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DENMARK

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English summary

Beginning in the 1990s, seafood ecolabelling schemes have proliferated with the Marine Stewardship Council as the leading and most widespread ecolabel for capture fisheries. Ecolabelling schemes are marketed as addressing environmental issues and ensuring fisheries 'sustainability'. However, concerns are continually raised over ecolabelling schemes as private-led, market-based, neoliberal forms of 'green washing', monopolizing markets while structurally favoring large-scale, volume-based fisheries. This PhD thesis is a study of ecolabelling schemes in the context of small-scale fisheries. Building on literature on the inaccessibility of ecolabelling schemes for small-scale fisheries, the focus of this thesis is on historical and current attempts of small-scale fishers to establish alternative ecolabelling schemes suited to their distinct practices and livelihoods. The main objective of this PhD project has been to use research on seafood ecolabelling and small-scale fisheries to constructively contribute to a contemporary Danish initiative intended to establish an ecolabelling scheme for small-scale fishers. Thus, this PhD project is situated in applied and engaged anthropology, where the researcher takes an active role, engaging critically with issues in the field. Together with stakeholders, including small-scale fishers, this PhD project has followed, studied and contributed to a new Danish, state-led ecolabelling scheme called NaturSkånsom.

The thesis comprises four academic papers addressing different but overlapping aspects of small-scale fisheries in the context of ecolabelling and fisheries management. Each paper addresses a distinct aspect of the case of NaturSkånsom. The first paper, Autzen and Winter (2020), is an account of the specific Danish structures of fisheries management, disadvantaging small-scale fishers and leading to the idea of NaturSkånsom as a way of safeguarding small-scale fisheries in a privatized, tradable fishing quota system. The second paper, Autzen and Ounanian (2021), analyzes contrasting conceptualization of 'sustainability' in the form of yield versus care and presents the case of an alternative ecolabelling initiative from the 1990s that laid the foundation for the concept of *naturskånsomt* fishing. The third paper, Autzen and Delaney (2021), is a study of the integration of social sustainability in fisheries ecolabelling arguing for a differentiation between the common *wage-worker centric* indicators and social sustainability for self-employed, independent fishers. The last paper, Autzen and Hegland (2021), is an analysis of the process of establishing NaturSkånsom

characterized by multilayered power processes including an essential alliance between Danish small-scale fishers and environmental NGOs.

The papers are framed by a synthesis introducing the context, theme and methodology of the PhD project, as well as the conceptual framework and a synthesizing analysis, discussion and conclusion. Because focus is on the active engagements of small-scale fishers in ecolabelling initiatives, the conceptual framework is based on the concepts of *resistance to neoliberal market-based management structures*, *the self-employed life-mode* and *neoculturation*. It is argued that while NaturSkånsom poses the challenge of contributing to current neoliberal structures, it also works as a resistance battlefield where new definitions of 'sustainable' fishing are constituted and new alliances are created supporting the life-mode specific livelihoods of small-scale fishers.

Through a dialectic analysis of the Marine Stewardship Council and an earlier Danish ecolabelling attempt, opposing modes and structures of ecolabelling schemes and their implications for small-scale fishers are compared. On the basis of the dialectic tradition, the synthesis analyzes how NaturSkånsom has been negotiated and structured to sublate such contrasting modes in order to cater to small-scale fisheries through a co-creation process, an inclusion of fishers' knowledge and an inexpensive structure of certification. The synthesis culminates with a discussion of the ongoing tensions of small-scale fishers in market-based initiatives with regards to the issue of standardization and the overarching focus on fish stock assessments. The thesis concludes on how to meaningfully structure an ecolabelling scheme for small-scale fisheries while holding the tensions and using these productively to continue to sublate contradictions

Danish summary/Dansk resumé

Siden 1990'erne har miljømærkningsordninger fået en stigende betydning i fiskeriet. Marine Stewardship Council (MSC-mærket) er den mest profilerede og udbredte af disse mærkningsordninger. Organisationerne bag fremhæver ordningerne som effektive værktøjer til at sikre miljøhensyn og 'bæredygtighed' i fiskeriet. I takt med deres udbredelse er der dog vedvarende blevet rejst kritik af miljømærkningsordningerne som værende markedsbaserede, neoliberale former for 'green washing', der skaber markedsmonopoler og strukturelt favoriserer det større, volume-baserede fiskeri. I lyset af denne kritik beskæftiger nærværende ph.d.-afhandling sig med alternative miljømærkningsordninger målrettet et skånsomt kystfiskeri.

Afhandlingen tager udgangspunkt i forskningslitteratur vedrørende barrierer i forhold til kystfiskernes deltagelse i mærkningsordningerne. Fokus er på kystfiskernes historiske og aktuelle forsøg på at etablere alternative mærkningsordninger, som tager hensyn til fiskernes særlige praksisser og eksistensbetingelser. Afhandlingens hovedformål har været at bidrage konstruktivt til et aktuelt dansk initiativ, som søger at etablere en mærkningsordning for bæredygtigt kystfiskeri - ved at anvende forskning om kystfiskere og om mærkningsordninger i fiskeriet. Dermed placerer ph.d-projektet sig i en anvendt og engageret tradition inden for antropologi, hvor forskeren indtager en aktiv rolle og engagerer sig kritisk i feltens problemstillinger. Projektet har fulgt, studeret og bidraget til den nye danske, statslige miljømærkningsordning *NaturSkånsom*.

Afhandlingen består af fire videnskabelige artikler, som hver især adresserer forskellige, overlappende aspekter af kystfiskeri i en miljømærkningskontekst, og hver artikel bidrager på forskellige måder til forståelsen af NaturSkånsom-casen. Den første artikel, Autzen and Winter (2020), er en fremstilling af specifikke fiskeriforvaltningsstrukturer i Danmark og disses konsekvenser for kystfiskeriet. Artiklen illustrerer, hvordan et specifikt forvaltningsfokus har ledt frem til idéen om NaturSkånsom som et redskab til at beskytte kystfiskeri inden for præmisserne af det danske, privatiserede fiske kvotesystem. Den anden artikel, Autzen and Ounanian (2021), består af en analyse af forskelligrettede forestillinger om 'bæredygtighed', herunder *yield* over for *care*. I artiklen præsenteres en case omkring et initiativ fra 1990'erne, der søgte at etablere en alternativ miljømærkningsordning, og som skabte fundamentet for begrebet *naturskånsomt* fiskeri.

I den tredje artikel, Autzen and Delaney (2021), undersøges inklusionen af social bæredygtighed i fiskeri mærkningsordninger. I artiklen argumenteres der for det hensigtsmæssige i at differentiere mellem typiske *lønarbejder-centristiske* indikatorer på den ene side og social bæredygtighed for selverhvervende, selvstændige fiskere på den anden. Den sidste artikel, Autzen and Hegland (2021), analyserer de komplekse magtrelationer, der opstår i forbindelse med etableringen af NaturSkånsom; herunder en vigtig alliance mellem danske kystfiskere og NGO'er.

Artiklerne bindes sammen i en syntese, der først introducerer ph.d-projektets kontekst, tematik og metodologi, og derefter redegør for de overordnede analytiske og teoretiske perspektiver. Der afsluttes med en syntetiserende analyse, diskussion og konklusion. Her anvendes begreber om *modstand mod neoliberale, markedsbaserede forvaltningstrukturer*, *den selverhvervende livsform* og *neokulturation* med henblik på at forstå kystfiskernes aktive engagement i mærkningsordningsinitiativer. Der argumenteres for, at selvom NaturSkånsom risikerer at bidrage til reproduktionen af neoliberale strukturer, fungerer mærkningsordningen samtidig som en arena for modstand, hvor nye definitioner af 'bæredygtigt' fiskeri etableres, og hvor nye alliancer skabes i arbejdet med at understøtte de livsformsspecifikke eksistensbetingelser for kystfiskere.

På baggrund af en dialektisk analyse af MSC-mærket, og det tidligere danske forsøg på at skabe en alternativ mærkningsordning, sammenlignes modsatrettede former for miljømærkningsordninger og deres respektive implikationer for kystfiskere. Med udgangspunkt i en dialektisk tradition undersøges det, hvordan NaturSkånsom er blevet forhandlet og struktureret i et forsøg på at ophæve en række umiddelbare modsigelser, så ordningen effektivt kan målrettes kystfiskeri. Denne proces karakteriseres som præget af samskabelse, en inklusion af fiskernes viden og udformningen af en prisvenlig certificeringsstruktur. Syntesen kulminerer med en diskussion af de spændinger, som opstår, når kystfiskere deltager i markedsbaserede initiativer, herunder udfordringer med standardisering og det overordnede fokus på reproduktion af fiskebestandene. Afhandlingens konklusion adresserer, hvordan der aktivt kan arbejdes med at anerkende og ophæve sådanne spændinger, så miljømærkningsordninger kan indrettes på en måde, der medvirker til at understøtte kystfiskernes fortsatte eksistens.

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Table of content

When ‘sustainability’ becomes the norm: Power dynamics in the making of a new ecolabel for low-environmental-impact, small-scale fisheries

Abbreviations

ASMP: Alternative seafood marketing programs

CFP: Common Fisheries Policy

DFPO: Danmarks Fiskeriforenings Producent Organisation (Danish Fishers' Association Producers Organization)

EU: European Union

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FSK: Forening for Skånsomt kystfiskeri Producent Organisation (Association for Low Impact, Coastal Fishing Producer's Organization)

GSSI: Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative

IFOAM: International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

ITQ: Individual Transferable Quotas

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

LIFE: Low Impact Fishers of Europe

MSC: Marine Stewardship Council

MSY: Maximum Sustainable Yield

NGO: Non-governmental organization

RVS: Responsible Vessel Scheme

TAC: Total Allowable Catch

VQS: Vessel Quota Shares

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature

Publications

Paper 1.
Autzen, M.H. & Winter, H.L. (2020). Denmark: Small-scale Fishing in a Market-Based Management System. In J.J. Pascual-Fernández, C. Pita & M. Bavinck (Eds.), *Small-Scale Fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience, and Governance* (pp. 417-437). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Paper 2.
Autzen, M.H., & Delaney, A. (2021). Considering Social Sustainability in Eco-Certification for Small-Scale Fishing – Why and How? *Human Organization, 80*(1), 61-71. doi.org/10.17730/1938-3525-80.1.61

Paper 3.
Autzen, M.H. & Ounanian, K. (2021). 'It's how you catch the fish': debates on ecolabelling, yield thinking, and care in Denmark. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of feminist geography,* doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2021.1975101

Paper 4.
Autzen, M.H. & Hegland, T. (2021). When 'sustainability' becomes the norm: Power dynamics in the making of a new ecolabel for low-environmental-impact, small-scale fisheries. *Marine Policy, 133,104742*
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Other publications related to the dissertation theme:

Dinesen, G., Rathje, I., Højrup, M., Bastardie, F., Larsen, F., Sørensen, T., Hoffmann, E., Eigaard, O. (2018). Individual transferable quotas, does one size fit all? Sustainability analysis of an alternative model for quota allocation in a small-scale coastal fishery. *Marine Policy 88*, 23-31.

Said, A., Pascual-Fernández, J., Amorim, V.I., Autzen, M.H., Hegland, T.J., Pita, C., Ferretti, J., & Penca J. (2020). Small-scale fisheries access to fishing opportunities in the European Union: Is the Common Fisheries Policy the right step to SDG14b?. *Marine Policy 118*. doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104009

1. Introduction

Skånsomt [low impact/gentle] fishing is a fishery that does not destroy seabed structures and ecosystems, has a low energy consumption and a low bycatch rate . . . The concept [skånsomt fishing] was created to have a word that could cover those vessel types that do not destroy seabed structures. When intending to support skånsomt fishing, it is important to understand that the fishers, who fish skånsomt, typically are self-employed with a lot of time spent on fishing without extensive experience with administration and without university-educated employees. These fishers, therefore, have other needs that the large-scale fishers who are backed by capital and have a higher degree of organization with employed lobbyists and consultants . . . For these [self-employed, 'skånsom'] fishers, the only things that will help are support for commercialization of their high-quality products for which they can receive a higher profit, increased fishing opportunities and a protection of their fishing areas from destructive activities, such as resource extractions and [demersal] trawling (WWF Denmark, 2014, p. 2 [author's translation]).

In November 2020, on the basis of encouragements such as in the above hearing statement from World Wide Fund for Nature's Danish office (WWF) and Danish small-scale fishers, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark introduced a new ecolabelling (certification) scheme for small-scale[1], "low impact" fisheries called *NaturSkånsom*. In the context of widespread international, non-governmental ecolabelling schemes for capture fisheries, NaturSkånsom presents an interesting case into the tensions of market-based approaches to fisheries 'sustainability' and small-scale fisheries. With the growth of international ecolabelling schemes and the increasing market penetration of especially the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), concerns have been raised about the exclusions of small-scale fisheries in these market-based approaches (Hadjimichael and Hegland, 2015; Stoll et al., 2019; Wakamatsu and Wakamatsu, 2017). While the market domination of MSC has provoked a rise of territorial ecolabelling schemes (Foley

[1] There is no universal definition of "small-scale" fishing—not even within the European Union, where definitions are most commonly based on criteria such as vessel size (most often 12 or 15 meters), length of fishing trips and types of fishing gear but vary from country to country (Penca et al. 2021; Symes, 2001). The Danish definition of so-called "coastal fishing" for regulatory purposes, presented later, is one of the broader definitions that includes vessels up to 17 meters.

and Havice, 2016), NaturSkånsom is currently the only functioning state-led, -financed and -controlled ecolabelling scheme for capture fisheries. Ecolabelling schemes, as referred to in this thesis, are different from self-declared environmental labels and governmental required labels (EU, 2005; Eden, 2011). Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) define ecolabelling schemes for capture fisheries as schemes that:

> *Entitle a fishery product to bear a distinctive logo or statement which certifies that the fish has been harvested in compliance with conservation and sustainability standards. The logo or statement is intended to make provision for informed decisions of purchasers whose choice can be relied upon to promote and stimulate the sustainable use of fishery resources (2009, p. 133).*

NaturSkånsom draws on the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark's general experience with labelling of food products, primarily the Danish organic label that is likewise state-controlled, but the scheme centers on, and is catered, for "small-scale fishing". Both politicians and small-scale fishers have pointed to NaturSkånsom as a way to address the decline of small-scale fishing. NaturSkånsom is thus connected to a political discussion about how to sustain small-scale fishing especially, as will be discussed later, in the context of a fisheries management system based on the privatization of fishing rights (Autzen and Hegland, 2021).

This PhD thesis is a product of an "industrial" PhD project embedded in the multidisciplinary project *Jammerbugt i balance*, Jammerbugt in Balance, focused on sustaining "low impact" small-scale fisheries—including the ecolabelling of small-scale fisheries products. The Danish Industrial PhD program is founded on collaborations between universities and the private sector funded partly by Innovation Fund Denmark[2]. An industrial PhD is a three-year research project where the PhD student is employed by a non-public organization or company but divides her/his time between the partnering university and the organization (AAU, 2021). As such, my (industrial) PhD project has for the past three years been a dynamic mix of applied work focusing on ecolabelling and a constant scientific reflexive process supported by my colleagues at Centre for Blue Governance at Aalborg University. On the applied side, this work has, among other things, contributed to the establishment of Naturskånsom. On the basis of the work in the Jammerbugt in Balance project, this thesis takes as its main object of study small-

[2] An independent fund under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science funding innovation and strategic research (AAU, 2021)

scale fisheries in ecolabelling. Thus, the objectives of this PhD have been to contribute critically and constructively to the current ecolabelling process (NaturSkånsom) through the research while at the same time make this process a study object.

