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PART I
Introduction

1. Introduction

My greatest fascination with social and cultural anthropology is that it can take anything that seems obvious or ordinary and examine it so all sorts of fascinating contradictions and complications come to light. I have never been all that attracted to the exotic or the exceptional. For me, good anthropology is research that reveals the abnormal in the normal, the extraordinary in the mundane. It is therefore no surprise that when it came to picking a research topic for my thesis I ended up choosing something which was so normal, yet so unusual at the same time. I wanted to juxtapose the ordinary, the everyday, with perhaps the most extraordinary phenomenon that is marking our time: Climate change. I was fascinated by how people normalize a phenomenon that is so unfamiliar to us. I wondered how people make sense of a concept so abstract and complex. It has been called the greatest crisis of our time, yet, to climate activists' frustration, it is not treated as a crisis. However, something seems to be stirring lately.

As a master student in anthropology I encountered numerous anthropological works during my university years dealing with nature-relations and understandings of environment. Some even addressing climate change directly. I began to wonder if, in a time of Greta Thunberg's *Fridays-for-Future*, and David Attenborough's *Blue Planet* becoming one of the most popular TV-programmes, something was changing in people's relation to climate change. These changes appear to be happening globally (*Fridays-for-future* strikes were registered in 125 countries this May (2019) with over 1,6 million demonstrators (Gerretsen, 2019)). I was convinced the topic deserved further attention. I decided to study it in a place where I was familiar with sociocultural norms and practices, so that I could properly root the ethnography I was about to conduct. Therefore, I returned to my home-country: Norway.

The nation-state of Norway was once described by a German sociologist as simultaneously an ethnological museum and a future laboratory, a place of contradictions, wedged between the turbulence of modernity and the inertia of tradition (Eriksen, 1993, p. 1). So where better to turn, than to this contradictory place to research a phenomenon as contradicting as climate change.

The research

The purpose of this study is to better understand the role climate change plays in everyday life for ordinary people, contributing to the overall field of anthropology of climate change. The ways in which climate change is understood and dealt with are highly localized. Anthropology thus has the perfect set of tools to take on the social and cultural frames surrounding the climate issue. I will do so by relating my own findings to those of Kari Norgaard (2011) who conducted a similar research to this one, and by extending some of the ideas of Mike Hulme (2009), who has written extensively on the topic of climate change and urges social scientists to start taking on the cultural variation in how this issue is tackled.

More specifically, the research question I set out to answer was: Have the ways in which people understand and deal with climate change on an everyday basis changed from Norgaard's findings of denial? The community I worked with to answer this question were young adults (18-35 years old) in Oslo. The data collection methods used in this research were foremost semi-structured interviews and participant-observation. After completing the fieldwork in Oslo in February 2019, a content analysis was conducted of the interview transcripts and fieldnotes. The chosen methods are discussed in detail in the upcoming methodology chapter. This research represents one case of in-depth cultural study that scholars have called for in order to prepare ourselves better for a changing future. Inspired by the aspects that Norgaard addresses in her research– psychology, emotions, socio-political situation, cultural norms and values – it is a study of the situated, of the localized.

After the present introductory section we will turn to the theoretical framework which makes up the basis for this research. We will address some theory, earlier research on similar topics and definitions of important concepts. The chapter on research design will go deeper into sampling, the community, the fieldwork, and review methods and the data collection. We will kick off the main discussion with a contextualization chapter (chapter 4) in which we address some important socio-cultural background and related empirical findings, which helps us set the scene for the main part of the discussion. The main part of this thesis is presented in three discussion chapters. The first under the name "Experiencing and *not* experiencing climate change" (chapter 4a) in which we discuss how experience and understanding of climate change interrelate, and examine the role science and social landscapes play in this process. The second chapter (4b) is called "Emotions, thinking and talking about it" where we will compare findings on how people think and feel about climate change with Norgaard's findings. We will examine some strategies people use to think about the issue and examine the dynamics of talking about climate change. The third chapter (4c) "Action and solutions", rounds up the discussion and

addresses the two most important solution narratives. First, it considers individual actions along with perceptions of agency, impact and responsibility. And secondly, it examines the narrative on technology and technological fixes. Throughout these three chapters there will be a constant dialogue between Norgaard's findings and my own, enriched by ethnographic examples. In the last chapter and we will reflect on how the findings from this study speak to earlier works and theories, and what they might mean for practice and policy.

Before we begin I feel I ought to give the reader a heads up on a more stylistic note. I have a tendency to speak in "we"-form whenever writing academically. This is due to a personal quirk where I cannot help but picture that I am speaking directly to the reader while writing. When writing phrases like "we will discuss" I do not intend to make it seem as if the discussion were written by a group of researchers. This thesis is produced only by me. Although it very much builds on the works by the numerous scholars who have gone before me in taking on the challenge of understanding climate change. Furthermore, I have been well assisted by colleagues, friends and supervisors in the development of this thesis. However, the discussion is foremost a product of my own theorization. I am also well-aware that the reader cannot directly partake in the discussion presented here. Yet, as I sit here writing and imagining the reader's thoughts brought about by my thoughts, I like to imagine us as a team. I would therefore like to invite the reader to be part of this "we" as we together unravel the study and its findings.

We will start with the theory.

2. Theory

State of the art

The anthropology of climate change

In the last 10 to 15 years a lot has changed in the way anthropologists have dealt with climate change. Actually, until recently, anthropologists barely dealt with climate change at all. In 2000, Tim Ingold wrote that: "It was considered to be just one of those things, like climate or ecology, that may or may not be a determining factor in human affairs, but whose study can be safely left to others" (Ingold, 2000, p. 313). It was treated as one of those things that simply fell outside of the scope of anthropology. However, as indicated, our priorities have changed. Anthropologists, together with other social scientists, have started to examine the dynamics surrounding climate change and the impacts it has on different societies.

It is a challenge to present a comprehensive overview of the anthropology of climate change. Anthropology's inquiries into climate date all the way back to the 18th century and through the times of "acclimatization of man" – connecting long-outdated notions of climate and human races (Hastrup, 2013, p. 272). We should not forget to note the difference between the anthropology of climate and the anthropology of climate change. Technically, this research is concerned with the latter. The anthropology of climate change overlaps with many related fields. For instance, that of environmental anthropology, environmental justice, the anthropology of consumption, human/cultural ecology, political ecology, multispecies ethnography, disaster studies, environmental sciences, science and technology studies, history of science, and conservation and development studies. Perhaps most of all it overlaps with literature on the Anthropocene. Within social sciences much work has recently been dedicated to this notion (Gibson and Venkateswar, 2015; Moore, 2015; Rudiak-Gould, 2015; Sayre, 2012). The Anthropocene is not only a geological era, but also a political Zeitgeist, in which the marks of human agency and culpability can be perceived nearly everywhere (Rudiak-Gould, 2015, p. 48). Climate change is often treated as a metonym for this predicament. Furthermore, we find several authors that have dealt with the historical developments of climate change, both as a physical phenomenon and as a social concept (Dove, 2014; Hulme, 2009). For now we will only address the more recent anthropology of *climate change.*

A number of edited volumes have recently dealt with the anthropology of climate change (i.e. Baer and Singer, 2014; Barnes and Dove, 2015; Crate and Nuttall, 2016; Hastrup and Olwig, 2012; Hastrup and Skrydstrup, 2013). These volumes all emphasize the plurality of the issue combining a number of different case studies and ethnographies in each volume with a wide

span of approaches. The editors of these volumes tend to argue the topic ought to be approached through a configuration of three main concepts, although the precise composition of these concepts vary in each case (e.g. "economic", "political", "historic", "holistic"). What is consistently lacking from these volumes are aspects of emotion and affect. We know that these play huge roles in perception and decision-making. Moreover, we know that the ontological challenges of climate change evoke strong emotions in people (Norgaard, 2011). Yet, anthropologists tend to stick to "economic", "political" or "historical" approaches.

About the overall field we can say that one bulk of anthropological research on the anthropology of climate change consists of studies focusing on global negotiations and discourses, largely with a focus on power-relations, politics and human rights (Crate, 2011). The second body of research, which includes many of the chapters in the previously mentioned volumes, can be placed in four categories: Studies of ethnoclimatology, resiliency, disasters and displacement, and resource management (Crate, 2011, p. 180). Studies within these four fields are almost always constituted by place-based community research. Most ethnographies of climate change experiences are conducted in so-called "climate-sensitive" areas, meaning areas in which environmental change has been most apparent (ibid., p. 179). These numerous field studies have documented that local weather worlds are destabilized and are perceived as being "out of bounds" in relation to the pre-established ideas of normality (Hastrup, 2013, p. 275).

Research in anthropology of climate change has been criticized for being too persistently and singularly focused on place-based community studies (Crate, 2011) Suzanne Crate herself argues for the fertility of such microcosm studies in developing methods and understandings to be applied to other world contexts, such has that of the Western consumer (ibid., p. 182). Yet, the western consumer him/herself tends to fall outside the scope of anthropological research on climate change. Despite this singular focus the field has progressed in other areas. The earliest studies focused on the direct, physical impacts of climate change, and how people handle these impacts (Crate, 2011). In recent years, anthropologists have started to account for climate change as a social phenomenon, and not merely a physical one. From this new vantage point climate change is understood as an idea which is imagined and constructed in different ways in different cultural contexts, and as a narrative to be applied in different political settings (Crate, 2011; Hulme, 2008, 2009; Rudiak-Gould, 2015).

Besides the specific findings of the anthropological studies on climate change, it is argued that some main aspects of the discipline are valuable tools and additions to the overall interdisciplinary field. These include: 1) In-depth fieldwork which explores cultural values and political relations that shape the creation and interpretation of climate-related knowledge and that make up the base of responses to changes. 2) The awareness of the historical context

underlying current debates on climate and climate change. And 3) its holistic approach to human and natural systems (Barnes, et al., 2013, p. 541). This holistic approach taken by several scholars has, however, not gone uncriticized. Questions have been raised if anthropologists in the field of climate change inquiry are falling again for the old notions of holism, bounded cultures and local knowledge (Hastrup, 2013, p. 276), especially when these scholars are looking at aspects of cultural loss due to climate change or the sense of being side-lined by the hegemonic climate discourse originating from western science (ibid., p. 276). To document who and what is vulnerable has great merit for implementation of adaptation processes, and is often done with the best intentions and respect towards the people in question. However, we must remain careful not to fetishize local tradition knowledge as unified and unchanging. The same goes for "modern, western" knowledge which is often treated as a unified front.

Climate change is very much a part of the lived realities of most people, but not only as a local perception of peculiar weather events (Hastrup, 2013, p. 276). Hastrup (2013) argues that too little attention is being paid to the complexity of localized knowledge. *Localized* knowledge is always a combination of a multitude of sources and experiences, spanning from international climate reports to local weather experiences. This understanding of localized knowledge has greatly shaped the research presented in this thesis. Two works have been essential: That of Mike Hulme (2009) and Kari Norgaard (2011).

Earlier research on similar topics

Hulme has argued in his book (2009) and numerous other publications that climate change is an idea to be debated, adapted, and used, as much as it is a physical reality. By understanding climate change as a social construct he does not attempt to undermine the fact that it is also an objective, measurable and global phenomenon. His approach merely takes into account that the *idea* of climate change has a social life of its own. This understanding of climate change leaves opportunity for local interpretations and local difference in its ascribed meaning. While local meanings vary, it is also a global idea. Climate change has become a master narrative in todays globalized world, the "mother of all problems" as Hulme calls it (2009, p. 333). The narrative has become widespread to such an extent that we can think of it as a condition of human existence. More than just a technical problem or a physical phenomenon it is an environmental, cultural, and political phenomenon that is reshaping the way we think about ourselves, our societies and about humanity's place on Earth. Most importantly, Hulme argues, is that this notion is influencing the way we think, feel, and act. It is influencing the ways in which we arrive at, and achieve, our personal aspirations, as well as our collective goals. It is a phenomenon not only altering our physical worlds, the very *idea* of it is altering our social worlds as well.

Important in this definition is that climate change possesses the quality of plasticity (Hulme, 2009, p. xxviii). This means that the *idea* of climate change carries quite different meanings and implies different courses of action depending on who one is and where one stands. Scientists know now that these differences are not mere consequences of how we interpret the science of climate change. Rather it uncovers a deeper level of diversity: Different attitudes towards risk, technology and well-being; different ethical, ideological and political beliefs; different interpretations of the past and competing visions of the future (ibid., p. xxvi). Consequently, climate change always has to be viewed from somewhere, the view from "no-where" has no local resonance (Hulme, 2008, p. 8). This plasticity is also what allows it to be easily appropriated. Hulme urges us to start looking at the cultural dimensions of climate change. He fears that the overly physical understanding of the phenomenon makes it flexible and adaptable to the degree that it is being appropriated uncritically in support of a still expanding range of ideologies such as green colonialism, commodification of nature, of natural security, of celebrity, and so on (Hulme, 2008, p. 9). The de-culturating of climate bestows climate change with a near infinite plasticity, making it overly malleable (ibid.).

What is surprising about Hulme's work is that, despite it uncovering and critically assessing cultural aspects of climate change, the chapters of his book never contain what one might expect them to. In his chapter called "The Endowment of Value" (Hulme, 2009, p. 109) he only speaks on actual economic value. Granted, he argues that we find great variation between different societies in what is considered "valuable". Still, in none of his works does he discuss a more anthropological view of "values", though he seems to build up to this in his introductions. Moreover, in the chapter on "The things we Believe" (Hulme, 2009, p. 142) he limits himself in discussing only major world religions. Which are important, indubitably, but again, many of the beliefs people hold and which are relevant to anthropological studies are not directly related to such official forms of religion. Common beliefs, spirituality, and in particular, secular beliefs, remain unaddressed. In the existing literature there seems to be a general tendency to overlook such beliefs. In fact, secular, western, and urban societies are generally overlooked in the anthropological field of climate change studies (Crate, 2011). We will continue discussing this in the later section "what this research contributes".

The second essential work, and the one closest related to the research presented here, was conducted by Kari Norgaard (2011). She analysed the ways in which people were aware of climate change, yet lived life as if they were not. Norgaard conducted her research in the Norwegian countryside in 2000-2001. She concluded that people knew about global warming and climate change, and worried greatly about the issues, but did not integrate this knowledge

into everyday life. A process which she termed denial. She argues that with a closer ethnographic view, we can understand this nonresponse as a social process in itself (Norgaard, 2011, p. 33). With the recent increase in awareness and public debate, the essential question is if people are no longer living in denial and in the "double reality" that Norgaard found.

Two chapters of her book are labelled "the cultural tool kit" and provide a thorough discussion of specific Norwegian history, common social norms, and cultural background. These discussions are based on her fieldwork, making them more rooted than the theoretical ones presented by anthropologists such as Eriksen, Gullestad, Anker and Witoszek which we will address in chapter 4. Throughout her book Norgaard's analysis takes into consideration the socio-cultural circumstances, a perspective that had been lacking from the field. In an attempt to fill this gap, she includes perspectives from political economy and social psychology. Above all, she looks at cultural dynamics, claiming that research up until then had focused too much on the individual and overlooked the influence of cultures and subcultures, nationality, and the political economic context on how people think, feel and imagine (Norgaard, 2011, p. 209). Norgaard touches upon many of the same aspects as this research: Discourse, emotions, human agency, and more. The main difference between our projects lies in the research setting. Norgaard conducted her research in a rural area, a town she calls "*Bygdaby"*. Whereas the research presented here took place almost 20 years later and in an urban context. So while many of the frames are similar, we find difference in place and time. This gives room to explore similarities and differences in our findings. Norgaard addresses too many aspects of the social process of denial and the interactions between socio-cultural dynamics, as well as the understanding of, and reactions to, climate change, to all be considered within the limits of this thesis. Yet, this research speaks to hers wherever possible. We will explore many similarities and differences throughout this thesis.

One of the most important take-aways from Norgaard's work is the crucial role of emotion in responses to climate change. It is a daunting and confusing theme, for researchers and non-researchers alike, and emotions play a vital role in people's understanding of this phenomenon. This aspect of understanding climate change is central to this research. The phrase "how people deal with" climate change stated in the research question implies coping on an emotional as well as a cognitive level. Therefore, this theory chapter ought to include a section dedicated to this vital, yet overlooked element.

Emotion

If we wish to better understand the impact climate change is having on people's lives, anthropologists ought to account for the emotional aspects that shape our everyday experience. Emotion has recently received renewed interest from anthropologists as a central component in how people perceive their worlds, and as a motivational factor towards action (Lindholm, 2007; Skoggard and Waterston, 2015). Anthropology has a long tradition of recognizing how emotions are experienced, expressed, and depicted differently in different cultural settings (Lindholm. 2007), but this focus on emotion and affect has in the last ten years or so become more explicit.

Emotion was recognized as important to human consciousness and behaviour already in classic works such as by Durkheim (Skoggard and Waterston, 2015) and by Geertz (Lindholm, 2007). The very enterprise of conducting fieldwork has always been recognized as an emotional undertaking (ibid.). However, early anthropology in its need to prove itself as a "real science" suffered greatly from an intellectual bias which dismissed emotion as a legitimate part of inquiry into human sociality (Skoggard and Waterston, 2015, p. 110). That was, allegedly, the case until the "turn" of affect. Many have found the concept of affect useful as a new frame in which to examine and articulate subjective and intersubjective states (ibid, p. 109). Some researchers have expressed concern with regards to the so-called new "turn" of affect. They fear that emphasizing its newness might lead to the contributions of earlier anthropology being overlooked. Especially those made by feminist scholars who have long dealt with affect and emotion in their work (ibid).

In newer and older ethnographies alike, it has been a challenge for ethnographers to articulate in words and conceptualize theoretically those things that are only felt and sensed (Skoggard and Waterston, 2015, p. 109). The form of ethnography that does make room for and value emotion and affect in its descriptions and explanations has been termed "evocative ethnography" (ibid.).

Some scholars have found it fruitful to distinguish between emotion and affect (White, 2017), while other remain unconvinced of its significance (Skoggard and Waterston, 2015, p. 112). Within affect theory, affect can be defined as nonconscious intensities that variously activate and deactivate bodies, whereas emotions are seen as those feelings fixed into place through discursive practices (White, 2017, p. 177). The definitions of the two concepts are multiple, but scholars seem to overall agree that affect refers to intensities and energies, while emotion addresses more specific experiences and expressions of states. Stewart and Lewis (2015) write:

> "Where emotions are presumed to be a form of social construction – named, value-laden states of being closely tied to a politics of representation – affect is a domain, register, or machinery of intensity, speed, rhythm, and emergent form" (p. 237).

Plenty of anthropological inquiries address the field of affect in terms of repression or release of emotion (Lindholm, 2007), yet few deal with more specifically defined emotions or emotion in relation to a specific topic. Works are not often differentiated by the kind of affect or emotion they deal with, but simply by its presence or absence (Skoggard and Waterston, 2015). The works dealing with them are lumped together into "the anthropology of affect/emotion". Some anthropologists have expressed concern that the renewed emphasis on affect might become an end in itself and will hinder anthropologists in examining and identifying more precisely which forces and conditions make some forms of emotion more or less likely (ibid., p. 113). Thus, there is a concern that the anthropology of emotion/affect is blurring itself into an indistinguishable cloud. To avoid any contributions to this blurring I have chosen to stick to the concept of emotion for this thesis. Moreover, I wish to examine two emotions in particular: Shame and guilt.

There is a great lack of emotion in the field of the anthropology of climate change. Though researchers can agree on the topic being daunting and even ontologically unsettling, the emotional reactions that play into the dynamic of understanding and reacting to climate change go largely unaddressed. This is often the case even in works that seem to call for it, for instance, Rudiak-Gould's work on climate change and blame (2015). Surely his arguments that the current conceptualization of climate change can lead to different configurations of blame is intrinsically linked to intersubjective states of emotion. The specification of such states naturally depends on the cultural or social setting of the research upon which he bases his arguments. Yet, whether expressed as anger, frustration, anxiety or differently, emotions go unaccounted for. Even in Hulme's large volume on the topic, a topic which he deems to be the "mother of all problems" and an omnipresent problem in our day and age, he never addressed any part of the spectrum of emotions that this issue evokes in people. As mentioned, Norgaard (2011) is a notable exception from this trend. She addresses a range of emotions in her book. Moreover, she ties these emotions to the specific socio-cultural and political setting in which they are found. Her most central concept, that of denial, she argues to be a result of dealing with overwhelming emotions.

To conclude this section, I would like to point out that guilt and shame, the two emotions which are at the forefront of the following discussion, are rarely found in anthropological work in general (at least not that I was able to find). This is surprising, since they are characterized by their strong intersubjective quality (Burgo, 2013). In order to understand the role of these emotions I will therefore be drawing on psychological literature as well.

What this research contributes

First of all, this research represents a deviant case in the field of social anthropology of climate change, since its focus lies outside of the four main categories (studies of ethnoclimatology, resiliency, disasters and displacement, and resource management (Crate, 2011)). The works of Mike Hulme (2009) and Kari Norgaard (2011) which have been so important to this research, are also no exception to the focus on small-scale community research. Hulme refers almost exclusively to indigenous groups in his empirical illustrations, and Norgaard conducted her research in a village community in the Norway. I agree with Crate (2011) that such studies are highly useful and informative. They have been central in developing the project presented here. However, I wish to complement this large bulk of existing studies by looking at a community of a different character. This research moves away from the island communities, coastal villages, farming and fishing communities, and indigenous groups, and into a large-scale, urban environment. Of course, the fact that an area is overlooked is not justification in and by itself that it ought to be a topic of focus. As the editors of *American Ethnologist* Besnier and Morales have pointed out: There might be a good reason it is overlooked; perhaps it requires tools we do not have or would not produce much theoretically speaking (2018, p. 166). Basing a study on this argument alone leads one to believe anthropologists are in the business of "butterfly collecting" (Leach, 1961). I believe what makes this particular locale and community worth investigating is that besides being undertheorized, they are part of a rapidly growing group of people: City-dwellers. Today, most of the world's population lives in much more urbanized areas. In 2008 the UN declared that for the first time in history more than 50 % of the world's population was now urban. A percentage that only has increased since then (Eriksen, 2016, p. 84). Moreover, these people have perhaps the biggest impact on the course of the unfolding climate issue (Baer and Singer, 2014). Therefore, this research has set out to understand the role of climate change in an urban, western, "non-climate-sensitive" (at least as of now not significantly impacted) setting.

We ought to address this last term: The "non-climate-sensitive" character of the field plays an important role. It might seem contradicting to attempt to understand climate change in a locale where this is not yet a problematic issue (though many would argue a global issue like this is problematic everywhere). I believe it makes the situation all the more interesting. How people understand and deal with an abstract issue like this on an everyday basis, especially when it is not yet impacting them much, is what initially piqued my curiosity. Only few anthropological works have dealt with the issue of climate change on a non-crisis basis, but instead as a constant part of everyday life. Norgaard (2011) is once again a notable exception. Hulme (2008) argues that situating climate change within its relational context (the places people live, their histories,

daily lives, cultures or values) is highly important for developing the field of climate change research further. Moreover, he states that: "Such research is needed as much, perhaps more, in countries of the North and West as in countries of the South and East." (Hulme, 2008, p. 8).

