best if the dough doesn't rise too much. I find the best flour to use is the cheapest discount flour, which I buy in Brugsen, but it's not ecological, and I also buy cut rye grain there, but I've thought about it, because my daughter says it's much better with ecological flour and that I should also try it for ryebread." (S4)

In a lot of the families, the children play a role in decisions about ecological products. Some families with small children choose these products because they think they're better for the children's health. In the families with older children, several of the children have kept on about ecological products, which has clearly influenced their mothers in particular.

The main reasons given for buying ecological products are that they aren't sprayed, health and taste, ie factors concerning products' material quality. Only a single respondent mentioned the environment as an important reason. This is

a bit odd considering the way ecological products are marketed. The blurb on MD Food's and Kløvermælk's ecological milk cartons says that "Ecological milk comes from ecological and biodynamic farms, where pesticides and artificial fertilisers are prohibited. The cow must be put out to pasture all summer, be given just as natural fodder in winter, and have access to lots of light, fresh air and exercise. This benefits both the environment and the cow (.....)." In a theme number on ecology in Samvirke, a consumer magazine, the focus is also on cultivation methods, the farmer's working environment, and more careful forms of production and strict control of all stages of production. With regard to the nutritional advantages of ecological products, Samvirke cites studies which show that there are only small differences in the nutritional content of ecological and non-ecological crops. According to the National Food Agency, this difference is too small to have any nutritional significance (Samvirke, Oct., 1993). Apparently, consumers choose ecological products for other reasons than those they are marketed under.

Consumer consciousness

Most people do not consciously go out and buy something that's bad, old, gone off, etc., and if they come back with something that's not alright, they take it back to the shop straightaway. On the other hand, people are also fairly loyal to the shop or shops they usually use, and our impression is that it takes something fairly drastic to make them change. In the case of stale bread or vegetables that are too old or perhaps rotten, they generally give the shop the benefit of the doubt, though they tend to be more careful next time they buy it, but in the case of meat, several say that they now buy it elsewhere.

Most wouldn't dream of complaining directly to the producer. Not one of those we have interviewed have even considered the possibility.

Most see themselves as – and perhaps are – discriminating consumers. They are critical if the products are off, the meat tough, the ryebread mouldy, or if the fish smells too much. It doesn't extend to labelling that could be better (at most that it's so inscrutable that they have given up on it long ago), or that a lot more products could take the environment and animal welfare into consideration than is the case today. None of our interviewees grumbled about prices, which could indicate that the price of food is now so low in Denmark that it no longer plays a very important role in the choice of food for people with jobs. This is not to say that people go amok when they go shopping. The families we have talked to seem to have found products that, for them, are of an acceptable quality and an acceptable price. This then becomes the accepted level for what they are prepared to pay for the food they eat, and normally they don't have to think so much about price. This flexibility in the household budget is by no means general, however, which is shown in, among others, Holm and Kildevang's survey, where many of the interviewees say they have a tight food budget (Holm & Kildevang 1994).

Some are interested in articles about food, even if there are no recipes. But it takes a really major information campaign for most people to react by, for example, boycotting something. The many TV programmes on battery hens is one such example, and has probably made the deepest impression. Articles

describing how food is produced industrially can affect some, but it only leads to drastic changes in food consumption in very few cases.

Use of shopping possibilities

As a rule, people do most of their shopping in only one or two shops. Where they know where things are. There are not many who, despite having the possibility, go to a lot of different shops in order to buy particular products. Most have a couple of specialist shops which they use now and then when they want something special, but for daily shopping, they only use the supermarket.

“We’ve done our shopping in S&E for years, so this is our favourite place in Roskilde, it’s right in the centre and they’ve got some good things, and lately we’ve got to know the butcher there, so that helps too. (...) Once in a while, when we shop for special offers in Strandberg or SuperBrugsen, I’ll have a look around to see what they’ve got and might buy what I’ve come for. But I get dead irritated at not being able to get around the shelves, and get the impression that the staff there are grouchier. Perhaps it’s because I don’t go there often, I don’t know.” (K4)

“I shop in Strandberg. Always there? Yes. Are you satisfied with them? Yes, it’s cheap. You know where things are – yes, it’s cheaper. (...) We buy potatoes and carrots from a farm in Vindige, and they also have other vegetables, which we’ve bought sometimes. But I never go to a greengrocer’s.” (L1)

One interviewee took advantage of the relatively many supermarkets in and around Roskilde. But not so much because of the variety, more because of where it was most practical:

“It varies. S&E, Netto, Fakta, Bilka, OBS, depending on where we are at the time. We don’t shop in any one particular place, Strandberg, if it’s a Thursday evening, for example, we always plan a lot of things for the weekend, so it’s the shops that are open until 6-7 p.m.” (L2)

Two families went more after particular products in particular supermarkets and specialist shops, but this wasn’t typical:

“We do most of our shopping at our grocer’s, and buy the rest in the other shops at the centre, where there’s a Føtex, Netto, SuperBrugsen and Prima, and then all the specialist shops are there too. Where do you do your shopping? Føtex mostly, but not my husband, he’d rather not to go to Føtex. And then I go to Brugsen for some special things, but I don’t like the prices there. What sort of things do you buy in Brugsen? Their ecological butter for one thing (...) I get my vegetables from a Turkish shop at the shopping centre. Only there (...) What about Netto? Never. We’ve been there once. It was when they opened, and we bought some candles. And we almost didn’t pay for them, because we couldn’t be bothered to wait in the queue. Is that the main reason? No, it’s the shop itself. We just can’t stand their sloppy way of displaying things, and there’s never anyone you can ask about anything, they haven’t got a big range, and I think the quality is poor. No, it’s not me. There’s too much discount about it.” (S1)

“It varies a lot where I do my shopping. But I do most of my daily shopping in Netto or Favør (.....) I buy a lot of everyday things in Netto. Because I think the quality is good. They haven’t got such a big range, not so many things, but they stock what you need during the week, and it’s fresher than other places because of the quick turnover. It’s a very, very good shop, and you can always buy the other things elsewhere. (.....) I also shop in S&E, which is a better class of place. But it also depends on whether I’ve got the car or go by bus. (.....) Do you shop in any of the smaller specialist shops? Yes, if we need cheese, etc. You could in the old days. But Tholstrup. They’ve closed. Then there’s the one out by Røde Port, that’s a good place, and there’s a fishmonger’s there too. I go there a lot. (.....) I buy a lot of things in Turkish shops, because their things are fresh, so I go there too.” (K3)

One respondent regarded Brugsen as a different kind of shop:

“It’s a bit on principle that I go to Brugsen. I’ve got an opinion about that. It’s because I think Brugsen have a lot of things, I don’t know whether they live up to it any more, but they have this thing about being more consumer conscious, they promote ecological products, and that’s something I go in for, and then I like the thought of co-operatives too. I know it’s more theory than practice, but it was once.” (S4)

None of the families were self-sufficient in eggs and vegetables to any great degree, but several of the families with dependent children got vegetables, eggs or fish from their parents or in-laws, who grew their own vegetables or did a bit of fishing.

All the families we interviewed were loyal customers in one or two local supermarkets, and it would take a lot to make them shop somewhere else. Some directly said that they disliked one or two supermarkets, where they didn’t shop, though this was more because of the layout and staff than the product range and quality.