The case of NaturSkånsom is both a lens into ongoing negotiations of fisheries 'sustainability' and into the dynamics of market-based approaches to fisheries management and their consequences and possibilities for small-scale fisheries. NaturSkånsom is a product of a specific Danish history with fisheries ecolabelling attempts, as well as international discussions and developments of fisheries ecolabelling. This introduction will gradually unfold the story of ecolabelling in fisheries beginning in the 1990s and its connection to fisheries policies with a focus on the European Union (EU) and Denmark, before introducing the research project, research questions and methodology.

1.1. Capture fisheries ecolabelling landscape and -history

In December 1995, as the organic wave swept across Europe and North America, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements' (IFOAM – Organics International) Standard Committee began discussing the possibility of establishing organic principles for wild caught seafood. IFOAM, which is an international membership-based organization founded in 1972, is the leading organization uniting and organizing organic agriculture with the world's most widespread organic farming standard (IFOAM, n.d.). In the mid-1990s, countries like Norway, Canada, New Zealand, Germany and Austria had begun working towards organic certification of aquaculture, which later were presented to IFOAM with the aim of establishing an international standard for organic aquaculture (Thrane, 2000). However, like wild game (e.g. venison) in organic meat standards, wild caught seafood was not included in these developments.

On request from a Danish member of the organization, in 1995 and 1996 IFOAM engaged in a heated discussion on the possibility of organic wild caught seafood that ultimately ended with a rejection. The rejection was explained with the same arguments for those excluding wild game, such as the lack of controllability of the environment that wild caught seafood 'grows' in—arguments that are inherently political reflecting the dominant view of what "organic" should be and mean (Kristensen, 1996; personal communication, Niels Heine Kristensen, May 5, 2018). On the 'pro-side' for establishing principles for organic wild caught seafood were Hervé La Prairie, then-President of IFOAM who was engaged in the protection of French small-scale fishing, and Niels Heine Kristensen, a Danish researcher who also contributed to discussions about organic fish facilitated by the

Danish environmental organization Living Sea (Kristensen, 1996; personal communication Niels Heine Kristensen, May 5, 2018). With Danish public funding, Living Sea had initiated a project working towards establishing an organic label for wild caught fish as:

> *An alternative development within the fisheries. The background for this work is a concern over the development-trends in the fishing sector. Increasingly heavy- and powerful fishing gear is employed while at the same time the most environmentally friendly fishing methods are being displaced. The social, economic and structural frameworks for the fishing are changing which create problems especially for the coastal [small-scale] fishers* (Levende Hav, 1996, p. 6 [author's translation]).

Despite public funding and political interest in fisheries sustainability through labelling, as examined later, Living Sea's initiative was countered by the large-scale fishing industry. Discussions about organic (wild caught) fish *"exploded with opposing interests"* between different segments of the fishing fleet (Thrane, 2000, p. 76 [author's translation]). Hence, while organic labelling of aquaculture was developed in the 1990s, labelling of wild caught fish took another route with the establishment of non-governmental 'sustainable' ecolabels led primarily by the MSC launched in 1997 (MSC, 2017).

Prompted by MSC, international discussions of ecolabelled wild caught seafood continued in the 1990s among other places in the Nordic Council of Ministers[3] and between FAO and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Thrane, 2000). In addition, other, in some cases national, non-governmental attempts of seafood ecolabelling schemes, inspired by the organic label(s), continued. For instance, the Swedish organization and certification-body for organic farming, KRAV, established principles for ecolabelled wild caught seafood in the 2000s (KRAV, n.d.; Thane, 2000). As an output of these discussions in 2005, FAO published the first version of their Guidelines for the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries (FAO, 2009; Thrane et al., 2009). Following these guidelines, ecolabelling schemes should, among other things, be voluntary, based on independent certification and auditing, be transparent, market-driven and non-discriminatory (FAO, 2005; Gutierrez et al., 2016). This is in line with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that define

[3] The council consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Greenland, Faroe Islands and Åland and is the official body for governmental collaboration in the Nordic Region (Nordic Co-operation, n.d.).

environmental labelling as voluntary schemes with a consistent standard, *"designed to reduce environmental effects by promoting market-driven demand for and supply of products which are verified by a third party"* (EU, 2005, p. 11).

While ecolabelling schemes can be managed and/or controlled/audited by public authorities, private organizations or a mix, capture fisheries ecolabelling schemes have so far primarily been driven by different constellations of private entities (EU, 2005; Vandergeest et al., 2015). As a number of such private-led schemes have been established, calls for tools to recognize schemes that live up to FAO guidelines have resulted in the Global Benchmark Tool from 2015. This tool, developed and managed by the public-private partnership Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI), benchmarks seafood ecolabelling schemes (who applies for it) on the basis of the FAO Guidelines for the ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification (Vandergeest et al., 2019; GSSI, n.d.). Like FAO guidelines and capture fisheries ecolabelling schemes in general, the motivation for this initiative is explained by a concern for the state of marine ecosystems addressed through market-based approaches for sustainable utilization of the fishing resources (GSSI, n.d.). Such market-based approaches need also to be viewed in the context of fisheries management.

1.2. Fisheries management in Denmark and the European Union

When MSC was established and Living Sea worked towards an organic label for wild caught fish in the 1990s, these ecolabel initiatives unfolded against a background of fisheries management in the EU and beyond failing to effectively address a widespread problem of overexploitation of the fishing resources. Overexploitation was largely rooted in overcapacity of fishing fleets compared to the available resources, and the imbalances that had led to depleted fish stocks and marine ecosystems more generally. In the EU, in particular, the development had been fueled by public subsidies for fleet development, which led to an increasingly efficient and large-scale EU fleet (Hegland and Raakjær, 2020; Thrane et al., 2009; Thrane, 2000). Although publicly subsidized scrapping rounds in the 1980s and 1990s reduced the number of fishing vessels, the aggregate overall capacity of the national fleets had continued to grow due to newer, larger and more efficient vessels (Hegland and Raakjær, 2020; Thrane, 2000; Vedsmand, 1998; Høst, 2015). The development was linked to the ongoing race for fish by coastal states favoring large-scale seagoing vessels. In continuation, the introduction of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) shares for some species led to a race for 'historical rights' for the remaining

species, as catch shares came to be determined by historical track records (Højrup, forthcoming; Symes, 2001). In the same period, Living Sea echoed the concern that the development was favoring large-scale, seagoing fisheries over small-scale fisheries, and that small-scale fisheries were generally ignored in EU fisheries policies due to among other things a lack of data for the sector and the general focus on efficiency (Levende Hav, 1996; 1997; 1999; Penca, 2019; Symes, 2001).

The EU sought to address its issues of overexploitation by implementing various technical measures, leading to the agreement on and introduction of the 'full' Common Fisheries Policy (CPF) in 1983 with the aim of sustaining marine resources (initially primarily meaning commercial fish stocks) by securing a balanced utilization of fish stocks. In the 1970s, leading up to the CFP, the EU introduced TAC shares based on scientific advice for a range of target species (Raakjær, 2009; Thrane, 2000). However, in the early years after 1983 focus was more on sector development than actual reductions of fishing pressure. Therefore, despite introductions of TACs, protected areas, control and surveillance measures, subsidies for vessel scraping etc., TAC levels for target species had to be cut further in the 1990s and early 2000s. The struggles between different fisheries over different interdependent fish stocks, habitats and fishing gears, as well as issues with for instance bycatch and discards, resulted in ongoing contradictions, leading to yet new measures complicating and limiting the effectiveness of fisheries management (Højrup, forthcoming; Symes and Phillipson, 2009). It was not until after the CFP reforms of 2002 and 2013 that the performance of the CFP, especially on the conservation of fish stocks, improved noticeably (Hegland and Raakjær, 2020; Autzen and Hegland, 2021). Nonetheless, of relevance to especially small-scale fisheries, researchers continue to point to the lack of systematic implementation of social objectives and considerations of fisheries dependent communities in the EU (Symes and Phillipson, 2009; Hegland and Raakjær, 2020).

Although the annual decision on the level of the different TACs is taken at EU level, it remains up to Denmark, and any other EU member state, to decide on how to allocate and manage its resulting national share of the different TACs[4]. Beginning in the early 2000s, Denmark introduced market-based allocation-systems for target species based on the model of Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQ). In the demersal sector for consumption species, this system was termed

[4] The TACs are divided between the EU member states according to fixed allocation keys, the 'relative stability', securing each EU member state the same relative share of the different fish stocks each year. The allocation keys were agreed based on historical fishing patterns and in general date back to the adoption of the CFP in 1983 (Hegland and Raakjær, 2020).

Fartøjs Kvote Andele, Vessel Quota Shares (VQS) (Autzen and Winter, 2020; Autzen and Hegland, 2021; Høst, 2015). The demersal sector for consumption species consists of more than 2000 more or less active fishing vessels of all sizes, targeting a range of different species (the most important in value being cod, plaice and nephrops (DFPO and DPPO, 2020)) with a variety of different fishing gear (Høst, 2015; Autzen and Hegland, 2021; Autzen and Winter, 2020).

The VQS system, was—like ITQ systems in general—introduced with the articulated aim of simultaneously addressing overcapacity, environmental and especially economic sustainability while simplifying management to the benefit of certain segments of the sector. The positive effects of an ITQ-system are supposedly prompted by providing owners of fishing vessels with property-like, sellable rights to the fish resource in the form of privatized quota shares. Thereby, in theory, quota-holders have a stronger incentive for sustainable utilization of the fish resources while allowing the more 'efficient' vessel owners to buy up from the less 'efficient', thus delivering on both economic and biological sustainability measures. In Denmark, the economic performance of the fishing sector as a whole improved following the capitalization of fishing rights in the form of ITQs. Research has shown, however, that access to capital (low interest rates and capital accumulated by an earlier shift to an ITQ system in the pelagic fishing sector), rather than efficiency or sustainability, became a determining factor driving the structural changes towards fewer vessels following the introduction of the VQS system (Høst, 2015; Autzen and Hegland, 2021).

The Danish VQS system is in its totality relatively complex, consisting of various, evolving features designed to avoid some of the known consequences of ITQ management systems, such as in particular quota concentration and decline of small-scale fisheries. Resulting from negotiations between Danish small-scale fishers and political parties, a Coastal Fishing Scheme[5] was included within the VQS system in 2007. The Coastal Fishing Scheme is designed as a protection mechanism for small-scale fisheries providing the eligible vessels with extra, annually allocated, state-held, non-transferable quota shares on top of their own vessel quota shares (Autzen and Winter, 2020; Autzen and Hegland, 2021). The Coastal Fishing Scheme has, however, only been a limited success when it comes to protecting small-scale held fishing rights from being bought up by large-scale actors. The 'recognition' of a coastal segment in the regulations did, however, create a 'political presence', which has allowed small-

[5] The Coastal Fishing Scheme has over the years in itself become relatively complex and now in practice consists of two separate Coastal Fishing Schemes, each protecting different segments (Autzen and Winter, 2020).

scale fishers' representatives to be invited into ministry-led working groups negotiating the continual adjustments to these schemes as well as other initiatives supporting small-scale fishers, such as the establishment of the new ecolabelling scheme NaturSkånsom (Autzen and Hegland, 2021; Autzen and Winter 2020).

Despite the Coastal Fishing Scheme and other provisions, the VQS system led to major structural changes in the Danish demersal fishing sector, which had large effects on the small-scale segment. As a result, employment and capacity in the sector as whole decreased, landings have been concentrated in the larger harbors (leading to the closure of fishing activities in many smaller harbors), quota shares have been heavily concentrated on large fishing companies, and fish are increasingly caught with demersal trawls rather than with so-called "low impact" Danish traditional gear types, such as Danish seine (anchor seine[6]), nets and hooks (Rigsrevisionen, 2017; Høst, 2015; Autzen and Winter, 2020; Said et al., 2020). While some of these structural developments were clearly in motion before the introduction of the VQS system, they were fueled, and others enabled, by the shift to the privatized quota share system (Høst, 2015; Autzen and Winter, 2020).

1.3. Small-scale fishing communities and the collaboration leading to this Industrial PhD project

The introduction of the VQS management scheme had widespread consequences for Danish small-scale fishing communities as vessel prices rose considerably due to allocated fishing rights. This created an unbalanced situation where vessel owners could suddenly exchange their vessels for prices not reflecting vessel size or conditions, whereas their crew members, as well as future generations, lost access to the fishing resources (Autzen and Delaney, 2020; Høst, 2015). In the coastal fishing village Thorupstrand, where I grew up, vessel prices rose up to 1000 percent during the first year of the VQS system, tempting fishers to sell their fishing rights (originally tied to their vessels) to fishers in the large-scale fishing sector, who were backed by banks and investors. In the neighboring fishing community, Lild Strand, all fishing vessels were sold during the first months following the introduction of the new management system. This, as well as an increased pressure from outside

[6] Danish seine is used by small-scale Danish fishing vessels for catching flat fish on sandy seabeds. It is a technique where two long, soft robes—attached to an anchor in one end, a net in between the robes, and the vessel in the other end—are laid (sailed) out after which the vessel anchors up and hauls in the robes and thus the net (Gislason et al. 2014). In Danish fishing regulations, Danish seine is characterized as "low impact" fishing gear along with passive gear types such as hooks, nets and traps.

investors, led the fishers of Thorupstrand, to seek out alternative ways of organizing and securing stable access to fishing rights for the community. Ultimately, this led to the establishment of the common fishing quota share company organized as a cooperative, *Thorupstrand Kystfiskerlaug*, Thorupstrand Guild of Coastal Fishers, where fishing quotas are held by members collectively. Through the financing of local banks, the guild has bought up quota shares that they distribute among them annually through a flexible distribution system allowing for individual needs. Members pay a membership fee that is repaid when they leave the guild, whereas fishing quotas stay in the guild for future generations of the local fishing community. While this has secured the access to fishing rights for this specific community, it has also created a precarious dependence on banks which is especially challenging during years with low landings, low fish prices or instability in the financial sector leading to higher interest rates (such as during the latest financial crisis). Such challenges, and the general development in the fishing sector as a consequence of this management system, have led to a stronger organization of Danish small-scale fishers as well as new fisher-led experiments. In 2014, the ongoing struggle between different fisheries, leading a segment of the small-scale fishers to feel unrepresented by the only national organization for the demersal fisheries, led to the establishment of a national producers' organization for small-scale fisheries, *Forening for Skånsomt Kystfiskeri*, Association for Low Impact, Coastal Fishing Producer's Organization (FSK) (Autzen and Winter, 2020; Autzen and Hegland, 2021).