Employing the terms of critical anthropology, this study might be called an ethnography of the privileged. The community I worked with is educated and (relatively) wealthy. In the unlevel playing field of today's developing environmental and climate crisis, the focus has been on the marginalized and the powerless, at least in the field of anthropology (Baer and Singer, 2014, p. 199). To complete the picture, this study aims to explore the lifeworld of the powerful. Not necessarily as a critique, but in order to present fuller depiction of the social situation as it is. The Anthropocene is an era characterized by a deep impression of the human footprint, and moreover, by an unequal footprint (ibid., p. 201). Part of the story of climate change is the huge contribution of wealthier nations to this problem, leading to the most devastating consequence in poorer nations with fewer resources to respond to such consequences. But we must also recognize the inequalities within nation-states. Though comparatively wealthy and highly educated, what makes a group more powerful remains relative. One could theoretically argue yes, the individuals in our community find themselves in relatively privileged positions. On the other hand, looking in comparison to large corporations and the elite in capitalist systems, perhaps not so much. Perhaps this is an ethnography of those stuck in the middle. Definitely not marginalized, but also not feeling that they are in charge. An ethnography of how "normal" people deal with a global crisis on an everyday basis. This is why the notion of everyday life is important. Dealing with climate change is not their field of expertise, not their job, not forced upon them by a natural disaster which requires them to deal with it. It is mostly an idea which is simply a part of their everyday reality, of the situation in which they happen to find themselves.

Academics have called for more concrete contributions and advice from anthropologists to the interdisciplinary debates on climate change (Milton, 1997; Roncoli, et al., 2009). Anthropologists are in a unique position to address the socio-cultural dynamics underlying climate change issues and on the other hand the socio-cultural impacts of it. This research presents one specific case which, hopefully, contributes to broadening our understanding of the dynamics at play on a more general level as well.

Questions about different nature-relations have always been the core of anthropology, and climate change is the most current issue in this regard. I believe partly what justifies this research is the importance of the issue at hand. One of my informants formulated it perhaps best when he stated:

> "I think the topic must be in the top of the public debate and for sure every single study that attempts to understand how people are interacting with it is worthy and if I can contribute in something I definitely would like to do it." (Personal communication, per email, 10.01.19).

As would I, like to contribute to this topic.

Theoretical framework

As one can imagine, climate change has been defined in a number of different ways in natural and social sciences. Some of the earlier research has concerned itself with "global warming" (Norgaard, 2011) or "the environmental crises" (Pfaffenberger, 1988). The term that has become dominant in current times, in society in general as well as in anthropology, is climate change. Some authors prefer the term "global warming" over climate change as it underlines the urgency of the planet heating up (Khan, 2016). I prefer climate change because it is a more comprehensive term including more of the consequences than merely heating.

At the moment it seems that "climate change", partly though the tireless campaigning of climate activists, is slowly being reshaped into "climate crises". All these notions are closely interlinked and all part of the same problem. For the sake of coherency, I will refer foremost to "climate change" throughout this thesis. I follow Hulme in his notion of climate change as simultaneously being an idea and a social construction, as much as a physical, measurable phenomenon. The one can never fully be separated from the other. Moreover, I will apply it in the sense of *human-induced* climate change. In different arenas debates are still ongoing to what extent the changing climate is due to human activity, and in natural sciences, of course, there needs to be a term to refer to the natural processes of climate change. However, this research is concerned with the specific social aspects of this phenomenon. I will therefore opt for the variant that is closest to the way it is used in public discourse: The change in climate as a global and human-induced phenomenon.

Frameworks

Two elementary theoretical frameworks make up the foundation of this research. Firstly, this research builds partly on a framework suggested by Svarstad, Benjamin, and Overå (2018). In their discussion on the current position of "power" in the field of political ecology, they identify three dominant perspectives: Actor-oriented, neo-Marxist, and poststructuralist approaches.

The different combinations and configurations of these perspectives with one another create nuanced insights into social dynamics and is argued to be one of the strengths of political ecology. This research might not be classified as a study of political ecology per se, as it does not directly address conflict or power relations which are central to the field of political ecology. Nonetheless, the framework presented by these authors has been a useful background for this research. This research's main aim is to explore individuals' understandings of, and reactions to, climate change – as experienced, but foremost as an abstract idea. Agency and sense-making by these individuals therefore stands in the forefront of inquiry. The actor-oriented perspective laid out by these scholars is inspired by, amongst others, Fredrik Engelstad and Max Weber. It focuses on actors who exercise, or try to exercise, power. The various forces of resistance, such as other actors and structural limitations are also accounted for in this perspective. The neo-Marxist approach builds on the idea that human agency is socially conditioned. Peoples' actions are enabled or limited by historically established social structures. Lastly, the poststructural perspectives are numerous, but those of main interest to this research are theories of discursive power, inspired first by Foucault, but further developed by many others. As a narrative, some sides of the climate change phenomena are emphasized, whereas others are overlooked. It is also a narrative with a strong moral aspect to it, which we will see is an important part of understanding climate change.

The second theoretical background for this research is Roncoli, Crane and Orlove's understanding of cultural frames and individual perceptions (2009). I think this lies at the very core of how I have approached this research. Their arguments are not originally posted as a framework, but I have interpreted their work as one, as it is helpful in examining interactions between different parts: Something which is absolutely central in answering the research question. The core tenet of their argument is that culture frames the way people perceive, understand, experience, and respond to key elements of the worlds they live in. Individual and collective adaptations are shaped by shared ideas about what is believable, desirable, feasible, and acceptable. The authors suggest four overlapping axioms which shed light on the different ways in which cultures engage their world through the prism of climate change. Namely, perception (how people perceive climate change through cultural lenses), knowledge (how people comprehend what they see based on their mental models and social locations), valuation (how they give value to what they know in terms of shared meanings) including moral and emotional value of the environment (mythical, religious, ethical principles, social obligations), and response. Naturally, these four axioms are closely intertwined. In order to understand one of the axioms, one needs a firm understanding of the others as well. I would again like to emphasize that I define response not only in ways of behaviour and actions, but foremost as cognitive and emotional processes. The term "dealing" is meant in the broadest way here. I have

found the insights shared by these authors useful in uncovering the assumptions underlying this research. The framework stresses how the collective and the individual levels are intricately intertwined in one another. Moreover, it emphasizes how perception, knowledge, valuation, and response are inseparable parts of understanding climate change, as parts of a kaleidoscope that interact and change the way in which we perceive. These authors go beyond the idea that understandings and responses are based only on climatic conditions and economic restraints, and make room for livelihood needs, goals, meaning, and cultural values. It mirrors the idea of localized meanings of climate change put forth by Hulme.

From these frameworks we can conclude that the ways in which people understand and deal with climate change is a process in constant flux. It is influenced by overarching narratives, structural barriers and possibilities, multiple actors, perceptions of one's own agency, etc. Not all aspects can be accounted for equally in the scope of this research. I have chosen to focus on individual sense-making, agency and (reported) actions, thus closer to an actor-oriented approach. Yet, the research draws on the understanding of the interlinked combinations of the three approaches outlined by Svarstad and colleagues (2018). In combination with the axioms by Roncoli and colleagues, it aims for a holistic understanding of the processes at hand. The importance of the interplay between cultural frames and individual perceptions is highlighted with the framework by Roncoli and colleagues described above.

The frameworks I have elaborated on here will play a more implicit part of following discussions. I hope the reader will see how they make up the foundation of the analysis and discussion even when they are not addressed directly very often. I have included them here to give the reader insight into my thought-process. In the following chapters I will devote the limited space to empirical materials and their relation to more specific research, such as that by Norgaard. Nevertheless, I want to stress the importance of these frameworks. They have been fundamental in shaping the approach I have taken in this research and in forming the research design. And without further ado, I shall now present this design.

3. Research design

Community

This research aims to understand the position of young adults in particular. This population is of interest as they are the first generation who have grown up with the notion of climate change. Awareness about climate change issues is high in this population group. Climate change has been part of the standard education in Norway for people who are now young adults. The issue was introduced officially into the curriculum (also at primary school-level) in 2006 with the national school reform (*Kunnskapsløftet*), although many teachers had already included it in their teaching programmes earlier (Personal communication, online conversation, 06.11.18). In Norgaard's (2011) interviews with educators back in 2000-2001 there are already mentions of this topic being taught in school. The population who are now between 18 and their mid-30s therefore have been formally educated on the topic. This group knows about climate change, which I take as a necessary requirement for answering my research questions. As expected, I found little to no denial that climate change is a real, human-caused and a currently happening phenomenon in this community. This does not mean, however, that my informants all had the same view on the issue. In fact, far from it, as we will see. Further ground for working with this community is that this generation is more likely to experience the more severe consequences of climate change in their lifetime. Therefore, they might be more preoccupied with climate issues than older age-groups. This argument is only based on assumption though. However, in light of the recent demonstrations, court cases, voting polls and changes in the media picture, I would say it is a reasonable one.

Due to the limited scope of this research I chose to go in depth with a more limited sample, rather than attempting to cover a broader group at risk of losing the deeper perspective. Experienced anthropologists have generally recommended to aim for depth rather than width (Bernard, 2006). A comparison with other communities or age-groups would be a very interesting and worthwhile endeavour, but that will be the task of later research. Even though I have limited the community I worked with by age-group, I have aimed for a mixture in obtained levels of education and occupation. The only further requirement was that the informants should live within the city-limits of Oslo.

Sampling

Chain-referral or so-called network sampling has been the chosen sampling method for this project (Bernard, 2006, p. 192). Start-up contacts were found through the use of social media and by reconnecting with old acquaintances who have returned or relocated to Oslo. This

research relied foremost on network sampling through these acquaintances. The researcher has attempted to account for deviant cases by specifically asking informants if they know people with different views on the topic. This way I have tried to avoid seeking out opinions which only support my argument (Silverman, 2000, p. 107). Network sampling was the most convenient method within this research's limited timespan. It is typically beneficial for the researcher to be recommended to new informants by their friends or acquaintances as it can lead to a quicker build of rapport and trust with new informants. This method of sampling does not result in a representative sample of the population, but that is not the aim either. This research aims to explore lived experience. Therefore, a smaller, more focused sample, with whom I could go into great detail with, provided the basis I needed for answering the selected research question.

Chain-referral sampling is often recommended in hard-to-find or hard-to-access sorts of populations (Bernard, 2006, p. 192). Though young adults, currently living in the city of Oslo, is not a population hard to find, it is indeed hard to access. In her book on climate change denial in Norway, Norgaard (2011) dedicates a large portion of her methods chapter to the notion of *fremmed skeptis* (stranger scepticism) (p. 237). With a minor alteration I will use the term "fremmed skepsis" instead, as I believe the "t" is the result of either a small error in translation or a variant of dialect I am unfamiliar with. This might seem an unnecessary correction for some non-Norwegian speaking readers, but I truly believe this version resonates better with Norwegian-speakers. Nonetheless, the meaning of the term remains the same. Most Norwegians are highly sceptical of strangers (all strangers, not limited to immigrants, but anyone outside their direct social circle). Basically, social norms prescribe that you are not supposed to talk to someone you do not know, unless you have an urgent reason to do so. This "protective bubble" is not something Norwegians give up easily (ibid., p. 238), as has been noted by foreign researchers and my foreign friends alike. Foreigners often interpret such sceptical behaviour (for instance, expressed through not acknowledging you as someone they know outside of your shared workplace, not engaging in small-talk, or not asking you any questions) as "standoffish" or plainly rude. Norwegians themselves explain it through social norms of not wanting to intrude and maintaining a private-sphere. As a Norwegian colleague of mine phrased it: "Whereas it is considered polite to ask someone how they are doing in many other places, Norwegians will show politeness by not asking how you are doing" (personal communication, conversation, 11.01.19). No matter the interpretation, *fremmed skepsis* makes it a bit more challenging to talk to anyone you do not live, work or study with, and have known for at least some weeks, if not months. Warming someone up to the idea of doing an interview with me, without having built a relationship for many months in advance, would be almost impossible. I believe that chain-referral sampling was the best methodological solution to overcome this barrier. When potential

new informants knew I had a relationship with their friend, colleague, or roommate, it created an excuse to engage with me. A loophole in the *fremmed skepsis* so to say.

The researcher is aware that purposive sampling is the method most often used in research with a limited time-span such as this one, as it ensures informants who have the best knowledge on the topic of interest. However, since this research is specifically aiming to understand the role of climate change in regular people's lives, this entails the informants most suitable are actually the non-experts. Network sampling becomes in a way purposive sampling, since informants are chosen for their non-expertise. The discrepancy between climate researchers and the general public is well-known. The ways these two groups understand and deal with climate change constitute two different worlds.

I argue the final results of the analysis, despite the small sample, still has a certain level of generalizability. The way I came in contact with informants is of course partly random and by chance, as it always is. But they were chosen on basis of a theoretical approach. In Mason's words the sample is: "designed to provide a close-up, detailed or meticulous view of particular units which may constitute […] cases which are relevant to or appear in the wider universe." (Mason, 1996, p. 92). Thus, their relevance lies in explaining the wider universe of the social life of climate change. Burawoy phrases how such an approach can contribute quite nicely: "The importance of the single case lies in what it tells us about society as a whole rather than about the population of similar cases." (Burawoy, 1991, p. 281). Now we turn to the cases, or actually to the informants, that were the basis for telling us about climate change in their lives.

Informants

I had the fortunate opportunity to draw on many conversations and interactions during the course of my field research, but besides more casual and unplanned interactions a group of 13 informants make up the basis of main input to this project. One (official) semi-structured interview was conducted with each of these informants. Some of them I met with several times and could be characterized as key informants. They spent time with me outside of the interview, let me join them in participant observation and recommended me to further interview partners. Others were met with only once for their interview.

The group consisted of 5 women and 8 men, from different circles. Some of them knew each other, as is obvious with chain-referral as the main sampling method, but others did not. A few key-informants I knew from before the start of this project, while most of them were recommend to me during this research and with whom I got acquainted during the course of my fieldwork.

As mentioned, I have aimed for a mixture in obtained levels of education and variety in occupation. The sample includes a few informants who have not enrolled in higher education, some who have completed different levels of higher education, and some who are currently still in university. The high number of informants with a background in higher education is to be expected since chain-referral sampling can lead (at least in the beginning or in such a short research) to contacts mostly within the researcher's more direct network, which in my case are foremost students and academics. These groups are perhaps also more willing to partake in research, as they know the importance of it and have personal interest in research. However, the number of highly educated informants is not only due to a sampling bias. In Norway in general, but Oslo in particular, the percentage of people who complete a degree is quite high. Statistics show that 60 % of young adults in this age group in Oslo have completed or are currently enrolled in higher education (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2018).

This research gravitates towards people who are more interested in climate and environmental protection. It is important to be aware of this bias. Part of the reason for this uneven distribution could be the sampling methods I have chosen. It is not always easy to reach people outside of certain social circles through chain-referral sampling and reaching people with significantly different views and experiences. Moreover, as I was quite explicit while making the arrangements for these interviews about the fact that this research is about climate change, some people with more sceptical views might have felt their opinions were unwarranted or would not be respected. Perhaps people with such attitudes had simply no interest in partaking in a study on this topic. On the other hand, scepticism towards climate change, especially in this age-group is quite uncommon. It is almost considered as a taboo to be a climate-scepticist in this particular locale. It could be unlikely that people would come forward with unpopular views due to the overbearing morale of the climate-narrative. This will be discussed further in chapters 4b and 4c. Whatever the reasons, the researcher has been aware of this bias and has attempted to take it into account while processing the data.

My role in the field

As a social- and cultural anthropologist I find it necessary to reflect on my own role in the field. Anthropologists can take on many different roles while doing research and sometimes take on several of them. It is, of course, important to be aware of one's own position and how this might impact the research.

I feel strongly about transparency and have therefore been quite straightforward with my informants about myself, about the study and its purpose. I have told them openly that I am a master student of social and cultural anthropology. With the large number of students in Norway it might not be a surprise that one is generally met with patience and sympathy in this role. Whenever people seemed confused about my questions or did not quite understand what I wanted from them, they seemed to feel more at ease as soon when I told them I'm a master student doing research. Many people have an appreciation for students and relate to their situation. So, when some people (whom I did not have previous contact or arrangements with) initially seemed unsure or sceptical, the role of student helped them relate to me.

Another important part of my role as researcher is the hybridity in my personal background. I have spent 15 of my 24 life years in Norway, learning the language fluently and acquiring a deep understanding of the social norms and values, ultimately sharing many of them. Norwegian is my first and best language, my citizenship is solely Norwegian and almost all my formal education has taken place there. This makes me somewhat of an insider in this context. However, since I was not born there, I no longer have any family living there, and a hint of a foreign accent has stayed with me through all these years, I am also an outsider. Coming from an Austrian university to conduct this research complicated this insider-outsider role even further. I think this hybrid insider-outsider role was significant in some ways. On the one hand, as an outsider, people were willing to take time and explain things to me, elaborating more on some topics and being patient with my many questions. On the other hand, as an insider, there were many things they could reference from popular Norwegian media and culture which for us did not require any explanation or following up. I think this shared base of references facilitated smoother communication and created a feeling of mutual understanding.

As a 1.5 generation child I might identify as Norwegian, but I have also consciously been part of an integration process where many of the things I take for granted today were explicitly taught and explained to me. And perhaps even more memorable were the many things about Norwegian society and ways of being that were not explained to me and that were once very strange to me and which I had to figure out over time. This high awareness of the "typical Norwegian" might put me in a unique position as a researcher as I simultaneously understand important social and cultural aspects, but also am aware of the fact that they are highly localized. I believe this double understanding has aided me in interpreting and making sense of the collected data.

Having such a long-lasting experience with local social norms also helped me in practical ways, since knowing social norms and habits can be quite important during an interview process. For example, being aware of how many Norwegians will avoid direct eye-contact over longer periods of time, even during a conversation, and knowing that too much eye-contact can be considered intimidating and awkward (instead of polite or as a sign of showing interest). Also knowing that Norwegians hold large private spheres and prefer to stand/sit/be further away from their conversational partners than what is typical for other Europeans is handy for an interviewer to be aware of. Some social norms have helped me keep contact with informants. For instance, that it is considered very polite to start any exchange, whether an actual conversation or a digital message with the phrase "thank you for last time" (*takk for sist*). Quite a few expats have reflected on this habit as the key to building professional relationships in Norway. Typically, Norwegians are very direct in their language, but very indirect in sharing their emotions. All of these little aspects and more were things I once learned as an immigrant and which now have aided me in the research process. As Bernard (2006) has argued: Fieldwork is all about explicit awareness of the little details in life (p. 364). Now let us turn to the methods of data collection and the actual data collected during this fieldwork.

The fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted between the 4th of February and the 1st of March 2019. During this period all the empirical data for this thesis was gathered. The fieldwork was prepared thoughtfully in the seminar anthropological laboratory during the winter semester of 2018-2019. And after concluding it, no further data collecting was deemed necessary.

The theoretical foundations for choosing Oslo as a field for research have been partly addressed above in the theory chapter and some further aspects will be raised in chapter 4 when we contextualize this research further. However, the practical aspects in choice of field should not be downplayed either. Practically it played a role that I could access this field easily, it has the sort of social and political stability which makes doing fieldwork here quite unproblematic, and I had the cultural experience and (indirectly) the social contacts I needed to start a research here. First and foremost, it played an important role that I knew the language in this field. As the expected time to complete a master thesis – planning it, doing the research, conduct the analysis, and write the actual thesis – is about one year, these practical advantages played a role in assuring the feasibility of the project.

During the fieldwork I stayed with two friends in a smaller town outside of Oslo and took the train into the city on a daily basis. Oslo is notoriously expensive, and few people have bedrooms

or even sofas to spare. Staying outside of city limits proved the best option. Daily activities in the field included conducting interviews, participant-observation, and other data-collecting activities. More will be said on this in the methodology chapter. Besides data collecting I had to reintegrate myself in Norwegian society; getting used to different shopping and eating habits, getting reacquainted with the language and with social norms, immersing myself in the current happenings by watching local news and talking to locals. Since I did not have a home-base within the city, I had scouted out potential working places beforehand. In the end all the interviews were held at local cafés and at the Culture House. The Culture House was a central place for my activities during the fieldwork. It is a public, multi-purpose space consisting of several floors and a courtyard, within which one can find different bars, stages and meeting rooms, a restaurant and a library. The Culture House hosts a range of events: Social, educational, as well as, political. Some of the most relevant meetings and public talks I attended were held here. Many of my interviews took place here as well, since they have lots of space and student-friendly prices. Furthermore, I took advantage of the freely accessible public libraries around Oslo when in need of more quiet working surroundings.

The costs for the travel and research were partly covered by a research grant from the University of Vienna, from the short-term grants abroad (KWA), which I received after the fieldwork. The application and acceptation of this grant has not influenced the content, course or findings of this research, but has merely been a great support in carrying out this project.

Methods and data collection

I would like to say some words on where this research can be placed in the vast field of climate-oriented work in the social sciences. My point of departure is within the idealist paradigm. This research addresses the importance of internal states – attitudes, preferences, ideas, beliefs, values- as the basis of human behaviour (Bernard, 2006, p. 79). Typically, this paradigm is set apart from material and sociobiological perspectives by the level on which analysis takes place (ibid., p. 80). Small samples and case-based research which aim at depth of understanding are more common here. Of many possible variables this research foremost deals with the interaction of internal states between themselves and between internal states and reported behaviour (ibid., p. 91). This study then leans more towards a narrative approach. It deals with the stories and narratives through which people describe their worlds, rather than the realist approach where the aim is to describe the gritty reality of people's lives (Silverman, 2000, p. 136).

The methods selected for this research revolve around qualitative content analysis. This method plays into the methods of data collection, as well as the analysis itself. Qualitative content

analysis can be used inductively as well as deductively (Elo, et al., 2014), and I will show it applied as a combination of the two. This method requires continuous self-reflection by the researcher and is ideal for working with rich verbal or written accounts (ibid.), which is why it is highly suitable for working with the interview transcripts in this case.

Qualitative content analysis consists of three phases: Preparation, organization and reporting of results (ibid., p. 1). The preparation phase consisted of collecting suitable data, making sense of the data, and selecting units of analysis. The organization phase is slightly different depending on if an inductive or deductive approach is used. For the inductive one it includes open coding, creating categories, and abstraction. Deductive content analysis involves categorization matrix development, which means data is reviewed for content and coded for correspondence to identified categories. As mentioned, I applied a combination with categories originating from both approaches, some already existing in the literature and earlier research, while others were derived inductively from the collected data. The combination of the two methods is sometimes called the abductive approach (Graneheim et al., 2017). Lastly, in the reporting phase, results are described by the content of the categories and the complete research and analysis process is reported in detail (Elo, et al. 2014). This, of course, is the aim of this thesis. All the empirical material this thesis builds on was collected during my fieldwork in Oslo in February 2019. The main bulk of data is made up of semi-structured interviews, complemented by observations, some forms of participant-observation and participation in a number of meetings.