Several of the families from Roskilde longed for one or more specialist shops: fishmonger, cheesemonger, greengrocer, a decent butcher. But it’s difficult to say how often they’d shop there if there were more.

It’s mainly the women who do the shopping, even though it’s the men who take the car to work. Several of the families did their shopping in different shops, depending on who did the shopping.

The influence of traditions

When the interviewees think back on the food they had when they were small, they nearly all describe the food they eat now as being more sophisticated, more green, with vegetables and green salads, and more influenced by foreign food traditions. Several say that their parents didn’t have so much money and that they didn’t splash out on food. There is a noticeable generational pattern between the food they had in their childhood homes and what they eat now, ie a difference between those born around 1960 and those born in the 1930s and 1940s. The older among the respondents remember cabbage soup, kale soup,

stews and most often several courses. The younger remember rissoles, steak, mettwurst with potatoes and gravy. Salad was added later in their childhood. And there was also a big difference between a liking for cooking and how well-made it was in those days, of course. Some learnt to cook before they left home and, having learnt the basics, felt well-equipped to develop their own food traditions, while others were more or less at a loss and had to learn either by going into service or experimenting with Frk. Jensen's cookery book.

One thing that seems to be coming back into fashion is the emphasis on making everything from scratch. We haven't delved more deeply into what their mothers meant by that, but it is probably quite different from what they mean by it themselves. For example, more than one mother has probably spent most of December preparing for Christmas, and spent days on Christmas dinner itself, making their own rullepølse (a kind of sausage made from rolled pork) and liver paté, etc.

People are more conscious about health food and less fat these days than they were in their parents' generation.

Accompaniments, apart from more vegetables and green salads, have also changed a lot. In the parents' generation, they only ate rice and pasta a few times a year, if at all. Nowadays, practically all families do. And in the old days, having potatoes with your meal always meant boiled potatoes and gravy, while today, potatoes can be made in a large variety of ways.

"It depends on when you mean. When I was young, for example, there was a big difference between then and now. We didn't eat the same things from when I was a child until I reached my teens. It changed over the years. And they also started earning more, so we could afford other things. We eat more foreign-inspired things than they did, of course. A lot as a matter of fact. So it's either some spices or a particular combination of ingredients inspired from Greece or Italy. At home we had – we've always had more salad at home, unlike Mads' family, and we had various accompaniments, rice, pasta. His were more gravy and potatoes. And it still is. (...) My mother was quite experimental for that day and age." (K1)

"I was in service at a catering manager's, and started to enjoy cooking there, because my mother was very traditional and has always hated cooking, and she's never bothered to hide it. (...) It was mettwurst, rissoles, steak and then back to mettwurst again. And something I remember, it was really a revolution it was, I think she saw a small recipe somewhere, where she made mettwurst and then added a packet of vegetables which she'd boiled! I remember I had the most uninspiring lunch pack in the whole class. I didn't think anything about it at the time, but now I think that my children aren't going to suffer that. (...) I think it was more or less the same in Steffen's family. But he says that his family's revolution was when they bought Miracoli." (K2)

"I think we eat more greens than they do. And my in-laws definitely eat very old-fashioned food – their idea of a treat is fried rasher with parsley sauce or onion gravy, they're a lot older than my parents." (L1)

“Anders: My mother was a housewife most of the time. And she spent ages cooking. But it was either or. It was either Italian or Danish [the mother is Italian]. And if my father had a sudden craving for something he knew from his family, it was more either or. Either just Danish dishes or just Italian. But my eating habits have become, how can I put it, much more sophisticated. We travel a lot, which means that you acquire a taste for more exotic things. This is also what we go after.” Lone: “I lived with my grandmother for a long time, together with my parents. And I’ve always visited her a lot. My grandmother is what you’d call a real farmer’s wife, ie slaughtering pigs and making everything yourself. No going out to buy anything. If they had some roast pork from the butcher, it was because they’d won it at bingo. And coffee as an extra prize on top of that. (.....) Obviously, it’s influenced me to the extent that I prefer to make things myself, and that I’m very quality conscious..... (.....). But I grew up with really good old-fashioned food. (.....) My mother can’t cook. She’s the only person I know who can ruin a smoked saddle of pork. (....) My mother doesn’t like eating here. There’s no doubt about that. She thinks I ruin the food with all those spices.” (S1)

“We eat more healthy food than my parents. My father just wants potatoes and gravy every day. We can do without the gravy. What about greens, do they eat just as much as you? Yes, now they do, not when I lived at home. My father couldn’t get himself to eat lettuce then, my mother could though. He was afraid he’d grow long ears. (.....) They eat more old-fashioned food. If they have chops, they have to be breaded! I never do that. I fry them in some way or other and garnish them. The gravy had to be thick and rich. And if they had roast duck, it didn’t matter that it oozed with fat. We’d never be able to get it down.” (S2)

“I don’t think much has changed, either in Jens Peter’s family or mine. They have also made all the food themselves. (.....) They never ate pasta. There’s a lot of difference. And they very seldom ate rice, perhaps once a year. It wasn’t something you ate regularly, we eat rice once or twice a week. But as for making the food myself, but there was no such thing as fast food then.” (K3)

“It’s probably more modern. In my childhood home, it was more rissoles, and stewed fruit for dessert. We always had two courses. (.....) Roast pork every Sunday. (.....) It was more traditional, like meat patties, mettwurst, roasts, pot roast. Always with potatoes. (....) Apart from them very rarely eating rice, I don’t think it’s very different from what we eat. The food we eat is a bit more varied. And we’ve dropped cabbage soup, kale soup and split pea soup. And fried liver. I always dreaded having that as a child.” (K4)

“We had fish once a week, it was cheap then. I came from a real working-class home. And there wasn’t a lot of variation. (....) My father was a navy. That was hard manual work, so it was rissoles, we couldn’t afford much meat then. There were lots of potatoes and a lot of porridge. Fløjlsgrød (a kind of porridge made out of butter, flour and milk) and vandgrød (porridge made with water), so I’ve hardly eaten it since I left home. (.....) When I look back, I don’t think we ever had anything for a special treat. They couldn’t afford it. There were five children to feed.” (L3)

“It was very different. When I was a child, we ate in another way altogether. Old-fashioned food. With gravy, milk foods, porridge, like everyone else did in

the 1950s. (.....) But it's because, it wasn't just because of my training (catering manager), but things do change. It became chicken and mushrooms, there was no chance of that when I was small." Erik: "We were three children and money was short, so we ate....., we always had three courses. (.....) My mother was quite advanced for those times. We always had a green salad (.....), like we do today, carrot salad, coleslaw, rissoles and steak, mostly minced pork, cheap dishes. Æbleskiver (a small cake of batter cooked in a special pan). Things have changed a lot. But my parents eat a lot, and we do too. It was probably a question of what we could afford, but we ate healthy food, also from what I know about it today. We had varied, healthy food, including breakfast, vitamins, cod liver oil." (L4)

"Yes, it was the same. As a rule, they had two courses, two or three courses, potatoes and gravy, no vegetables." (S3)

"Very, very Danish, pork, rissoles, liver, mettwurst with gravy and potatoes, it was very traditional. Danish food like it was in the 1940s and 1950s, but very well made food, my mother was a very good cook, and her food was delicious, but traditional (.....) It was the same with Ole's parents, and his mother was a terrible cook, and still is, but I think they ate even more traditionally than us. In other words, even more gravy and potatoes, where my mother might serve a bit of green salad, so I think, I didn't grow up there of course, but....." (S4)

The difference between the interviewees' diets and their parents' is mainly more greens, less fat, and more variation, with more spices. Whether the parents actually eat more fat is hard to say. What we can say is that the interviewees think they eat less fat than their parents, but perhaps it's because the parents eat more visible fat (more fatty things on bread, more gravy), and that, in general, they possibly eat relatively less meat (with hidden fat) than the younger generation. That the older generation eats fewer vegetables is a bit odd, considering that, in another connection, many say that they get lots of vegetables from their parent's and in-law's kitchen gardens!