The project Jammerbugt in Balance is connected to these changes with an overall aim of supporting and sustaining the development of an economically, socially and environmentally viable small-scale fishing. It is a part of a larger struggle where small-scale fishers are trying to redefine the development of the fisheries; establishing their sector as part of the future. This is against a background of prominent actors from the large-scale fishing sector characterizing small-scale fisheries as merely *"postcard fishing"* (Andersen, 2021). Furthermore, it is part of a larger geopolitical struggle over local fishing grounds between, among others, Dutch beam trawlers and Danish small-scale fishers. Jammerbugt in Balance, that includes a close collaboration with Danish small-scale fishers, including Thorupstrand, is led by the research and communication organization *Han Herred Havbåde*, based in the northern part of north Jutland, in the bay of Jammerbugt facing the Skagerrak Sea. Jammerbugt in Balance, including this PhD project, is funded mainly by the VELUX-Foundations with project members based in Han Herred Havbåde and consultants from the National Institute of Aquatic Resources at the Technical University of Denmark.

1.4. Problem statement — In search for solutions and reflection

As recent research on ecolabelling schemes discusses, international non-governmental ecolabelling initiatives, although widespread, are challenged with several issues. The issues with most relevance to the Danish seafood context is the reality that market incentives in the form of price premium of certified fish is disappearing (especially on the fisher (producer) level), the competition between different labels is increasing and social sustainability factors, not previously addressed by these schemes, are gaining attention (Roheim et al., 2018; Gutierrez et al., 2016). As predominantly MSC products take over the market, the price premium of certified products fades, and fishers have to find new strategies for value adding and market differentiation (Bush et al., 2013). Research on seafood ecolabelling have focused mainly on non-governmental ecolabelling schemes (Vandergeest et al., 2015). While there are several studies of the wide-spread MSC, few have studied what happens, when an ecolabel, such as MSC, becomes the norm and new initiatives therefore must find ways of exceeding existing ecolabels in order to create a distinct product. Large-scale ecolabelling schemes have been criticized of creating monopoly-like situations, where small-scale producers are excluded (Hadjimichael and Hegland, 2015), but how do small-scale fishers cope with this situation? What are the possibilities and challenges of establishing an ecolabelling scheme, when large-scale ecolabels have already occupied the concept of 'sustainability'?

The Danish ecolabelling process is a way of trying to address the dominant influence of especially MSC on the Danish seafood market—while trying to sustain small-scale fishing and its conditions of possibility within a market-based fisheries management system. The scheme is also a part of a larger redistribution initiative of political attention, power and fishing quota shares from the larger-scale fishing fleet to the small-scale fishing sector. As with other ecolabels, it is a product of politics and uneven power relations (Eden, 2011) and it is therefore relevant to understand the processes that form the ecolabel, and how the subjects, especially the fishers, navigate and negotiate these processes. As this PhD project has been characterized as a dynamic interplay between applied, practical work and reflexive research engaging critically with the theme of ecolabelling and the NaturSkånsom process, two synthesizing research questions guide this thesis:

1. How can an ecolabelling scheme be structured to the context of small-scale fisheries?

2. What dilemmas and contradictions are created in such a process and how can these be understood?

1.5. Structure of the thesis and the contributions of individual papers

The thesis consists of four published papers and this synthesis. Each paper addresses parts of the total perspective and contributes to the overall research questions from its individual angle.

Paper 1.: Autzen and Winter 2020, "Denmark: Small-Scale Fishing in a Market-Based Management System"

Paper 1. is a chapter in the book "Small-Scale Fisheries in Europe: Status, Resilience and Governance" edited by José Pascual-Fernández, Cristina Pita and Maarten Bavinck and published in 2020. The chapter is cowritten with Hanne Lyng Winter, marine biologist, who has a long history in Danish NGOs focusing on marine issues, and who currently works as a consultant for the national Association for Low Impact, Coastal Fishing Producers' Organization (FSK) in Denmark. This paper works as a background chapter for this thesis and is focused on the structural and political context of Danish small-scale fisheries and fisheries management. It explains the different management and industry developments that have led to ecolabelling being a part of the 'solution' to a problem of a vulnerable and declining small-scale fishing sector. This paper is more descriptive than the other papers as a consequence of the book format and -project.

Paper 2.: Autzen and Ounanian 2021, "'It's how you catch the fish': debates on ecolabelling, yield thinking, and care in Denmark"

Paper 2. is published in *Gender, Place and Culture*. It is cowritten with the main supervisor of this PhD, associate professor Kristen Ounanian. The paper takes a feminist care approach to fisheries management through the case of Living Sea and their ecolabelling attempt in the 1990s. It discusses conceptualizations of fisheries 'sustainability' and presents the emic concept of Fishing with Care—that NaturSkånsom builds on—and its connections to an idea of fisher-led responsibility, stewardship and ethics. The paper discusses how the focus on care contra yield has shaped Danish small-scale fishers' political work leading to NaturSkånsom and the particular concept of *skånsomt* fishing.

Paper 3.: Autzen and Delaney 2021, "Considering Social Sustainability in Eco-Certification for Small-Scale Fishing – Why and How?"

Paper 3. is published in *Human Organization*, the journal of the Society of Applied Anthropology and cowritten with associate professor Alyne Elizabeth Delaney, co-supervisor of this PhD project. This paper discusses social sustainability in fisheries

ecolabelling arguing that standard social sustainability indicators in capture fisheries are based on a wage-worker centrism that does not capture (and is not suitable for) the life-mode of the independent, self-employed small-scale fisher. Using the case of small-scale fisheries in Denmark, the article suggests how to meaningfully incorporate social sustainability factors in ecolabelling for small-scale fishers.

Paper 4.: Autzen and Hegland 2021, "When 'sustainability' becomes the norm: Power dynamics in the making of a new ecolabel for low-environmental-impact, small-scale fisheries"

Paper 4. is cowritten with associate professor Troels Hegland and is published in *Marine Policy*. Employing a multilayered approach to power, the paper analyzes the creation of NaturSkånsom, the alliances behind it, and thus how Danish small-scale fishers have worked to strengthen their position in political settings. The paper provides a lens into the ongoing dynamics and interplay between environmental NGOs, the fishing sector and political settings structuring the possibilities of the different actors and an initiative like NaturSkånsom.

The papers build on distinct and overlapping methodologies introduced in the papers. The methodology section of this thesis, therefore, focus on the overall research process, reflects on the combination of applied work and anthropological research and shortly describe the methodologies and analytical approaches of the four papers. Following the Methodology section, the Literature Review on ecolabelling presents the major scholarly discussions and conceptualizations of ecolabelling in capture fisheries including the marginalization of small-scale fisheries in such initiatives. This is followed by an Analytical and Conceptual framework introducing main concepts and discussions that this thesis builds upon and is in conversation with. The next sections, the PhD "synthesis", build on the papers and address the overall research questions. First, the ecolabelling schemes of MSC and Living Sea are carefully analyzed in relation to three themes chosen for their relevance for small-scale fisheries. Next, is an analysis of how NaturSkånsom has been developed and negotiated to sublate the opposing modes and structures of the aforementioned schemes in order to cater for small-scale fisheries. The two last sections discuss the dilemmas of this market-based approach and how to understand this process as something exceeding basic resistance while still being characterized by ongoing tensions.

1.6. Methodology: At the intersection of applied science and anthropological research

This PhD project required a methodology which could encompass both the applied (engaged) context of the project and research questions. The methodology has been characterized as a circling between anthropological, qualitative research methods, engaged anthropology and applied work informing the research process. The methods and methodological approach also reflect the main object of study, as an emergent process of establishing an ecolabelling scheme (NaturSkånsom). A concrete aim of the project has been to critically and constructively engage with the process and directly contribute to the development of the labelling scheme. Throughout the project, I have simultaneously studied fisheries ecolabelling and contributed to the establishment and implementation of NaturSkånsom. Consequently, it has been a constant interplay between active (and practical) collaborations with stakeholders and a more inductive research process trying to scientifically understand the process and phenomena of ecolabelling from new angles.

During the project, I have had to consistently adapt methods to the context(s)—something that often characterizes social science in the marine area where field sites, access and people might be harder to reach than expected and require more intuitive skills than textbook techniques (Ounanian et al., 2021). Thus, there has been a high degree of elasticity of my methodological approach, where I have turned to opportunities to participate in different settings and interview more people when I have had the chance. This has been necessary because of the inductive research approach, where new themes and questions have emerged during the research, and in order to arrive at a saturation point for different themes (which, I did not find, was necessarily reached by planning X number of interviews). This 'elasticity' of methodology is a common feature of qualitative research where studies are continuously redesigned in order to adjust to the changing field of research, access and questions arising during research (Janesick, 1998). The methodological approach and -design for my project, in other words, have emerged from the specific context(s) (including people of my research) as much as from predefined and textbook-inspired design (Møller et al., 2015; Chamberlain, 2000). In this section, I explain and reflect on the methods, positions and roles, including implications for access, that were in play in the project.

1.6.1. Positionality – coming to the 'field'

When Han Herred Havbåde (in partnership with National Institute of Aquatic Resources at the Technical University of Denmark) applied to the VELUX Foundations for funding for the project Jammerbugt in Balance, one of seven focal areas of the project was ecolabelling of local small-scale fisheries products. With the aim of increasing resilience of local fishing communities, Han Herred Havbåde wanted to facilitate collaborations between marine scientists and local fishers, work with buyers and environmental NGOs and push for fisheries policies supporting small-scale fishing. Initially, when the project period began in 2016, project workers and local fishers collaborating with Han Herred Havbåde looked to Naturland's capture fisheries program and Slow Food's Slow Fish network as ways to create market differentiation for small-scale fishers operating from the bay of Jammerbugt. As a majority of the Danish political parties (not including the then-government), prompted by the Association for Low Impact, Coastal Fishing Producer's Organization (FSK), suggested working on a national ecolabelling scheme for small-scale fishers in December 2016 (Socialdemokratiet et al. 2016), Jammerbugt in Balance began working closely with this initiative in collaboration with FSK and the responsible ministry. Jammerbugt in Balance (with myself as a key participant) has from the beginning taken an active role in co-creating the scheme by discussing criteria and scope, working with local fishers trying to anchor the scheme (in the small-scale fishing sector and with buyers) and trying to solve issues around the implementation and certification processes together with fishers, FSK and the ministry. While other labelling strategies continued to be a focus of the Jammerbugt in Balance project, the NaturSkånsom process became a focal point—especially for my work in the project.

When I started this PhD project in 2018, I had been working in the project Jammerbugt in Balance for 1.5 years and thus I had come to the field from an applied position. In addition, I grew up partly in a small fishing village and had recently moved back to the village where my family also has a longer history both researching fisheries and contributing to sustaining the village as an active place for fishing, including facilitating the creation of the Thorupstrand Guild of Coastal Fishers. Thus, I have not had a neutral position and it has been both a personal and professional ambition of mine to contribute constructively to the livelihoods of Danish small-scale fishers. Both in anthropology and in the tradition of action-research such ambitions are not new (Sluka, 2012a; Hastrup et al., 2009; Bell et al., 2008; Ortner, 2019), but it calls for transparency as a way of addressing 'objectivity' and biases—with an acknowledgement of how it is never possible to observe or conduct qualitative research from a non-position (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010;

Hastrup, 2003). Instead, I have strived for openness and reflection knowing that one always chooses a perspective and a context (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010) and that there is "*no value-free or bias-free design*" (Janesick, 1998, p. 41). Explaining the context of my study, my roles, my positions and intentions is also an acknowledgement of the situatedness of knowledge and knowledge production (Janesick, 1998; Ounanian et al., 2021).

The mix of qualitative methods involved in this project testify to the fluidity of empirical reality (Hastrup, 2003) and the fact that the field has been less of an actual place and more thematic. Therefore, I have moved back and forth between document analyses—from everything between policy documents and newspapers—participant observation, semi-structured, unstructured and informal interviews, dialogs and workshops. I am informed by ethnographic fieldwork, living in a fishing village, but my empirical field is defined as Danish small-scale fishers' ecolabelling attempts. The informants of this project are not limited to small-scale fishers but involve other people from the seafood sector too, as well as people participating in the formation of NaturSkånsom. I have approached these stakeholders, including fishers, as collaborators, highlighting that not only the researcher produces knowledge, rather that knowledge production is a collaborative process where roles and approaches are constantly negotiated (Sluka and Robben, 2012; Holmes and Marcus, 2008).

1.6.2. Engaged anthropology informed by action research

This research project is situated in what is termed the *"engaged turn"* in anthropology (Ortner, 2019, p. 1). As explained by Ortner, engaged anthropology is characterized by projects:

> *Chosen for their involvement in real-world problems, and/or such involvement is brought to light and highlighted rather than ignored; and/or the anthropologist's role is understood to be one of critical, and sometimes activist, engagement with the issues at hand* (Ortner, 2019, p. 1).

Engaged anthropology, like action research, is not a method in itself, but an approach shared in various degrees between many social scientists (Sluka, 2012a). Action research, that often articulates an aim to experiment, intervene, change, create or solve something by means of research and analyses together with other people, is also focused on practical involvement in the field (Nielsen and Nielsen, 2010; Noffke and Somekh, 2009). There are numerous different techniques, specified approaches and directions within action research, and while I have not

designed my research as action research, the field and approaches of action research have been an inspiration that has shaped my research process. I have mainly been inspired by action research's traditional and general focus on active participation on the basis of analysis, and the relation between research and practice characterized as founded on mutual realizations and impact (Nielsen and Nielsen, 2010; Hastrup, 2003). Unlike (much) action research, I, as the researcher, have not been the facilitator of a project with active involvement of practitioners. Instead, I have had the dual role of the engaged researcher and the practitioner together with both other researchers and practitioners. Applied anthropology, action research as well as other engagements with solution-oriented science risk being drawn into narrow calls for instrumental frameworks where science is supposed to contribute to a specific paradigm of economic growth and new types of regulation and governance (Nielsen and Nielsen, 2010). In this PhD project, I have tried to maintain a constant reflection on what I have been contributing to, and whom it benefits; not that this is something, I have always had the ultimate ability to decide, but that constant reflection has helped me negotiate my roles within different settings.

Some of my engagements have had a more explorative action research-inspired approach than others. For instance, I volunteered to help facilitate and draft a "coexistence negotiation" between the Danish MSC Office and a representative from NaturSkånsom, where we tried, and failed, to reach an agreement on a document comparing the two ecolabels on the basis of different focus areas. Such a document had been requested by stakeholders in *Parnerskab for bæredygtigt fiskeri*, Partnership for Sustainable Fishing, where I have participated in discussions, workshops and seminars together with actors from the fishing industry, processing industry, buyers and NGOs addressing a multitude of aspects on fisheries sustainability. As a consequence of the partnership rarely agreeing on subjects, contributing to an increasing confusion especially among buyers, the aim of the so-called Coexistence work was to make clear the differences between the labels:

> *Field reflections, February 2019.*
> *The so-called "co-existence" or "matrix" work began last fall [2018], when an employee working on NaturSkånsom from FSK suggested a person from MSC to meet and make a "form of contract" about how each label positions itself in relation to the other and put on paper how each label addresses different aspects of "sustainability" that other actors in the Partnership can then orient themselves after (...). I volunteered to participate and take the role of putting into text what they 'agree on'. I have now made a first draft that the representatives for the labels will discuss tomorrow at our meeting at the Danish Ethical Trading Initiative.*

While I spent quite some time drafting this "co-existence" document, sending it back and forth, trying to reconcile the differences in perspectives between the representatives from the two labels, it never developed into something the representatives could both accept[7]. Our inability to draft a document that all parties could live with shows not only the high degree of disagreement and positioning, but also the constant negotiations of sustainabilities taking place. Even though I went into this engagement with the aim of establishing some form of common ground and creating a useful document for the partnership, the failure to realize this goal taught me a lot about the field. For instance, the way in which the label organizations were highly aware of how labels were compared and positioned vis a vis each other but preferred not to comment on the other label or 'recognize' it publicly. The co-existence work as well as discussions in the partnership also made clear the high conflict area around fishing gear impact (on sea floor).