Interviews

During the fieldwork 13 interviews were conducted, whereof one might be called an expert interview (Bernard, 2006). All interviews were recorded, translating into approximately 15,5 hours of recordings.

Semi-structured interviews are ideal for when one only has a single chance to interview an informant (Bernard, 2006, p. 212), which was the case in this rather brief fieldwork. Semi-structured interviews make for an efficient use of the informant's (and the researcher's) time. Interviews were based on an interview guide for more reliable, comparable data. The guide changed slightly during the fieldwork. Though it is common to address topics and questions in a specific order, following the interview guide, this varied between interviews for me. The first three were more structured, whereas the structure became looser as I became better acquainted and more comfortable with the questions. In further interviews there was less focus on the particular order of topics allowing for more freedom in the discussion and for the conversation to run a more natural course. Of course, I made sure that all questions were asked at one point

or another, but I considered it better to let informants raise issues of their own and follow their stream-of-thought when possible.

The first 12 interviews were held with individuals from the target group as described above. The last interview was held with someone working with the team for Oslo as "European Green Capital". This expert interview gave me further insight on how this project works and how the public response has been. The questions for this interview deviated from the standard interview guide and revolved more specifically about her work and the public reactions to the Green Capital projects.

At the beginning of each interview anonymity and confidentiality was assured. All 13 informants signed the informed consent form. This introductory part, along with a brief explanation of the research seemed to put informants' minds at ease and give them more security. The interview processes presented a steep learning curve. I noticed myself adapting rapidly. In addition to being more open with the structure of the interview the most important skill I learned over time was to tolerate silence. By this I mean to give informants time to think and reflect, and simply wait until they provide more answers. This process can be slightly awkward, but often interview partners would raise interesting ideas after such a break.

Before embarking on the trip there was a discussion whether or not some questions planned in the interview guide were too leading or too direct. However, in every interview people dared to disagree with me (or with what they assumed I thought), which I take as a good sign. I always encouraged to an open discussion at the end of each interview which led to more personal reflections and interactive dialog. For instance, I spoke with my interview partners about how we (or they specifically) use different terms, i.e. "environment" on the one hand and "climate" on the other. Sometimes we also talked about the interview and the questions themselves, which was quite insightful for me. As mentioned before, I value full disclosure, and at the end of the interview I would readily answer and discuss the research topic, and my own thoughts on different matters when informants asked.

An important note on these interviews and the interviews questions is that the term "climate change" was explicitly used. Anthropologists have documented a clear difference in the answers informants give when being asked directly about "climate change", and when being asked about changes in local environment (Marino and Schweitzer, 2009). However, since this research is concerned foremost with the former, most interview questions explicitly mention climate change. Informants were aware from the beginning that this is the overall topic of the research

and I believed that to sidestep the term (or to "walk around the porridge", as Norwegians would say) would do more harm than good, as people might feel I am somehow misleading them and might be insulted. I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages of being more or less direct in interview questions, but it is impossible to say how this effects every individual case. The general impression I have gotten from each interview, however, is that people were not afraid to be straightforward with me. When questions were changed in the interview guide this was always due to issues of comprehension, and not so much to any particular effects or biases. Still, these factors need to also to be addressed here.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they make better ground for comparing interviews than less structured forms do (Bernard, 2006, p. 212). The researcher is aware of the weaknesses in this method. For instance, one has to balance probing, but not leading an informant. Questions regarding individual behaviour, decision-making or consumption in light of climate change could be perceived as threatening questions or create discomfort for the informant. Climate change is a quite morally charged topic, as such the effect of social desirability, or the deference effect (ibid., p. 241) should be given particular attention. During the more official part of the interview attempts were made to avoid the deference effect (ibid., p. 241). Interview questions were formulated and presented in such a way so that people would not have the urge to tell me what they thought I wanted to know, trying to keep things as neutral as I could. In the discussions after all the questions had been posted this was not the case anymore. When they asked for my view on certain topics, I gave my honest opinion, and in particular interesting discussions took place in these less official conversations. Social desirability is an effect of concern in interviews in general, but perhaps especially when dealing with the present topic as the discourse on climate change is quite morally loaded. It often involves reflections on "doing what is right" and of "being a decent person". Because of this, questions might be more easily perceived as threatening. It is therefore I am quite pleased that interview partners did not seem to be withholding in disagreeing with me, or telling me no. At one point an interview partner told me that what I had just asked was a stupid question and proceeded to explain for five minutes why it was stupid. This rant, if I may call it so, gave great insight into how this particular person felt toward the climate change debates.

Both of these issues might be prevented by the precise formulation of the interview questions. And indeed, the interview questions have been formulated with these effects in mind. Also, inaccuracy in reporting, as well as dishonest informants are things the researcher must be on guard for. Techniques for minimizing inaccuracy include jogging memory (Bernard, 2006, p. 247). I sought to avoid these biases and the effects mentioned here by carefully developing an interview guide and having it reviewed by several supervisors, colleagues, and friends. Of course,

such effects can only be minimized and never fully eliminated. It is important to take them into account not only in the preparation phase, but also during the course of interviews and during the analysis afterwards. Awareness of them is one way to make sure they do not interfere significantly with the findings.

Some interview question started to feel saturated around the 6-7th interview. Particularly the topics of non-experience and social media, which we will address soon, constantly emerged to during interviews, resulting in a certain consensus. Others, such as people's reported behaviour and emotional reactions varied more and could only be seen more coherently afterwards during the analysis. Some questions, such as faith in public institutions, would make fascinating contributions to the field, but were not explored enough in-depth here to do a full analysis.

Meetings and presentations

I attended a number of meetings and presentations which revolved around the topic of climate change. These events were insightful in terms of finding out what discourses surround the issue of climate change in the public sphere, what issues were raised and how were they argued. I attended 5 such events, all of which were recorded.

The first meeting was an internal municipality meeting, which took place at the Culture House and which I happened to stumble upon. The participants were kind enough to let me join. This meeting was basically a presentation of The Green Capital project informing all people working for the municipality (in other sections) what it is about and how it works. Being an internal meeting the public responses and critique by media was also addressed openly, and how one can respond to different critiques.

The second meeting was a breakfast meeting also at the Culture House. Breakfast meetings are a regular occurrence here. They invite different speakers and experts on an issue who present and discuss some topic between 08.00 and 09.00, while the audience gets a free breakfast. These meetings tend to be well visited. This particular vent was titled: "The future is now" and addressed the future in general, but with climate change as the most prevalent topic. Speakers included: Kristin Halvorsen, previous minister for SV (the Socialist Left-party) and now director of CICERO (Centre for International Climate Research, based in Oslo); Kjell Magne Bondevik, previous prime minister and leader of KrF (Christian Peoples Party), currently chairman for the Oslo Centre (Independent organisation working for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights); and Sigrun Aasland, Chief Advisor for *Tankesmien Agenda* (Norwegian-based think-tank). Trygve Svensson, as leader of *Tankesmien Agenda* moderated the discussion.

The third meeting was a similar evening-discussion at the Culture House with the catchy title: "Is the world going to hell?" A total of 11 scientists and professionals gave presentations and discussed this question in light of their field of expertise. These fields included everything from growing algae to vaccines, and every single one of them raised the issue of how climate change would impact their field, whether this was the spread of ticks or the need for developing more robust grain. The red-line in this three-hour session was the connections between humans, animals, plants, ecology, food and micro-organisms, from a one-health-principle.

The fourth event I attended had a lighter tone. As part of the European Green Capital event calendar and in an attempt to discuss climate change in a positive light, "Karaoke and climate change" was held. A number of guests were invited to speak, and karaoke was held at the end of the meeting. In spite of the interesting concept, I do not believe they managed to truly give climate change a positive spin.

Last, but not least, I attended another breakfast meeting at Ciens, the research centre for environment and society. Here several scientists, city-planners and politicians presented their opinions about "Cities as the solution to Climate Change", evaluating the current plans and developments, and whether these are efficient enough to meet certain climate goals.

The popularity of these events was telling. All of them were well attended, to the point of crowding. Their audiences consisted of mostly young people, although not exclusively so, and younger professionals (my rough estimation would be people in their 30's and 40's). Many more women than men visited and participated in these meetings, although amongst the speakers there tended to be a more or less equal gender distribution. The makeup of participants at these sessions does seem to confirm that it is indeed young adults that take most interest in the public discussions on climate change.

Observations and participant-observation

Important in every fieldwork are observations. Part of everyday life during my fieldwork was recording observations both confirming and opposing my own ideas from before the fieldwork, notions of everyday life in Oslo in general, and any aspects I came across as potentially relevant for my topic. The observations made were not structural or intended as the main form of data collection, but rather as gauges of the usefulness and appropriateness of some preconceived ideas by myself and theories by others. They were also important as pointers into new and unexplored issues which turned out to be relevant. Returning to the topic of data collection, informal interviewing took place during the fieldwork as well. Although it is hard to measure the

extent of it, of course. This simply included asking people things while walking somewhere, while commuting, while hanging out in bars or café's. Observations were made and noted constantly. Some situations also allowed for me to take more the role of a participant observer (Bernard, 2006, p. 347). Partaking and at the same time observing in daily activities. Bernard distinguishes between an observing participant and a participating observer (ibid.). In practice it is hard to tell which one is most fitting as also informants' perception of the researcher is important here. Participant-observation included everything from café visits with informants, leisure-time activities, attending a lecture at the University of Oslo, commuting an hour to and from Oslo, hiking together, going to public talks. These activities were all undertaken together with informants and made a great starting point for contextualization, for understanding everyday life better and for new inputs.

Notes and pictures

During the fieldwork 99 pages of handwritten notes were produced. These were from interviews, but also include observations, thoughts and reflections. Notes were written by hand during interviews as a safety precaution, but also as a technique. Taking notes can be part of "tolerating the silence". At times, being (or pretending to be) busy in taking notes gave informants time to think and (re)consider their answers. It helped stretch the time until informants completed their thought or went deeper into the question. Although it was quite a challenge to keep up with note-taking I managed to rewrite notes digitally almost daily. The time commuting on the train in the mornings and evenings was especially useful for this activity. I loosely followed Bernard's separation between methodological, descriptive and analytic notes (2006, p. 395). I found this helped me be more aware of what I was noting down and for what purpose.

About 400 pictures were taken throughout this research of places, objects and happenings relevant to the research topic. These pictures serve foremost as memory triggers and illustrations and not directly as a form of data to be analysed. This documentation does not only include pictures of places where I conducted research and had conversations, it also included pictures of the many, many places climate change or environmental issues came up, for example, on posters and advertisements. In the tram, train and busses one can find posters thanking you for taking public transportation and thereby limiting emissions. On the outside of some busses it is proudly announced that this is an electrical bus! Or a bio-fuel bus! In cafés one finds little signs that ask you to please only take what you need of lids, plastic cutlery or napkins, and help them reduce waste. The print on paper coffee cups reminds you that this particular cup is made

from recycled and reusable paper and is a good environmental choice. I used photography to document and remember these detail from the fieldwork.

Secondary data

Many different sorts of contextualizing data are relevant in a project such as this one. I have used some statistical data from the national statistical institute of Norway, *Statistisk sentralbyrå.* Moreover, media outlets such as online newspapers were drawn upon. Also, the different websites and Facebook pages of relevant organisations were used in addition to newsletters from these organisations that were and still are being sent to me on a regular basis. I will not list all these sources here, but instead reference them in the relevant places throughout this thesis. These non-theoretical sources have been vital starting points in collecting information and contextualizing the role climate change plays in everyday life in Oslo.

Why I chose this particular data

These forms of data collection were chosen as I am foremost interested in meaning and sensemaking. I deemed interviewing people and partaking in participant observation to be the best and most plausible way to gain access to these processes and information. The time-limit and financial restriction made a smaller more case-based study like this a more sensible option. Furthermore, I was interested in conducting a "classical" anthropological study and training myself in these methods. Conducting fieldwork this way was therefore in my own personal interest as well.

Originally, the data was meant to include participant-observation at climate demonstrations. This plan fell through as no demonstrations took place during the fieldwork. Moreover, I had hoped to work with local NGOs working with climate and environmental issues. Surprisingly, none of them replied to my emails or suggestions. Before the fieldwork I had attempted to reach out to both NGOs and governmental groups, and to my surprise the state organs and municipality offices were much more helpful and accommodating than the NGOs. I realized during the fieldwork that a strong emphasis on accessibility, transparency, and flat hierarchies in Norwegian society made these institutions actually easy to access.

While conducting a study like this one touches upon a lot of interlinked topics and issues, and the biggest challenge of them all is picking one to focus on. After much consideration, analysis and reflection the final outcome of the process became a focus on the individuals themselves. In the end, the people, their experiences, and stories and strategies was what mattered most to me. This was also where the ethnographic material was the richest. Other topics considered were:

The relation to state or climate policies, a larger focus on Oslo as Green Capital, the relation to policy makers and politicians, or generally a more structural analysis. But in the end, I set out to study the lifeworld of young adults in Oslo, and that is what I did.

Analysis

The analysis was conducted using the Maxqda 2018.2-program, which was also used for transcribing. All 13 interviews were transcribed fully and the 5 events I attended partly. As noted above I followed the approach of an abductive content analysis. Some codes, and later on categories, originated more from the theoretical literature I had acquainted myself with. In order to relate it to earlier research I explored some categories which were overlapping (Denial, the use of Nature, etc.). On the other hand, many arose from the data itself, and present new input into the academic conversation (such as: shame and guilt, faith in science, non-experience, etc.). Combining these two approaches is the very essence of the abductive approach. One of the advantages of this method of analysis is that one can compare and speak to earlier research, while on the other hand balancing this with close work on the empirical data gathered, contributing new categories, aspects and ideas to the ongoing discussion.

Language

This methodological section ought to include a note on language. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian, as this is my own, as well as most of the informants' first or native language. The researcher is aware of the challenges with regards to translation. Some concepts will have altered meanings or just lightly different connotations in different languages. The transcription and analysis of the data was carried out in Norwegian in order to stay as close to the original meanings as possible. Only in the reporting of results phase, thus in the writing of this thesis, the terms and findings were translated into English. All translations have been done by me and always in cooperation with Norwegian-speaking friends and colleagues. An exact translation of meaning is rarely possible, but with full professional proficiency in both languages I am confident that close translation of meaning was attained in most cases. Those terms that proved particularly difficult to translate are explained and applied in their original Norwegian version.

Part II
Discussion and findings

4. Contextualization

In both the chosen definition of climate change and in the two frameworks described above, the aspect of localization plays a major role in understanding the role of climate change. Since both perceptions and experiences of climate change are highly localized, this research aims for a high contextual sensitivity (Silverman, 2000, p. 66) by looking at the specific socio-cultural background relevant to the research setting. Literature on Norwegian identity and Norwegian nature-relations therefore constitute an important foundation for this research. This literature includes some of the writings of Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993; 1996; 2015), Peder Anker (2007; 2013; 2018), Marianne Gullestad (1992), Nina Witoszek (2003) and Kari Norgaard (2011). The fact that these scholars voice similar arguments creates a solid basis for understanding the sociocultural situation in the Norwegian case.

In this section we will address these writings in combination with my own empirical observation to better understand some of the relevant aspects of the context in which this research has taken place.

I am not interested in identifying a national character, but rather in identifying ways of thinking which may be seen typical for the general region of the nation-state of Norway based on scientific literature and empirical observations. I have no illusions or misguided ambitions about establishing a fixed, common way of being Norwegian. The theoretical framework by Roncoli, Crane and Orlove (2009) can be, and has been, criticized for representing a too-still image of culture (Hastrup, 2013, p. 275) The researcher is acutely aware that cultural models and values are always changing, being made and remade. (Hastrup, 2013, p. 275). Identities and social norms alike are always multiple and in constant flux. We know this already from back in the 1960s when good old Fredrik Barth deconstructed the idea that an in-group is homogenic (Barth, 1969). It is highly important to acknowledge that my collaborators in the field are no more prisoners to a unified and closed tradition than I as an ethnographer am (Hastrup, 2013, p. 278). During this discussion I will merely look at some general tendencies and patterns that I myself, and established scholars as well, have observed. Two main aspects will be considered here: The concept of egalitarian-individualism and local nature-relations. We will start with the former.

The Norwegian case: Egalitarian-individualism

Politics and social life in Norway are marked by a peculiar democratic ideology: Egalitarian-individualism (Eriksen, 1993, p. 5). Equality and the integrity of the individual are highly valued in this ideology. Some argue it is expressed through a strong suspicion against social climbers and the rejection of formal social hierarchies. I am one of the people who would argue so.

The expression of this ideology is observable even by looking closely at the use of language and in the way in which people address one another. Norwegian has no formal ways of addressing others; no "sir" or "miss", or to take the German version, no "Sie" or the like. It is even uncommon to use last names. You address your superiors by their first names. To give an empirical example, in a public meeting I attended during my fieldwork, one of the speakers was Kristin Halvorsen, previous minister and current director of a prestigious research institute. Her debate partner was Kjell Magne Bondevik, previous prime minister and current chairman of an esteemed independent organisation working for peace, democracy and human rights. Obviously, both of these highly respected people were referred to as "Kristin" and "Kjell", were addressed as "you", and a lowly student like me could easily approach and talk to them at any time. Gullestad has argued that, in the Norwegian context, a person can define him/herself as equal to another by being accessible (1992, p. 193). She has pointed out that American, French and Scandinavian understandings of "equality" are all slightly different from one another. In Norway, equality is often understood in terms of "alikeness" or "sameness" (Gullestad, 1992, p. 185). Kristin Halvorsen herself told a story during the meeting underlining the normality of sameness. The story was about how foreign visitors at their research institute were often confused when they found that the top leaders of the organization were eating lunch in the office canteen with all the employees; *but where else is one supposed to eat?* - Kristin asked. A laughing audience confirmed the preciseness of the story. Under this egalitarianism one is not supposed to show off the money one has (Norgaard, 2011, p. 28). CEO's, directors and ministers will eat lunch at the company's cantina, and even bring their own lunchboxes.

All in all, equality is a positively valued word, whether it concerns gender, class, town or country (Eriksen, 1993, p. 5). However, egalitarian-individualism should not be assumed an ideal, utopian praxis. Ideologies never are. In the (locally) well-known novel by Aksel Sandemose from 1933 he presents the adverse effects of such an ideology. By immersing the reader in the fictional village of Jante, they are introduced to the unwritten laws people are forced to live under. Rules such as: "Thou Shalt Not Think Highly of Thyself", "Thou Shalt not Think Thou are Someone", and "Thou Shalt Not Think Thou are Better Than Us" (Sandemose, 2000). Both social scientists and local businessmen have claimed that the Law of Jante, as it is known, is a deeply embedded aspect of Norwegian culture, and that it discourages brilliance and high achievements (Eriksen,

1993, p. 5). I recently took part in an online webinar (by Norwegians) guiding graduate students in their job-searching process. The presentation was summed up into three rules. I have to admit I do not even remember the first two, but the third, and most important one was: "F*ck the Law of Jante". It was stressed that while searching for a job it is allowed to think that "you are someone" and admit to oneself and others that perhaps one is even good at what one does! I believe it is quite illustrative of the power of these unwritten rules that graduate students are told explicitly that it is okay to take pride in and even broadcast ones' achievements and excellence.

Summed up, an egalitarian-individualistic society is one where strong individualism is combined with the collective values of the welfare state. Gullestad explains: "Norwegian culture is fundamentally individualistic in the sense that each human being is ideologically in the foreground, but the Norwegian form of individualism coexists with a strong emphasis on equality defined as sameness." (1992, p. 192).

The Norwegian case: Nature

Anthropological literature on Norwegian identity has stressed the peculiar relation many Norwegians have to nature. Eriksen (1993) addresses specific historical and cultural developments in Norway, explaining how egalitarian-individualism and the idealization of simple lifestyles and nature came to hold central positions in dominant Norwegian ideology. Much of it relates to the history of colonization and forced unions with Sweden and Denmark over the centuries. When it came to the process of national identity-building in the 19th century, it was important to mark a difference from these other Scandinavian countries. Norway was an underpopulated and poor country at the time, lacking a rich military, cultural or political history to draw upon. However, what Norway lacked in cultural riches, it made up for in diverse, rugged and majestic landscapes (Eriksen, 1996, p. 4):

> Norway's national identity gradually took the form of a lifestyle characterized by closeness to, respect for and love of nature, particularly the subarctic mountain landscape requiring great courage, strength and endurance from those who have to survive in it. Danes and Swedes were in this light refined and decadent city people, and the image of the thoroughly healthy, down-to-earth, nature-loving Norwegian was established as a national symbol. (Eriksen, 1996, p. 4)

Other authors have in contrast traced this so-called eco-humanist tradition back to old Norse customs and emphasize their reestablishment in modern times by philosopher Arne Næss (Witoszek, 2003, p. 198). This tradition is described as a pragmatic one, prioritizing action over word, experience over fixed principles, and practice over theory. When several European countries turned to nature to define their national identity at the turn of the century, Norwegians did so in a manner quite divergent from most European countries by building on these older Norse nature-relations, revoking nature traditions, promoting egalitarianism, rationality and simplicity. Witoszek identifies a number of political and economic factors which have likely influenced this development; absence of aristocracy, a lack of controlling state bureaucracy and dehumanising "officialdom" which characterized the turn of the century in many other European countries (ibid., p. 199). She argues that the cultural legacy in perceptions of nature bears on the present but is often overlooked. Others have argued that the boom in outdoor recreation really first occurred in the 1960s and reflected the nation's growing wealth which had given people more time for such leisure activities (Anker, 2007, p. 456). I would indeed agree with Witoszek that this cultural tradition, regardless of its origins, is still very much alive in contemporary Norwegian society.

Thus, the cornerstone of national identity is the ideal of a rural, simple lifestyle and a close connection to nature. Despite (or perhaps besides) the fact that 75 % of the country's population lives in cities or urban areas and adhere to a lifestyle quite similar to most urban-dwelling European citizens (Eriksen, 1996, p. 6), relations to nature remain an important part of everyday life. Ethnography shows that Norwegian mothers of all different classes believe that "fresh air" is beneficial and that children should learn to become independent by playing outside (Gullestad, 1992, p. 209). I know from my own personal experience that being outside is an important part of everyday life. With the rather cold climate Norwegians face, one of the most used expressions remains: *Det finnes ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlige klær* ("There is no bad weather, only bad clothing"). And if the weather does happen to be nice, well, then the obligation to go outside becomes almost a duty.