Childrens' influence on food

All 12 families we interviewed had children. In six of them, the children were still living at home, while in the other six they had left home. In all the families, the children had had a big influence on the organisation of mealtimes and what was put on the table. In the families where the children had left home, they still influence the cooking, either by inspiring their parents or by discussing the quality of and additives in the ingredients, and whether they had been sprayed, etc. In all six families where the children had left home, the respondents commented on the childrens' knowledge of food in the sense that they were more aware of health and whether or not it had been sprayed, albeit negatively in one case.

In the families with dependent children, they tackled the children's fussiness and unwillingness to try anything new in very different ways. Some families only made food they knew the children liked, because who wants to waste time making food that nobody wants to eat. Others couldn't face the daily conflict with the children over food. And others again nevertheless made the food they liked, only perhaps less spicy, and made the children at least taste it.

“I think it’s hard to decide what to make, so I often ask the children what they think of this or that, unless it’s rice pudding, but hear what they’d like (.....) Our food has perhaps also changed in the sense that it’s important that the children get something to eat. It’s pointless making something we know they won’t eat. I do anyway now and then, knowing full well that they’ll turn their noses up at it. Do they eat it anyway?A bit now and then.” (K2)

Lise adds that, if the children don’t like the food, she makes them eat the potatoes or rice, and if they won’t even do that, she’s quite strict about not giving them anything in the way of chocolates, etc., in the evening. And the children know this.

“It has to be something the kids like, so it’s often rissoles (.....) or schnitzels.” (L1)

“Do you think the children have a lot of influence on what you eat?Yes, a lot. Too much. It puts a limit on what you can make, I certainly don’t feel like mixing a whole lot of things together, like I used to, because they just won’t eat it, it’s a waste of time.” (L2)

“Is it often the children don’t like something?Yes, every day as a matter of fact,but I force them to eat it. It’s no good them saying they don’t like it.They have to try it. But if they can’t eat it,are they allowed to leave it?They have to stay at the table, we’re strict about that. At least for a while. It’s too easy for them to say they don’t like it, perhaps it’s something they’ve never had before. They have to try it.” (S2)

As the children grow up, they are perhaps a little less fussy, but they still influence the food:

“He’s at the girl stage at the moment. It’s not so good if there’s garlic in the food. He likes it, but it’s not so good because he smells of it in school the next day. So we give him chlorophyll tablets every time he eats garlic. Otherwise he’s usually not fussy. It takes a lot for him to complain. He likes spicy food, but he can’t take as much chili, for example, as we can. (.....) Occasionally, he’ll come and say that it’s a long time since we had this or that, even if it’s hot, spicy food. And then sometimes he’ll just want rissoles. So we have that.” (S1)

In the adult families, the children have also left their mark on the food in that the various dishes they have wanted throughout their childhood are still part of the family’s regular repertoire, while other dishes have been dropped. And in some families, the children come home with inspiration for food:

“We have ordinary white potatoes, but if I make a steak, I might make homemade chips too, where I cut them into long boats and sauté them and then put them in the oven with thyme, salt and pepper. The children prefer not to have white potatoes, so when they were at home we never had them. (.....) We don’t eat so many burgers any more. We often had rib burgers with salad or meat with salad. We don’t eat that any more, but the kids loved it. (.....) But my thoughts of making proper brunkål (a Danish dish made with cabbage) and other good traditional dishes haven’t come to anything, also because now there’s only the two of us, and there’s not so much time.” (K3)

“They come home and teach us something new, which is good. What, for example? Chili con carne, chop suey (a Chinese dish), home-made pizza. Before they left home we only had ready-made pizza. (.....) Do they eat a lot differently than you? I think they eat rice with everything (.....)” (K4)

A few said that the children’s food was more healthy than the food they eat, and that the children were more concerned about buying food that hadn’t been sprayed:

“Yes, they (the daughter and her family) eat very differently. They eat a lot more salads than we do. I think they eat more healthily than we do (.....)” (L3)

“Yes, also because our daughter is studying environmental chemistry for her graduate engineering degree, so we get to read and hear all about the food we eat.” (K4)

“My son suffered from an allergy and went to Gørlev Idrætshøjskole (sports college), where they only eat food that hasn’t been sprayed, etc., they’re not 100% vegetarian, but they make sure there are no artificial colourings or additives in the food, and they only eat meat two days a week, and his allergy disappeared completely, even though he was allergic to grass pollen. He got a lot better, and when he came back home he kept on eating the same sort of food, and it probably influenced us too, made us more aware of artificial colouring and additives. So we are generally very careful about what additives we choose. (.....) It’s often the children who make me aware of things like that. Even though they’re both students and haven’t got much money, they’re much more careful about what they buy than I am.” (S4)

One parent is somewhat sceptical about his son’s emphasis on healthier food habits:

“The youngest has started on something with diet food. Which I’m not so pleased about, because he’s short and hasn’t got a strong build. If he’d been tall, it would have been a different matter. But when you’re short you can see it straightaway, and he felt he was too fat, and different from the others, I didn’t think he was too fat. When he left home, he started making different food, but he loves to come home to eat. But he won’t make it himself. Not even when you visit him? Does he make this new food for you then? Yes, and we don’t get coffee either. We get cappuccino. But he does at least say he’ll buy some proper bread. He’s probably the one who eats the most healthily. He lives alone.” (S3)

There is no doubt that, from what the interviewees said about their parents and about the children’s influence on food, there is a clear tendency towards a greater awareness of healthy eating, with more vegetables and less fat, and the younger you are, the more varied the diet is, and with a wider range of foreign-inspired food. We don’t mean the very young, those who have just left home, but those who have established their own homes and formed their own dietary habits.

Inspiration for food

There is a big difference in the extent to which the interviewees have a fairly fixed number of dishes for everyday food and for when they have guests, or whether they more or less have to have something new all the time. Some throw themselves into making new dishes or get inspiration from magazines, TV programmes and lots of cookery books, while others only have the cookery books they had when they got married, and which they still use as a source of inspiration and to look up something specific. Some only use cookery books when they have guests, when they want to make extra sure of a good result, while others get a bigger kick out of experimenting. Most get inspiration from magazines, either their own or those they read at the hairdresser's, but there is a big difference between those who use the cookery books they have and those who are inspired to buy new ones, perhaps after having read about a new trend in cooking, new pasta dishes, new fish dishes, etc. The difference is just as big as regards food for guests. Some choose red meat or a roast with garnishings, while others make lots of small dishes, inspired by southern European cooking. All 12 interviewees said that food was important, both everyday food and when they had guests. You can enjoy being with the family or good friends over a meal, and all stressed the importance of making good food. What good food is obviously differs a lot from family to family, and the keenness on and amount of time for cooking also differs a lot. Some prefer to play it safe when they make food for guests, and therefore stick to tried and tested recipes, while others see it as an opportunity to give their creativity free rein.