My applied (action research-inspired) engagements and contributions in the field, informing my research project, can be divided into two rough categories: (a) the ones that I facilitated primarily involving small-scale fishers and (b) the ones that I participated in, but did not initiate—opportunities that I seized as they came forward in the working groups and partnerships that I participated in. An example of the latter is the work in the Partnership for Sustainable fish where I also participated in workshops with different stakeholders and contributed to a guide[8] informing fish buyers of the different aspects of sustainability in fisheries and aquaculture and what indicators (including labels) to look for when buying fish. As a part of actively contributing to the label process, throughout the project I have held informal and formal meetings with fishers discussing criteria and structure of NaturSkånsom and participated in meetings between fishers and environmental NGOs. I also participated in facilitating the courses for NaturSkånsom:

> *Field reflections, February 2020.*
> *The NaturSkånsom labelling process has been moving very slowly since the fall when the different environmental organizations began demanding MSY to be a part of the Standard—also it seems that different EU clauses have had to be considered by the ministry.*

[7] As the agreement was that we would not share the document before all parties had signed it off, I unfortunately cannot share the "co-existence" drafts.
[8] Link to the guide: https://www.dieh.dk/dyn/Normal/3/23/Normal_Content/file/1748/1612867051/indkoebsguide-for-baeredygtig-fisk_210121.pdf

> *They [responsible ministry] still work with a timeline of implementing the label this summer, and they have asked Fiskeriskolen [vocational educational institution for fishers in Denmark] to begin opening up the obligatory quality assurance courses for the label. (. . .). FSK has asked for one of the courses to take place here in Thorupstrand, and I am currently trying to plan the logistics for it while also mobilizing fishers to attend. Several things are still unclear, so I am in daily contact with the ministry, the fishers and FSK. I've had to reach out to the school a couple of times as it is basically impossible to find any information about the course (course material, what facilities are needed to carry out the course etc.) and the exam. This evening I'm hosting an information meeting for interested fishers—several of them are worried about the written exam, about how much they need to read for it, and mostly how attending will mean that they miss two days of fishing.*

The co-construction (between FSK, the ministry and a range of stakeholders including Jammerbugt in Balance) process characterizing NaturSkånsom meant that my work has had these practical aspects of planning and facilitating meetings and collaborating with FSK, the ministry and environmental NGOs trying to include local fishers' perspectives and engagements.

1.6.3. Interviews, participant observation and settings

Coming from an understanding of the interview as an interaction between people founded on a construction of a dialog, I have approached my interviews as places for contextual knowledge creation and sharing and as a way to access the lived experiences and perspectives of people (Tanggaard and Brinkmann, 2010; Spradley, 1979). Some of my interviews have been semi-structured guided by pre-written interview-guides, and many have been more informal and unstructured (Bernard, 1994). Unstructured interviews, in particular, helped me get to know people and to listen to them speak about their own concerns. My childhood in a fishing village and my knowledge about fishing related culture, material culture (e.g., fishing gear) and issues (e.g., politics), have helped me when reaching out and talking to small-scale fishers in different places. Thus, I have used our common knowledge as grounds for establishing rapport and meaningful relations (Sluka, 2012b) trying also to contribute with stories from my own background in fisheries when talking to fishers.

Photos from fieldwork among small-scale fishers together with my daughter, Inge.

I have not conducted formal interviews with fishers from my hometown as these fishers are used to having discussions with me and thus any formal interview setting would feel awkward and too 'set up'. I have, however, had endless opportunities to talk with local fishers—have "*field conversations*" (Wadel, 1991, p. 47), also known as informal interviews (Bernard, 1994)), and actively participate in meetings with these fishers, including meetings between them and FSK. It has also been my collaborations with FSK that has led me to small-scale fishers in other places in Denmark. All interviews I have conducted with fishers outside my community, have taken place either on board their fishing vessels or on quay, where I have often had to follow them around or take part in whatever work they were doing and be flexible about conversation length and time of day. It has been a priority to conduct interviews with small-scale fishers from different geographical regions—covering all the different sea areas used by Danish small-scale fishers (the North Sea, Skagerrak, Kattegat, the Baltic, the Belt Sea and Oresund). In addition, interviewees were chosen on the basis of use of fishing gear in order to cover the most commonly used "low impact" fishing gear types (hooks, Danish seine, nets (including pound net) and pots/creels). I reached informants primarily through contacts in FSK, but also via fishers in my hometown and by visiting the largest Danish fishing harbors. I have also conducted interviews with officials and employees working with fisheries in different organizations—these have had a much more formal setting where my affiliation to the university has provided me with access.

Throughout the PhD project, I have kept fieldnotes. In cases of participation in meetings, I have kept personal minutes of meetings, saved any public minutes and written additional fieldnotes about my observations. Fieldnotes,

as well as minutes, have been used in coding processes for the different papers, but also during the PhD project as a guiding tool into themes and issues that needed further exploration. As an example, a meeting in the Partnership for Sustainable Fishing in 2018 led me into exploring the use of "sustainability" and "skånsomt" in fisheries ecolabelling and to take part in the matrix work:

> *Field reflection, October 2018.*
> *Today I participated in another seminar in Partnership for Sustainable Fishing. Like the other meetings and workshops in the Partnership, it was characterized by disagreements and conflicting claims confusing actors from the food sector. At the end of today's seminar, a participant from FSK finally addressed the elephant in the room by saying that the fisheries-related actors really need to sit down and figure out what "we can agree and disagree about in relation to a definition of sustainability within fisheries in order for the Partnership to function". Earlier in group conversations at the seminar, two actors representing the foodservice sector and retail chains had noted how the main take-home message for them from the work in the Partnership had been how "you cannot trust anyone [actors in fisheries plus labelling sectors]" when it comes to understanding what sustainable fisheries look like. This was unfortunate as one of them said: "because this was my primary reason for coming here [learning about what sustainable fisheries and sustainable fish products are]".*

I have listened to all recordings from semi-structured interviews and transcribed around 70% of these, only leaving out parts that were not at all related to the main topic of the interview. As described in two of the papers (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021; Autzen and Hegland, 2021), I have used Nvivo 12 software when coding documents, transcripts and fieldnotes (see methods and coding approach for each paper later in the next section). Table 1. Show the number of semi-structured interviews, participant observation in formal settings and analyzed documents. The table *does not* include the large number of informal meetings, field conversations (informal interviews) and days spend in the fishing community where I live that have likewise informed (and formed) this PhD project.

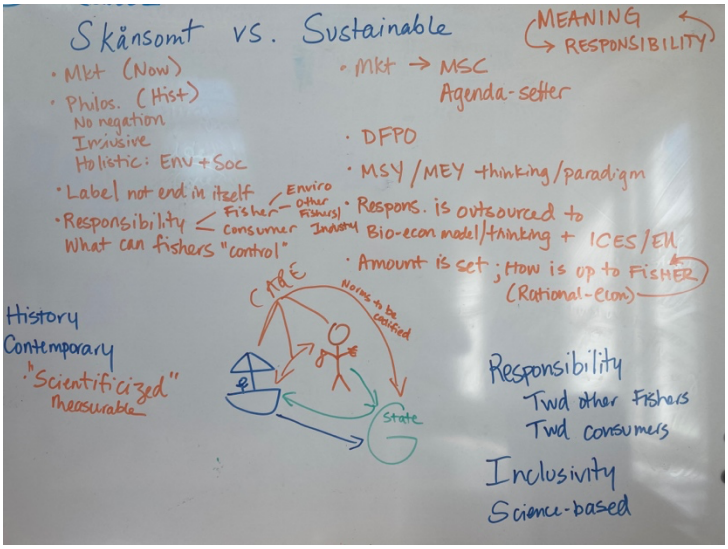
Table 1. Data collection

Semi-structured interviews	**Number**
Small-scale fishers	24
Ecolabelling organizations	4
Marine scientists	2 (focus group with 4 people)
Fisheries organizations	5 (with 3 different people)
Public servants	4
Participant observation	**Number**
Formal meetings	34
Workshops and seminars	14
Documents	**Number**
News articles	18
Policy documents	12
Scientific reports	4
Minutes, annual reports, meeting notes and media outputs (from fishing organizations and NGOs)	37

1.6.4. Analytical approaches and methods for papers and the synthesis

I have generally approached analysis as an inductive process, but in practice the research process has been a mix between emergent and inductive analysis and more deductive approaches; returning to the 'field' with new questions on the basis of analysis of existing material and different theoretical concepts (Lyngaard, 2010; Boolsen, 2010). I have had a constant practice of reading through my material (interview transcripts, documents, fieldnotes etc.); a form of ongoing open coding (Boolsen, 2010) leading me to ask new questions and return to specific themes for more material. This process has led me to the different analytical ideas used and processed in paper 2, paper 3, and paper 4. The analytical process has been an ongoing search for patterns and common traits among different modes of fishing and fishers, the meaning and history of emic terms, cultural and political themes, contexts and domains (Spradley, 1980; Boolsen, 2010). I have used Nvivo 12 as a

tool to search for, cluster and categorise themes in my material and condense and classify material, but the analytical processes for the different papers have also involved discussions and reflection with the different co-authors based on the material.



Whiteboard from analysis-reflection with co-author of paper 2.

Throughout the project, I have paid close attention to the language and concepts used by fishers and other people working with fisheries or marine issues. Some emic concepts have been employed widely by both fishers, marine biologists, officials and people from environmental NGOs in overlapping ways. An example is the concept of *skånsom* fishing. The Danish word skånsom is translated to "gentle" or "careful", and in paper 2 of this thesis, we thus explain, trace and translate the concept to "Fishing with Care" (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021; Ordbogen, n.d.). Most often though, the concept is translated, by practitioners, to "low impact", and it is often used together with either "environmental" (*miljø*skånsom) or "nature" (*natur*skånsom) as in the name of the new label[9]. I have used concepts like these as empirically grounded, sensitizing concepts guiding my analysis—in this case into the ongoing negotiations of fisheries sustainability(ies). Sensitizing concepts are "*constructs that are derived from the research participants' perspective, using their language or expressions, and that sensitize the researcher to possible lines of inquiry*" (van den Hoonaard, 2008, p. 812). As such I have used these as starting

[9] In Danish fisheries regulation, the concept used is "skånsomme redskaber", *skånsomme* fishing gear meaning low impact fishing gear (Miljø- og Fødevareministeriet, 2017).

points for analysis, but also for prompting conversations with people trying to understand the multiple use and meanings of some of the otherwise same concepts. While for instance *skånsom fishing* for small-scale fishers often refer to the fishing gear types used, it is also connected to the size of fishing gear, whereas the regulatory definition only concerns fishing gear types. In the criteria for NaturSkånsom and in regulatory definition it is an either/or concept (one is either employing a *skånsomme* or non-*skånsomme* fishing gear). For Danish marine scientists, who employ the concept in reports, different fishing gear types have different (general, although site specific) degrees of *skånsomhed*, or carefulness, on different aspects (such as bycatch, impact on seafloor, etc.) (Gislason et al., 2014). While understandings of skånsom, in some form, appear in all of the papers, analytical and methodological approaches have varied between the papers.

Paper 1 (Autzen and Winter, 2020) is primarily based on document analysis and several years of applied experience in the field of Danish fisheries policy from co-author Winter. As a book chapter in an edited volume about small-scale fisheries in Europe, it required specific knowledge on already-identified themes and thus the primary work was gathering existing information for each theme. While the book project was ongoing, long after the delivery of the first draft, the political situation in, and public attention to, fisheries in Denmark shifted, and we got a chance to update the chapter to integrate new policies and developments.

The idea for Paper 2 (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021) emerged from data gathering; reading material about fisheries labelling processes and discussions in Denmark and asking questions about the origin of the emic term “skånsomt” fishing constantly applied in these discussions. Tracing skånsomt led me to the history of Living Sea’s efforts in the 1990s and prompted me to analyse Living Sea’s legacy and influence on the current labelling process. This was done by reading all available documents from and about Living Sea and later coding the key documents about their labelling scheme. Living Sea made reports about their work, published presentations from their seminars and discussions and wrote press statements in the 1990s and 2000s, and these gave a valuable insight into the motivation, context, and discussions of their work. In addition, I interviewed the founders of the organization as well as some of the fisher members and affiliated researchers. Interview questions focused on the motivation behind establishing Living Sea, how Living Sea impacted their lives and fishing, the issues they encountered trying to establish the labelling scheme, the reasons behind their choice of criteria etc. I did all interviews, document searches and analysis for this paper (in Danish) and coded all material using Nvivo 12 software. The coding for Paper 2 took an inductive process with emergent codes (keywords emerging from the material) (Tanggard and Brinkmann, 2010)) categorised into thematic entities (see appendix A). Analytical themes and theoretical perspectives were then discussed

with the co-author as a part of the analysis leading to the construction of the 'care' focus of the paper.

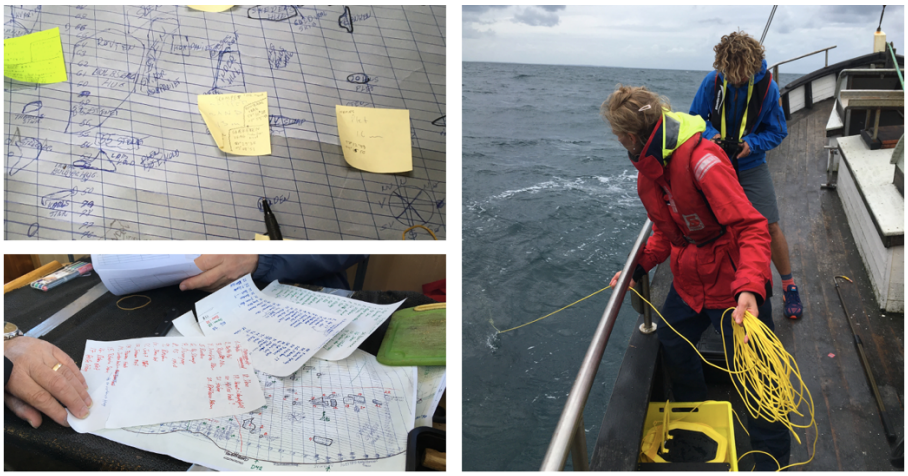
Paper 3 (Autzen and Delaney, 2021) is a product of a more deductive approach linked to a discussion about social sustainability in small-scale fisheries in the context of the NaturSkånsom labelling process and in the Partnership for Sustainable Fishing. The main empirical materials for this paper were interviews conducted with Danish small-scale fishers from different regions covering the different "low impact" fishing gear types. Interview questions focused on why these fishers chose small-scale fishing (in the Danish definition of the category "coastal fishing"), how they felt about fishing, how their fishing was structured (also in terms of employment structures), what obstacles they encountered and what these fishers viewed as the main differences between large-scale fishing and their sector. I conducted all interviews for the paper and used interview settings to discuss criteria for NaturSkånsom and the possible incorporation of socially focused criteria (i.e. what criteria these fishers found meaningful). Analysis for this paper was guided by the sensitizing concept of small-scale fishing as a *livsstil,* lifestyle or way of life. Growing up in a fishing village, I tacitly know that fishers rarely employ the word "job" when speaking about their fishing. However, as part of this study, I used this word in conversations and interviews as a way of prompting reflection over the distinction between having a job and fishing. In these conversations the word lifestyle was used by fishers explaining to me how 'it is more than just a job' (Autzen and Delaney, 2021). It was such conversations (as well as the organizational structures of fishing) that led me to analytical concepts such as the ones in *life-mode analysis* (Hansen and Højrup, 2001) employed in the paper.

