



WHO WILL END THE WAITING GAME?



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
AARHUS UNIVERSITET

LARS ESBJERG
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WEDNESDAY, 29 APRIL 15

BACKGROUND

- ▶ Legislation has been the primary instrument for regulating and improving animal welfare
- ▶ Emerging consensus that legislation regulation is not sufficient
- ▶ Market driven animal welfare has become a mantra
- ▶ Growing importance of private standards (often numerous competing standards exist)
- ▶ Increasing use of third-party certification and auditors



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PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ▶ The overall **purpose** of the project is to analyse if market forces can be used for promoting animal welfare
- ▶ We are trying to answer the following **research questions**
 1. What characterises current exchange practices related to pork (and animal welfare) between actors in the pork chain from primary producers to retailers?
 2. How do actors construct representation of the market and animal welfare?
 3. What are actors' own views on how exchange practices, norms and regulations for animal welfare in the pork industry can/should be changed to improve animal welfare?



RESEARCH SETTING

- ▶ Danish pork sector
- ▶ Important - very export oriented
- ▶ Focused on conventional pigs
- ▶ Ongoing discussion of animal welfare
- ▶ Domestic market and five export markets
- ▶ Australia
- ▶ China/Hong Kong
- ▶ Sweden
- ▶ United Kingdom
- ▶ United States

METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Multiple case study design
- ▶ Sources of empirical material
 - ▶ 40 semi-structured interviews
 - ▶ Primary producers, slaughterhouses, processors, importers, retailers and caterers
- ▶ Documentary sources
- ▶ Store visits in some markets
- ▶ Analysis and interpretation
 - ▶ Coding and categorisation
 - ▶ Theory-based interpretation



	The importance of animal welfare	Exchange practices	Representational practices	Normalising practices
Denmark	Animal welfare a (very) small niche	Close relations, frequent contacts; price and quality paramount	Ongoing discussions; sales figures; hunches; formal market research	Combination of private standards and public regulation
Australia	Animal welfare becoming more important	UK standards influencing retailer demands	-	Coles imitating UK, Woolworths sitting on the fence waiting
China/Hong Kong	Animal welfare not important yet, food safety is	Price, quality and food safety important; very close business relationships	No reliable statistics; customer visits, informal discussions and store visits	Public regulation of food safety; some private animal welfare standards
Great Britain	Local, happy and British free range pigs are the ideal	Retailers dominant; animal welfare and local foods important (esp. private brand)	Discussions with retail customers	Private standards (retailer-led); opinion leaders (TV chefs); media
Sweden	Animal welfare a given; have set high standards, resulting in lower production	Locally produced and animal welfare important; discounters growing	Comparisons with Denmark, UK	Public regulation; media important; cooperation with farmers
United States	Beware of the media; importance of animal welfare growing	Caterers so far more proactive than retailers	-	Media have a disciplining influence

DISCUSSION

- ▶ Animal welfare is a vague and contested concept
- ▶ Disagreements about what constitutes good animal welfare
- ▶ Disagreements about how animal welfare should be regulated and monitored
- ▶ Disagreements about who is responsible
- ▶ Animal welfare is objectified and singularised differently
- ▶ Competing animal welfare standards
- ▶ National or pan-national
- ▶ Animal welfare standards are enacted materially and in market practices

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ A meteorological network has been established that measures and objectifies animal welfare
- ▶ Amount of hay, space, naturalness, tail docking, castration
- ▶ Actors work together to develop new standards (and sometimes against them)
- ▶ Negotiation
- ▶ Coordination
- ▶ Investments
- ▶ External shocks



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Thank you for your attention 😊

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