We let people tell us about inspiration and food for guests themselves:

"I either get my inspiration from what we feel like, because it also has a lot to do with what I feel like making, or from what the family wants to eat. But also from what I see in magazines and shops, how they have displayed it, etc. For example, last weekend I was looking through a magazine we get about food and wine, where there are a lot of the usual adverts, but where the local grocer also has his adverts and special offers on the back page, and he had an offer for lamb, and there was this recipe for lamb, so now I've got to have some lamb. (.....) I read everything about food. The weekly papers we get with adverts about house and garden, where they also have recipes and good tips. I read the lot. I buy Femina (a woman's magazine) every week, that's got a lot about food, and I read it all. I make all the recipes in my head, I get a lot of pleasure from that. But I actually make a lot too. And get inspiration. (...) Do you make anything special when you have guests? Yes, a lot. I can start preparing food three days ahead. What do you have? Six courses, all sorts of things, something with vine leaves, and then I saw something or other from Turkey, a little thing from Morocco, and a little thing from there, when I have guests. They get something I haven't tried before. Then I can be fairly certain they haven't had it before either." (S1)

"I always try to find one new thing when we have guests. There's got to be one thing. Whether it's an accompaniment or the main course itself. We were 16 for dinner last Saturday, and for the main course we had roast hare with apples, stuffed with blackberries and walnuts. For the first course we had fish that had been in the oven in small dishes, and mousse for dessert. (...) It depends on the guests we have. We also had guests a fortnight ago, and

then we had chicken roasted in the oven with a soya sauce, red wine and honey. A salad with white cabbage, celery, apples and chives, parsley and dill, and a dressing made from sour cream, A38 and honey. (.....) I haven't got many cookery books, but I've got all the Karoline ones, which I use all the time, and then all the magazines we get at work, Hjemmet, Familie Journalen, Billed Bladet." (L2)

"What about new dishes, how often do you make something new? Quite often I think, and in periods, it depends a lot on if we see something in a magazine, or when those Karoline books come out, I also have some girlfriends I see often, and then we have really great food. Do you buy cookery books? It's been ages since I did that." (K2)

"I often get my inspiration from magazines, newspapers, etc. And cookery books, when a new Karoline book comes out (.....) I don't use them every day, only when we have guests. Do you think you'd like a cookery book for your birthday? I already have so many. I've got all those from Lademann. No, I don't think so. Yes, I've just wished for one on pasta. But hardly ever. It's not as if you don't get enough from magazines, the papers, etc. (.....) But I cut a lot of things out, which I collect, and which I often look through." (L1)

"We had guests last Saturday, and we had undercut of sirloin. The children had burgers. They made home-made burgers. Mie made that, and we had the sirloin in lemon..... or we make beef. Where do you get your inspiration from? Brugsen's kitchen and Karoline. We bought them in Brugsen. Those for DKK 20, we buy them as soon as they come out as a rule. Where otherwise, in the magazines." (K1)

"Where do you get your inspiration for food? Magazines. Or if I'm chatting to someone, I'll ask 'can I have a copy of that'. What about cookery books have you got any? A few. I've sorted out the good ones and thrown the rest away. It depends what you use. There's no reason to go on keeping things you never use. I've got one from Det Gode Køkken, one from Lademann's, a thick one, and my old school cookery book, from when I went to secondary school, that's quite good. You can find recipes there which you can't find in other books. Usually, I don't use cookery books, it's mostly when we have guests, then it's comforting to know that it's like it's supposed to be. Do you make anything special when you have guests? Yes, it's more like – beef of some kind or another. A roast. With hasselback potatoes or baked potatoes." (S2)

"What do you make when you have guests? It varies a lot. It can be from split pea soup to meat loaf, or beef. Do you have a first course? Yes, we often do something special for that. Prawn cocktail, for instance, or an avocado, or smoked salmon or fish in one form or another. And then a delicious dessert. (.....) Do you read recipes? Yes, if I come across a magazine, I don't subscribe to any myself, but if I come across one then I'll have a look at the recipes. What about cookery books? I've got lots of cookery books. Do you also buy some now and then? No (.....) the most recent are the ones we got from Karoline, which I like a lot." (L4)

"What about the weekend, do you spend more time then? Yes, if the children are home or if we have guests I spend a lot of time cooking. If we have guests,

I can spend most of the day on the food. But then we have three courses, and I do something really special. We also have a lot more accompaniments, and that takes me a long time too. But good food does take a long time. Where do you get your inspiration from? I don't buy magazines, but a lot of the daily papers have recipes. And when you've been a housewife for as long as I have, you don't always have to be so dependent on a recipe. I often get inspiration from – I think – that should be good, or I see something in the paper, sometimes I get recipes from my girlfriends, where I say 'umm, that tastes good, can I have the recipe', there's a lot of things you can figure out for yourself. Or if you've been out. What about cookery books? Yes, I've got some of those too. Would you go and buy one yourself? I might. I've got a lot of cookery books." (K3)

"Where do you get your inspiration for food? Everywhere. I only have to see a picture of something to get me started, I don't follow recipes all that much. I make my own small dishes. See a new cookery book or recipe, I don't buy magazines, so it's not from there. Would you buy a new cookery book? Yes, if a new one came out that had something on healthy diet food, then I might, I have before, and ones on French food too. If you were going to have something really delicious for the weekend, what would it be? I'd buy a culotte roast, we both like that. It's got a good strong taste and you almost never go wrong with it. It's tender and delicious. Then I might put a few potatoes underneath it so that the fat can drip down on them, or salad or French bread." (L3)

"Do you like cooking? I don't know really. I've got nothing against it, but it doesn't interest me enough for me to want to cook for hours and hours, adding a bit of this here and a bit of that there, but on the other hand I'm fussy enough to want good varied food, it's probably there the balance lies. It's also fun to try something new, if I've got a good recipe for it. I'm not the kind of person to start on a whole lot of things without even opening a cookery book. Where do you get your recipes from then? Sometimes a dish I've had somewhere which I liked, and which I've been given the recipe for. Or a traditional cookery book, eg the big cookery book from Gyldendal, or something I've seen in a magazine and felt like trying. (.....) We always make something special when we have guests, of course. For example, red beef, with potatoes, chips, peas, Béarnaise sauce (.....) The Béarnaise sauce we buy is from a tin or a jar." (K4)

"We eat very spicy food, a lot of garlic, Greek – Turkish food, we like that a lot. We eat it all the time, I don't think of it as particularly exotic, but I use egg plant an awful lot, olives, garlic, etc. I make different kinds, we like to eat like they do in Greece, a lot of small dishes, salads, mashed avocado etc. We've also been inspired from holidays. Where else do you get inspiration from? Do you often have new dishes? I'd say that until about a year ago, we've really been so busy the past year, but before then, I'd always notice things when I was invited out, and also when I saw something on TV now and then, tried something from those TV chefs, there was one called Hurtigkarl who sometimes made some delicious fish dishes, which I tried, and then there was Claus Meyer, who also did things I tried out sometimes. If I thought it looked good. And then I've got various cookery books. Actually, a whole shelf filled with all kinds of cookery books. Do you buy them now and again? Yes. Especially ones with special pasta dishes, or fish recipes, then I do." (S4)

The more experimental “cooks” read recipes in magazines and cookery books, which they read like novels, and make a mental note of things when they’re invited out. Those who want to be more sure of what they’re doing use cookery books, and follow the recipes more faithfully when they have guests. They also stick to the cookery books they’ve had for years, and they don’t feel the urge to buy new ones, because all the recipes they need are in the books they’ve already got.