In the 1990s, when Eriksen was asked to write a social study textbook for second-generation minority youth, he identified that some of the cultural aspects most difficult to grasp for these minorities regarded the nature-relations. He writes: "Why for example, did Norwegians venture out into nature instead of sitting in cafés on a grey and wet November Sunday? Why did they glorify the frugal and simple life associated with the mountain cabin when they could afford not to?" (Eriksen, 2014, p. 8). Such confusions emphasize that traditional nature-relations are still very much alive and practiced broadly in Norwegian society. These relations are expressed in a "social use of nature" (Eriksen, 1993, p. 7) which is practiced through regular hiking, skiing,

cabin culture, and other rituals (Eriksen, 1996). I want to emphasize that nature-loving and -respecting values, do not necessarily mean that the average Norwegian lives in a paternalist or communalist relation with nature, in the sense that there is general or balanced reciprocity between man and nature (Pálsson, 1996). If anything, the "social use of nature" hints at a rather orientalist view of nature. This view is characterized by a discontinuity between nature and society, just as paternalism is, but in contrast also by domination and thereby a negative reciprocity with the environment. Exploitation of the environment in this view can be expressed through a range of purposes from production and consumption, to sport and display (ibid., p.68). Therefore, activities of outdoor recreation while emphasizing a close relationship with nature and placing value on dwelling in nature, are also in the orientalist sense a *use* of nature for one's own purposes. As a colleague of mine once stated in a seminar: "Often it seems that seemingly paternalist views of nature, are actually orientalist-relations in disguise" (personal communication, seminar discussion, 14.11.18). Pálsson's paradigms should, however, not be regarded as bounded regimes or discursive islands, neither in time nor space. In every society there are different layers of engagement with the environment, and the reality is therefore much more complex than just fitting into one or the other category. Often, we find tendencies from all three of Pálsson's paradigms within one and the same society. Industrial societies especially encompass many ways of engaging with the environment all at once (Milton, 1997, p. 490). It is not surprising that relations to nature are complex and ambiguous, as people engage with their environment in diverse ways. I believe the notion of "social use of nature" in this specific setting can help shed light on how people perceive climate and environment and their role towards these. I have paid extra attention to the social uses of nature during this research as I assumed it relevant to experiences of climate and changing environments that I was so curious to learn about. Moreover, in the literary works on nature-relations that we addressed above there is rarely made any connection to empirical material or examples. I therefore want to show the relevance of understanding these relations and their continued accuracy by relating them to the data gathered for this project.

> Norwegians really love nature though. Or, hiking, or in the winter there is complete chaos in the *Marka* (a national protected forest close to Oslo) here when the weather and snow are nice. Then the whole of Oslo is out on skis. And that's very nice. So I think Norwegians have a great interest in the use of nature. It's becoming more and more popular. (Informant 11)

To put the words "use" and "nature" in one and the same sentence might evoke negative connotations and assumptions from some social scientists. In Scandinavian regions on the contrary, the use of nature is connected with an entirely different set of associations. In some small talk leading up to an interview an informant told me that he:

> "Both go and stand on skis", (meaning that he both engages in cross-country and down-hill skiing), "I don't hike that much anymore... but! We do have a cabin for the summer times, so I would indeed say that I use nature, hehe" (Informant 12).

In this exchange the informant seems to be trying to convince me that, indeed, he uses nature. To use nature actively, as an arena, but also as a resource at times, is a common social expectation in Norway and holds positive associations. We discussed earlier how being close to nature and spending much time outdoors has been argued by several anthropologists to be the corner stone of Norwegian national identity. Also nowadays, a close relation to nature is deemed to make one a moral and decent person. "A Norwegian who lacks interest in nature and *friluftsliv* ("life out in the open") may well be accused of being a poor specimen by his fellow citizens." (Eriksen, 1993, p. 7, emphasis added). My own observations support the idea that even in urban populations such as in Oslo, dwelling in nature remains widely practiced. I will illustrate with some empirical examples.

In the most dense and urban centre of Oslo, I observed a man in a typical ski-outfit (sport tights, a sleek jacket, round scarf, sport gloves, ski cap – all tight-sitting and streamlined for least wind-resistance) and with skis in hand (cross-country ones, as is the standard) exit a burger shop on a regular Tuesday afternoon. No heads were turned, no questions were asked, just business as usual. On a particularly sunny day, in the mere five minutes it took me to change from the metro to the bus, I counted 16 people in this complete ski-outfit with skis in hand in the middle of the city heading out to better ski grounds. The episode that stuck with me the most, however, took place on my very first evening in Oslo when it was cold and snowing heavily outside. This was when I overheard a man's phone conversation on the train. This middle-aged man, who I assumed was on his way home from work since he was wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase and was on a local train at six o'clock in the evening, asked his friend to join him for skiing that night, as the *"føre"* was so perfect.

Allow me a little digression. *Føre* is an almost untranslatable Norwegian word and is most fascinating. It refers to the condition of the ground upon which one travels. This term is used for travel by car, foot or ski alike. Importantly, *føre* does not refer to the quality of the road or the tracks, the tracks can be perfect and still the *føre* can be bad. Instead, it describes the interaction between the tracks and skis, or the road and a car's tires. A good *føre*, with regards to skiing, means that the snow is in perfect condition for skiing (although perhaps not for driving). I

believe this term reflects important local knowledge of environment, as it requires knowledge of how temperatures, humidity, and amount of snowfall all interact with each other and create certain conditions in the snow. The concept is central to the social ritual of skiing. When someone returns from an afternoon of skiing, they will almost guaranteed tell you what the *føre* was like today.

To return to the discussion at hand; my point with bringing up these examples is merely to further substantiate the arguments presented by anthropologists such as Eriksen, Anker, Gullestad, and Witoszek which we discussed before showing that being in nature is an important part of everyday life, even in urban settings.

Some might question the nature-relation of urban dwelling people. Yet, we see here that even in the urban context of Oslo, nature plays an important role in everyday life. I do not believe that people in Oslo are "less in touch with nature". Leisure activities in nature are highly prioritized. Moreover, they consider elements of weather and landscape when speaking about climate change. For instance, one informant measured how "good" the winter was by comparing the height of snow to the metro tracks throughout the winter each year. And when speaking of a lack of precipitation informants spoke of the colours of the grass. When considering what role the urban setting plays in contrast to earlier research in rural context, a closeness to nature is surprisingly not a differentiating variable.

Everyday life

Some words need to be said on the notion of everyday life. The study of everyday life has a long tradition in social sciences. It has included a range of topics from the study of routine and daily activities, to creativity, productivity and consumption, all the way to studying folk beliefs. The notion of everyday life can be traced through French, German, and American research traditions (Gullestad, 1992, p. 35). The study of everyday life accompanied a change in the field of anthropology in general where one paid more attention to "the apparently trivial and the humdrum rather than the solemn and the sacred, the thoughts and words of ordinary people rather than the interpretations of local experts" (Gullestad, 1992, p. 35). This is particularly important to this research, as my interest lies in exactly this: "the words of ordinary people". By addressing non-experts in a non-climate-sensitive area, my aim is to understand better what role climate change plays in everyday life.

Moreover, the notion itself holds a particular and central position in Scandinavian societies, which is hard to overlook. The implicit meaning of everyday life in the Scandinavian context has changed over time. Whereas it used to define alterations in time (between the everyday and the

festival), it has developed to signify the opposition to state bureaucracy and "the system" (ibid., p. 37). Arguably, "the everyday" plays a particularly important role in highly secularized societies, which Norway is one of. Here the notion of "everyday" is connected to closeness and informality that stand in opposition to formality and hierarchy which are highly unpopular notions (ibid., p. 53). The notion of "everyday life" is highly value-laden and carries positive emotional associations, it is something to be protected and appreciated. We can observe how this overlaps with self-ascribed identities of mundane and down-to-earth people, and how the antipathy towards hierarchy supports the egalitarian notions addressed above. When doing research in Scandinavian settings one cannot really escape the notion of everyday life. We see for example how it played a vital role in forming Norgaard's research. So much so that it is even included in the title of her book. The concept of everyday life is central both to the focus as well as the aim of this research.

With regards to the former understandings of the everyday and the holiday, it seems that the roles have become somewhat reversed. It is actually the everyday that is now perceived as a precious, almost sacred, sphere, one that ought to be protected. We also see this reflected in the emphasis of the role of nature in *everyday* life. It is not so much special or extraordinary leisure events in nature that hold value, but rather it is the daily interactions with natural surroundings – little walks through the forest, a brief ski trip after work, a daily swim in the fjord – the everyday experiences with nature are those considered most valuable.

From this discussion, we can conclude that sameness, down-to-earthness and the mundane everyday life hold central positions in contemporary Norwegian society. Nature is highly idealized and at the centre of dominating ideology in this specific setting. This makes it particularly interesting to look at the dynamic understandings of nature and climate, the role human beings play in them, and the role they play in the lives of human beings. Norway, as a country where people praise themselves for respecting and loving nature, which is wealthy, where people are generally highly educated, and the consensus is to believe climate change is real (Norgaard, 2011) makes a fitting setting to examine the understandings and experiences of climate change. Oslo, a place where most people have both the knowledge and the economic means to consider climate change in their actions and their lifestyle choices makes good ground for inquiry.

The city of Oslo

Departing from the more general regional look I would like to zoom in and provide some context on the specific site of this research. Oslo is the capital of Norway and its biggest city with almost 700 000 inhabitants. It lies in the south-east of the country right by the Oslo fjord (European commission, 2018). Oslo is one of the fastest growing cities in Europe, posing both great opportunities and great challenges for its population and decision-makers. It is placed quite compact between the nationally protected forest *Marka,* an area often used for sports and recreation by the local population, and the Oslo Fjord (ibid.). The population is young, highly-educated and diverse – one third of the population are first- or second-generation immigrants (ibid.).

When it came to choosing a field, Oslo came naturally to me. It being at the heart of Norwegian society, and my intended future home, gave me incentive to get to know this city. This city had played a central role in most of my life. It is the place where most of the political decisions that have influenced my life have been taken, the mediascape created in Oslo impacted my worldview in all the places where I have lived, its airport was the place I landed every time I went home to visit family or friends. I had many opinions and views about this place. However, I had never spent any time there. This changed in February of 2019, when I spent a month here conducting fieldwork.

The actual impacts of climate change on the Oslo-area so far can be debated. There is a general belief that climate change might not have a terrible large impact in Norway. Warmer temperatures and more rain could lead to new opportunities for planting more diverse crops which so far have not been successful in Norway (Støstad and Sæther, 2019). Norway is fortunate enough to have solid infrastructure and a tradition of dealing with changing and extreme weather conditions. Moreover, most of the country lies high above sea level (although not all of Oslo does). The trick with climate change, however, is that everything is connected in such a complex network of relations of causes and effects, that it is incredibly hard for humans to predict changes. A number of quite impactful changes have already been reported in Norway. For instance, some rivers and lakes have turned browner due to more earth and plant residue. This poses a threat to clean drinking water (ibid.). Change in local ecosystems result in foreign insect and animal species outcompeting local species. Change in landscapes such as swamps, forests and coastal lines are greatly impacting the functioning of the general ecosystems. The tree border has moved up about 100 meters in height in some places already. There has been an 18 % increase in precipitation, contributing together with faster melting rates to floods, breaking of dams, and landslides. Heatwaves and forest fires have been occurring increasingly often and with increased intensity. These heatwaves led to a shortage in fodder in the summer of 2018 and

livestock had to be put down, especially impacting dairy farms (ibid.). The ski season around Oslo has been shortened by 40 days. This last occurrence is particularly important to our case. Skiing is of central cultural significance for Norwegians in general, this is also argued by Norgaard (2011). She claims: "It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to overemphasize the symbolic and recreational significance of skiing for community members" (Norgaard, 2011, p. 37). As a people who are known to say that they are born with skis on their feet, it is more than just exercise, recreation and sport: It is pride and identity. Eriksen even defines it as one of the most important rituals in "the social use of Nature" (Eriksen, 1993; 1996). This ritual is now threatened by climate change. All of these changes are not predictions for the future, but happenings that have already occurred (Støstad and Sæther, 2019).

Still, the city of Oslo generally remains a locale without much direct physical impact of climate change until now. Yet, awareness is high, and city planners are taking measures to prepare for potential future change; for instance, by creating waterways to avoid flooding (European Commission, 2018). In terms of Mike Hulme's understanding of climate change, we see a high influence on decision-making and development, emphasizing it as an idea which is adapted and used (Hulme, 2009). As discussed, earlier research found general knowledge of, but yet a denial, when it came to climate issues in Norway (Norgaard, 2011). This tendency seems to have changed over the past 20 years. Recently, there have been court cases, public protests, and heated media debates related to the prevention of climate change. The membership numbers of environmentally oriented NGO's have boosted since an unusually warm summer last year in 2018 (Sandberg and Bredeveien, 2018). City planners are implementing precautionary measures. We will discuss climate awareness and activation further in chapter 4c. I merely point it out here as the high awareness of climate change contributed in selecting this field as an appropriate one for this research.

What makes Oslo even more interesting as a place for this research on climate change is that it was awarded the title of European green capital for 2019 (European Commission, 2018). This title is awarded to a city each year to highlight the work that has been done, as well as the future plans, in the domain of environment and climate. Cities apply for this award by documenting their progress and their future plans in a detailed report which is evaluated by a specific secretariat of the European Commission. In typical Norwegian fashion the project aims to include all layers of society, combining politics, industries and common people. This is done by having over 200 external partners, and a year calendar where these can contribute with their own events, participate in public events organized by the municipality, etc. They plan an upgrade in the school system and public information to spread awareness about climate and

environmental issues. The notion of including "common people" is especially central. They intend to boost the people's green shift (*folkets grønne skifte*).

Grønt skifte – the green shift, is a common word used in Norwegian politics and everyday discourse. According to the government's website it can be defined as a climate and environmentally friendly restructuring (Klima- og miljødepartementet, 2014), stating that:

> "The global climate- and environmental challenges demand a restructuring to a society where growth and development happen within nature's tolerance limits. There has to occur a transition to products and service which give significantly less negative consequences for climate and environment than today. Society has to go through a *green shift.* It will be demanding, but completely possible." (own translation, emphasis added)

It is emphasized that these challenges go combined with others, such as fighting poverty, and increase in the global population. They underline that Norway, as every other country, has to find their own specific way to a green economy, presenting climate change more as a global issue that requires local action rather than international cooperation. The idea that climate change might help us overcome ideas of the national and rather focus on the global and on humanity as a whole put forth by Hastrup (2013) is not prevalent here. The explanation of the green shift by the government concludes by stating: "Climate + growth = true" – so one must ask oneself how deep this restructuring is actually running when the explicit aim is to maintain the current system of continuous growth. The green shift was voted as the Word of the Year in 2015 by the Norwegian Language Commission (Olerud, 2019).

However fascinating the green capital project and the green shift concept may be, the green capital was not deemed particularly relevant by informants and was rarely mentioned. I address it here because it ought to be mentioned as part of the context and as one of the reasons I chose Oslo as a field. As it turned out not to play much of a role in the lives of my informants, it did not constitute such a significant part of the further analyses and findings. It is however interesting that such a large, EU commissioned project received so little attention. More on this will follow in chapter 4c.

Now that we are more familiar with the field and context we can start addressing the more specific findings of the research. This will be done in three chapters. The upcoming chapter will discuss what shapes the experience of climate change in a locale such as Oslo.

4a. Experiencing and *not* experiencing climate change

We have finally reached the first chapter of the discussion. I will present and discuss the findings, and simultaneously bring in the related theory as it becomes relevant to my argument. I believe presenting the analysis this way will be the most comprehensible for the reader. In this chapter we will discuss one particular side of climate change: The experience of it.

Climate cannot be experienced directly through our senses (Hulme, 2009, p. 3). Yet, we often talk about it as if we do. Change in environment or weather can often be attributed to climate change in everyday conversations (Norgaard, 2011). In this section I wish to relate experiences of weather and experiences in nature to the local understanding of climate change.

In her work, Kari Norgaard shows how people understood the unusual winter events as signs of climate change (Norgaard, 2011, p. 34). Later and shorter winters, and flooding, were both seen as the consequences of a changing climate. In my field research, almost 20 years later, unusual weather events had also been occurring. During the summer of 2018, a total of 40 days with temperatures reaching above 30 degrees Celsius were reported, in contrast to only one day in 2017 (Sandberg and Bredeveien, 2018). This is highly unusual for this region, and it was discussed frequently in local media, often in connection with climate change. Local NGO's, and political parties with a focus on environmental- and climate-protection experienced a boost in memberships during this period (ibid.). The NGO *Fremtiden i våre hender* ("The Future in our Hands") gained 3560 new members during this summer, 60 % more than in the same period the previous year. Another NGO, *Naturvernsforbundet* (The nature protection alliance, or: "Friends of the Earth Norway") gained 568 new members, a 10 % increase (ibid.). Of particular note is that these members joined on their own initiative. They were not directly recruited, nor were they targeted with specific campaigns. Many of these new members reported that climate change was one of the reasons they had joined.

In light of these events I had expected to find people pointing to the unusual weather experiences as evidence of ways climate change had impacted Oslo. However, I could not have been more mistaken. These weather phenomena were indeed raised in many conversations, but in opposition to Norgaard's findings, they were not put forth as proof of climate change. Social scientists have shown climate change to be a constructed idea, they have documented how

sensory encounters are taken and built into something more abstract (Hulme, 2009, p. 3-4). I expected to find in my case as well that sensory experiences are built up to a conception and understanding of climate change, as Hulme (2009) and Norgaard (2011) have found in other cases. What I found instead I can only call: The *non*-experience of climate change.

The *non*-experience of climate change

> "A little. Not so much.. you don't really notice it. Maybe a little. It does have a connection with the heat from last year though.. we were on a trip in the mountains last year, me and [xxx]. And normally there is water everywhere, but now much was dried out and it was hard to find water, only in the bigger lakes, the streams were dried up. Normally it is like: rain-sun-rain-sun. But last year there was only really sun.. and drought. I believe there were a lot of forest fires. Uncommonly many." (Informant 11)

This was the response I received when asking one of my interview partners if he ever experienced climate change in Oslo. The story is similar to the ones told by Norgaard's informants. However, when I asked him whether he saw a connection between this and climate change, he replied:

> "Not necessarily, but it is a little strange, that it is this way. It is not like there is a direct connection, but it is a little unusual that it is this warm." (Informant 11)

This apprehension of linking weather phenomena and climate change is a tendency I encountered time and time again in Oslo. We have discussed how spending a lot of time in nature is common, and even socially desirable. It is striking that the idea of climate change is completely separated from these activities and experiences. When asked about their perceptions of the impact of climate change, all my conversational partners explicitly refused to build on their own experiences. They all admitted that the summer had indeed been extremely warm, with temperatures over 30 degrees for extended periods of time and stated how this was unusual. The winters were also described as milder and wetter, but at the same time more extreme towards the spring. An overall change in the cycle of seasons was mentioned a lot. Many claimed that they had never experienced such an extremely warm and dry summer in Norway. However, every single one of my informants was careful to point out that the connection between extremes of weather and climate change is not so straight forward.

> «And that has in a way annoyed me, that people go like "but it is snowing outside". Cause it is like "Yes that's weather sweetie". […] I remember someone at work saying that "hello, it is snowing in June, climate change yeah right, that's just bullshit". There is a difference between weather and climate, and that's perhaps what people struggle to differentiate between. It is about a global level of warming. I have also heard people say that the summer we had this year was *proof* of climate change, not necessarily! Because it goes both ways. Maybe it's just about that people have bad arguments for their points of view. Or that they are trying to find simpler arguments, I don't know." (Informant 2)

None of the people I worked with denied that climate change is a real and currently happening phenomenon, but in contradiction to the people in *Bygdaby,* the young people in Oslo tended to address its inherent complexity. Hulme has stated that the distinction between weather and climate remains highly elusive in popular discourse (2009, p. 9). This statement does however not hold true in our case. People were quick to problematise the weather-climate relation.

> "I mean.. it's difficult to say.. for what are consequences of climate change and what are simply variations in weather? I would say.. that the weather has been less stable in the last years than I remember from when I was young. Before in Norway we had 20 degrees in the summer, and then cold and rainy in the fall, and cold and snowy in the winter, and then a little warmer in spring and some sun. And it was clearly separated by season, I remember. And now we have, what I think of as equator storms, very short and sudden rain showers which are very intense and stop instantly. And that is actually quite unusual for Norway. Norway hasn't had such tropical rainstorms ever before. But to what extent this is due to climate change or not?…tja… I'm far from an expert on the science behind it, so I can only say what I have observed. The explanation is beyond me." (Informant 3)

By questioning the link between the weather phenomena and climate change, people are indirectly pointing out is that they are not actually building abstract understandings from their own sensory experiences. Instead they downplay their own experiences. This stands in opposition to some widely acknowledged theories of environmental understandings in anthropology. Tim Ingold has been one of the central actors in the development of such theories, arguing that people relate to their environment by dwelling in it and through the constant interactions and relations between human and non-human actors in mutual relationships (Ingold, 2000). In the following quote we see a great example of how people devalue sensory experience and emphasize the complexity behind climate change:

> "It was a ridiculously warm summer. It was completely crazy. But I'm a little like.. I feel that it is wrong to talk about whether *I* or *we,* or anybody, is *experiencing* climate change. Because I think it is a thing that is happening slowly over time. It is not the fluctuations from one year to the next that is climate change, if you know what I mean. It is the steady increase over a longer period of time. So to say that "okay, it was a crazy warm summer: This is climate change" is very strange to me. It could be that the summer wouldn't have been as warm if.. what should say.. it wasn't for climate change happening." (informant 12)

Again, there is no denial about the reality of climate change, but rather an acknowledgement of the complexity of the situation. The reference to fluctuations over periods of time refers to a rather scientific understanding of the issue. As noted before, the younger generations in Oslo are generally quite highly educated and comfortable with scientific language. We can observe how scientific notions are integrated in everyday speech:

> "But I don't know if it is just me that is experiencing it like this, and then thinking that "oh it must be climate change" is because that makes logical sense, or if.. well if it is purely *confirmation bias*." (Informant 3, emphasis added)

The relationship between occurring phenomenon and one's own experience is highly problematized. One does not equal the other, not even in the informants' own understanding. There is a dissimilarity between sensory experience and deeming a phenomenon real or important. Climate change is deemed to be real, current and an urgent matter. But in contrast to the arguments presented by Hulme, Norgaard and even Ingold, we do not see that sensory experience builds up to an abstract understanding of climate change or of environment. What we are really looking at in my cases is how narratives of science and the idea of experts play into forming the idea of climate change.

This whole discussion can be summarized in one short interaction. This was in fact the very first discussion I had during my fieldwork for this research, long before I had seen any tendencies or patterns. It remains, however, the most poignant example:

> Researcher: "I was wondering if, since you have been living in the city, you have experienced any effects of climate change?"
> Informant 1: "uhmm.. No." […] "No.. the last summer was indeed warm. No I really can't say I did. But I do believe in them, that is not the thing. I believe the glaciers are melting and that the oceans are warming and rising. But if I have experienced it.. no."