Paper 4 was inspired by discussions in the Partnership for Sustainable Fishing. Besides material from these discussions, interviews (see appendix 1 in Autzen and Hegland, 2021) from a VELUX-funded project about sustainable fish (focused on labelling) for Copenhagen Hospitality College (conducted by the co-author Hegland), the development and implementation processes of NaturSkånsom and diverse policy documents informed the research for this paper. I coded all material using NVivo 12 software (see appendix B) with a focus on the positioning and forming of alliances that I had experienced during meetings and workshops in the Partnership and working group on NaturSkånsom. Selective coding was used by closely (re)coding central parts of the material (Boolsen, 2010). As we began employing theoretical concepts of power to our analysis, a need for theoretical sampling (Boolsen, 2010) occurred; thus I had to conduct a few more interviews (with MSC and FSK) focused on specific thematic categories (such as the theme (and concept) of alliances) in order to deepen our understanding and test our conceptual framework.

Unlike the papers, with the synthesis written as the last piece, I had a chance to take a step back from the applied part of the project and take an overview of the project, the papers, and reflect on the process. The synthesis draws on material from all four papers with the part on NaturSkånsom and the Danish small-scale fishing sector drawing primarily on my participation in the different meetings, seminars and workshops related to NaturSkånsom and FSK and the discussion of sustainable fish in Denmark. The synthesis is structured around the three main cases of ecolabelling featured in the project and papers: MSC, Living Sea's attempt and NaturSkånsom. It draws on the analytical concepts developed in the papers but with a focus on answering the overall research questions and relating the cases to the larger context of neoliberal fisheries management. Inspired by Living Sea's ideas about their labelling scheme and MSC as a contrast, I use a dialectic approach to display the conflicting modes and themes of ecolabelling and the inherent contradictions—especially in relation to small-scale fisheries (including their modes of fishing, the theme of social sustainability and the concept of 'care'). I have chosen to draw on conceptualizations of neoliberalism as a contextual basis for the market-based nature of ecolabelling and for the specific context of fisheries management in Denmark prompting the work on NaturSkånsom.

1.6.5. Ongoing negotiations of roles and implications for access

My PhD project has to a great degree been characterized by a constant negotiation of roles; PhD student, anthropological project worker in Jammerbugt in Balance, active member of fishing community, 'expert' in different working groups, etc. Within my employment, I have had to shift between more applied modes of working and more research-based approaches to the field and especially in the beginning, I had difficulties finding time for reflection and analysis, as there was always more to be 'done'. Within the fishing community, where I live, I have had the role of informing about, or discussing, new policies, facilitating meetings between fishers and FSK or fishers and NGOs, discussing and solving practicalities around the use and certification of NaturSkånsom, and rarely have they experienced me in a 'traditional' researcher role. I have also taken on a 'translator' role several times as the project, my PhD is embedded in, involves marine biology and -science, where marine scientists have met and worked with fishers. In these situations, I have often been the link between the 'scientists' and fishers, establishing common ground, making conversations flow and generally being a gatekeeper for my colleagues to the fishers.



Photos from fieldwork with marine scientists working on mapping the seabed on the basis of local fishers' knowledge and self-drawn maps.

Some roles have been negotiable, others less so, and I have strived to be conscious about constraints and possibilities of the roles that I have taken on. As both an insider and an outsider in the field, I have also used myself as an informant (Wadel, 1991; Spradley, 1980). Especially the duration of the project, the fact that I have never completely left the 'field', has provided me with time to go back, discuss the same issues twice or present analytical reflection to collaborators and listen to their reactions. In ministry-led meetings, I have also taken on and been placed in three main, sometimes overlapping, roles. One has been the PhD student/researcher studying ecolabelling schemes; the other has been the hands-on 'expert' in small-scale fishing in my home region, a sort of link to fishing communities; and the third has been an actual stakeholder in the process. This has prompted me to articulate the sometimes different perspectives, circumstances and needs of different fishing communities and be reflective about different perspective as well as my own analysis.

My active engagement with the NaturSkånsom process, my collaborations with fishers and my employment have opened the field for me in ways that would not otherwise have been possible. I have participated in meetings in FSK, in political settings negotiating the Coastal Fishing Schemes and NaturSkånsom and in meetings between environmental NGOs and representatives from the fishing sector. Some of these have been formal and open, such as the partnership and the open ministry-led working group for NaturSkånsom, while others have been informal and/or closed. I have therefore also had to constantly

reflect on what information and discussions, I could write about, and what I needed to get permission for or simply cannot include.

1.6.6. Validity and ethical considerations

Being sensitive towards, and guided by, emic concepts, and fishers' own concerns, while holding onto the theme of ecolabelling and the different analytical approaches and concepts has made my research a constant dialectic process of inductive and deductive research; what Wadel (1991) terms a "*round dance*" (p. 129); a circling between data, theory and methods. The use of sensitizing concepts, explanations of context, settings, processes and my own positioning and roles are also ways of approaching the theme of validity and credibility (Hastrup, 2010; 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2010; Tanggard and Brinkmann, 2010). In order to come to a valid and larger understanding, I have employed common triangulation strategies (discussing with colleagues, interviewing or talking to the same people several times, reading other people's work, reading public documents and mixing interviewing with participant observation (Denscombe, 2002; Tanggard and Brinkmann, 2010)). Triangulation is (also) a way of addressing the delimitation of different methods, such as interviews where there may be discrepancies between what people say, and what they mean, do, or think (Bernard, 1994). Having close relations with fishers and other collaborators have enabled me to ask them for comments on drafts. Some of these conversations have sparked yet new insights, as for an example when I asked long-time members of Living Sea to read the Autzen and Ounanian (2021) paper where we use their ecolabelling attempt as a case study. These members were very satisfied with the link to a feminist ethics of care that they thought was an interesting and representative connection to their work in the 1990s—perhaps also in the light of such approaches' popularity today.

Presenting to, and asking for comments from, people involved in this study has been one of several ways that I have addressed ethical considerations and consent. In the middle of my PhD project, Denmark implemented the General Data Protection Regulation; EU's new data privacy and security law (EU, 2016). At university level, this meant new procedures for ensuring consent in research projects, and I was advised to collect signatures, or at least, present a written consent form explaining the object, and any future use, of the study before starting an interview. This facilitated a somewhat formal and distancing lead-up to interviews with fishers[10], and also challenged the inductive approach of my research as I had to

[10] In this PhD thesis, including papers, I have used pseudonyms of informants, unless they wished otherwise.

present to informants all ways in which our conversations could potentially be 'used'. I also wondered about the effectiveness of this approach, as normally I would treat consent as fluid and as something that can be renegotiated and is based also on trust (Jöhncke, 2009). Consequently, I began using written consent forms in the semi-structured, recorded interviews that I conducted.

In addition to consent forms, I continued to reflect on the potential impact of my research and thus continued to make different ethical decisions during the project (Janesick, 1998). For instance, as the implementation of further provisions for "low impact" fishing gear types in the Danish Coastal Fishing Schemes sparked new tensions between fishers using bottom trawling and fishers employing (and/or advocating for) "low impact" gear types, I decided to be very sensitive about my use of direct quotes from my interviews in my work (e.g., about fishers' perspective on impact of fishing gear types). In Denmark the small-scale fishing sector is small and dispersed, and fishers are dependent on good relations with(in) local fisheries organizations (including other fishers at their home port), local fish mongers and fish auctions. Such relations can be (and have been) compromised by the often-sharp discussions about bottom trawling versus "low impact" fishing gear at different levels (in local fishing organizations, on the political arena and among environmental NGOs). Ongoing decisions not to use specific quotes and perspectives and to not disclose otherwise non-sensitive (but possibly identifying) information (such as home port or specific fishing gear type) made ethical considerations fluid and adapted to the ongoing discussions and developments in the sector.

As mentioned earlier, I have strived to be constantly aware of what I was contributing to, and for whom it was useful. This has sometimes been precarious when being given an 'expert-role' and asked to provide advice often demanding a simplifying of perspectives and aspects (Jöhncke, 2009). Thus, I have sometimes participated in finding pragmatic solutions to complex situations, where voicing and directing focus to the different perspectives and complexities have been my best option. In such situations, I have relied both on my knowledge of literature and research on ecolabelling schemes and my own research. As the needs and concerns of fishers from my hometown and small-scale fishers elsewhere in Denmark (especially one-man operators in inner waters) often did not match, it has also been an ongoing practice to voice sometimes conflicting perspectives, support negotiations between fishers and actively seek compromises. Before introducing the conceptual and analytical framework of this PhD thesis, the next section presents the main scholarly discussions of ecolabelling of capture fisheries.

2. Literature review: Ecolabelling of capture fisheries

As environmental impacts of capture fisheries have become widely recognized, ecolabelling schemes have flourished along with research on specific ecolabelling schemes and the phenomenon itself. International seafood ecolabelling schemes have, as explained, so far been led by non-governmental organizations partnering with a broad range of actors including the seafood industry. Capture fisheries ecolabelling has therefore been characterized by scholars as market-based management, global green governance (Eden, 2011), or Environmental Governance (governance not initiated or governed by a government (Barclay and Miller, 2018)). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in ecolabelling have explained this strategy as a response to ineffective state (and supranational) regulation leading NGOs as well as the industry to experiment with market-based approaches to management (Vandergeest et al., 2015; Dolmage et al., 2016; Konefal, 2012; Cashore et al., 2004). This narrative, however, has been criticized by scholars discussing how ecolabelling has also been a convenient tool for the industry arguing for 'sustainable' self-regulation instead of (increasing) public regulation, and how *"this 'failure of the state' narrative has been used to justify the way that private actors are inserting themselves into existing regulatory activities which were previously considered the domain of government authority"* (Vandergeest et al., 2015, p. 5).

The simplistic logic behind ecolabelling—the so-called original 'theory of change'—is to certify products as sustainable (in accordance with specific criteria) and engage 'consumer power' with the perceived aim of incentivizing producers to adopt more sustainable practices in order to become certified (Roheim et al., 2018; Eden, 2011). This theory of change logic is connected to a general idea of the alienation between consumer and production as a consequence of globalization and the capitalist mode of production. In today's globalized world, the relationships between production, consumerism, capital and labour are rarely connected in a stable, local context (Comeraff and Comeraff, 2000). This is said to be driving a global consumer culture characterized by distrust, concern and scepticism. Certification is based on the premise that consumers lack knowledge of the products they are buying making them ignorant to the negative consequences of production. Ecolabelling is thus offered as an answer to this issue by providing

consumers with the knowledge that is missing which then enables them to make an informed choice when deciding between products and thereby allows consumers to take part in pushing for a more sustainable production. Nonetheless, as pointed out by several scholars, processes of seafood ecolabelling schemes, and the way these work, can rarely be explained by the simple model of consumer demand (Eden, 2011; Hadjimichael and Hegland, 2015; Gulbrandsen, 2006; Barclay and Miller, 2018). This so-called 'knowledge fix' is, for instance, challenged by research showing that consumer scepticism cannot be turned around just by offering information and that consumer knowledge is not created through passive transmission of knowledge. Rather, consumer knowledge, in the words of Eden (2011), is produced *"through various and highly interactive sociocultural processes"* (p. 172). In other words, it is hard to control how information is interpreted by consumers, and the idea of a free and informed (consumer) choice can be challenged in several ways (Eden, 2011). Moreover, there is a limit as to how much information a label can contain, and research has focused on consumer awareness; how consumers interpret labels; when information becomes confusing rather than informative; and how this issue might be solved by pushing for state-controlled standardized labels (Gutierrez and Thornton, 2014; Eden, 2011).

Much of the literature on fisheries ecolabelling have focused on consumer willingness to pay extra for ecolabelled seafood especially in the Global North, and methods and results vary (Dolmage et al., 2016; Brécard et al., 2009; Eden, 2011). In recent years, however, the idealized model of how consumers' demand and willingness to pay extra for sustainable products works as incentives for the fishing industry to adopt more sustainable practices has been cast away. Instead, focus has been on how environmental NGOs address the issue of unsustainable production and therefore encourage and push corporations (e.g. large retail chains) to embrace ecolabelling schemes. As such this confirms how the market works not just as a platform for economic transactions but also for political activism; where companies and supply chains can be pushed to include ecolabelling as a part of their competitiveness and environmental and social profiles (Gutierrez and Thornton, 2014; Hadjimichael and Hegland, 2015; Gulbrandsen, 2006; Eden, 2011; Barclay and Miller, 2018). Consequently, consumers are given more ecolabelled products options perhaps changing consumer preferences and fulling the whole process (Gutierrez and Thornton, 2014). Instead of attributing the growth of seafood ecolabelling to the actions of either consumers, retail chains or NGOs, it has been suggested to view it as a 'governance concert': that is a product of the dynamics, relations, and interactions between different actors as well as 'the audience' (the consumers) (Barclay and Miller, 2018).

Ecolabelling schemes are often criticized for the lack of certain criteria, for the complexity of others or for the composition of criteria as well as the way these are measured. Schemes have been categorized as 'single attribute' or 'multi attribute' labels focusing on one or more aspects of "sustainability" (Thrane et al., 2009). For international ecolabelling schemes with MSC leading the way, there seems to be a general agreement about what elements should be included; overlapping criteria are focused on the healthiness of targeted fish stocks, effects of fishing on ecosystems and efficient fisheries management. There is, however, no general agreement on how such criteria should be measured or defined (Agnew, 2018). Research has suggested that established ecolabelling schemes could benefit from including CO2 emissions (of both the catch- and the processing sectors), the sustainability of the packaging and the social and cultural aspects of the production (Thrane et al., 2009; McClenachan et al., 2016; Agnew, 2018). Eden (2011) calls this discussion *"the mainstreaming dilemma"* (p. 181) of ecolabelling; should an ecolabel set high environmental and social criteria, forming an expensive niche, or does it make more sense to set lower standards in order to be inclusive and able to create a larger market—and which strategy creates the highest impact?