Do people eat fish?

The fancy for fish depends a lot on whether fish is easy to come by, which means either getting it from someone in the family who fishes or that there’s a good fishmonger nearby.

Mette and Bent ate fish more often when a fishmonger stopped by Bent’s work every week. Mette likes to eat fish when they eat out, but doesn’t feel like doing much with fish at home or reading how to make delicious fish dishes, so she doesn’t make it herself. So at home she usually makes more traditional fish dishes, like plaice, herring fillet, grilled herring, salmon and turbot. It’s usually non-processed fish. Mette, who works in Copenhagen, buys them at a fishmonger’s there, since they don’t think much of the local fishmonger. Sometimes they buy frozen, stuffed plaice, which they put in the freezer and keep in reserve in case they forget to take some meat out of the freezer one day. Mette and Bent don’t feel a great need for fish, but if there was a good fishmonger’s nearby then.....

When Else buys fish, it’s often from the fishmonger at the centre or from a fish van which comes their way every Tuesday. A fishmonger also calls in at Hans’ workplace, so he sometimes buys fish there. Else rarely buys frozen fish, but she sometimes buys cod fillets. Else and Hans eat fish about once a week.

Anne and Jens Peter also eat fish about once a week. Either plaice, flounder, and often cod or coalfish in the oven, with sour cream or cream and lots of herbs. They have salmon too, but rarely lemon sole or other more expensive fish. In summer, they have eel with boiled potatoes in white sauce, or potatoes and parsley sauce. Anne would never dream of buying ready-made fish meals. They’ve tried fish fingers and stuffed plaice, but it’s not something they’d buy again. Now and then they buy frozen fish, eg salmon or prawns.

Nina and Erik don’t eat as much fish as they’d like. Nina is not sure whether it’s because she thinks it’s too expensive. She’s certain that, if they lived in a town where they could just go down to the harbour and buy directly from the fishing boats, then they would. When they do eat fish, it’s mostly cod. Sometimes plaice, and otherwise frozen fish such as cod, coalfish or halibut. They put the latter in aluminium foil together with some vegetables and then put it in the oven. They never buy ready-made fish meals.

Charlotte and Jørgen get fish from Charlotte’s father, who’s an angler. They get salmon, flatfish and eel, and never buy fish from a fishmonger or frozen fillets. Charlotte puts the salmon in aluminium foil and then pops it in the oven; they have it with potatoes and a sauce. They eat the eel smoked in sandwiches, or fried with potatoes and parsley sauce. She fillets the flatfish as a rule, because

of the children. Charlotte would like fish more often, but she wouldn't think of buying it.

Anette and Mads eat fish about once a fortnight or less. They have salmon, because it's got cheaper, whole steamed salmon or trout, fish rissoles, and in summer often mackerel or steamed or fried fish fillets. They never eat eel. Anette had it often as a child, because her grandfather fished, so she's had enough of it.

Lis and Steffen eat a lot of fish in periods. Lise's father is an angler and gives them a lot, plaice, cod and eel. They also buy fish at the fishmonger's, eg cream of fish, plaice, non-processed mackerel or garfish. Lise sometimes buys frozen fish in Brugsen, either salmon or cod fillets, never ready-made meals or breaded fish.

Malene and Søren only have fish now and then. Often fish, especially cod and flounder, that they get from Malene's parents. Otherwise they don't eat fish often, but when they buy it, it's always frozen fish, cod or plaice, or cream of fish.

Birthe and Peter eat fish once a week, and in periods only every fortnight. Birthe usually buys frozen fish in the supermarket, either pieces of coalfish or cod, or whole frozen salmon. They buy lobster tails elsewhere. Birthe buys non-processed fish about once a month, either from a fishmonger who calls at her workplace or another fishmonger. Here, she buys flounder, plaice or cod. She never buys ready-made fish meals.

Kirsten and Ole buy both fish from the fishmonger and frozen fish. At the fishmonger's, Kirsten buys different kinds of sole for mixed fish dishes or to go in the oven. She doesn't buy the more expensive kinds of fish, but plaice now and then. Kirsten thinks it's a problem that she can buy frozen salmon at DKK 20-25 per kilo, while a piece of cod costs over DKK 50 at the fishmonger's. At one time they fished themselves at their weekend cottage, and caught a lot of flatfish, but they haven't got the time any more. Kirsten buys stuffed, frozen plaice now and then.

Anne-Marie and Peter very seldom eat fish. Anne-Marie comes from Bornholm, where they ate a lot of fish, and she'd like to again really. But Peter doesn't like the bones, and if, as Anne-Marie says, he has salmon something or other for starters at a party, he's always the one who gets the biggest bones, and that's him finished. Sometimes, Anne-Marie makes plaice anyway, which she loves, but she always takes the bones out for Peter.

Lone and Anders are probably the family who eat the most fish, and they eat far more than the 4-6 different kinds of fish people usually buy in Denmark. When Lone and Anders eat fish, it's always non-processed fish from the fishmonger's. They have a good fishmonger and enjoy trying new and exotic kinds of fish. The last one they tried was a parrot fish, which they had to cook for three hours, and which the fishmonger didn't know either. Otherwise, they usually ask him how the fish can be cooked, and if they like it they try it again the next time he has it. They usually eat fish on Tuesdays, when the fishmonger gets fresh supplies, because he's closed on Mondays.

As the above shows, the majority of families eat fish 2-4 times a month, eg cod, salmon, plaice, haddock and coalfish, which they often make, together with

vegetables and cream or other sauce, in the oven, and sometimes fried flatfish. Whether they eat non-processed or frozen fish depends a lot on how satisfied they are with the range of fresh fish at the local fishmonger's. A few had tried other ready-made or semi-ready-made fish dishes with other kinds of fish than stuffed plaice, which nobody was particularly fond of. Only one family was inspired by the fishmonger's range and bought fish they'd never tried before.

Ways of life and dietary patterns

In the questionnaire survey, we have determined respondents' ways of life on the basis of those variables it has been possible to identify in a quantitative study. The self-employed way of life has solely been determined on the basis of whether the respondent has his/her own firm, while the wage-earner and career ways of life are distinguished from each other on the basis of such questions as whether the respondent brings home work, whether s/he thinks about work during leisure time, and whether s/he can distinguish between work and leisure. This is a highly simplified method of determining ways of life compared with the variations and nuances underlying the development of Højrup's (1983) way of life analysis, which is a qualitative analysis.

In this interview survey, we have selected the people we wanted to interview on the basis of the information from the questionnaire survey.