There is a difference between "believing in" and "experiencing" climate change. In reality the question about how we experience or do not experience climate change is about how we relate to "evidence". This idea has already been put forth by Hulme (2009), but he has not elaborated on the notion. Based on my findings, I will present a potential furthering of this aspect of Hulme's theories on this subject.

Anecdotal evidence

In summary, we find that the extreme weather variations were rather described as expected irregularities, though believed to be intensified by climate change. None of the informants were willing to say that they have experienced climate change, though they all strongly believed in the changes. One of my informants explicitly refused to talk about how he experienced the changes himself "on his body", as Norwegians say, since he deemed this irrelevant. This kind of "anecdotal-evidence" is what climate-deniers use to argue their case, and to use it ourselves would undermine the critique of such logic, he reflected.

> "A lot of the people who don't believe in man-made climate change say like: "oh look it's snowing". And then it is like climate-change-my-ass in a way. And at one point I became very aware about not using this rhetoric and this logic.. the other way around. Because it is very dangerous. And completely stupid, because you will lose the upper hand that you really have in a discussion." (Informant 12)

Later on he stated:

> "I refuse to associate with such anecdotal evidence. 'Cause that is what it is. If I'm going to talk about how *I* feel the climate change on my body, then that is not really of interest to me. It is not that which is important" (informant 12)

In the ethnographic examples we have looked at in this chapter, people showed a great awareness of the complexities of climate change. They downplay their own sensory experiences. We see that people are familiar with scientific narratives. Many are aware of biases, fallacies and rules of logic. However, science plays a bigger role than just a generic background from which people adopt phrases. When the informant cited above stated that neither his experience, nor in fact, anybody's experiences were really important, I had to ask what he *did* think was important. Without skipping a beat, he answered that what is important is what scientists say. We will now address the role of science in experiencing climate change.

Science

> «The summer last year was completely crazy. One probably doesn't know for sure what is due to what until a while later, but I believe the experts are saying that they think it has something to do with climate change. […] But something *is* happening. Wasn't it.. on NRK (the national television channel) the other day that meteorologists were stating that something is now very different than how the weather was before?" (Informant 9)

"they think"; who is this "they" that people so often refer to when speaking about the facts of climate change? The people I met in Oslo were quick to refer to "experts" such as meteorologists or other scientists, to underpin their own thoughts and opinions. Most of the time, this is done with a generic "they". Sometimes people mention scientists directly.

> "I have never actually seen climate change, as I said. But yes, I believe the scientists"
>
> (Informant 1)

A very particular part of the scientific narrative is numbers. Beyond being a construction that is highly influenced by natural science, Hulme argues that the dominant popular understanding of climate is a numerical and statistical one (Hulme, 2009, p. 9).

> «But my point is, right now it looks like there have been proper snowy winters in Oslo, but I don't know if the statistics show that there have been proper snowy winters. That it has been stably cold.. I have no clue, I have no statistics to refer to. […] Since I don't have a stable enough thermometer to say that it is warmer or colder than last year. […] I have no idea. So I can't truly say if I have experienced climate change, it is hard to tell" (Informant 2)

Statements such as the one above, and those structured as "I don't know the numbers, but…" followed by an opinion they wished to express were encountered time and time again during my field research. Again, we see a numerical, science-influenced picture emerging.

Science plays an important role in how people understand climate change (Hulme, 2008). The construction of climate change that is currently most dominant has its origins in the scientific disciplines of the natural sciences and in the institutional processes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (ibid., p. 5). It is tied to expectations of improving "predictions" and to a problem-solving policy, which claims universal authority and global reach (ibid.). Even in geographically peripheral settings, such as some physically or socially remote settings, this dominant narrative is evident. Climate change did not come into worldwide consciousness

through local experience, but rather through global public discourse (Hulme, 2009; Lorenzoni and Pidgeon, 2006). Even when the scientific terms could not be further removed from people's own lives people will often talk about ozone layers and global warming (Marino and Schweitzer, 2009), which emphasizes the global spread of this narrative.

Hulme has argued that one of the reasons we disagree about climate change is because science is no doing the job we expect or want it to do (Hulme, 2009, p. 74). He notes three limits to science we ought to recognize: 1. Scientific knowledge of climate change will always be incomplete and uncertain. Good science always speaks with a conditional voice. 2. Knowledge is coproduced in social-processes as a public commodity, complete separation of science and politics is not possible. 3. Science cannot tell us everything, some things simply fall outside of its scope. We cannot hide behind it when difficult ethical choices are called for (Hulme, 2009, 106-107). So far, especially in regards to climate change most people fail to recognise these points. Science is still looked to for concrete answers.

One further issue in regards to science has to be acknowledged: The underlying assumption that science drives consensus and that "better" science will settle our differences. This persistent idea ignores the roots of our differences in political, national, organisational, religious and intellectual culture (Rayner in Hulme, 2009, p. xxii). Norgaard (2011) argues similarly that denial is not an issue of knowledge deficiency. More scientific studies and more information has not helped bridge differences within the climate debate so far. If anything, we find an overwhelming amount of information already available to the public. Thus, narratives of science do not necessarily promote homogeneity in people's attitudes towards climate change issues.

Therefore, even though the community in Oslo adheres to this dominant narrative of science in their understanding of climate change, this does not mean that everybody views the issue similarly. In fact, much of the disagreement arguably does not stem from disputes about the evidence upon which our scientific knowledge of climate change is founded. Rather, the disagreements have their basis in different understandings of the relationship between scientific evidence and other factors, such as truth, uncertainty, risk, and legitimate policy making. (Hulme, 2009, p. 106). We will discuss the variations in conceptualizing climate change in the next chapter. For now, it will suffice to conclude that there is a close relation between science and climate change, specifically in the way people construct these phenomena in my case-study. This connection might seem like an obvious one for some readers, but we have to remember that cultural understandings of climate vary greatly, and that this sort of connection is not, in fact, a given.

One such cultural understanding that is important to our case is the perceived intertwinement of science and technology. Oftentimes, these two concepts are understood as two sides of the same coin. Technology can in this way be seen as applied science (Pfaffenberger, 1988, p. 239). The relationship between technology and science is actually far more complex, dynamic, and above all, historically recent, than assumed in everyday use and understanding of these terms (ibid., p. 239). Pfaffenberger explains that: "Many important inventions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as the steam engine, were in no real sense the result of the application of science. Indeed, much twentieth- century science stems from an attempt to discover why certain technologies work so well." (Pfaffenberger, 1988, p. 239). Thus, the relation is not a simplistic, linear one. However, in modern Norwegian discourse the two notions are closely interlinked. The importance of science in the process of making sense of climate change therefore foreshadows that technology might be ascribed a similar significance in this context. We will explore this topic in greater detail in chapter 4c.

Bias or social norm

During the analysis I discovered the tendency to point to experts and scientists. This tendency might be partly due to a bias accompanying the method of interviewing, such as a deference bias. It might be assumed by interviewees that I, as a researcher, would want to know facts about climate change, and therefore people might attempt to base their answers on science. On the other hand, one can speculate about the influence of certain social norms. We know cultural values and norms play a central role in framing our worlds (Roncoli, et al., 2009). The power of egalitarian norms and the expectation that one should not think too highly of oneself might result in people calling on science to back up their claims. For many, the idea that scientists know better than we do seems to be persuasive. During a conversation, one of my informants stated that one of the most annoying things about the whole discussion on climate change is that so many people get involve when they really have no ground or foundation to say something about it (Informant 7). If you are going to speak up, you ought to know what you are talking about.

In some research with indigenous groups it has been found that certain cultural norms prevent people from speaking outside of their own direct experience, such as in Inuoiaq society (Marino and Schweitzer, 2009). This notion might seem applicable in my study also. Notice how in the citation assessed earlier, informant 3 states that he can only talk about his own experience and that he is far from an expert on the topic. This is akin to a disclaimer about his own knowledge and experience. I do not believe that the social norm of solely speaking about direct experience holds up for Norwegian society in general, or for all topics for that matter. But when it comes to climate change specifically, young people tend to downplay their own experience and reflect on

the complexity of the issue. The dominant narrative of climate change framed in scientific terms has a strong impact on the way people speak about it, and ultimately how people experience it.

Such narratives are not made up on the spot. They spread, they come from somewhere. In the next section we will address where people get their information about climate change and how this information becomes part in shaping experience and understanding.

Echo chambers

Media constitutes a vital part of our understanding of the world. Through different mediums and channels, we are told stories of what the world is like, or what our world *could* be like, presented in both fact and fiction. Our understanding of climate change is no exception. In the meetings with my informants many recommended me books, movies, and tv-shows. These tell stories of post-apocalyptic scenarios, of distant possible futures, or alternative universes. This input from different media makes relevant reflection points for people to think about climate change, about the *if's* and the *when's.* Of course, current and more fact-based input through news and documentaries, or even TED-talks, also takes part in shaping this picture. A significant part of today's social landscape is something not accounted for in Norgaard's book, simply because it did not yet exist. This part is social media. Studies have shown the importance of social media as a source of news, especially for young people (Bergström and Belfrage, 2018). The research presented here also confirms that the young adults I worked with received most of their daily news from social media. The science of climate change, or at least the stories of it, are accessed first and foremost through social media.

> "And a lot through social media, both on Instagram and on Facebook a lot of ads pop up. They do know everything about you so." (Informant 9)

Social media platforms are notorious for gathering information about their users. This element is, however, not passive. The information gathered in turn shapes the virtual landscape it produces, giving social media a self-reinforcing power. The inner workings of social media are such that once you search for, read about, or show any form of interest in a topic online, this topic will be suggested to you further in the future, along with similar topics that might be of interest. Though we often treat these media platforms as a neutral stream of information, the picture they present is actually incredibly biased, since they will only present the side of the argument that you have previously shown an interest in (Granados, 2016). Both the topics and type of arguments are self-reinforcing. Climate change is typically one of the topics that will come up seemingly "all the time" if you follow certain pages or people on, for example, Facebook.

Conversely, if you don't show interest in such posts, they will not be shown further to you either. So in the end, what you see, depends on what you follow:

> "And all of these events on Facebook because I follow certain pages, and attended some sustainability-stuff, and suddenly I get 500 invitations to other things." (Informant 9)

I noticed this reinforcing power myself during the field research. Once I starting looking up climate-related events and arenas in Oslo for my fieldwork a few more would be suggested to me. Mostly on Facebook, as this was my preferred platform. Then, some organisations enthusiastically encouraged me to sign up for their newsletters, in which they told me about more events. It happened slowly at first, but soon built into a fast-growing snowball of relations and connections, until my whole digital world consisted of climate activism. This was the experience of many of the young adults in Oslo. When I asked about where one hears about climate change, an informant told me: "it depends on what sort of people you socialize with. What are your contacts? What do you focus on yourself? For instance, on social media, what do you follow?" (Informant 2). He proceeded to take out is phone and open Facebook. How long would he have to look before something climate-related would show up, was the question he asked himself. Two posts was the answer. We continued scrolling while talking and he found out that about every fourth post showed something connected to climate or environment. It is no wonder the issue seems omnipresent.

We can understand social media as *ekkokammer* or echo chambers. Whatever one shouts into it is echoed back in a similar manner. Social media is a quite extreme form of echo chamber, but this effect also happens outside of digital social life. One informant reacted to a question I asked her: "I cannot imagine not being surrounded by friends who talk about, and care about, climate change. I never thought about how we all seem to agree on this, I took it for granted." (Informant 4). Social media is an extension of our social lives, the concept of echo chambers can partly apply to direct physical interactions and friendships as well. We tend to surround ourselves with people with similar ideas and attitudes. Our own social life can therefore also become an echo chamber of sorts, where opinions are sent out and reflected back in the same manner.

> "There is a very aware environment at my studies and at my faculty. A lot of engaged people in my class. But it is also.. well it is everywhere in a way. In the news and… everywhere." (Informant 9)

These echo-like qualities, especially in social media as being the main form of information input on the climate issue, leads to a world where it is everywhere. The content of this constant stream of input mostly depends on your initial interest (not necessarily whether or not you believe in climate change, but also which arguments you are presented with). One of Norgaard's most important findings was that people were living in a "double reality" (Norgaard, 2011, p. 5). While people were deeply concerned about climate change, they did not take any action to address the issue. In addition to a double reality, I would propose that people often seem to live in a parallel reality. Whether or not climate change is seen a major and urgent issue is shaped by the social and virtual landscapes one immerses oneself in. These self-reinforcing echo chambers then amplify the view or tendency that is already present. We find people living side by side, geographically speaking, all the while experiencing separate, but parallel, realities of climate change: What it's causes and solutions are, and how it will impact their lives and societies. Whether you are an activist or a bit more sceptical, the issue itself can no longer be avoided, as it is everywhere. As Hulme (2009) claims, it has become a condition of human existence. I was told:

> «But that's the thing, a lot of people get their news from social media, and people only follow things that are relevant to them, so you'll get self-reinforcing… And some probably don't read news at all, they only follow Facebook groups and twitter that are of interest to them. And if they are then climate deniers to begin with […], it will be self-reinforcing depending on which side you are on, whether you believe in climate change or not. But I think everybody gets the information constantly, on one or the other side." (Informant 2)

The *idea* of climate change has become omnipresent "across the full parade of human endeavours, institutions, practices and stories" (Hulme, 2009, p. 322). In the everyday life of the young adults in Oslo, social media is significantly contributing to this omnipresence. We will see why the penetrating presence of the idea of climate change plays an important role in people's way of dealing with and responding to it in the next chapters.

Summarizing

How we experience our environment is influenced by many factors, such as: Cultural narratives, sensory experiences, and the social groups in which we find ourselves. In this chapter, we have discussed how the young people in Oslo ascribe to a non-experience of climate change, relying on narratives of science and statistics above their own sensory experience. A surprising find considering the nature-loving self-identification of Norwegians and the local importance of dwelling in nature. We addressed the relations towards evidence and science, and how these together with local cultural tendencies shape the experience of climate change. We find critical reflections on the distinctions between weather and climate, anecdotes and reliable sources, that demonstrate the complex understandings people hold of science and evidence. Informants showed a tendency to underemphasize their own sensory experience and highlight others' expertise instead. The reliance on experts is typical for the climate narrative, but also for the Norwegian context where egalitarian norms prescribe a shift of focus from one's own reasoning towards more knowledgeable individuals.

These findings diverge from those found in most of the previous and similar studies that have been done, and drastically differ from the ways in which the people in *Bygdaby* experienced climate change which was much more grounded in personal experience.

Climate change has become an omnipresent issue. Through both social and digital echo chambers people are constantly reminded of it and their existing attitudes are reinforced by the echoes in these spaces. Regardless of the specific view one has, the *idea* of climate change is everywhere. Social media as a main source of information plays a central role in this new development.

The importance of scientific narratives and the recognition of its complexities underline the abstractness of the idea of climate change. Climate remains a part of our natural environment, but holds a peculiar position. In the next chapter we will see how people think about climate change and how they make sense of this peculiar position.

4b. Emotions, thinking and talking about it

What makes climate change a difficult issue to deal with, both for anthropologists and people in general, is its complexity of it. A multitude of influences, factors and consequences are interlinked in this one overarching issue. The research on climate change has an incredible broad range and information on it hails in from many sources. This makes it hard to keep oversight over the issue, if we ever had any to begin with. The findings of the current research show us that the abstractness of the climate change concept becomes apparent in how people think and talk about the issue, and in how they attempt to clarify it to themselves. I found a clear tendency for people to focus on a specific side of the issue. We will now address how certain aspects become meaningful when thinking and speaking of climate change.

Thinking about it: *Hjertesaker*

As a starting point for most my conversations during my field research I asked what the first thing was that people thought about when they heard the term "climate change". These associations varied greatly, covering everything from melting polar caps to plastic wrappings. The first things that came to mind were: Ice melting, higher average temperatures, rising sea level, milder weather, lack of snow, crises, nature, storms, global warming, the North Pole, trash, recycling, climate refugees, meat production, the future, resource scarcity, responsibility, generational differences, controversial political debates, the colour green, pollution, challenge, transportation, plastic, glaciers, CO2, deforestation, expansion of humanity, and impact on the Earth. Given time, even more connections were made. So many, some interview partners pointed out, that it at times felt as if we "went too deep" and had to "snap out of it" in order to think straight again. Anything can be tied into this "mother of all problems" (Hulme, 2009, p. 333) if one looks hard enough.

For all the different facets that can be related to climate change, each individual showed a tendency to return to a singular topic of particular importance to that person. To use a Norwegian expression: Their *hjertesak* (literal translation: Heart case, plural: *Hjertesaker*). It signifies the one thing you focus on and care deeply about, the case that so-to-speak lies in your heart. Almost all of the people I worked with had one, whether it was recycling, nuclear power, vegetarianism, or transportation. The conversation would always return to their specific

hjertesak and relate different arguments to this. The *hjertesak* in question was often raised as both a major part of the problem and on the other hand, an important part of the solution. These particular topics were: Public transportation; political debates; recycling; minimalization of products (in acquiring them and in reducing use); going waste free/reducing waste; vegetarianism; changing the economic system; and avoiding air travel. This does not mean people were not aware of, or concerned about, any other aspects at all; Rather, it means that their particular *hjertesak* acted as a base for the conversation, one which was oftentimes returned to during the course of the interview. An individual's *hjertesak* was often considered *the* most important aspect in solving climate change.

The quick list above already shows the vast array of aspects of climate change which one can concern oneself with. Often the *hjertesak* had ties to other important parts of life. The informant who was mostly concerned with transportation, both public and otherwise, worked as a metro driver. The one mostly concerned with political debates was a political science graduate. These were some of the more obvious links, others were more obscure. Yet, we can discover patterns in what people relate to and what is meaningful for them.

Norgaard reminds us that what we pay attention to, and what we ignore, we learn though "cognitive traditions" (2011, p. 5). Society teaches us what we ought to deem important and what not to. As we can see, what we pay attention to is additionally highly personal. One can blame this tendency on a simple bias, like an occupational focus or the like. However, while the specific direction of a *hjertesak* may correlate with other important aspects in one's life (because how could it not) it also tells us something about the idea of climate change in general. It tells us something about the complexity of the issue. No one person can hold equal knowledge about all the aspects that link into this problem. As a global phenomenon, climate change simply has too many complications for any one single person to fully grasp. Moreover, the focus on a *hjertesak* tells us something about the way people deal with this complexity and abstractness. An issue with this level of abstractness presents itself as quite vague to people which can make it difficult to think about. The number one argument raised with regards to the difference between climate and environment was that environmental issues are more tangible and understandable, and that makes it easier to take action. One can easily picture plastic waste or deforestation; a changing climate, however, is harder for us to imagine. By addressing climate change through a *hjertesak,* our thoughts and ideas become more rooted, and the conversation is given a more stable ground.

Previous literature has laid out in detail the plasticity of the idea of climate change (Hulme, 2009). By looking at the examples discussed above we see exactly how climate change can mean many things to many people, even within the same community. Relating the issue to one specific problem is one a way to cope with the plasticity and the abstractness of climate change.

The anthropological research methods used in this project are not necessarily suited for making direct claims of *how* people think about climate change, we can only say something about how people *talk* about it, and about how people talk about thinking about it. Let us do so now.

Climate and environment: Blurry thoughts

Conceptually, it is important to know what people understand as climate change. Where people believe it begins or ends was part of my inquires. This led to an examination of several concepts, climate and environment key amongst them.

Climate and environment are two closely intertwined concepts. Where does one end and the other begin? Of course, scientists and academics have their own definitions regarding this, but what is of interest here is how the young people in Oslo perceive and link these concepts. As part of my research I was curious to understand how the different terms are used in the climate narrative and when they are distinguished between. To sum up the discussion about to follow: I found absolutely no congruity in the answers I received, but that is actually quite an answer in itself.

In order to create a congruent baseline all my interview questions referred exclusively to "climate change". Interviewees were openly informed that this was my topic of interest. Nonetheless, in almost all interviews "climate" and "environment" were used interchangeably by informants. A few even used the term "environment" consistently, despite my pointedness to the term "climate". Towards the end of an interview, when I asked explicitly how my participants understood the two terms, I received a range of answers. Some informants explained environment as a part of the climate, or that the climate influences the environment. Some argued that if something influences the direct environment, on a certain level it starts influencing the climate, therefore climate is the overarching category. It was equally claimed that the climate is the foundation for the environment and that the environment is the foundation for the climate. Some informants emphasized that the environment is directly around us and climate is abstract, others argued in contrast that it is climate that is always surrounding us and environment is "out there in nature". Often, I was told that there is a difference, but people had difficulty explaining to me exactly what that difference was. Both terms hold quite similar meanings to their English counterparts and I do not believe this confusion is due to a language specific reason.

My take on these conversations is that both concepts, environment and climate, are abstract to such a degree that they can be interlinked in a multitude of ways. It is quite telling that the lines between environment and climate are blurred to such an extent that people cannot seem to separate the two and rather use them interchangeably. What undoubtedly connects the two

terms is a narrative of urgency. Both terms come accompanied by either "change", "issue", "crises" or "problems". Especially the words "climate" and "change" have become an inseparable entity. One of the informants reflected:

> "There is so much talk about climate, when you say climate you very quickly think climate change anyways". (Informant 12)

At the public talks I attended, the speakers often asked the question: "What can we do about climate?" or "How to solve climate?" - no "change" was required. The term climate seems to have become synonymous with an idea of a problem. No matter which version of the term is used, the underlying implication is that the topic is problematic and urgent. In similarity to Hulme's findings (2009) *climate* is framed as something fragile and precious, something that needs to be saved, and *change* as something scary that ought to be avoided. Climate change has the aura of an issue which ought to have been solved yesterday, and the time-pressure can be sensed in how people speak about it. Through this attitude towards climate is evident a somewhat paternalistic understanding of climate change in terms of Pálsson's paradigms (1996). Interestingly though, there was never a direct indication of having to protect "nature" as such. We have discussed at length the importance of being in nature for most Norwegians, and many of the informants I worked with told me about the role *friluftsliv* plays in their own lives. Yet, when speaking about climate change, there is no direct connection made to it (for example) being a threat to the forests in which they love to hike or the natural water that they drink. Such connections are not easily made. Anthropologists have recognized that directly surrounding environments and the idea of climate or climate change are not always perceived as connected (Marino and Schweitzer, 2009). Also in our findings the environment was seen as more understandable, more concrete. There is a prevailing idea that what is good for the environment is also good for you, thus motivating people more easily to action, according to some. Climate change is in contrast seen as accompanied by negative connotations. Hulme's suggestion (2009, p. 363) that we could acknowledge the positive effects of climate change in our societies by looking at how it stimulates creativity, innovation and some serious soul-searching with regards to our place in the universe, is not at all found in my interviews, nor in the public talks I attended.