While consumers might not know the actual criteria of a known ecolabel, the success of an ecolabelling scheme is affected by levels of trust, credibility, embeddedness and legitimacy of the label (Thrane et al., 2009; Boström, 2006). As demonstrated by Boström (2006), establishing credibility demands, among other things, scientific validation, transparency, auditability—most often in the form of third-party certification and control—and the difficult balancing of inclusiveness with high enough standards. While questions of legitimacy are important everywhere, they are essential in connection to private ecolabelling schemes because of their nature as non-governmental and market-driven governance. Ecolabelling schemes need to legitimize their criteria and need constant active approval from their receivers (Boström, 2006; Miller and Bush, 2015). Ideally, approval and credibility would be granted through stakeholders and consumers being able to see and measure the environmental impact of an ecolabel, and although studies are undertaken with the aim of examining the effectiveness of seafood ecolabelling schemes, results are mixed, and methods critiqued. What can be seen, though, is how the seafood supply chains, especially the fishing sector, increasingly communicate to the public how they are improving their practices (Gutierrez and Thornton, 2014; Teisl et al., 2002). As shown by Miller and Bush, establishing and maintaining credibility and authority of a scheme is an ongoing relational process, and ecolabels are thus

> *Not simply arenas for market competition or chains of value-adding activities, but rather comprise complex political-economic systems*

> *in which competition and conflict among actors are playing a critical role in distributing authority and legitimacy* (2015, p. 143).

While some governments have been skeptical of private seafood ecolabelling schemes, research shows that many states are accepting and sometimes promoting these as they work as a handy addition to policies, have market value and in some cases help extend state sovereignty (Gulbrandsen, 2006; Karavias, 2017; Bush and Roheim, 2018; Vandergeest et al., 2015). Moreover, scholars have argued that private ecolabelling schemes work not independently of, but within international law, and receive legitimacy because they draw on and interact with international policies. According to Karavias (2017): *"these interactions first and foremost affirm that the divide between international law and private fisheries certifications standards is a porous one, allowing room for reciprocal impact"* (p. 179). While direct environmental effects of ecolabelling can be difficult to measure, the above-mentioned interactions can create secondary effects such as new fishing policies and regulatory processes that affect more than the certified fisheries (Gutierrez et al., 2016; Barclay and Miller, 2018; Roheim et al., 2018).

Much research on fisheries ecolabelling have noted the problematic exclusion dynamics that large-scale schemes create as a consequence of the expenses and complications of getting certified. This has been identified as a widespread issue for small-scale fisheries (especially in the Global South (Foley and Havice, 2016; Hadjimichael and Hegland, 2015; Stoll et al., 2019; Wakamatsu and Wakamatsu, 2017))—which will be a returning theme in this thesis. Studies of the most commonly known ecolabel of wild fish Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) show how a monopoly-like situation can occur when an ecolabel get to define and thereby 'standardize' 'sustainability'. In addition, this can create a pressure to certify in order to meet the increasing demand, and the process of certification creates a potentially powerful audit economy as it involves continuous control. Along these lines, researchers have also been concerned over ecolabelling as a form of 'greenstamping' or 'greenwashing' of large-scale corporations and -producers (Hadjimichael and Hegland, 2015; Eden, 2011; Gutierrez and Thornton, 2014; Bush et al., 2013).

Because of the challenges for small-scale fisheries in ecolabelling schemes, scholars have promoted alternative ways of addressing market differentiation and sustainability—also in socioeconomic and -cultural terms—for the small-scale fishing sector. For instance, Stoll et al. (2019) argue that the widespread employment of ecolabelling schemes draws focus from other tools that are better suited for small-scale fishers. Instead, the authors suggest placing attention to what they term *relational seafood supply chains*—also referred to as,

alternative seafood marketing programs (ASMP[11]), small-scale fisher market empowerment tactics or -innovations (Penca et al., 2021; Penca, 2019). Put simply, this refers to marketing and production and value chain systems based on relational connections enabled by direct communication, trust and/or personal ties—often limited geographically. These can be structured in multiple ways through different marketing approaches but have in common the goal of strengthening the connection and feedback between small-scale fishers and consumers. In fisheries, examples of these are dock-to-dish programs (Stoll et al., 2019), fish box initiatives (Penca et al., 2021) and in a Scandinavian context SMS services (or apps) from fishers to subscribers informing about the daily catch, prices and estimated landing time (Autzen and Winter, 2020).

Initiatives like these are not necessarily driven by small-scale fishers but rely on levels of co-ownership, shared responsibility and a focus on supporting local, small-scale fishers. It is the interactions and the sense of shared responsibility between fishers, consumers and citizens that make these initiatives successful. ASMP thus help build capacity for small-scale fishers by establishing local market advantages, strengthening social organization among fishers and between fishers and consumers thereby enhancing social capital for fishers (Stoll et al., 2019; Penca et al., 2021). This impacts socioeconomic, cultural and environmental sustainability by *"helping to facilitate solution-focused entrepreneurship and creates space for harvesters to organize and operationalize sustainability in context-specific ways"* (Stoll et al., 2019, p. 5).

ASMP solve some of the problems of ecolabelling such as actual price premiums by forging a relationship between fishers and consumers and by adding value to the purchasing experience (Stoll et al., 2019; Penca et al., 2021). The local level, bottom-up nature of ASMP, however, does not offer the same larger-scale market access and advantage as established ecolabelling schemes. ASMP is usually based on geographical proximity (Stoll et al., 2019; Penca, 2019), which is not a universally realistic scenario when it comes to selling fish. For instance, in Denmark, the small-scale fishery on the west- and north coast of Jutland adjacent to the North Sea and Skagerrak is not a low volume fishery where the entire catch can be sold locally. Moreover, many large-scale buyers in the Global North prefer, or directly require, (MSC) certified fish as a part of their 'green strategy' (Vandergeest et al., 2015). ASMP initiatives can be a useful tool on the local level in many places but does not offer larger-scale market differentiation—the

[11] In the following, I will use the acronym ASMP as a collective term for initiatives that support, promote and market small-scale fishing products and/or establish new sales structures and links between fishers and consumers.

theme of small-scale fisheries in ecolabelling therefore continues to be discussed (Penca, 2019; Penca et al., 2021). NaturSkånsom thus is a case in point in understanding small-scale fisheries in ecolabelling initiatives.

3. Analytical and conceptual framework: Understanding the NaturSkånsom process

The process of NaturSkånsom is closely related to the recent history of privatization of fishing rights in Denmark as well as to a related conceptualization of 'fisheries sustainability' challenging small-scale fisheries through an overarching focus on fish stock productivity (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021). In order to understand and discuss the case, the first part of this analytical framework is focused on some of the main concepts and overall processes that have formed NaturSkånsom. Some of these are contested concepts, but ones that allow us to develop an understanding of both the logics of ecolabelling schemes, the tensions of 'fisheries sustainability' and the neoliberal idea of efficient fisheries management that continues to have major sociocultural and economic effects on fishing communities in Denmark and beyond (McCormack, 2017; Autzen and Winter, 2020; Witter and Stoll, 2017). In the last part of this framework, I introduce *life-mode analysis* in order to analyze how NaturSkånsom, and similar initiatives for small-scale fishers, are expressions of a resistance towards neoliberal structures and policies; but not just arbitrary forms of resistance or acts of futility. Instead, through the lens of life-mode analysis; engaging in market-based approaches such as NaturSkånsom is part of a larger process in which small-scale fishers try to create new conditions of possibility specific to their practices. In order to elaborate this focus, I introduce and discuss concepts of *resistance* and *power* and tie these to life-mode analysis.

Each paper included in this PhD have their separate, but overlapping, conceptual foci explained in the papers—the framework introduced here therefore works as a synthesizing framework for the PhD. The intention is not to make a comprehensive review of essential concepts; rather to introduce them in the context of fisheries. I begin with the broad and ambiguous concept of *neoliberalism*—which in this thesis is used to understand the kinds of fisheries management, governmental and non-governmental, that NaturSkånsom and similar initiatives for small-scale fishers are shaped by (McCormack, 2017; Konefal, 2012; Autzen and Winter, 2020; Autzen and Ounanian, 2021).

3.1. Neoliberalism

The concept of neoliberalism is widely used, and widely critiqued, in social science where it is generally understood as *"a structural force that affects people's life-chances and as an ideology of governance that shapes subjectivities"* (Ganti, 2014,

p. 89) but often employed without further definition, theorizing or recognition of its history. It is especially the multiplicity of the use of neoliberalism that challenges it as meaningful concept including how it in various settings is used to describe all kinds of socioeconomic and political contexts (McCormack, 2017; Ganti, 2014). In a discussion of anthropological engagements with neoliberalism, Ganti (2014) points to four overlapping characterizations of neoliberalism showing how the concept can be delimited meaningfully. One is reform policies focused on deregulating the economy through means of for instance privatizations. Another is a specific model for development prescribing roles of capital, labor and states in novel ways with widespread socioeconomic and political implications[12]. Third is an ideology of market exchange as the ethical guide for all activity, and fourth *"a mode of governance that embraces the idea of the self-regulating free market, with its associated values of competition and self-interest, as the model for effective and efficient government"* (Ganti, 2014, p. 91). In this thesis, I use the concept to understand how a shift to market-based approaches to fisheries management (governmental and nongovernmental) affects small-scale fishers (Høst, 2015) and has led to the establishment of NaturSkånsom as yet another market-based approach.

3.2. Neoliberalism in fisheries management and its connection with 'fisheries sustainability'

A common anthropological insight is that neoliberal policies and structures play out differently in different contexts as they are negotiated, implemented, resisted and accommodated by people in ongoing processes—thereby creating qualitatively different impacts and 'neoliberalisms' (Ganti, 2014; McCormack, 2017). Market-based approaches to fisheries management are good examples of this. The privatized quota share model ITQ has been modelled to fit different contexts, including places with indigenous peoples, and designed and redesigned with numerous different elements in order to, for instance, try to limit some of the well-known consequences of it such as quota concentration (McCormack, 2017; Høst, 2015; Autzen and Winter, 2020; Arnason, 1997; Pinkerton and Davis, 2015). Still, ITQ schemes reflect some of the basic and more steady features of neoliberalism, namely market-based approaches to management; 'self-regulation', privatization and commodification (McCormack, 2017; Pinkerton and Davis, 2015).

[12] For an explanation of the differences between neoliberalism, classical liberalism and late capitalism see Ganti, 2014.

ITQ schemes are also linked to a particular idea about how to understand and address environmental issues (Vandergeest et al., 2015; Konefal, 2012) supported and promoted by the World Bank and other strong international institutions: *"Nature, in this paradigm, has been reconstructed as a package of quantifiable ecosystem services and environmental problems are caused, it is surmised, by a failure to price these services"* (McCormack, 2017, p. 11). In fisheries, this so-called 'market environmentalism' comes with focus on market-based management mechanisms (Konefal, 2012; Vandergeest et al., 2015), such as ITQs (Høst, 2015; McCormack, 2017), but also voluntary schemes such as ecolabelling; all of which *"privileges market rationality over any other human-environment relationship"* and foregrounds the idea of protecting 'nature' by selling it (McCormack, 2017, p. 13). This links to contemporary critiques of the use of 'sustainability' embedded in neoliberal policies focused mainly on market-based approaches, 'green economy' and economic systems in general. In research on ITQs, scholars have challenged the idea that such privatizations enhance stewardship and environmental sustainability especially with the transferability of ownership diluting connections between specific ecosystems and resource users (McCormack, 2017; Macinko, 2014).

ITQ systems and fisheries ecolabelling schemes have in common their relationship with a particular conceptualization of fisheries sustainability built on Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). MSY is based on bioeconomic modelling estimating the maximum harvest of a fish stock that, in theory, allows for the stock's continual productivity. MSY is the most widespread fisheries management paradigm and, as earlier mentioned, the basis of EU fisheries management (ICES, 2019; Tsikliras and Froese, 2018; Hegland and Raakjær, 2020). Estimations and interpretations of MSY are both contested and constantly developed in order to better represent the complicated reality of fish stocks, ecosystems and their interrelations, including genetic differences and migration patterns (McCormack, 2017; ICES, 2019). While fisheries management is often framed as founded on neutral scientific assessments, such as MSY, and technicalities, scholars have shown how it is characterized by ongoing negotiations of what fisheries to prioritize and thus a highly politicized context (Høst, 2015; McCormack, 2017). As observed by McCormack in relation to privatized quota shares based on MSY, this approach to fisheries management provides us with a narrative

> *Of the practice of neoliberal sustainability in general environmental governance, one that involves a complex mix of abstract economic theorising, the selective use of science, and one that instigates enclosures in both human and natural worlds* (McCormack, 2017, p. 74).

While MSY is not the only focus of environmental fisheries management, it tends to be the chosen foundation and in the context of ecolabelling schemes, the only widespread criteria where some form of international agreement of how to measure it exists (Agnew, 2018).

3.3. Neoliberalism and fisheries ecolabelling

Fisheries ecolabelling schemes have, as mentioned earlier, largely been driven by NGOs or as collaborations between NGOs and industry partners. NGOs are linked to new modes of governance and seen as important players in today's environmental knowledge production (Ganti, 2014; Konefal, 2012; Eden, 2011). Konefal (2012) argues that NGOs' market-based approaches to address environmental sustainability, for instance in the form of ecolabelling, not only drives neoliberalization, but unintentionally contributes to its ongoing legitimization. This argument is built on a Weberian understanding of legitimacy *"as a collective process through which actors and ideas gain credence"* (Konefal, 2012, p. 337). While neoliberalism(s) is a multi-faceted, ongoing and constantly challenged process (Ganti, 2014; McCormack, 2017), according to Konefal, ecolabelling approaches maintain neoliberalism as an unavoidable and evolutionary process through core labelling structures of consumerism, marketization and *"the devolution of regulatory authority"* (Konefal, 2012, p. 336). While scholars agree that proliferation of NGOs has facilitated neoliberalism and *"been an essential feature of the decentralized and privatizing political-economic landscape associated with neoliberalism"* (Ganti, 2014, p. 97), it has also been documented how NGO-driven ecolabelling schemes sometimes contribute to strengthening state policies (Bush and Roheim, 2018; Vandergeest et al., 2015). Vandergeest et al. (2015) therefore, in conversation with Konefal (2012), argue for a more nuanced understanding of fisheries ecolabelling schemes as *"made up of multiple logics beyond the market"* (p. 1).