The four self-employed families were thus selected according to whether they had their own firm. Two of these are consultancy firms, which were started on the basis of the respondent's knowledge and experience from a previous job. If we had obtained the information while they had still been employed, then their interest in their work, the fact that they brought home work, and their difficulty in separating work from leisure would have placed them in the career way of life. And this also agrees more with the information we obtained from the qualitative interviews. The ideology of these two families is far closer to the career way of life than the self-employed. The two other self-employed families, one with a small restaurant and the other with a floor-laying firm, had also been wage earners before becoming self-employed, but without the career emphasis, and the ideology of their firms was more in accordance with Højrup's definition of the self-employed way of life.

In one of the four families with the career way of life, the man had recently started his own firm, which had not come out during the questionnaire survey. However, as regards education, work and leisure, and ideology, it would still be more correct to place this family under the career way of life, as it has been done here. The other three families also appear to be correctly classified, and more search questions about their lives and relation to work and interests would have been needed to determine whether another classification would have been more correct. The same applies to the four wage-earner families, who all seem to have been correctly placed.

On the face of it, the biggest danger of misclassification seems to be in the case of the self-employed families. Even though they can be classified based on the objective criterion of ownership of their own firm, this is far from sufficient as regards Højrup's definition of the self-employed way of life, which, briefly, can be

described as a family life centred around the firm, and where work and leisure merge into one. This definition is, to a large extent, consistent with life in small trade firms, small retailers, farmers and fishermen, but is inconsistent with people with a career background or a further education, eg dentists, solicitors or various kinds of consultancies.

From the in-depth information obtained from the interviews, it must be concluded that two of the 12 families do not lead the way of life that the questionnaire survey has placed them under.

Based on the above account of consumers' options and their actual choices, we now turn to a discussion of the tendencies which could characterise the dietary patterns of the three way-of-life groups. It should be pointed out in this connection that it is not possible to reach quantitative conclusions in this type of study.

As regards the division of labour in housekeeping, there is a clear dividing line between the generation in their mid-30s and the generation around the 50 mark. In the families with dependent children, the man and woman often help each other with the cooking, even though it is the woman who has an overview of the housekeeping. In the families where the children have left home, there was only one man who did more than help with the cooking, and he often made the food on his own. In three of the self-employed families, where the man and woman ran the firm jointly, planning and doing the shopping and cooking is an integral part of the day's work, and there is no distinction between work for the family's private life and work in the family firm.

In the discussion about product quality, there is a tendency for the career families, including the two "self-employed career families", to be somewhat better informed about product content, eg most are aware of the difference between barn eggs, free-range eggs and ecological eggs. Only a few of the others are at all interested. Similarly, it is also the women from the career families who are critical about the production of pork. On the other hand, no one really knows what the difference between traditionally matured herring and rapidly-matured herring is. Most are, across ways of life, more interested in what brand of herring it is. As regards ecological products, two of the career families (including the self-employed families) consistently buy ecological products, while the other four buy them now and again, albeit more at random. The four wage-earner families seldom buy ecological products, perhaps one now and again. One or two of these families are considering buying more ecological products, but this is not something that is likely to happen in the immediate future. The other two self-employed families (in Højrup's sense) don't buy ecological products at all. One on principle, while the other is not at all eco-oriented. Thus, there does seem to be the beginnings of a pattern here, but since the material in this kind of interview survey is more suitable for clarifying why people shop the way they do than for how many, we should be careful about making any further conclusions at this point.

As regards the choice of shop, most do their shopping in one or two shops in the neighbourhood. The intermittent use of specialist shops was randomly distributed among the way-of-life groups. The mentioned criticism of shops where people avoided doing their shopping (the shops differed from respondent to respondent) is also spread throughout the three groups.

Concerning experimenting with cooking, two of the most experimental can be found in the career group (including the self-employed career families), but there is also one experimental family in the wage-earner group, which we would interpret as a coincidence. Whether respondents use one favourite cookery book a lot or have whole shelves of cookery books and cuttings from magazines, etc., also varied randomly between the groups.

With regard to the pattern of meals, all 12 families attach a lot of importance to dinner as a social focus in an otherwise hectic day. One self-employed family was unable to find the time for this because they were so busy in the restaurant, while in another the man travelled so much that he couldn't eat with the family so often. The career families probably had the least fixed meal pattern, especially as regards what time they ate, while the wage-earner families, where both came home at the same time every day, had a more fixed pattern. Notwithstanding, there was a distinction between families with dependent children and families where the children had left home, the meal being more fixed in the former, irrespective of way of life.

All things considered, where the ways of life possibly differ from each other is in the way they get their information about the content of food products and the consequences of various production forms, as reflected, among other things, in their attitudes to ecological products. The relation to time and the planning of household chores versus other activities also differs in the three way-of-life groups. The self-employed integrate things, not distinguishing between household activities and activities in the firm, while daily routines in the wage-earner families are much more fixed than in the career families, who first have to finish their work before they can go home and cook/eat, sometimes bringing home work to do afterwards.

5. CONSUMERS' WISHES AND FORMS OF EXPRESSION

In this analysis, we have tried to explain how diet forms part of everyday life, and why dietary patterns develop as they do, through the complexity of everyday life. On the one hand, it is tempting to analyse dietary patterns in connection with broad categories in everyday life, eg families with/without dependent children, people who live in the country/town, regional differences, different ways of life, educational differences, etc. However, the present study shows that it is difficult to demonstrate related patterns between diet and such broad categories.

As can be seen from the 12 interviews, consumers typically relate to dietary patterns and shopping for food as part of a whole, or as being associated with a food tradition, which agrees with the results of Eriksen's (1994) socio-cultural studies of food habits. If they relate to individual products, it is what they see on the shelves, or have read about in magazines, or have seen in TV programmes or commercials. In other words, the way the interviewees relate to shopping and the choice of products is based on a dietary tradition they more or less consciously belong to, and it is on this basis that they formulate their wishes to the retail trade about particular products at, for them, the right prices.

It has not been possible to delve more deeply into consumers' demands, both because information about food production is very scanty, and thus gives consu-

mers little knowledge about the various products, and because they don't relate to individual products as such, only as part of an overall dietary tradition. Ideally, consumers would like to be able to make food from scratch, only having to turn to ready-made products when pressed for time, and therefore don't think of them as something they will keep on buying. Reality is different for the great majority of consumers, however: they don't have time to make everything themselves and therefore actually buy a lot of industrially produced food. But many consumers are interested in knowing more about the way their food is produced, and most are also more discriminating if they are given sufficient information.

Consumers are very ambivalent about industrially manufactured products. In fact, they'd prefer not to have them at all. But they are slowly being added to shopping lists nonetheless, and there they tend to stay. This is one of the areas where the conflict between how consumers would like things to be and how they act in everyday life can clearly be seen. Dinner products have the hardest time being accepted. Many consumers regard dinner as the one meal they'd still like to make from scratch, using fresh ingredients. But if the stress of everyday life makes this difficult, then most would regard frozen vegetables as being better than, for example, a ready-made gratin. In other words, if it can't be avoided entirely, then there should be as little processing as possible. Nobody has been tempted by a ready-made meal because it looked delicious or because they'd tasted it at some friend's. The only thing used to justify ready-made meals is lack of time. In a sense, as regards cooking from scratch and knowing what ingredients are used, dinner is the consumer's last bastion, while other products, such as jam, bread, cakes and sliced meat, have been on shopping lists for much longer and have gradually become accepted as regular purchases, even though, to begin with, consumers have probably viewed them with scepticism too, and also wanted to make them themselves. But most have acknowledged that, with two full-time jobs, there is simply not enough time to make this type of product yourself. And at the same time, 10 out of 12 say that they wouldn't spend more time cooking on weekdays even if they had the possibility. Consumers say they don't want ready-made meals, but buy them anyway now and again. There are a lot of self-contradictions in consumers' desire for home-made bread and delicious food made with fresh ingredients and the cold reality of a busy everyday life. There is therefore sometimes a gap between what they say they do, which lies close to their ideal of "a good meal", and what they actually do, which comes close to one of everyday life's many small compromises. The transparency of both production methods and the quality of ingredients could be a lot better.