We see that the complexity of these terms and issues is impacting how people think and speak about them. There is no certainty about what is what, and thoughts, as well as narratives, remain blurred. Norgaard suggests that part of the reason for this unclarity is that climate change is rarely spoken about directly, thus the conversations about it a feel little chaotic simply because we have not practiced talking about it, we are not used to it. It is knowledge in "raw form", not yet processed through political discussions (Norgaard, 2011, p. 57). Many a time during

conversations, people would pause and ask themselves: "is that actually climate change?" realizing that certain aspects of their story did not really relate to this phenomenon. This was only realized once we started talking about it.

Talking about it

Norgaard concluded that people in *Bygdaby* did not talk about climate change at all around the beginning of this century: "The issue was raised with a shaking of heads, a sense of trouble and discomfort, with no notion of what could be done" (Norgaard, 2011, p. 54). People did mention it, but never really spoke about it in depth. It was an awkward and negative topic, and nobody wanted to be the mood-breaker. There was no time or place to talk about an issue of this gravity. Whenever it was raised it seemed to kill the conversation. The discomfort was overbearing, and as she quotes: "people literally don't like to think or talk about the subject" (Immerwahr, 1999 in Norgaard, 2011, p. 55).

Climate change remains a difficult topic to talk about. As noted above, there are not a lot of positive associations linked to the idea. Yet, the findings of my research show us that it is not solely awkwardness and negativity which lead to people not talking about the issue; the lack of conversation about climate change could also be due to the assumption of agreement.

> "We talk little about it amongst my friends. And that's probably because we have an expectation that we mostly agree." (Informant 12)

In a social landscape filled with echo chambers we have a hard time imagining how other people might think in completely different lines than we do. We know that our in-groups are not homogeneous, still we imagine them to be. When people *did* talk about it with others, the case was most often that these others were on the same page. When they were not, conversations were quickly abandoned. To understand when and how people talk about climate change we must first address an inherent quality of the climate change narrative, namely that it is deeply imbued with elements of morality.

Right and wrong

"I'm trying to be better at actually choosing the right thing." (informant 9)

When Hulme (2009) discusses beliefs and morality, he refers purely to religion and spirituality. As readers we are left asking ourselves: What about the beliefs of atheists? Norway is a highly secular country (Eriksen, 2015). Yet, as anthropologists, we know that all people hold beliefs. Beliefs about what is right and wrong, what our place in the world is. Therefore, beliefs are equally important to our case. Climate change is not just an environmental or economic issue, it is a moral and ethical one. (Hulme, 2009, p. 143). We have to move beyond Hulme in examining how the moral character of the climate change narrative plays into the understanding and experience of it.

Many scholars have claimed in their works on climate change that people only care when they perceive themselves to be personally disadvantaged by it (e.g. Hughes, 2013; Hulme, 2009; Randall, 2009).

> The losses described are catastrophic but, for the audiences in the developed, industrialized nations, they are remote, either far in the future, or geographically distant. They will happen to other people, in other places, or in other times (Randall, 2009, p. 119).

The results from my research does not correspond to such claims. There is something fundamentally unsound about the notion that people only seem to care when they are scared. If the many years of climate activism have taught us anything, it would be that scaring-techniques are not an effective catalyst for action. Moreover, as discussed in a foregoing chapter, Norway is by many perceived to be a safe place out of reach of (at least the worst) effects of climate change. And even in worst case scenarios, the country might be affluent enough to be able to cope with many changes. Yet, people express concern and are changing their lifestyles due to climate concerns, as we will discuss in greater detail in the upcoming chapter. The question I wish to address here is why people are so preoccupied by an issue that they, on the one hand claim they have not yet experienced, and on the other, might not experience at all. The key might lie in the deep-rooted moral character of the climate change issue.

A number of other scholars have discussed how morality plays into the idea of climate change (Hughes, 2013; Hulme, 2009, Rudiak-Gould, 2015) some even in the specific case of Norway

(Norgaard, 2011). Concurrently, it was noted by scholars that there is a strong tendency by Norwegians to want to be seen (both by themselves and by other) as "decent persons" (Gullestad, 1992, p. 186). Gullestad goes on to explain that a way of life is usually connected to identity and feeling of self-respect. When we combine the idea that a way of life, or let us call it a lifestyle, is closely connected to identity and self-respect with the notion that attitudes towards climate change reflect a certain moral character, we start to see why our personal relation to climate change has such a strong appeal.

The discourse about climate change, on all levels, but especially on the individual level that we focus on, is permeated with expressions such as: "we ought to". The "we ought to"-attitude, in combination with the "we are so lucky"-attitude, stands strong in Norwegian society. Norgaard found in her analysis that people felt especially responsible for leading the way towards a more climate friendly future since the people in Norway deem themselves "so lucky" to be living under such privileged circumstances (Norgaard, 2011). This typical Norwegian stance toward one's own privilege resonated also in the current research. It is reasonable to suspect this has a connection to the norms of *Janteloven,* which we discussed before. The idea that one should not think one is better than others is less commonplace nowadays, but continues to exist. One can see these norms expressed in discourses. In many a conversation, people are quick to state something along the lines of "we who are so lucky" in combination with a feeling of even greater responsibility. According to Norgaard it is the combination of high levels of access to information, acceptance of the information, the valuation of social welfare and the environment, and current wealth and economic interest that comes together to put Norwegians in a contradicting position with regards to many global issues (Norgaard, 2011, p. 86), such as global poverty and climate change.

The "we are so lucky"-attitude does not only appear in relation to international or global issues, but also to local ones. City dwellers are quick to underline their own privilege in their ability to live climate friendly in comparison to more rural based populations. Sympathy is expressed for their struggle, as rural populations are assumed to have less access to variety in goods and less developed public transportation systems (which is true in some cases). This sentiment leads to a dynamic in which rural dwellers are held less accountable for their contributions to climate emissions, since they "have no choice" (the opposite of "we are so lucky"). Though not entirely unfounded, such sentiments partly undermine rural people's agency. The other side of the coin is that city-dwellers are held more accountable for emissions due to their perceived privilege.

The "we are so lucky"-attitude and its accompanying "we ought to"-attitude can thus be found in many situations. A recent newspaper article pinpointed this local value perfectly in stating that:

"Because in Norway, cities have a charming bad conscience for being at the centre" (Svensson, 2019). To uphold egalitarian norms one better show solidarity with more peripheral regions.

To return to the global perspective: In the time of *Bygdaby* this mindset was undermined by the "we are but a small country"-narrative, in which China and the US were even more guilty than "little Norway". It was therefore argued that Norwegian citizens ought to be cut some slack (ibid., p. 169). In the current research, however, this latter attitude is found to a much lesser degree, and there is a much greater focus on one's own contributions or lack thereof.

> «Not as much as I would wish, no. Old habits die hard. No, I would like to more." (Informant 1)

Moral obligation is imposed not only upon oneself, but also upon others. In the discourse we find an obvious choice; right or wrong:

> "Everybody wants to be green right? Nobody wants to be red." (informant 5)

There is a strong bearing of social pressure and of trendiness to living according to a more climate friendly lifestyle. It is the right thing to do, morally, and socially. As we have seen, the people in one's own group of acquaintances and friends are assumed to "be on the same side", so much so that this is contributing to the dynamic that climate changed is rarely discussed. It is treated as a universally known fact, as well are the ideas of what we *ought* to do about it. Deviating from this general trend is, within the specific social spheres studied in this particular study, simply not done. We find talk of climate deniers or scepticists only in more indirect stories. There is a lot of "my-grandma-has-a-cousin-who-is-married-to-a-guy" or "the-uncle-of-a-university-friend". The contacts are always some nodes removed, never in the direct social circle. These stories almost exclusively refer to people of older generations and every now and then to contacts in more rural areas.

> "It is interesting, there have been these TV programmes that show that there are people who deny it..." (Informant 11)

The parallel realities of climate deniers and the people with climate awareness are quite far removed from one another. The people who fare in different circles than oneself become these entertaining misfits one sees on TV. We find a fragmentation between these groups, as if they occupy two different fronts and assume the other "side" to be the enemy. For many of my informants it was almost unthinkable that people in their own society hold such fundamentally different views.

> "Perhaps people are climate deniers because they know they have done so much *wrong* and they would have to admit they are *awful people* if they acknowledged climate change to be real." (Informant 4, emphasis added)

This statement reflects both the negative sentiments towards climate deniers and the moral tone of the discourse. Denying climate change is heavily frowned upon within these circles. Despite my best efforts, nobody could help me find a climate denier to talk to. Perhaps this is not so much because they are non-existent, but because of the enormous social pressure surrounding the climate change narrative. Within one's own circles, one's echo chambers, it might be hard to voice contradicting opinions. Especially when it comes to a topic as morally loaded as this one.

> «It is like a package deal. You are not likely a climate denier and having a nice life besides that. There is something wrong with you when you are one, like generally. […] There is a distance to them, they become like aliens, just way out there" (Informant 4)

It is considered taboo to be a climate-sceptic in these circles. We find strong social pressure to be on "the right side" of this issue. I believe one important element of this dynamic where people do not talk about climate change is the fact that we assume our closest relations, such as friends, to hold the similar opinions to our own. Not only because we might believe our in-groups to be more or less homogenous, but also because with an issue as morally charged as climate change where we often think in terms of "right" and "wrong", of "good" and "bad", we want to believe our friends are mostly "good people" – which entails a certain stance towards climate issues.

Bygdabyinger felt bad when speaking of climate change not only because it is a daunting topic, but also because they were violating the social norms of social interaction in the community, their negativity was not accepted (Norgaard, 2011, p. 92). There might be an opposite process at work now. People might not raise climate change in everyday conversation, as they assume other people are in agreement on what is "right". And when unsure, perhaps it is better to avoid the confrontation all together. Within these circles, it is not acceptable to *not* be concerned. One's stance towards climate and environment reflects upon one's character and moral decency. In addition to all of this, the expectation of an uncertain future is unsettling on many levels. Climate change provokes strong emotions for these reasons. We will now look at how young adults in Oslo deal with these strong emotions.

Dealing with strong emotions

Climate change threatens the stability of the world we know (Hulme, 2009) and with it our aspirations, lifestyles, security, and identity (Randall, 2009). It is no that wonder strong emotions play into our understanding of it (Norgaard, 2011; Roncoli et al., 2009).

Understandings of climate change in the setting of this research are largely influenced indirectly and abstractly through global narratives and scientific notions. However, this does not imply that informants dealt with climate change only in a rationalizing manner. The idea of climate change invokes a range of emotions. Informants expressed amongst others: Frustration with both self and others for not taking more action, hope for the future, faith in technology, anger with politicians and industries, confusion over potential solutions, and profound insecurity about most aspects of climate change. To some extent also apathy was expressed. One person stated: "It's absolutely tiresome to think about... it is easier not to..." (Informant 1). Another declared that: "It underlies some decisions, but I don't think about it directly" (Informant 3). Informants explained that climate change ought to be on the top of the agenda, that people should be worried about it. On the other hand, the many and opposing emotions can be difficult to deal with. One informant illustrated this beautifully in an analogy comparing climate change to the concept of death:

> I think it is one of those really huge problems which you can't really grasp how big it is. So people kind of have to take a denial perspective on it. It's like.. the classic example is when you go around thinking about that you are going to die someday, then you won't get anything done in life, right? But at the same time we exercise a degree of caution in everyday life, we don't want to throw ourselves recklessly into busy traffic either. It's not like we are trying to die, but we know it could happen. […] I think it is the same. You have it in the back of your mind, think a little about it, hopefully take some measures to do something about it. But at the same time I can't go around thinking that my grandchildren are going to live in the apocalypse, where there is fire in the sky, because we didn't cut enough emissions. You can't live your life that way as a human being, you'll simply be depressed the whole time. (Informant 3)

Norgaard's findings (2011) show how such emotions can become overwhelming, and that in order to protect oneself from them people went into denial. This does not mean that people denied the issue itself, but rather that they avoided internalizing the knowledge that they had, and avoided dealing with the emotions it provoked, by not implement changes in behaviour. This is not a lack of response: Denial is in fact a response in itself. In close similarity to Norgaard's findings many of the young people in Oslo admitted that it would be easier not to think about

climate change. However, as we have seen, not thinking about it is not really an option anymore. People are submerged in a world where the news, their social media accounts, advertisements on buses and even coffee cups, serve as constant reminders of the impending doomsday scenario, even whilst thanking them for not contributing to this scenario. The change in general awareness has had an impact on the emotional landscape. In order to understand this new emotional landscape, we need to have a look at how the idea of climate change is related to people. What role do people play in its narrative?

Rudiak-Gould (2015) has argued climate change is constructed in such a way that it makes everything and everyone blameworthy and blameless at the same time. Climate change invites ubiquitous blame. This is possible because: 1.) It is, or is understood to be, invisible. When one cannot *see* it directly, one is able to choose to perceive it everywhere if one so wishes. 2.) It is omnipresent: Weather effects nearly every living thing, so its influence can always be suspected. And 3.) It extends human agency to the sky, which in Western imagination is understood to be the last truly wild and untouchable thing (Rudiak-Gould, 2015, p. 49). However, depending on your viewpoint it can also invite ubiquitous blamelessness, selective blame or partial blame (ibid.). A long list of heroes-and-villains narratives are part of these stories of blame (for instance, rich vs. poor, nature-loving vs materialists). These stories often hit a little too close to home with regards to how Norwegians may perceive themselves. They could be deemed more blameworthy as citizens of "one of the richest countries in the world", who also maintain the perception of being nature-loving and non-materialistic people. The story of blame can involve our community in different roles, however, as human beings, they are always somehow involved. Climate is no longer just an index for conditions, instead it has become a *cause* of particular events (Rudiak-Gould, 2015, p. 50) There is a perception of a causal link between human activity and a changing climate which leads to configurations of blame. Where there is blame there is responsibility, and where there is responsibility there is guilt.

Shame and guilt

The Swedish term *"flygskam"* (lit.: Flight shame) has been spreading through European countries over the last year. Exactly when and where this term originated is hard to say; however, we do know that the term is quite recent. Beyond this, I was unsuccessful in uncovering any academic literature on the concept. *Flygskam* means – quite literally, a feeling of shame caused by the use of air travel against better judgement. The air travel industry is generally recognized as one of the worst sources of pollution and a recent news article reported that 12 % of the inhabitants of Oslo reported that they planned to use air travel less in the next two years. 23 % reported that it is "likely" or "very likely" that they will use less air travel during this time (Sandberg, 2019).

One of the *hjertesaker* I encountered whilst conducting my interviews was indeed air travel, or more precisely, the aim to avoid it.

Hughes (2013) argues for deployment of a similar, though broader, term. An awareness of self-destructive behaviour as the core of a new CO2-specific environmentality he calls: Carbon conscience (Hughes, 2013, p. 579). Both *flygskam* and carbon conscience point to two of the most important emotions in how people process and understand climate change: Shame and guilt. Guilt can be defined as a feeling of responsibility or remorse for some offense, crime, wrong-doing, etc., whether real or imagined (Burgo, 2013). Shame, on the other hand, is the painful feeling arising from the consciousness perception of something dishonourable, improper, ridiculous, etc., done by oneself or another (ibid.). These two emotions are closely related, but often unnecessarily blurred. Both are interpersonal in nature.

Climate shame and guilt are not completely new in the academic discussion. Norgaard showed in her research that people experienced these emotions, but avoided truly recognizing them by applying microprocesses of self-exoneration such as blaming nations that were bigger polluters than themselves and by underlining their own national narrative of being good, humble and nature-loving people (Norgaard, 2011). Yet, the contradicting thoughts and feelings lead to a sensation of guilt and cognitive dissonance that could not be covered up by implicatory denial (ibid.). In the current research informants oftentimes admitted that though it was absolutely necessary that the topic is covered extensively by the media and that it ought to be a debate at the centre of attention, it also was incredibly tiring to hear about climate change all the time. Conflicting and contradicting emotions easily lead to exhaustion that is associated with thinking and talking about climate change. The guilt of "knowing better" can be quite overwhelming:

> "now that I'm talking about it, I say stuff like "yeah yeah, but I'm not the worst", as they say. But really I should be thinking about all the things that I do that are destructive. But I can't.. No I'm not quite capable.. There are limits to.. no.. I don't think I can do it." (Informant 12)

There is something vulnerable about this statement. It shows a person who is highly aware of the impacts and the dangers that lie in brushing off the seriousness of the issue. At the same time, he is acknowledging his own role in this. Yet, he feels the limits of how much he can handle. Guilt and shame are strong emotions, which is why denial can work as a defence mechanism. In her use of the term denial Norgaard aims at inverting the meaning it is normally associated with. Denial is often seen as being incapable of comprehending something or behaving out of stupidity or ineptitude (Norgaard, 2011, p. 61). Norgaard argues that it is actually the very opposite that

is happening: Denial is actually a testament to our human capacity for empathy, compassion, and a moral imperative to respond (ibid., p. 61). Apathy, she claims, is really the mask of suffering.

Climate change *is* an emotional topic to talk about. I experienced this myself. During my fieldwork I constantly felt the need to reassure my informants. When speaking of what the future might look like I really wanted to tell them that things will be okay and when they doubted themselves I wanted to say that they were doing the best that they could. There was this overwhelming urge to end our conversations with a positive spin. Climate change is still, as is was before, instilling a depressing mood. Interview partners stated repeatedly how they wished the approach to climate change, in the media for instance, could be more positive. For example, my interviewees wished that media coverage could be voiced as constructive feedback, instead of turning to guilt-tripping and scare-tactics. There is a belief that such negative approaches will not last and we find a cry for more positivity.

For all the emotions that came to light in our conversations, several people argued that the sort of emotion they feel does not matter, as long as it leads to action:

> "It's silly to be worried, better do something about it." (Informant 11)

Or differently voiced like this:

> "I try to be careful not just to talk. Many people have good intentions and talk a lot about the environment. But it's not the thought that counts at all, it is irrelevant how many good thoughts one has. It is what you actually do that means something." (Informant 9)

For the final chapter we will look at the last important link to Norgaard's theory of denial, and examine if informants are implementing their knowledge in their everyday lives.

Summarizing

In this chapter we have discussed the processes of thinking and talking about climate change, and the emotions this evokes. Again, we see that people struggle with the abstractness of the issue. The findings show that people develop strategies to deal with such abstractness, such as referring to a *hjertesak*. By relating climate change to a concrete problem it becomes more relatable and more personal. The abstractness is furthermore exemplified by the discourse in

which notions of "environment" and "climate" remained blurred. This interchangeability points to an uncertainty about what the issue of climate change truly entails. Part of the reason why the discourse is chaotic is that people have little practice talking about it. It is not processed through political discussion. The topic is still met with discomfort, as it was in *Bygdaby.* But besides this, it is the expectation of agreement which is heavily influenced by the climate narrative's moral character and enforces this silent dynamic.

The overbearing moral aspect of the climate change narrative further complicates thinking and talking about the issue. There is a prevalent sense of moral obligation to take a certain stance towards climate change. The topic is imbued with ideas of "right" and "wrong". Climate scepticism is heavily frowned upon, which I suspect leads to less open discussions on the topic within these circles. We further saw that the idea of climate change is still challenging on an ontological level and evokes strong emotions. Informants express a wish to escape the entire issue, however, its omnipresence cannot be eluded. Increased awareness has contributed to a new emotional landscape where guilt and shame are more prevalent than before. These emotions play a major role in the shaping of actions and solutions which we will discuss in the upcoming chapter.

The findings of our research point to uncertainty on both cognitive and emotional levels with regards to climate change. We see that people employ different strategies to make sense of what is happening and of the overload of information that is hailing in from different sources. Thinking and talking about climate change might be unsettling on an ontological and existential level, yet, when we take a step back we can see from a meta viewpoint that contemplating climate issues might be a useful thing to do. Hulme argues that climate change is performing valuable work for us:

> Climate change is reminding us – in case we had imagined otherwise – that we are intimate co-workers with the non-human in the mutual shaping of our present and future worlds, rather than being lords of all we can see. Climate change is teaching us – in case we had hoped otherwise – that the future is irredeemably precarious and beyond all our efforts of prediction and control. And climate change is convincing us – in case we believed otherwise – that our identities and our interpretations of the world around us can never fully escape encounters with place and materiality (Hulme, 2010, p. 274).

The idea of climate change is challenging our ways of thinking about the world and our place in it, which perhaps is a useful exercise in and by itself. However, the actions and imagined solutions that this exercise leads to also ought to be addressed. We will now turn our attention to these important aspects of how climate change is understood and coped with.

4c. Action and Solutions

The scope of this research has meant that actual actions and lifestyle changes could not be empirically documented. The discrepancy between self-reported behaviour and actual behaviour has been demonstrated in research projects, such as "the Garbage project" (Rathje and Murphy, 1992), and should not be underestimated. I therefore emphasize that the discussion on behaviour and action presented here is solely based on self-reported behaviour. The importance of self-reported behaviour in this case lies not so much in how well it represents actual behaviour, but in how well it illustrates how people reflect on their actions, their choices, and their agency, and how they place their own actions in the grander schemes of climate change solutions. We will examine how people reflect on their own behaviour and explore what is different from Norgaard's *Bygdabyinger*. We have come to our final discussion and will see in this chapter whether or not people are still living in denial.

The ways in which people imagine solutions to the climate change issue, and the necessary actions towards reaching these solutions, tells us a lot about how people imagine climate change. In this chapter we will examine such solution narratives. Narratives are essentially the stories that people tell and provide rich information about how they make sense of their lives. They help weave together disparate facts to cognitively make sense of reality (Patterson and Monroe, 1998, p. 315). Narratives are a powerful tool in helping us navigate a world full of contradicting sensations and experiences. People create narratives to understand the realities around us, we do this as individuals and as collective units (ibid., p. 316). Randall (2009) has outlined five commonly found solution narratives in the context of climate change. These are: "Small steps", "Market transformation/green consumerism", "Technology will save us", "Decarbonization" and "The happiness tale" – in which things change, but we will find it preferable (ibid., p. 119-120). We often find several of these narratives coexisting within societies, even within the same stories. Most of them were referred to in the scope of this research. The two most prominent solution narratives were "small steps" and "technology will save us". In this chapter we will examine closer how these two form the basis for imagining a solution to climate change in this particular research setting and how they are expressed by the community. Towards the end of the chapter we will examine how the actions based on these understandings of solutions relates to the notion of denial.

Before we start some words ought to be dedicated to the other solution narratives formulated by Randall (2009). As stated above they were almost all encountered in this research. I encountered for instance suggestions oriented towards market transformations and green consumerism every now and then. However, such ideas were much less clearly formulated and much more rare. The idea of decarbonization was also found, but more as part of the technological solutions. I therefore have chosen to include this under "technology will save us". Lastly, "the happiness tale" was not found at all in my analysis. The reason why the solutions of "small steps" and technology were much more prominent might be that they simply play a more direct role in people's everyday life. The small step narrative is ultimately about individual action, as we shall see in a bit, and technology is a central player in these people's everyday existence. Concepts such as market transformation and large-scale industrial solutions are further removed from most people's everyday experience. So, since our goal here is to examine the role of climate change in everyday life, we shall focus on the two most relevant solutions.