Establishing an ecolabelling scheme and practicing assessments and certifications is a part of a larger *boundary work* in which a framework for a scheme is created (Vandergeest et al., 2015). In social science, the concept of boundary work is widely used to describe processes by which actors try to create boundaries between for instances 'science' and 'non-science', or 'politics', establishing epistemic authority used, for instance, to legitimize scientific claims (Lamont and Molnár, 2002), policies, or in this case the standard of an ecolabelling scheme. Creating boundaries in ecolabelling is done with the use of science and expertise, thus establishing schemes and their standards as 'scientific' rather than political. In

order to highlight how certain aspects of sustainability are included in labelling while other aspects are not, Vandergeest et al. (2015) introduce the term *objects of concern* inspired by Latour's *matters of concern* (Latour, 2004). Objects of concern in this context refer to what a scheme, through its experts, defines as the important aspects to protect (i.e., productivity of target stock or bycatch of marine mammals). Objects of concern are, just as matters of concern, not understood as 'matters of fact' but defined in a certain context as a part of framing and creating boundaries around 'sustainability'. This is difficult and can be contested both in terms of what is not included, but also as: *"The active materiality of these objects, and the marine environment in which they operate, render boundaries problematic and fluid due to the movements of fish, vessels, and currents"* (Vandergeest et al., 2015, p. 5). Thus, in ecolabelling, the concept of boundary work shows us *"The ways in which spaces are defined and connected with each other; objects and subjects are included or excluded; different kinds of expertise are accepted or not; and rules regulating movement across boundaries are set"* (Vandergeest et al., 2015, p. 3). NGO-led ecolabelling schemes, therefore, are not just a process by which non-state actors engage in rulemaking and weaken state authority (Vandergeest et al., 2015; Karavias, 2017; Bush and Roheim, 2018). Rather, it is a part of neoliberal processes that *"redefine the nature and functions of the state rather than completely eliminate it"* (Ganti, 2014, p. 92). Still Konefal's main point is that the

> *Transformative capacity [of initiatives such as ecolabelling] may be limited, and in using market-based approaches it may be facilitating processes of capitalist accumulation that environmental sociologists have widely identified as antithetical to environmental sustainability* (Konefal, 2012, p. 336).

According to Konefal, there is simply no way to be *"in the market, but not for it"* (Konefal, 2012, p. 336). By promoting ('green') consumption as *the* way in which citizens can make a difference and contribute to conservation, ecolabelling approaches are foregrounding individualism and individual responsibility—instead of collective action pushing, for instance, for better regulation of fisheries (Konefal, 2012; Eden, 2011). There is an interesting tension here that will be guiding for the rest of this thesis. For Danish small-scale fishers, NaturSkånsom is a way of trying to address neoliberal fisheries policies and the market domination of international ecolabelling schemes that challenge their livelihoods. At the same time, NaturSkånsom incorporates some of the same features and structures that these fishers are trying to resist. This shows a structural tension that Witter and Stoll (2017) identify as a problem of *"participation and resistance"* (p. 139).

3.4. Resistance and power

Using a concept of resistance raises several questions of positionality including how to address and understand power and change. Resistance is, like other concepts introduced above, a highly contested and critiqued concept. Inspired by Scott's *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of resistance* (2008), a whole field of 'resistance studies' grew in the 1980s that was later criticized for romanticizing groups or practices and for (over)using a concept of resistance to a point where it no longer held any analytical value (Fletcher, 2007; Fletcher, 2001; Abu-Lughod, 1990). Resistance also raises key questions such as what is power, does resistance really exist or work or is it *"may be merely a 'safety valve,' providing the dispossessed with ineffectual avenues for blowing off steam and thereby diverting their energy from truly meaningful social action"* (Fletcher, 2007, p. 2)—and how do we know? In an introduction to the edited volume *Beyond Resistance*, volume editor Fletcher takes the stance that there is still value in engaging, also analytically, with practices of resistance

> *Because at the heart of resistance is the question of 'progressive' social change itself, and this question remains imperative. Because the actions we have long called resistance still exist in the world, and people still rely upon them for their hopes of a better world* (Fletcher, 2007, p. 3).

While much resistance literature has inherited a Marxist class perspective with a focus on the resistance of 'conscious' class groups, recent engagements have been poststructural drawing on Foucault's work on marginalized groups—whom, in this conceptualization, are not necessarily conscious of their so-called resistance. While these approaches have in common a view of resistance as: *"opposed to 'exploitation,' 'oppression' and 'inequality.' How these objects are conceived, however, remains hotly contested"* (Fletcher, 2007, p. 5). One of the most profound differences is the Marxist 'objective' perspective on both what resistance is (it is real) and on what is being resisted and a poststructual 'relative' perspective where both 'resistance' and what it being resisted is understood as relative (Fletcher, 2001; 2007).

The difference between the aforementioned perspectives on resistance rely, among other things, on different conceptualizations of *power*—perhaps the most contested and debated concept of the ones introduced here (Van Tatenhove et al., 2010; Fletcher, 2007). In a classic Marxist approach, put simply, power is seen as held by the dominant alliance of the ruling classes and exercised over the working classes. State power, in this conception, and its ruling ideology,

work to conceal interests; interpellate dependent subjects and create ideologies—resistance is thus when subjects escape the dominant ideology and oppose ruling power (Althusser, 1993; Althusser, 2008; Fletcher, 2007). Foucauldian understandings of power are a development and critique of this Marxist theorizing focusing on how power can be exercised from all angles and is constructive in the way that it produces reality—resistance therefore is another way of exercising power (Fletcher, 2007). According to Fletcher, resistance studies as led by Scott seeks to negotiate these positions: Subjects know their own interests and that they are being dominated by the 'elite' who exercise power through controlling the means of production. As a researcher then, following Scott, one can access and analyze the interests of people by observing the difference between their private versus public practices (Fletcher, 2007; 2001).

Aware of these fundamental discussions of power, in this thesis, I build on a relational and situated approach to power that acknowledge power both in the form of structures affecting people—and their capacities to act—and as something that is exercised relationally both from top-down and bottom-up with the possibility of affecting different overall structures (Ahlborg and Nightingale, 2018; Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2005). Like Scott, this is an attempt to mediate different approaches to power inspired by Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018):

> *The empirical studies clearly show that there is an interplay between human agency and constitutive power that enables and constrains actors in their attempts to exercise power. This provides a strong argument for not choosing one of the two conceptions, but rather, staying clear that power is relational, emergent and contingent in both of them . . .* (p. 387).

Because of these dynamics, attempts at resistance, and exercising power in general, can result in very different, sometimes unintended, outcomes. In Autzen and Hegland (2021), following Arts and Van Tatenhove (2005), we draw on this understanding of power adapted to a planning and policy-making context in which power is understood:

> *As the organizational, discursive and relational capacities of actors involved in and affected by the NaturSkånsom to influence the process including the professional discussions around it. These capacities are determined both by the structural and the discursive contexts in which the actors operate* (Autzen and Hegland, 2021).

This helps us understand how the, often marginalized, small-scale fishers have been able to influence current fisheries policies including the creation of NaturSkånsom.

Understanding the negotiations characterizing the process of NaturSkånsom is also connected to an understanding of change in which I draw on life-mode analysis.

3.5. Life-mode analysis: The self-employed, small-scale fisher

In order to get beyond an understanding of NaturSkånsom as a product of small-scale fishers' arbitrary (or useless or romantic) attempts of resistance, I am inspired by a dialectical understanding of the relations between distinct forms of practices involved in fisheries policies. In Autzen and Delaney (2021) and in this synthesis, I thus employ concepts from *life-mode analysis.* This is a mode of analysis that takes as its theoretical object the dialectic relations between different life-modes and their necessary conditions of possibility. The framework allows for a further mediation of the above-mentioned oppositions—as well as to the underlying agency-structure debate—and provides a conceptual understanding of the practices of small-scale fishers based on the empirical messiness of this heterogeneous sector. In this framework, traditional small-scale fishers are analyzed as *simple commodity producers*; that is self-employed (and/or share-organised (Autzen and Delaney, 2021; Høst, 2015)) fishers whose aim often is to stay exactly that: self-sustained and independent. In simple terms, the main goal of production (here fishing) is, in most cases, to sustain this way of life—in this conceptualization theoretically termed a *life-mode* (Høst, 2015; 2012; Hansen and Højrup, 2001; Højrup 2012; Højrup, 2003). In anthropological literature, there are several conceptualizations similar to simple commodity production and the self-employed livelihood—focused on for instance the family enterprise (Kleinberg 1983; Delaney, 2003), and in studies of small-scale fisheries; *domestic commodity production* and the independent fisher (Johnson, 2018; Delaney, Schreiber, and Alfaro-Shigueto, 2019; Ross, 2015). I use the life-mode conceptualization here as this is well-developed in literature on Danish fisheries (Høst, 2012; 2015; Højrup, 2003), and because it helps inform the discussion on resistance through the related concept of *neoculturation* explained in the next section.

A life-mode is defined by a specific set of practices. It is a *"conceptual construction"* (Højrup, 2003, p. 28) that can be elaborated, specified and thereby used as a mode of analysis to understand peoples' lives and practices. It *is not* to be understood as empirical categories with which to categorize specific individuals but features from the different (theoretical constructs of) life-modes can help explain people's practices and living conditions. Thus, the concept of a life-mode is used to gain a larger understanding of common characteristics and features and how these relate also to other practices. When I use (self-employed) life-mode here, I therefore refer to *"the concept of the self-employed life-mode"* (Højrup,

2003, p. 28)—within which there are different empirical variants and nuances (and not all self-employed individuals share all these characteristics (Høst, 2015; Hansen and Højrup, 2001)).

While the self-employed life-mode operates on the market and constantly needs to balance costs of fishing with income, to create a profit, be able to invest or to increase production further is not a goal in itself. As discussed in Autzen and Delaney (2021), Danish small-scale fishers rarely speak in terms of 'spare time' or 'working hours'—they feel responsible for their fishing that to them is generally understood as a way of life, rather than a regular 'job'. Selling their own products to a market, for these fishers, is part of their concept of 'freedom', and thus they have their distinct conceptual world with which they understand their way of life (Autzen and Delaney, 2021; Hansen and Højrup, 2001; Højrup, 2003; Høst, 2015; Johnson, 2018). While increasing catch is one of the survival strategies also for small-scale fishers, it is not given that they are 'producing' to full capacity (or 'optimal level' in economic terms) since this simply may not be the goal of fishing. This stands in contrast to a classic capitalist mode of production and the wage worker context. For the simple commodity production to continue, it is essential for the fishers to own (or inexpensively access) their means of production; in this context vessel and access to the fishing resource (Høst, 2015; Højrup and Hansen, 2001; Johnson, 2018). This is one of the reasons why neoliberal management schemes, such as ITQ systems, tends to disadvantage small-scale fishing fleets; decreasing their resilience and flexibility by limiting their possibilities of shifting between different kinds of fisheries and by increasing their debt and relationships with investments and bank loans (for quota purchases) (Autzen and Delaney, 2021; Høst, 2015; Højrup 2012).

3.5.1. Resistance as a part of neoculturation and ecolabelling as a 'resistance battlefield'

Instead of understanding change as the direct product of interactions between agents, or subjects (in some conceptualizations changing the overall structures that in turn also affect and constrains these subjects; sometimes referred to as circular causality (Fletcher, 2007; Højrup, 2003)), life-mode analysis takes another perspective. In life-mode analysis, focus is on how different practices, life-modes' relations with each other, and dependence on specific structures (such as a market, political- and legal settings; for instance, property rights), form an overall structure, or social formation. A mode of production has its different sets of life-modes, and each life-mode its own conceptual world. This is evident when seeing how common concepts such as 'work' and 'freedom' have different meanings for people with

different practices linked to the different ways of organizing and understanding everyday life (Højrup, 2003; Højrup and Hansen, 2001; Høst, 2015).

Life-modes, such as for instance the self-employed fisher, presuppose specific conditions that can be drawn out by analysis. Different life-modes require different conditions—sometimes conflicting demands of for instance political structures (Højrup, 2003; Høst, 2015). These conditions and requirements need to be able to be reconciled in the larger social formation if all these life-modes are to persist simultaneously. When (the 'bearers' of) life-modes engage in new means in order to preserve, enhance or save their livelihoods and practices, this end (i.e., the goal of sustaining this life-mode (its practices)) change as well as a consequence of changed means and conditions. In life-mode analysis, building on Hegel's conception of cunning of reason and history (Lukács, 1975; D'Hont, 1970; Hegel, 1969), this is termed a *neoculturation* process. Culturation refers to a cultural process, and neo to something new; neoculturation is thus the new formations of conditions whereby life-modes also change (are renewed). Social formations, therefore, are characterized by ongoing struggles between different life-modes to maintain or create better conditions of possibility (Højrup, 2003; Højrup, 1989). In empirical analysis, the concept refers to:

> *How transformations of state systems, state forms and social formations are generated by people's efforts to conquer, maintain, renew, defend, or improve the necessary conditions of existence of their distinct cultural life-modes. It concerns a self-transcending cultural process, by which life-modes change as an unintended consequence of applying the means by which these life-modes try to preserve, improve or renew their conditions of possibility* (Højrup, forthcoming).

By using anthropological methods and concepts, I can thus analyse how resistance is not necessarily about resisting to resist, about being able to air frustrations ('safety valve') nor for creating an all-encompassing change of structures (or revolution in a Marxist tradition). Instead, what we understand, or what is voiced, as resistance in the context of small-scale fishers can be further analysed as ways of adjusting to structural changes while pushing for better conditions of possibility in order to sustain one's way of life. Therefore, by using the concept of life-mode analysis, we can identify the necessary conditions of possibility of the self-employed life-mode. In empirical terms, by analyzing small-scale fishers' way of life, their practices and the conditions under which they are able to operate, we may also form an understanding of how both these conditions and the fishers' practices—affecting each other and conditioned by a diversity of other aspects—change over time.

Neoculturation is not synonymous with resistance: It is characterized as a specific struggle for the continuation of a life-mode; by applying different strategies to secure, re-establish, rethink or enhance the conditions under which one operate. It is not necessarily an obvious or organized struggle, but one that can appear in many different forms determined by other structures in the different levels of society. The concept of neoculturation is thus an analytical tool with which to understand how people react to changed conditions. Neoculturation processes are conditioned by the specific context and the people who partake in them and is therefore *"rarely a direct 'solution' to the 'actual problems'"* (Højrup, 1989, p. 223). The transformations, that neoculturations processes can bring about, will often not only change the conditions and structures making people's life-modes possible, but also the life-modes of the people themselves (Højrup, forthcoming; Højrup, 2003).

For fishers engaging in the establishment of NaturSkånsom, this work and strategy is both a critique of the current neoliberal management system, a resistance towards international standardized ecolabelling schemes and a way of addressing these while trying to sustain their fishing—thus in this thesis understood as a part of a neoculturation process. ITQ systems (as well as other enclosures) have shown highly difficult to reverse—especially as they function as collateral for bank loans and thereby have facilitated a substantial industry debt (Høst, 2015; McCormack, 2017). As small-scale fishers have been pushed to accept and adjust to the Danish VQS management scheme, they have had to engage in multiple strategies for survival—including pushing for a state-led ecolabelling scheme like NaturSkånsom. How a market-based approach like NaturSkånsom has come to be part of this neoculturation process is addressed in this synthesis. While NaturSkånsom poses the challenge of contributing to current structures, I argue that it also works as an important battlefield where new definitions of 'sustainable' or conscious fishing are constituted and new alliances created supporting the life-mode specific livelihoods of the fishers in question.