Consumers are somewhat frustrated by the sheer volume of information about preservatives, artificial colourings and aromatics in food, and find it difficult to relate to the many E numbers. There is a lot of ambivalence among consumers about the kind and quality of information they want about everyday food, as Holm's study (1991) also shows. On the one hand, in order to be able to choose between products, it is important for consumers to have information about product ingredients, while on the other hand, only the most interested consumer can relate to this type of information. As regards information about the production process, neither primary producer nor manufacturer are very forthcoming. As a rule, producers only provide information about animal welfare, eg on ecological farms, when they have something positive to say. Consumers can't take any more information than they get at the moment, but this could be focused more precisely

on the things consumers do want to know. Consumers want relevant information about product content and production methods, but it must be brief and to the point, and above all, understandable. There should be less focus on nutritional content and more on the manufacturing process and the environment.

A lot of consumers are in the process of changing to more environment-friendly products. Some have only recently realised that they can buy fresh ecological products at reasonable prices, while others always buy ecological products when possible. The interview survey was carried out in Spring 1994, which was six months after FDB increased their range of ecological products and reduced prices. Some consumers will never buy ecological products. But for those who are gradually being converted to the idea, it is important that ecological products are widely available and visible on the shelves. The more people buy them, the easier it will be to keep prices competitive and turnover high enough to be able to offer fresh products every day.

Either people eat fish or they don't. Those who eat it would also like to eat more. What they want is fresh, non-processed fish. They only turn to processed fish products as a last resort. Now that so many fishmongers have closed down, some consumers feel there are too few possibilities for buying non-processed fish. There is not much demand for the more exotic kinds of fish, most want good Danish plaice, flounder, cod or salmon. Much more information about exotic fish is needed before consumers will be tempted to try them. Consumers are already aware of the high nutritional value of fish; all it would take to make them think more of fish for dinner would be the existence of more local outlets for fish. Fresh fish could, for example, be sold in supermarkets, as in southern European countries.

Consumers are probably the most critical about meat. Some think that the increasing production of meat has not only led to a deterioration in animals' welfare, but also in the quality of the meat, and to such an extent that it no longer tastes of anything much. A lot of women say that they eat more meat than necessary, and that they would rather eat less but better meat. Men, on the other hand, still want a big piece of good meat, and if they can't have that, then a big piece of less good meat.

The consumer of the future

The consumers interviewed in this survey are, each in their own way, examples of the critical consumer. A consumer who makes decisions about and relates to product quality, mostly material quality. The survey also shows that she is receptive to information – especially information that differs from the self-serving blurb they are bombarded with in adverts. Respondents' attitudes to information corresponds quite well to Longfield's (1992) surveys, which show that, while people think that adverts have a big influence on consumer choice, they don't think they have any great effect on their own choice.

Many of the consumers buy the same things again and again. Relate to brands, and if they live up to their expectations of quality, and the price is reasonable, keep on buying them. They try one product, drop it, and try another one, and keep on until they find one they're satisfied with and then stick with that. Today's consumer appears to be loyal to a product once it has been accepted. She

makes her influence felt through her choice of products, not by making her views known orally or in writing to retailers, and especially not to the producer.

Clearly, there is a change in dietary patterns and consumer consciousness from generation to generation. The generation that ate porridge, etc., has now almost completely died out. The generation whose diet consisted mainly of Danish dishes, such as "boller i karry" (a dish with meatballs and spiced with curry), meat, potatoes and gravy, and skibberlabskovs, is still going strong but is otherwise much like the older generation. The generation that has been inspired by foreign food traditions, and which eats a lot more pasta and pizza, is now passing its dietary pattern on to the next generation. As we argued in the introduction, the cultural modernisation processes are affecting all aspects of everyday life, also in the kitchen, emancipating the consumer from "old traditions" and thus also from the knowledge the old food traditions required, eg how to cut different cuts of meat from a cow or pig, or how to make pickled herring. But this also gives consumers the freedom to acquire new food habits and new knowledge about how to cook food. And what are the characteristics of this? Future consumers will be more aware of the environmental considerations of food production and health value of products. They will again eat more vegetables and less meat, and they will pay more attention to the fat content. Consumers have grown used to the fact that the market is no longer confined to the local hinterland, with the relatively few products it can offer, but now embraces the whole world. While this has made some consumers worry about the growing energy and environmental implications, there is nothing to indicate that the tendency is going into reverse again. Last, but not least, the new consumer will find the quickest and most direct way of making his/her influence felt – perhaps as a political consumer!

Children are among the most conservative food consumers, and this affects the dietary pattern of families with dependent children. However, it turns out that, when children reach their teens, leave home and set up house for themselves, most of them are more conscious about health and the environment and more open towards new dishes than their parents. This seems to have been the pattern in the last 3-4 generations, at any rate. When they talk about what their parents ate, most say they ate fewer greens, more potatoes, more gravy and less meat. All think they eat more healthily than their parents, though not as healthily as their adult children. As regards the state of health of the population as a whole, it is doubtful whether the health value of Danish diets has improved very much, but there is no doubt that there is a growing awareness of diet, health and the environment, especially among the younger generations.

APPENDIX

Interview guide

Family situation:	age occupation education place of work (the same for spouse and children)
Life cycle:	Childhood, the respondent's and spouse's life story up to now: – her and her husband's education and place of work – marriage/children – change of residence (town/country, rent/own)
Daily cycle:	What is an average day for the family like? Which times are fixed?
Meals:	Which meals do the family have every day? Which meals are fixed? Which are eaten at home? Which are eaten together? Is there a difference between weekdays and weekends? Where is the meal eaten? How long do they last? Is the radio/TV on at the same time? Is being together given a high priority? Have there been any changes? What are meals like when it's best? How often is this? What are meals like when it's worst? What would it take to have some cheerful meals?
Shopping:	Where do you do your shopping? Why? Does your spouse do the shopping? How often? How much time do you spend on shopping? Hours of work in relation to shop opening times? Transport time to and from work? Satisfied with the number and kind of shops in the neighbourhood? Do you wish there were more? Do you try to do the shopping as quickly and rationally as possible? Do you go into several shops? When do you think shopping is a pleasant experience?

Are you satisfied with the products in the shops?
Do you wish there were others?
Do you go shopping by bike/on foot/by car?
Any changes in shopping patterns?
Self-sufficient in some products?

Resources: How big is the family's budget for food, clothes, furniture, holidays, etc. (after the fixed expenses are paid)?
– How much do you spend on food?

– Is it possible/would you like to be able to increase the food budget?
What would you have to cut down on instead?
– Which food products would you like to buy if you could afford to?