The first, the "small steps" narrative, emphasizes how we all need to "do our bit" (Randall, 2009) and thereby it focuses on individual choices and actions. The second is expressed by faith in technology to counter climate change while people can mostly resume living the same lifestyles as before. The two are clearly at odds with one another at times, but that does not hinder these narratives in existing parallelly. We will address them both below.

Small steps through everyday action

The small step narrative revolves around individual action. Individual action stands in opposition to Norgaard's notion of denial. Let us examine the findings in light of these concepts.

Most of my interview partners had made changes in their lives. They had become vegetarians, vegans, or flexitarians (when you still eat meat, but less often and smaller portions). Some were thinking twice about where they would go on vacation so that they could avoid unnecessary flights. There was a focus on buying consciously and avoiding plastic wrapping and bags. The option of public transportation was emphasized as a better option than owning a car. Some people had truly implemented changes on all areas of life, whereas others would stick to a single thing or two, like their *hjertesak*. Interestingly, most people started making these changes recently. Informant 4 explained that this concern with climate change would not have hit her so hard and felt so personal just a couple of years earlier, but with an increasing awareness in society it became ever more important for her. Informant 3 noticed a great change during the last years of middle school when he claimed to observe a general change in attitudes and ideas.

Schools suddenly started recycling and teaching about environmental change. Informant 7 told me how he had been completely uninterested until he watched documentaries on planetary discovery and exploration of the universe. This put in perspective how small our little planet is and how precarious life here is, which for him led to an activation by making major lifestyle changes.

All these journeys were different and personal, and emphasize once again how the flexibility in the idea of climate change allows it to mean many different things to people. Randall has emphasized that making lifestyle changes often includes an aspect of loss (2009, p. 118). Giving up meat, dropping a vacation or changing it to a closer location, saving water and electricity, buying less new things – most of the climate friendly choices we attempt to make as individuals imply a decrease in something. Randall argues that we can only accept this aspect of loss when we feel ownership of the changes we are making (ibid.). The stories above emphasize that every person's journey is different, we all tell our story differently and make sense of our experiences and choices in various ways. A personalised story with climate change might give a person more ownership of the choices and changes that are occurring.

The degrees of action taken within one community varies greatly between people, but overall something seems to be stirring. Like a slow wave, or a *green shift,* people have started to become more aware, and feeling a little more responsible. We cannot deduct in this particular research exactly how much awareness has led to how much actual change. That would require a different style of research altogether. What we can say for sure is that the overall levels of activation and internalization are far greater than what Norgaard reported from 2000-2001. One particular interaction highlighted how deep the considerations of climate change can go. When I first met informant 5, I asked what the first thing was that came to mind when she heard the term climate change, and this was her response:

> «I think about the future and that the earth is becoming warmer, and that we will have more climate refugees and space will be tighter, so will resources. Right now I'm only 25, but when I might have children, what will it be like? Perhaps I will not have children because it will be so bad that it just doesn't… well.. I don't exactly get positive associations with climate change." (Informant 5).

I would say that the consideration of climate change in the decision whether to have children goes beyond a small step, and is quite a big consideration. Climate change is, if not directly impacting major life choices, at least a considered factor.

Central to Norgaard's understanding of denial is the lack of everyday action (2011). She has argued that although the people in her research showed awareness of the climate issues, they failed to internalize this knowledge and turn it into action, therefore they found themselves in a double reality and a state of denial. Finding that actions are taken would therefore mean that we can conclude that people no longer live denial. However, I believe Norgaard is overlooking some important aspects of the process of turning knowledge into action. This implementation involves perceptions of impact, responsibility, and agency. I discovered in the course of my analysis that we cannot understand everyday actions, nor make conclusions about the state of denial, without addressing these factors.

Agency and responsibility

I want to refer back to the framework by Svarstad and colleagues (2018) described in chapter 2. They address agency as being intrinsically linked to power. The exercise of agency by an actor is seen as constrained as well as enabled by different sorts of societal structures (ibid., p. 535). We ought to address how informants perceived their own agency being shaped, restricted or facilitated by specific social structures in their lives.

The way these young adults perceive their own agency against the backdrop of Norwegian society is twofold. On the one hand, the privileged position most Norwegians find themselves in is seen as an advantage, as something which makes it easier to "do the right thing". On the other hand, the purchasing power that comes with that position and the general high standard of living can be found troublesome in attempts to minimalize on new products or cutting back on, for example, vacations. So, we find those who argue that it is easy to live climate friendly in Norway. Many structures are already in place and function well, such as recycling and public transportation. There is a growing range of alternative, more climate-friendly products in stores, and people argue that most of the citizens in Oslo can afford to spend money on these better, but slightly more expensive products. Simultaneously, it is argued that Norwegians are actually too well-off. They have the money to buy a lot of stuff, which leads to a culture of consumption. Moreover, some argue that there is still not enough initiative nor incentive. Meat is still cheap, so people are temped into buying it. Trains are still more expensive than domestic flights and so forth. What these two different views have in common, is that they put agency in relation to whether choices are facilitated or limited by the state. In some areas the informants felt enabled, while in others they experienced restriction. Interestingly, many of the informants expressed a wish for more regulation, thus more restriction.

Norway belongs to a group of countries characterized as "highly trusting" countries in terms of political trust, together with Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland and Denmark (Hahkverdian and Mayne, 2012, p. 743). Political trust refers to the faith that citizens place in political actors and institutions to act in ways that will not do them harm or to protect them from harm (ibid.). It covers a range of instances from micro to macro levels, such as local government, civil service, the legal system, parties, parliament, the police, judges and politicians. Norway has a long history with strong communal values and confidence in the welfare state (Eriksen, 1993; Gullestad, 1992; Norgaard, 2011). There is great faith in the state and people expect the state to address the climate issue in their best interest. Studies have found that governments in several countries are conferred a high degree of responsibility for solving climate and environmental issues in a similar matter as found here (Lorenzoni and Pidgeon, 2006, p. 86). The discussion on actions and solutions in light of climate change brings us to an interesting dynamic between perceptions of individualism and society, between people and the state. The state is often drawn into the small-step solution narrative by people wondering whether it is aiding the population in making "the right choices". It is quite typically an area with circular explanations: Political decisions will lead to change in behaviour and change in behaviour will lead to change in politics.

> "Many people are not so motivated as I would hope they would be. They might be if.. there was a bigger focus from the government. Well.. it's very difficult. The government are also the people. So in the end the responsibility lies with the people, to create change in the government at least. But then people can start taking responsibility for themselves. Change their diet, drive less, fly less, do those things". (Informant 7)

In one case an informant admitted that he was actually not making any particular changes in relation to climate change. He believed only the government could have a real impact. Yet, he reflected that maybe he just chose to believe that so he would feel better about not contributing. The small-step narrative creates a strong social pressure, and the informant felt guilty about not "doing his part". From this interaction we can see that there still is some displacement of responsibility onto "higher authorities or legitimate decision makers" as a form of denial of self-involvement, a strategy also found in *Bygdaby* (Opotow and Weiss, 2000, p. 481 in Norgaard, 2011, p. 44). Overall, people felt it would be easier to deal with climate change if there were stronger regulations in place, a sentiment perhaps typical to nations with high averages of political trust. Norgaard interprets this displacement of responsibility to result in climate change being perceived as a national or international issue, and not a local one (2011, p. 44). My research findings show that the two levels of responsibility can also relate in a different way. We have seen throughout the discussion that blame and responsibility for action very much happens

on local and individual levels. Yet, people live with a hope that the state will support them in this. One informant explained:

> "Of course it helps a great deal, because we have to do what we can, which is to change our lifestyle, little by little. And when we change our lifestyle then the political decisions on flight-taxes and the big things will follow, and we will follow that too." (Informant 4)

So we find a dual responsibility: On individuals and on decision makers. The former is much more dominant in how people deal with climate change in their everyday lives. As we saw earlier, the whole project of Oslo as 2019's European green capital was barely addressed during interviews. Such state-level solutions are not of direct relevance to people's everyday life. We also see a discrepancy of faith and non-faith on these two levels. During a discussion about the dominance of climate change in the media picture one informant told me:

> «It sucks that one has to nag so much. But I mean, people are completely useless." (Informant 12)

Although the greater responsibility is put on individuals there seems to be little faith in "people". My informants were not convinced that other individuals were making changes, or big enough changes, to truly combat climate change, and they were well aware that it takes a majority in order for individual-level changes to have an impact.

Impact

One of the reasons why people wished for more restriction was because they felt the options were too many and the impacts of each choice is not easy to know as an individual. Is it better to buy locally sourced cow milk than imported plant-based milks? Does the cost, energy and materials required in the production of a new electrical vehicle outweigh its benefits and should one opt for buying a second hand diesel car instead? The actual sum of the impacts of our daily choices are mostly out of the grasp of individuals.

I found a deep uncertainty about what is the right way to deal with climate change in the community I worked with. Whether informants were making fewer or more changes, bigger or smaller ones, the question always came up to what extent they actually have an impact.

> "We're told that if everybody does a little then it helps. And that's very true. But it's not something that you can see. It's hard to get motivated to do something if you never see the

> results from it. I think that is the problem with changing people's attitudes as well.. ideally you'd never see a physically big change, if everybody does a good job. The best thing that can happen is that everything continues as normal, and everything is fine. Then it's a little hard to prove you've done something good." (Informant 3)

The best case scenario for the outcome of climate change is that nothing happens. These findings resonate with Hulme's (2009) ideas: Climate change is not a problem with a solution, it is something which has to be worked on continuously and always will have to be prevented. It will never be the case that we tick a box or we flip a switch and we can say that we never have to worry about it again because the problem is solved. This is deeply felt by the young people in Oslo. Despite public discourse constantly referring to questions of "how to solve the climate crisis?", there is no ultimate solution. For all the "right" behaviours and changes the inhabitants in Oslo make there is never a feedback that confirms that it is indeed the right thing to do. There remains insecurity about the issue in general and the potential solutions. This insecurity spills over in assessing ones' own behaviour.

> "there are no obvious solutions or clear things we can do. I would love to have a plan that was like "if we follow this it will turn out alright". And we do have climate rapports that in a way have that sort of recipes. We have to decrease this and that, etc., but it's not something that one can relate to as an individual." (Informant 12)

There is no universal standard by which to measure one's own behaviour. It is quite a matter of belief and faith in that the choices you are making are the right ones. A profound uncertainty arises from this aspect of abstractness of climate change. The questions of *what* we can do and *how* to do it remain largely unanswered for people.

> "A human life does not really consist of so many parts. Work, sleep, eat – those are the things we have to do. And within those, I don't know how much more I can do. I would very much like someone to tell me what more I can do. Because I look for an answer to that all the time […] I just don't know what the next step is. Where does one continue? Should I sit down in front of the Parliament and say that I'm with Greta? Will that have any effect?" (Informant 7)

Despite the fact that adjustments are being made in everyday life, people remain unsure of the actual impact of these changes. The uncertainty regarding impact is closely linked to the abstractness of the climate change notion. There is no way of personally checking the effects of our actions when we deal with a phenomenon that encompasses the entire globe.

The situation is permeated with uncertainty about impact and about what would be the "right thing" to do. The one informant mentioned above explained that he was hesitant to make changes in his life for this reason. For instance, he said, everybody seemed to be moving away from using plastic shopping bags and had started to bring their own cotton bags instead. But he had read that the production of cotton bags requires amounts of water and energy that it equals the production of many thousands of plastic bags. The original article stating this has actually be debunked because they used a set of outdated numbers on the production processes in their calculations (Ringgaard, 2018). Yet, it illustrates that the math and the effects of our choices in the grand picture are not always as straightforward as they seem. And this is deeply felt by these young adults.

Reflections on actions

We just saw that the informants had a deeply reflective relationship with the choices they were making, often critically assessing different options. Young people in Oslo are ever more trying to implement the knowledge they have by making changes in their everyday life. Moreover, they are aware of the complications of impact and attempting to make "good" choices. Yet, when speaking about this, they do not express to feel particularly good about this. How can this be?

> "I'm not gonna walk around feeling good about myself (*shrugs*)." (informant 12)

The informant brushed of the question whether he felt good about the changes he was making in his life and expressed with the statement above that the idea of feeling good about oneself just for making a few changes is a ridiculous thing to do. This example requires some further analysis. For starters I want to point back to our previous discussions on egalitarian-individualism and the Law of Jante. This one social norm can of course not directly justify or be the cause of social behaviour, but I have never seen such a clear indication of it as in this particular setting. When informants spoke about the changes they have made in their lives, trying to "better" themselves and doing the right thing, it is striking that they are not particularly proud about this. In stark contrast to the reputation climate active people, vegans in particular, hold, they are definitely not shouting from rooftops about the "good things" they are doing. The most enthusiastic answers I got might be that a person claimed to be doing "kinda alright" on the climate front or saying "yeah.. I try".

In fact, telling people about this "good thing" you are doing will probably be a little awkward in a context with such strong emphasis on egalitarianism. You might be pointing out to the other person that they are not doing this good thing, and therefore implying that you are better than

them. I was taught by my informants that arguments voiced in an overly critical matter or trying to take the moral high ground were not at all appreciated. One of the particularly active informants happened to find himself on the other side of such conversations:

> «It is very difficult to know what is really the right way to deal with this. Even on a very basic, individual level. I know that if I start to mention it to my buddies, they will have this reaction […] They don't like it. And that just increases my frustration around the topic. That it is not even possible to have a discussion […] We can touch upon the topic, have a lighter discussion, but if I start talking about the UN's climate rapport or how we ought to eat less meat they become very stubborn very fast." (Informant 7)

Both taking pride in one's own achievement as well as suggesting to others how they might improve go against egalitarian notions of sameness. Anthropologists have addressed the protected private bubble that Norwegians commonly hold, and the importance of not interfering in other people' private spheres. We discussed it ourselves in the methods chapter. More than just making it more complicated to get in touch with people we see here that an overemphasis on humility and non-interference can hinder open discussion.

During my time in Oslo I found a prevalent sense that people experienced their actions as "never being enough". I had anticipated people to be more positive when discussing their own choices and action, if only due to the urge to make oneself look a little better to which we all fall prey. This was not at all the case. Instead people were constantly questioning the effects of their actions.

With regards to Norgaard's arguments we have now illustrated that awareness does not directly translate into action, as she herself also argued. What our findings add to the discussion are certain aspects that obscure the process of activation such as agency, perceptions of impact and responsibility, the interference of social norms. I wish moreover to illustrate the same for the inversed relation: Action does not equal constant awareness.

The activation of climate change related knowledge does not imply that one is aware of it all the time. Many informants pointed out that there would be a time when they considered their options, and once they made a choice, they simply tried to stick with it. For example, with opting for a vegetarian diet. Once decided that this was something she wanted to implement in her everyday life, informant 5 tried to follow that idea. When considering meal options, she did not think of climate issues (although this was the reason for her initial decision) but rather of the commitment she made to herself.

Norgaard's findings show awareness paired with inaction, mine show awareness and action. Even some action without awareness is found. What can we make from this?

The translation of awareness into action is rendered complicated by the elements discussed above. People partly feel responsibility, but also place responsibility on higher authorities They remain unsure of the impacts of their actions and choices in the big picture. They do not seem to get much of an emotional boost or social acclaim for their choices. Furthermore, there is a lack of confidence in the majority of the population to also contribute with their part, which renders the small step solutions meaningless. Comparing a number of international studies, Lorenzoni and Pidgeon (2006) found that individuals will not voluntarily choose to alter their behaviour due to climatic concerns unless they feel enabled to do so and perceive the rest of society to move in the same direction. Both perceptions of feeling limited in one's own agency and a lack of faith in general society are found in the current study. Yet, we find a surprising amount of changes in our informants' everyday lives. The question remains: Why do people implement changes in their everyday life despite these countering factors?

There are many complications to the solutions focused on individual actions, and the informants where aware of these. Yet, many of my informants still tried to adhere to a more climate conscious lifestyle. It might seem contradicting at first glance. But with all the factors we have addressed in previous chapters we start to see a picture immerse of why people opt for action, even though it might seem hopeless. In the previous chapter we discussed how overwhelming emotions, expressed as guilt and shame in particular, are commonly experienced by the young people in Oslo when dealing with climate change. The notion that one is "doing one's part" can counter these negative emotions and lessen some of the uncomfortableness arising from the cognitive dissonance of awareness. The emotion of guilt in particular may be amplified by the "we-are-so-lucky"-attitude which we addressed in the foregoing chapter. This special stance towards one's own privilege increases the moral pressure and guilt towards those "who-are-not-so-lucky". Doing "one's part" can be seen as a way of coping with the conflicting position of awareness and privilege, and dealing with the negative emotions. Furthermore, as I believe is already implied in this argument, the inherent morality in idea the climate change is, together with its emotional appeal, vital to activation. We discussed in the previous chapter that climate change is often linked to the notion of being a good person. Motivation towards action is related to the feeling that one ought to do something, to be able to see oneself as a good person. Of course, this does not mean that the young people of Oslo are always making the most climate

friendly choices. Oftentimes, so they reported, they would not. Climate change was most often a weighing factor, but at times financial restrictions, convenience or temptation would win.

With regards to the issue of denial I would argue that climate change is not denied in these cases, but emphasize that the factors in our choices are always complex. A single aspect – climate friendly or not – will not always be the most decisive variable. Yet, the awareness has increased to such an extent that opting for the less-friendly choices is often accompanied by the emotional burden of knowing better. People will still fly to holiday destinations, but *flygskam* will most likely follow them on their trip.

Before we can draw our final conclusions from these findings we need to address the second solution narrative: The one focused on technology. This approach is a very different one indeed, but is too significant to exclude from our discussion. Initially, it might not seem to go well together with the processes of activation which I just described. We will soon see how they can coexist, but first we need to understand this profoundly distinct idea of technology as our saviour.

Technology will save us

The second solutions-narrative found in our community finds resonance with what Randall terms: "Technology will save us" (2009, p. 120). In order to understand how technology is framed as something that can save us, we need to examine the notion of fetishization.

The fetish of technology

The fetishization of technology is essentially a process of endowing technological objects with powers they do not have. Doing so it creates a perception of technology having the capability to solve any problem (Harvey, p. 3). This can lead to uncritical and sometimes disastrous investment in technological "solutions" (ibid.). Fetishization is a process lying entirely in the habit of humans and does not characterize an inherent quality of the object, although it becomes part of how the object is seen and interacted with. Harvey defines fetishism as: "the habit humans have of endowing real or imagined objects or entities with self-contained, mysterious, and even magical powers to move and shape the world in distinctive ways" (Harvey, 2003, p. 3). Scholars have identified and argued for different forms of fetishization, which can be linked to Western discourse in several ways. What these ways have in common is that they disguise the social choices and social relations that figure in any technological system (Pfaffenberger, 1988).

Climate, development and technology

The deterministic view of technology that accompanies fetishization can on either side lead to the belief that technological progress is inevitable, and is either "good" or "bad" (Harvey, 2003, p. 3), yet, cut off from social choices and relations. Interestingly, we find a parallel determinism in the climate change narrative. People perceive the future to turn out either all good or all bad, but either way determined by the changing climate (Hulme, 2011). In western discourse technology is often equated with civilization and progress, as a positive development throughout history. Thus, technology and development are seen to go hand in hand. Historian Lynn White has emphasized the implicit linkage between classical definitions of technology and the roots of Christian metaphysics, which dictate human domination of the natural world (Pfaffenberger, 1988, p. 237). This development, or domination, is simultaneously what has led "the West" to the threshold of a serious and self-destructive ecological crises, according to him. We start to uncover the complex relations between these concepts.

Both the concept of climate change and that of technology have been examined by anthropologists as ways of overcoming the culture-nature divide. We know that climate change is simultaneously a physical and measurable phenomenon, as much as it is a social idea that is constructed, contested and adapted (Hulme, 2009). It is an idea that quite independently of any actual climate impacts is altering people's lives in real material ways (Rudiak-Gould, 2015, p. 49). I remind you of Rudiak-Gould's argument we discussed earlier that climate change has turned the last "wild" and "natural" thing, namely the sky, into a human artefact, thus bridging what we perceive as natural and as cultural. Similarly, technology has been redefined by anthropologists as humanised nature. Instead of falling outside the domains of society/culture and nature, it can be argued to constitute a third domain of its own. Anthropologists have finally started to acknowledge the fundamentally social essence of things such as technology (Pfaffenberger, 1988) and climate (Hulme, 2009). What we have discussed so far is the take of academics and scholars. How it is understood by most people is a completely different story. Now that we have laid the foundations for understanding perceptions of technology and climate change, let us return to the case.

Technology and hope

> "Well the hope lies in new technology, the development of new technology" (Informant 5)

The understanding that climate change can be "fixed" by some technological inventions is a wide-spread idea (Hulme, 2009), and one I immediately encountered in my research. The way people imagine and talk about this gives us further insight into how climate change is imagined through its "solutions" We will discuss how the notions of technology is used to frame climate change by analysing some key statements.

> "some are really good at giving money to new technologies though. Perhaps we should try to get in some renewable.. sort of thing" (Informant 11)

Technology constitutes an unusual logos since it is not so much seen as a field of knowledge like biology, sociology or theology, but it often is used to point to particular objects (Arregui, 2011), think of computers or mobile phones. When people refer to technology in the context of climate change, however, the term is often used generically and ambiguously. When our informant was speaking of new technologies as a potential solution to the climate issue he stumbled over his own words at the end of his suggestion. People are quick to refer to "technology" as the saviour of humanity, but what specific device, machinery, tools or processes are we really talking about? In the instance cited above we observe clearly that when attempting to give further detail or explanation to this, we quickly run out of familiar ground. People are influenced by a strong narrative of technology, without being able to point to a specific manifestation of it. In opposition to the contradicting way in which technology is often presumed to be a specific device instead of being treated as a logos (the knowledge surrounding these artefacts), these findings indicate that technology is used as an open and ambiguous entity. An entity which' contents we cannot really identify – thus we are dealing with the idea of technology, more than anything else. Randall explains that in the technological narrative, the "boffins" (which is apparently British slang for all those professors in white coats, with pebble-glasses and crazy hair) have the answers – whether it is renewables, nuclear power, or geoengineering. It is shaped by the idea that once these people have their hands on the resources they need, they will deliver a world much like the one we know (Randall, 2009, p. 120). In the citation above we saw how the idea of money leading to new technologies was expressed in this manner. Also, the aspect of non-change finds resonance:

> "Something has to be done. So we can continue using existing.. oil to make energy, but that someone can invent something so it doesn't give the same emissions. That we can collect it in a way or another.. I guess it is hard to make an eternity machine." (Informant 11)

Thinking back to Lynn White's arguments we addressed earlier, that domination of nature through technology is the cause of ecological issues, it is seemingly a contradicting idea that new technology can fix whatever issues old technology has created. This circular logic is nonetheless found in many fields. Innovation is often perceived as capable of solving the issues previous innovation has caused, capitalism seen as the solution to the problematic consequences of capitalism (Fairhead, et al. 2012). We continue to see great faith in the potential that lies in this ambiguous idea of technology. The fetishism in this idea is so strong we could perhaps explain it best in terms of Alfred Gell's technology as magic (1988).

> "I like to be optimistic, and hope that we can reach technological solutions that can help. Both because it is easier for everybody since we then don't have to do so much to change, but also because it seems to me that it otherwise would demand enormous changes in attitude from people." (Informant 3)

In this argument we can observe how technology is treated as a form of magic. Technology and magic do not always form an opposition, quite on the contrary, both are characterized by the same sort of faith in a process (Gell, 1988). We do not know how it works; we just know it will work. Magic serves the same goal as the technical, magic is costless technology. It will produce the desired result without people having to change or put in much effort. This underlines once again how the fetishism of technology cuts it off from all social relations and impacts. We can carry on with our lives as we have done before and technology will solve the problem for us. The last citation we will discuss emphasis this aspect even more so. It shows the ultimate separation between society and technology, between people and solutions.

> «And I hope technology can be a big part in helping since I'm not so optimistic about people's attitudes changing fast enough. Ideally, I would picture a bigger focus on electrical cars and alternative energy sources, and research for ways to avoid climate pollution and all that stuff." (Informant 3)

Once again we see a lack of faith in people. The informant is separating people and people's attitudes, from technology and the ways in which it is developed. Technology is described as something developed outside of society, but also the integration of it into society is somehow separated from people, because there is little faith in people's attitudes changing. Even the

research that goes into developing this new technology is separated from people's attitudes. Individual actions and lifestyles choices are questioned in terms of how effective they really are. Yet, the processes and results of technological advances are not challenged at all. This may partly be due to the strong moral position science and technology hold in Norwegian society. Technologies of heating and isolation have helped people overcome climatic challenges of extreme cold. Local hydraulic power feeds "green" electricity to the heating systems. Thanks to new technology, infrastructure has been able to reach over the most difficult fjords and cliffs, and bridges and tunnels help people move through the arduous landscapes. The processing and export of oil has given citizens shared wealth which was unimaginable before the 1960s. It seems that there is no challenge that cannot be overcome by technology.

> "we are perhaps a little arrogant as a species exactly because there has been so many things we have managed to overcome. We have travelled away from our own planet, we can fly on a daily basis which would have been completely unimaginable some hundred years ago. We have overcome a lot. And even when we haven't overcome death we have at least expanded our lifetime greatly. It was normal to live until 30 and now people live fine until 80-90 years, and it is normal […] We probably have gotten too used to being able to control everything. So now we might be thinking that, well, this is just a new problem that we can solve."
>
> (Informant 3)

Many people are aware that their current lifestyle, especially the technological aspects of it, are at times at odds with the conservation of their beloved nature and climate, the idea of new technology is a buffer in balancing out this cognitive dissonance. The relation between climate change and technology is a curious one. Climate change is simultaneously caused by it, understood through it, and also hoped to be solved by it. People have a tendency to talk about technology when referring to specific devices. In the climate change narrative, however, and especially in the narrative where "technology will save us" it is referred to as a generic idea. We observe how technology is fetishized as if existing outside of social relations. In this view technology will make sure society will continue to exist as we know it, without us having to change. This not only confirms the form of fetishization where technology is perceived as autonomous, but also its magical component, where our social behaviour can remain unaffected.

Contradictions

The two narratives addressed above seem to oppose one another. The "small step" solutions emphasize individual actions and put responsibility on an individual level. The technology narrative relieves individuals of such responsibility and places it on this magic entity existing outside of social relations instead. They coexist side by side in the sensemaking by my informants. After thorough analysis, my interpretation is that the existence of the second narrative does not cancel out the first, therefore it does not necessarily oppose the notions of activation and imply a continuity of denial. The contradictions between these two narratives might be due to a lack of political discussion and open conversation about the topic. We discussed in the previous chapter that the lack of conversation about climate change leads its narrative to be more chaotic and contradicting. On the other hand, solving an issue of this complexity requires multiple approaches. While many of my informants implemented changes in their everyday life they also hoped that technological advancements could aid them by making less changes necessary in the future.

I am not the first anthropologist to discover contradictions in people's narratives, and I will definitely not be the last. Human social life is filled with them. To make sense of a phenomenon as convoluted as climate change and imagine how to overcome it is not a simple task. The complexity of the issue makes it hard to know what the "real" or "right" solutions are. However, this research has found that people are trying, within the limits of their means and time people are trying to make the best choices they can. They are attempting to navigate this complex landscape of emotion, responsibility, blame and uncertain impacts to the best of their ability. In the cases I encountered where informants were not making many lifestyle changes, they nonetheless showed a deeply reflective relationship with the topic. They questioned processes of production, ethics of responsibility, and the actuality of perceived impacts. Even in these cases where actions were not necessarily found, I argue we can conclude that the activation is actually present. People have internalized the knowledge and apply it where they can. It is rather the complexities of agency and impact that stand in the way for further action.

Though the imagining and dealing with climate change is far from free of contradictions and inconsistencies, I argue that the denial found by Norgaard is not present in the same way in the current research. The widespread awareness in combination with specific social factors discussed in this chapter has led to an activation of knowledge. The specific expression of this activation in action differs in each case, but it is nonetheless present. The issue of climate change has engrained itself into the fabric of everyday life and seems to be there to stay.

Summarizing

The concerns voiced in interviews were based on a shared assumption: That, not only anything climate or environmentally friendly is "good" and that we should go in that direction as a society, both on an individual and a collective level, but also that we *can* go in that direction. Different arguments on how to achieve this, were built on the common ground of the idea that manipulation of nature possible. The enduring idea of climate mastery reveals an ideological position that humans have the desire, the right and the means to control nature (Hulme, 2009, p. 25). The only context in which people doubted the idea that we can influence climate was in terms of uncertainty in relation to other people. There was an assumption that we can control nature, if only we wanted to. The more disputed question is rather we can control people. Interestingly, people are perceived as much harder to control than the world's climate.

In this chapter we discussed multiple solution narratives people hold, of which the "small-step" narrative and the technological focus are the most dominant. The former takes climate change from being a national or international issue to the level of local and individual responsibility. This idea, however, coexists with the fetishization of technological solutions and trust in political institutions to help solve the problem. The findings show circular explanations of individual and state level responsibilities. Though there is little faith in "people" in general, we find the continued belief in the small-step solutions, and a smaller or larger degree of activation in own behaviour.

Many of the young people I worked with felt a responsibility to do their part, despite the uncertainty regarding the actual impact of these actions. There is no universal standard, no clear-cut solutions or feedback loop. What actions are taken depends heavily on solution narratives and common perceptions of what is considered to be "climate-friendly".

The activation process we observe can be seen as a result of climate change's omnipresence and the need to be seen as a "good person" by oneself and others. Moreover, making changes in lifestyle choices is a way of dealing with the shame and guilt as we discussed in the previous chapter. Feeling that one is contributing is a way of dealing with the pressure that arises from the idea of climate change. The notion that one is "doing one's part" can counter these negative emotions and lessen some of the uncomfortableness arising from the cognitive dissonance of awareness. Moreover, doing "one's part" can be seen as a way of coping with the conflicting position of awareness and privilege. The inherent morality in idea the climate change is, together with its emotional appeal, vital to activation.

Thus we can see that the everyday lives of the people in our community are ever more shaped by action and conscious choices, and less by denial. Small actions can be a way of dealing with the shame and guilt arising from the constant input of stories regarding climate change and the awareness of one's own potential blame. The morality underlying the climate change narrative heavily impacts people's perceived need to take action. However, the process of activation is rendered more complicated by ethics of responsibility, perceptions of impacts, structural limitation or facilitation of agency, and individuals own understanding of their agency. The internalization of knowledge is therefore expressed as actions in varying degrees and in different ways by the individuals in our community. Yet, the activation in itself has become much more present with the increasing omnipresence of the idea of climate change.

Part III

Conclusions

5. Conclusion

The story of understanding climate change in Oslo is essentially a story of making the abstract tangible and of people navigating a complex field of emotions, moral implications and perceptions. Let us return to the initial research question we have attempted to answer. I have aimed to explore the ways in which people understand and deal with climate change on an everyday basis in order to see if this has changed from Norgaard's findings of denial. The findings show various similarities to earlier research findings, but ultimately the process of denial is not found in the same way.

To make the discussion somewhat coherent I addressed the findings in three main chapters: 4a) Experiencing and *not* experiencing climate change; 4b) Emotions, thinking and talking about it; and 4c) Actions and Solutions. In psychology one might term such a division as: Input – processing – output. The separation of these processes is purely analytical, of course. In actual lived experience they are deeply intertwined in one another as I have tried to show by continuously making connections between the chapters throughout the discussion. I will not summarize the findings of each chapter here once again; for that I refer the reader to the summarizing sections at the end of each analytical chapter. As Silverman (2000, p. 250) so neatly puts it, I will try to avoid "a final downhill freewheel" of merely repeating what has already been said. Instead, I will assess the research overall, and address its significance in terms of the broader field, and practice and policy-making. We will start by contextualizing our findings in relation to some of the previous literature.

I hope this research makes a valuable contribution by examining a case where people are dealing with a crisis that has not yet happened. By doing so it creates a more nuanced picture together with the earlier climate ethnographies that have focused on "climate sensitive regions". This research makes a start in examining an important and underemphasized group: Western, city-dwelling populations. The rapid growth in urban populations world-wide (Eriksen, 2016), in addition to the significant climate impact such populations have (Baer and Singer, 2014), makes it an urgent matter for social scientists to better understand their situation. The people wedged between the powerful, discourse-shaping elite of policy makers and climate scientists, and the often marginalized victims of climate disasters, are equally worthy of our attention.

Adger and colleagues stress that if the cultural dimensions of climate change continue to be ignored, it is likely that both adaptation and mitigation responses will fail to be effective since they will not reflect and relate to what matters to individuals and communities (2013, p. 116). This research represents one case of in-depth cultural study scholars have called for in order to

prepare ourselves better for a changing future (Hulme, 2008; Milton, 1997; Roncoli, et al., 2009). We have looked at climate change by combining cultural frames with individual perceptions and actions. We have addressed the role of emotions, perceptions of morality and agency, amongst other factors, in our explorations of how denial can turn into activation. The rootedness in the local is of particular importance to these dynamics. Lorenzoni and Pidgeon have written that:

> If the future of climate change rests on moral, ethical and value judgements, in which citizens will be called upon to decide and take action, then it is important to recognise that different degrees of knowledge, cultural preferences, responsibility and trust will all shape an individuals' position to the issue (2006, p. 90).

This is precisely the research's implication for policy and practice. In demonstrating the deep impact of these local dynamics in activation processes, we see how such factors ought to be further considered in climate policies. Moreover, the research has emphasized the complexity of everyday life decisions, and the multitude of factors influencing such decisions. The knowledge-deficit model was debunked quite a while ago (Hulme, 2009; Norgaard 2011), yet we see in climate communications that the quantity of information is still emphasized over the degree of quality with regards to local resonance. In practice we need to recognise the very human tendencies of uncertainty and the significance of social context when communicating and discussing potential climate change solutions. Furthermore, we ought to take into account the biases in how we process information regarding climate change: Relations to scientific notions, sense-making, moral and social implications of certain actions or attitudes, normalized ways of dealing with emotion – all of these factors strongly influence what actions we do or do not take with regards to climate change issues, and all of them are highly localized.

I recognize that this research took place in a very specific place and at a specific time, as such the generalization of the findings can only be limited. However, by showing the implications of local norms and values, and highlighting certain social dynamics, I hope to have demonstrated exactly why such factors ought to be examined when we consider the issue of climate change. I am acutely aware that this research does not contribute to climate-related policy-making everywhere or at all times, that is a consequence of treating climate change as a constructed and localized idea. However, in terms of the Norwegian setting and perhaps especially within the demography of younger adults, I believe the foregoing discussion does provide footing for some suggestions. Some of these suggestions might be applicable in a wider context as well.

Firstly, the findings show that we are dealing with a fragmentation between groups, where the climate-aware occupy one front and climate scepticists the other. I use the term front on

purpose, as it illustrates how the exchange between the "sides" is limited. Absence of an open discussion, which we have seen is partly due to the strong foothold of egalitarian norms, hinder exchange and spread of ideas. By playing on the moral aspects of the idea of climate change and posing climate scepticists as inherently bad people, I believe we are creating barriers that will hinder progress in the long run. This dynamic reminds us of the issues with discourse surrounding racism and sexism as well. When people's attitudes and actions are extended to their inherent moral quality and seen as unchangeable, it greatly harms progress and creates a dynamic where the accused part will react defensively. If the goal is to achieve further activation, I suggest that attention ought to be given to actions and ideas, and the promotion of open dialogue, not the categorization of people into boxes of "bad" or "good".

Secondly, our findings negate the assumption that young people are uninterested or unmotivated to partake in societal and global concerns. Hulme (2008, p. 8) has stated that it is easy to verbalise superficial concern with the problem, but that this concern is belied by little enthusiasm for behavioural change. Our analysis shows this is not necessarily the case.

We see that despite this activation, the result in actual action varies greatly. We have seen that especially in cities the information hails in from many sources. Everything from coffee cups to posters at buss stations, TV commercials, physical protests, and the digital sources awaiting readily in everyone's pockets is contributing to the omnipresence of climate change. The localized knowledge of the people navigating this cityscape is pieced together from more multitudinous sources than ever before. We have addressed both the effects of the blurring of information that arises from this, as well as some strategies that people use to combat the overwhelming amount of input. As scientists dealing with climate change, we have to help pave a clearer path in this world of overwhelming amount of information. I strongly believe more interdisciplinary work will be necessary to do so. Anthropology has a long tradition of dealing with complex societal issues. With many people feeling alienated from and confused by the climate change discourse, I believe we have a job to do in the general process of sensemaking and in making this issue more approachable for people.

Lastly, the findings of this research stress the need to recognise the enormous impact social media is having in shaping our worldviews. Ethnographies in the field of climate change research have a tendency to focus on sensory experience, tradition knowledge, or reactions to physical changes in landscape and weather. However, as we have addressed numerous times in our discussion: Climate change is equally a social construction and a mental and cognitive challenge, as it is a physical one. Social media has become the number one player in providing people with information on what is going on in the world, especially in this age-group. We need further insight into how these echo chambers are impacting the actions we do or do not take.

With regards to future research, I furthermore suggest we ought to examine the fragmentation caused by the moral implication of the climate change narrative. Looking at how "the other front" is imagined and approached could contribute valuable insights to overcome such divides. Comparative studies examining the climate change issue with a similar approach to this study, either with a different focus geographically speaking, on another demographic, or otherwise, would greatly complement the findings presented here. It also would have been incredibly interesting to enrich the results of this study further by conducting a complementary quantitative study on the actuality of the reported changes and actions. If more time would have been available I would have further examined the recent political developments in Norwegian society as a backdrop for this study, or generally extended the field research time-wise to gather even greater insight into the valuation of climate and nature overall.

This research has yielded in some fascinating findings, both when it comes to the strategies individuals employ to make sense of climate change, and the mechanism used to cope with the burdening effects of the idea of it. It has furthermore uncovered different factors that influence action and activation. With these findings I am pleased to have achieved what I set out to do, which was to better understand the role of climate change in everyday life. However, no research is perfect and more research always remains to be done. If this project has done anything it has awoken an engagement within me and I look forward to continue working in this field. I hope that the work presented here has both enlightened the reader in some way, and moreover, has incited some curiosity and sparked some new questions. I do thank you for reading it and hope it has brought you something valuable to take with you.

The work in anthropology of climate change is messy and complex, but the field continues to develop. It links global issues with local life worlds, and deals with mankind reassessing their role on this planet. It is a complicated field full of contradictions. Yet, I believe it is one of the most important issues anthropologists have ever addressed. Our relation to our environment and climate might be at the peak of urgency at this current time, as we approach what some call a climate breakdown. The issue might seem more problematic than ever before. I believe this is precisely why it deserves our attention. Therefore, I will sign off supporting a comment made by Mike Hulme and state that: "Climate and humanity have travelled a long way together; let us not give up now" (Hulme, 2008, p. 10).

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7. Attachments

Overview interviews:

- 06.02.19 – Informant 1 - Oslo
- 07.02.19 – Informant 2 - Oslo
- 08.02.19 – Informant 3 - Oslo
- 14.02.19 – Informant 4 - Oslo
- 17.02.19 – Informant 5 - Oslo
- 18.02.19 – Informant 6 - Oslo
- 19.02.19 – Informant 7 - Oslo
- 20.02.19 – Informant 8 - Oslo
- 21.02.19 – Informant 9 - Oslo
- 21.02.19 – Informant 10 - Oslo
- 25.02.19 – Informant 11 - Oslo
- 26.02.19 – Informant 12 - Oslo
- 26.02.19 – Informant 13 - Oslo

Total	13	
Women	5	38,5%
Men	8	61,5 %

Overview presentations and meetings:

1. Internal municipality meeting on the Green Capital – 06.02.19 - the Culture House
2. Breakfast meeting "The future is now" –13.02.19 - the Culture House
3. Evening discussion " Is the world going to hell?" – 13.02.19 - the Culture House
4. Karaoke and climate change – 19.02.19 - the Culture House
5. Breakfast meeting "Cities as the solution to Climate Change" – 27.02.19 - Ciens research centre

Abstract (English)

This research examines the ways in which people understand and deal with climate change in everyday life. Specifically, in the case of young adults (18-35 years old) in Oslo, Norway. The findings speak to an earlier research conducted by Kari Norgaard in 2000-2001 in the Norwegian country-side. Through semi-structured interviews and participant-observation, followed by an abductive content analysis, this research has sought to understand climate change as a highly localized idea combining cultural frames with individual perception and actions. Findings show a development away from denial and towards activation, but nuances these response-processes by stressing the links between the way people perceive, understand, experience and respond to climate change. Findings show that informants' understanding of climate change is shaped by *non*-experience which is heavily influenced by scientific narratives. Experiences are also shaped by social media that create an echo chamber effect, amplifying already existing attitudes. Furthermore, the research documents how people employ different strategies to deal with the abstractness of the idea of climate change, such as adhering to *hjertesaker.* It demonstrates how moral and emotional implications, also found in earlier studies, are expressed in new ways. Shame and guilt accompany the ever growing awareness of human contributions to climate issues. This research shows how the process of activation is complicated by perceptions of agency, impact and responsibility, and coexists with other solutions narratives, such as that of technological fixes. It demonstrates the significance of a number of previously unaddressed factors in turning denial into activation. Overall, a significant change from Norgaard's findings is found.

Abstrakt (Deutsch)

Diese Studie untersucht, wie Menschen den Klimawandel im Alltag verstehen und damit umgehen. Insbesondere junge Erwachsene (18-35 Jahre) in Oslo, Norwegen. Die Ergebnisse werden mit einer früheren Untersuchung verglichen, die Kari Norgaard in den Jahren 2000-2001 in Norwegen durchgeführt hatte. Durch semi-strukturierte Interviews und teilnehmende Beobachtungen, gefolgt von einer abduktiven Inhaltsanalyse, wird versucht, den Klimawandel als eine stark lokalisierte Idee zu verstehen, die kulturelle Rahmen mit individuellen Wahrnehmungen und Handlungen kombiniert. Die Ergebnisse zeigen eine Entwicklung weg von der Verleugnung und hin zur Aktivierung, nuancieren diese Reaktionsprozesse jedoch, indem sie die Zusammenhänge zwischen der Art und Weise betonen, wie Menschen den Klimawandel wahrnehmen, verstehen, erfahren und darauf reagieren. Die Studie zeigt, dass das Verständnis der InformantInnen für den Klimawandel von «Nichterfahrungen» geprägt ist, die stark von wissenschaftlichen Narrativen beeinflusst werden. Erfahrungen werden auch durch soziale

Medien geprägt, die einen Echokammer-Effekt erzeugen und bereits vorhandene Einstellungen verstärken. Darüber hinaus dokumentiert die Studie wie Menschen unterschiedliche Strategien anwenden um mit der Abstraktheit der Idee des Klimawandels umzugehen, wie zum Beispiel das Festhalten an *hjertesaker*. Sie zeigt weiter, wie moralische und emotionale Implikationen, die auch in früheren Studien gefunden wurden, auf neue Weise zum Ausdruck gebracht werden. Scham und Schuldgefühle begleiten das stetig wachsende Bewusstsein für menschliche Beiträge zum Klimaproblemen. Diese Studie zeigt, wie der Aktivierungsprozess durch die Wahrnehmung von Entscheidungsfreiheit, Einfluss und Verantwortung verkompliziert wird und mit anderen Lösungsansätzen, beispielsweise technologischen Lösungen, koexistiert. Sie zeigt die Bedeutung einer Reihe von zuvor nicht angesprochenen Faktoren für den Wechsel von der Verweigerung hin zur Aktivierung. Insgesamt zeigt sich eine signifikante Veränderung gegenüber den Ergebnissen von Norgaard.

Abstrakt (Norsk)

Dette studie undersøker hvordan mennesker forstår og håndterer klimaendringer i deres hverdag. Mer spesifikt er fokuset unge voksne (18-35 år) i Oslo, Norge. Funnene står i relasjon med et tidligere studie av Kari Norgaard som ble gjennomført i 2000-2001 i en norsk bygd. Gjennom semistrukturerte intervjuer og deltakende observasjon, fulgt av en abduktiv innholds analyse, forsøker dette studie å forstå klimaendringer som en sterk lokalisert ide som kombinerer kulturelle rammeverk med individuelle persepsjoner og handlinger. Studiet finner en utvikling bort fra fornektelse og mot aktivering, men nyanserer disse responsprosessene ved å vektlegge forbindelser mellom måter mennesker oppfatter, forstår, opplever og responderer til klimaendringer. Funnene viser at informantenes forståelse av klimaendringer er formet av en *ikke*-opplevelse, som er sterkt preget av vitenskapelige narrativ. Opplevelser blir også formet av sosial medier som skaper ekkokammer som forsterker allerede eksisterende holdninger. Videre viser studiet at forskjellige strategier blir anvendt for å håndtere abstraktheten med klimaendringsideen, for eksempel som å tilskrive seg *hjertesaker.* Det viser også hvordan moralske og emosjonelle implikasjoner, som også ble funnet i tidligere studier, blir utrykt på nye måter. Skam og skyldfølelse følger en økende bevissthet om menneskelige bidrag til klimaproblemer. Dette studie viser hvordan aktiveringsprosessen blir gjort mer komplisert gjennom oppfatninger om handlingsmulighet, påvirkning og ansvar. Videre sameksisterer fokuset på individuell aktivering med andre løsningsnarrativ, som teknologibaserte narrativ. Studiet demonstrerer betydningen av flere oversette faktorer i prosessen av å gjøre om fornektelse til aktivering. Alt i alt, blir en signifikant forandring fra Norgaard sine funn vist.