Food: What do you eat?
Morning, midday, evening
Typical dishes?
When did you last make something new?

Variation?
Tradition?

Difference between weekday and weekend?

Time
Do you want things that can be quickly cooked, ready-made meals/partly ready-made meals?

Major changes in diet?
In connection with illness, obesity, children, living together?
Are you becoming more aware of health/environmental factors?
Do you eat differently from your parents?

Background
For the respondent and spouse's parents :
occupation
education
residence

Quality
Presentation of three different products:
eggs
herring
butter/margarine
Which would you choose? Why? (Taste/healthiness/
price/the environment/animal welfare)
What do you mean by good food?
What priority do you give it?

Desire for change?
Are you satisfied with what you eat?
Family conflicts over the food?

What would you like to be different (if more time – more money)?

Cooking:

Who does the cooking?

Division of labour (cooking, cleaning up)? Are you satisfied with this?

How much time do you spend on cooking?

Fish:

Do you eat fish? What kind? How often?
Does everyone like fish?

Where do you buy it?
Non-processed/frozen/cooked?

Price of fish?
Quality?
Would you like to eat more fish?

Ecological products:

What would make you eat more fish?
Do you eat ecological products?
Why/why not?
How often?
Where do you buy them?
Who decides to buy them?
What would make you eat more ecological products?

The respondent
as consumer:

How do you get your information about product content/quality/production?
Do you ever complain if the quality is poor?
Do you see any possibilities for influence?
Influenced by campaigns, eg about salmonella?

Do you discuss food quality with others?

Quality of life
through food:

Where do you get your inspiration for food?
Do you sometimes eat with the family or friends – apart from birthdays, Christmas/Easter, etc.?
Do you make anything special when you have guests?
What do you have?
How often do you eat out?
Favourite cookery books? Serving of the food?

REFERENCES

- Andersen, I. & Enderud, H. (1990). Vidensproduktionens arbejdsgang i hovedtræk. In: J. Andersen (Ed.), *Valg af organisations-sociologiske metoder – et kombinationsperspektiv*. København: Samfundslitteratur.
- Beardsworth, A. & Keil, T. (1990). Review article. Putting the menu on the Agenda. *Sociology*, 24(1), 139-151.
- Borda, B. & Lundin, S. (1986). Vem får grädden på tårten? Om samhällets subtila makt-strukturer i Pierre Bourdieus sociologi. *RIG*, 69(3), 66-86.
- Calnan, M. & Cant, S. (1990). The social organisation of food consumption: A comparison of middle class and working class households. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 10(2), 53-79.
- Ekström, M. (1990). *Kost, klass og kön. Umeå studies in sociology no. 98*. Umeå.
- Eriksen, S. H. (1994). *En kultursosiologisk studie av matvaner blant bønder*. Universitetet i Trondheim.
- Featherstone, M. (1990). Perspectives on consumer culture. *Sociology*, 24(1), 5-22.
- Fjellström, C. (1990). Drömmen om det goda livet. Livskvalitet og matvanor i ett upp-växande industrisamhälle. *Acta Ethnologica Umensia, Skrifter, Etnologiska Institutionen i Umeå, vol. 1*, Umeå.
- Foster, A. & Macrae, S. (1992). Food Quality. What does it mean? In: The National Consumer Council (Ed.), *Your food: Whose choice*. pp. 116-134. London.
- Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Grunert, K. & Brunsø, K. (1994). *Fødevarerelateret livsstil i Tyskland*. Aarhus: The Aarhus School of Business, MAPP project paper.
- Haraldsdóttir, J., Holm, L., Jensen, J. H. & Møller, A. (1987). Danskernes kostvaner 1985.2. Hvem spiser hvad? *Levnedsmiddelstyrelsen, Publ. nr. 154*.
- Hjort Andersen, B. (1991). *Tilløb til livsformsanalyser på grundlag af kvalitative data*. Dansk Sociologi 2.
- Hjort Andersen, B. (1993). *Kan man spørge mennesker om deres livsform?* København: Socialforskningsinstituttet, Rapport 93:4.
- Holm, L. (1991). *Kostens forandring*. København: Akademisk Forlag.
- Holm, L. & Kildevang, H. (1994). *Opfattelser af levnedsmiddelkvalitet i befolkningen og i de levnedsmiddelproducerende erhverv – en interviewundersøgelse*. Fortryk fra Forskningsinstitut for Human Ernæring, Den kgl. Veterinær- og Landbohøjskole. København.
- Højrup, T. (1983). *Det glemte folk: Livsformer og centraldirigering*. København: Institut for europæisk forskning.
- Jelsøe, E., Land, B. & Lassen, J. (1993). Do consumers have influence on food production? In: U. Kjærnes, L. Holm, M. Ekström, E. L. Fürst & R. Prättälä (Eds.), *Regulating markets – regulating people: on food and nutrition policy*. Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Jelsøe, E., Land, B. & Lassen, J. *Livsformer og kostmønstre - en spørgeskemaundersøgelse (fortryk til MAPP working paper)*.

- Kvale, S. (1990). Det kvalitative interview. In: I. Andersen (Ed.), Valg af organisations-sociologiske metoder – et kombinationsperspektiv. København: Samfundslitteratur.
- Land, B. (1994). Ways of life analysis and food culture. Aarhus: The Aarhus School of Business, MAPP working paper no 24.
- Lassen, J. (1993). Food quality and the consumers. Aarhus: The Aarhus School of Business, MAPP working paper no 8.
- Lassen, J. (1996). Forbrugerindflydelse i levnedsmiddelsektoren – En analyse af betingelserne for forbrugerindflydelse med den danske fiskesektor som case. Ph.d. afhandling. Roskilde: Roskilde Universitetscenter, Institut for miljø, teknologi og samfund.
- Longfield, J. (1992). Advertising and labelling. How much influence? In: The National Consumer Council (Ed.), Your food: Whose choice? pp. 49-71. London.
- Messer, E. (1984). Anthropological perspectives on diet, Annual Review Anthropological, 13, 205-49.
- Murcott, A. (1988). Sociological and social anthropological approaches to food and eating, World Review of Nutrition and Dietetics 55, 1-40.
- Prättälä, R. (1991). Outlining multidisciplinary food research. In: E.L. Fürst, R. Prättälä, M. Ekström, L. Holm & U. Kjærnes (Eds), Palatable worlds. Oslo: Sociocultural Food Studies.
- Rahbek Christensen, L. (1987). Hver vore veje. København: Etnologisk Forum.
- Samvirke, (1993). no. 10.
- Simonsen, K. (1993). Byteori og hverdagspraksis. København: Akademisk Forlag.
- Shephard, R. & Sparks, P. (1992). Culture, identity and psychology. Eating what the others eat. In: The National Consumer Council (Ed.), Your food: Whose choice. pp. 37-48. London.
- Straughan, R. (1992). Freedom of choice. Principles and practice, In: The National Consumer Council (Ed.), Your food: Whose choice. pp. 135-156. London.
- Warde, A. (1990). Production, consumption and social change: reservations regarding Peter Saunders' sociology of consumption. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 14(2).
- Ziehe, T. & Stubenrauch, H. (1983). Ny ungdom og usædvanlige læreprocesser. København: Politisk Revy.