In the following, I use life-mode analysis for two, related purposes. One is to understand how the change of conditions, in this context primarily the shift to neoliberal fisheries management in the form of VQS but also the rise of international ecolabelling schemes increasingly dominating the seafood market, prompt small-scale fishers to resist and engage in specific strategies for survival; here the establishment of NaturSkånsom. The other is to analyze how different stakeholders in the process of establishing NaturSkånsom, including small-scale fishers, NGOs and buyers, require different, sometimes conflicting, structures of the scheme, and how these are then negotiated and attempted reconciled in the process. For ecolabelling to be a meaningful strategy (or a mean to the end of sustaining

small-scale fishing), it needs to be structured in a way that solves some of the issues that have so far made ecolabelling inaccessible for (a lot of) small-scale fishers. I begin by analyzing these issues using the examples of MSC and the ecolabelling attempt of the Danish NGO Living Sea.

Inspired by a dialectic approach, I use the aforementioned cases to understand opposing modes in ecolabelling schemes and their consequences for small-scale fishers. MSC and Living Sea's attempt both contain possibilities, constraints and opposites that stakeholders has had to negotiate in the establishment of NaturSkånsom. On the basis of the analysis of MSC and Living Sea, I analyze how NaturSkånsom has been created to reconcile, or sublate, certain labelling aspects in order to meet the demands of different stakeholders and cater for small-scale fishers. Sublation, in this sense, inspired by Hegel, does not necessarily mean to remove or cancel contradictions or oppositions, but to preserve these, or to find a balance in order to create a whole, to solve or reconcile something, and/or gain a deeper understanding (Inwood, 1992). Dialectic analysis, thus, is used to analyze which characteristics are relevant (and which are not) for understanding a phenomenon or an issue, and how different features condition each other. In dialectic analysis, contradictions or opposing forms are viewed as productive for understanding what needs to be sublated in order to create something more appropriate and coherent. Sublation processes are self-transcending processes, wherein new contradictions are also created, hence the work of sublation is a cyclic process. This is not to be understood as a way of finding the 'true solution'; but to engage in a self-transcending process contributing to improving the current state (Inwood, 1992). An improvement, in this context, is an ecolabelling scheme that is *more* coherent and appropriate (or suitable) for the life-modes that are a part of it and for their practices' impact on ecosystems.

4. Fisheries ecolabelling under opposing and divergent conceptions of sustainability

This section takes a dialectical analytical approach to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the Danish environmental organization Living Sea's ecolabelling scheme (Figure 1.) from the 1990s with a focus on their opposing and divergent conceptualizations of sustainability and structures and modes to achieve it. This help us understand how NaturSkånsom has been developed as an alternative to MSC—resisting certain labelling structures while embracing others and trying to establish another conceptualization of 'sustainable fishing' building on the earlier attempt by the NGO Living Sea. MSC is the most widespread ecolabelling scheme for capture fisheries and the scheme has inspired a number of similar initiatives, guidelines (such as GSSI and FAO) and discussions. While MSC is an international organization working on a global scale, Living Sea's ecolabelling scheme was a local, bottom-up initiative that came out of a fisher-led discussion and call for responsibility. However, the two organizations have both attempted addressing the environmental impacts of capture fisheries through ecolabelling and understanding both labels is essential in order to discuss NaturSkånsom.

This section will not give a complete overview of MSC, nor comprehensively compare the scheme with Danish ecolabelling (attempts). Rather, the aim of this section is to carefully juxtapose MSC's and Living Sea's approaches on three analytically chosen elements, in order to understand the radical differences between these ecolabelling schemes. Three guiding themes structure this section and were chosen because these are the ones that risk making ecolabelling inaccessible, in some cases unsuited for, small-scale fishers. 1. *Who is in charge? Who certifies?: NGO-led versus industry-led* is about the general structure of an ecolabelling scheme. This has implications for the trust, credibility and legitimacy of a scheme, but also, importantly for the purpose of this thesis, for the producers' expense of participating in a scheme. The costs of entering assessment, being certified, using a label, being audited and recertified are some of the major barriers of certification for less resourceful, often small-scale fishers (Penca, 2019; Wakamatsu and Wakamatsu, 2017; Stoll et al., 2019). 2. *Market-driven 'stewardship': Who is supposed to care, about what and how?* is focused on the conceptualization of 'sustainability', who gets to define it, how it is measured and the incentive structure of a scheme and thus relates to the neoliberal structures of ecolabelling schemes. Measurement and incentive structures have implications for which producers (here

fishers, fishing companies and -associations) are most likely to enter certification; e.g. whether it is realistic and manageable for multispecies targeting fisheries (often small-scale) or individual vessels to enter certification and stay certified. This also relates to who benefits from certifications and discussions about price premiums. The last theme, 3. *Conceptualizations of and engagement with social sustainability* centers on ecolabelling schemes' engagements with social sustainability—which is often linked to small-scale fisheries but usually not a part of capture fisheries ecolabelling. This theme highlights the lack of attention to social dimensions of fishing, while also showing how typical social sustainability indicators are not necessarily applicable or relevant for small-scale, independent fishers (Autzen and Delaney, 2021).

Figure 1. Marine Stewardship Council and Living Sea's Naturskånsomt Fiskeri

Marine Stewardship Council
Initiated by a partnership between World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and consumer goods company Unilever, MSC was launched officially in 1997 as an independent non-profit, non-governmental organization focused on certifying and promoting 'sustainable' fisheries. In 2000, MSC certified the first fisheries in accordance with their MSC Fisheries Standard (MSC, 2017), today MSC continues to be the most widespread capture fisheries ecolabelling scheme with 15% of the global wild marine catch certified and 409 certified fisheries (including 22 suspended) in 2019-2020 (MSC, 2020).

Living Sea's Naturskånsomt Fiskeri
Living Sea is a Danish environmental organization established by citizens, including small-scale fishers in the early 1990s with a primary focus on marine issues. In 1995, they began working for a "blue organic" label for capture fisheries. They viewed this as an opportunity for consumers and environmentally oriented fishers to work together for a shift to community management and skånsomt fishing. After sailing around Denmark in 1998-9, visiting the majority of Danish fishing harbors and landing places, members of Living Sea agreed on a label standard based on what interviewed fishers saw as responsible and low-impact fishing practices (Andersen, 2000; Levende Hav, 1995; 2000).

4.1. Who is in charge? Who certifies?: NGO-led versus industry-led

4.1.1. Marine Stewardship Council

As a non-governmental, market-based approach to fisheries management, MSC is an example of the new modes of governance described earlier. MSC is structured with third-party certification on the basis of its Standard. Assessments are based on a point-system with performance indicators that accredited independent certifiers (described as Conformity Assessment Bodies/certification bodies) use when assessing fisheries (MSC, n.d.a; Le Manach et al., 2020). These third-party certification and auditing processes are central components for MSC's claim of objectivity and neutrality (Miller and Bush, 2015; Vandergeest et al., 2015). With its comprehensive requirements of fisheries management and harvest regulations, MSC works within international law from which it also draws legitimacy (Karavias, 2017; Gutierrez et al., 2016). MSC, however, continually faces critique by marine scientists and environmental NGOs, including WWF, over specific, certified fisheries (O'Connell and Kremer-Obrock, 2017; Long and Jones, 2020), the process of certification including the industry's influence on certification bodies, weaknesses of the Standard as well as assessment methods and -logics (Long and Jones, 2020; Autzen and Ounanian, 2021; Autzen and Hegland, 2021; WWF, 2018; Le Manach, et al. 2020). Despite continuous critique, MSC maintains its front position in capture fisheries ecolabelling affecting and defining the international market for 'sustainable' seafood and thus, who are included and excluded (Vandergeest et al., 2015; Long and Jones, 2020; O'Connell and Kremer-Obrock, 2017).

In addition to the critiques mentioned above, scholars have also noted the problematics of MSC's income largely coming from logo licensing creating a dependence on certified (high volume) fisheries (O'Connell and Kremer-Obrock, 2017). The expense of using the logo (sales fees) as well as the high certification-, audit- and recertification costs are also identified as driving exclusions of less-resourceful fisheries, especially small-scale fisheries in the Global South (Autzen and Delaney, 2021). MSC is therefore criticized for structurally favoring large-scale fisheries in the Global North that also constitute the majority of certified fisheries (Le Manach et al., 2020; O'Connell and Kremer-Obrock, 2017). Thus, the

structures of MSC, that are essential for its claim of credibility, are also what makes it challenging for small-scale fishers to participate.

4.1.2. Living Sea's Naturskånsomt Fiskeri

In contrast to MSC, Living Sea's ecolabelling scheme was an attempt to enable fishers to take responsibility for the marine environment (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021). The scheme was to be largely industry-driven by Danish fishers living up to the criteria and organized in what they termed *Fiskernes Økologiske Netværk*, Fishers' Organic Network. Living Sea was in charge of certification and control of fishers signing up for the scheme but worked towards getting the scheme state-controlled like the Danish organic label. Certification and use costs were to be inexpensive, and Living Sea received state funds for projects related to developing the label ("Støtte til 'grønne' fisk", 2000). Living Sea brought the then-government to look into the idea of a state-controlled organic label for capture fisheries based on their initial work, but this idea received strong critique from the large-scale fishing sector as well as the agricultural sector and was thus ultimately abandoned.

The ecolabel was reconceptualized from organic fishing to *Naturskånsomt Fiskeri* (caring for/gentle to nature fishing, today translated to low [environmental] impact fishing) and was supported by a number of marine biologists and social scientists joining Living Sea. Living Sea's initiative, and the process that followed it, is an example of a *"bottom-up, relational strategy"* (Stoll et al., 2019, p. 6). This is one that redirects attention to local-level, community- and fisher-driven problem-solving—as is a characteristic of ASMP (Stoll et al., 2019). This contrasts with the development of internationally institutionalized ecolabelling schemes, such as MSC, that outsource responsibility, reliability and control to third-party certifiers. Living Sea's ecolabel can be viewed as an attempt to structure, mobilize and extend local initiatives to a national level—still grounded in a strong connection between engaged fishers and consumers. It was implemented and worked shortly in 2000, but ultimately the initiative was paused due to lack of funding and political support as well as strong resistance from the then only national producers' organization, the Danish Fishers' Association Producers Organization (*Danmarks Fiskeriforening PO* (DFPO)). DFPO's chairman commented publicly on the initiative in 2000 calling it *"false item description and manipulation of the consumers"* stating that *"in our opinion you cannot ecolabel fish"* ("Fiskeriforening", 2000). DFPO went as far as excluding members who joined the scheme. Thus, the scheme did not succeed in establishing the needed credibility nor strong enough alliances to work in practice.

Through the lens of life-mode analysis, it is possible to qualify the heated conflict between small-scale fishers in Living Sea and the large(r)-scale fishing sector in Denmark. It was a conflict between to modes of production; community-based, simple commodity production (self-employed life-mode) and a (increasingly) semi-capitalist mode of production, a large-scale, highly mobile fishing sector that required other conditions of possibility and would not benefit from a focus on "low impact", locally based fishing. The scheme of Living Sea, therefore, came to represent the collision between two different neoculturation processes in the Danish fishing sector. While DFPO, at this time in the 1990s, took the stance that fish should and could not be certified, a few decades later, MSC certification became a part of the neoculturation process of the large-scale fishing fleet.

4.2. Market-driven 'stewardship' and 'sustainability': Who is supposed to *care*? About what? And how?

4.2.1. Marine Stewardship Council

Although often critiqued, MSC (also) draws credibility and legitimacy from its Fisheries Standard (Miller and Bush, 2015) which according to MSC is based on *"the most up-to-date understanding of internationally accepted fisheries science and management"* (MSC, n.d.a). The Standard for securing sustainable fisheries (regularly reviewed and updated) is designed to be globally applicable and universal. It addresses environmental sustainability through three principles: 1. Sustainable target fish stocks, 2. Environmental impact of fishing, and 3. Effective management (MSC, 2018). Together, these constitute what "sustainability" is in the context of MSC and show an important boundary work. Criteria broken down to performance indicators for each principle are defined by experts on the basis of scientific knowledge that is thus translated into the standard which then is processed and interpreted by accredited certifiers/auditors who work with the actual fisheries.

As stated by Vandergeest et al. (2015), the specific expertise required in the processes of continuously developing a standard and employing it have consequences for what kinds of knowledge can be included: *"As certification concentrates capacities to produce knowledge and mobilize action, other (often local) expertise and knowledge brokers are marginalized from the production of relevant ecological and social knowledge"* (pp. 14-16). This can be problematic for especially small-scale fishers whose tacit and local ecological knowledge is often not legible in this context—something MSC certification processes are critiqued for (Penca, 2019; Vandergeest et al., 2015).

MSC's most well-understood and clear matter of concern is "sustainable target fish stocks", Principle 1, that is focused on stock assessments and harvest management in the form of MSY in order to avoid overfishing. In a Danish context, annual catch levels for target species are set collectively by the EU based on scientific advice (Hegland and Raakjær, 2020). Although a goal, not all catch levels are set according to scientific advice, leaving some EU fisheries with MSC certification to be suspended and some unable to enter certification. The strong market influence of MSC, however, means that actors in fisheries supply chains, including fisheries organizations, are likely to push states to set catch levels in accordance with scientific recommendations. Thus, MSC influences fisheries policy beyond certified fisheries (Gutierrez et al., 2016). This focus on the productivity of fish stocks through harvest management on the basis of stock assessments, however, is a barrier for small-scale fisheries as species caught by these fishers in different regions sometimes do not yet have any stock assessments, especially those caught only in smaller volumes. In addition, the multispecies targeting approach of many small-scale fishers further complicates a certification process and makes assessments more expensive (Foley and Havice, 2016; Wakamatsu and Wakamatsu, 2017).

MSC's incentive structure for fisheries to enter certification is based on market incentives such as price premiums for certified catch and general market access. Put simply, retailers and consumers are to prefer and care about 'sustainable' fish products, thus creating a "market demand" (MSC, n.d.b) that makes, in turn, fishers care about certification—a neoliberal market logic of reaching 'sustainability'. This structure has received critique because of observations of unfair distribution of economic benefits with price premiums not reaching the fisher level, and the expansion of certified fisheries reducing or eliminating price premiums and making market differentiation increasingly difficult (Wijen and Chiroleu-Assouline, 2019). For Living Sea, however, as explored below, the main critique of this kind of structure has been the outsourcing of responsibility, knowledge and caring about the environment away from the fishers (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021).

4.2.2. Living Sea's Naturskånsomt Fiskeri

Living Sea's labelling scheme was based on a concept of caring about the environment *and* fishing communities. In contrast with the, at the time, growing attention to stock assessments and harvest management focused on quantity of fish caught, Living Sea emphasized, *"how you catch the fish"* (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021). This emphasis was linked to addressing what fishers could directly influence

and thus take responsibility for. As fishers do not control overall catch or quota levels, the productivity of fish stocks and harvest management were not included. Instead, the standard, which was a mix of criteria and guidelines, had specific restrictions for different kinds of fishing gear, limits for bollard pull for active gear (some gear types such as beam trawl were excluded), and guidelines for securing the quality of the catch for ethical and socioeconomic reasons. The main objects of concern were not limited to the environment, but also fishing communities and especially the livelihoods of small-scale, low impact fishing families (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021).

The goal of the scheme was to empower fishers and encourage them to take care of the marine environment in accordance with their local, ecological knowledge. An alliance between conscious consumers and small-scale fishers—with a larger aim of standing together in advocating for better governance of the marine resources—was meant to enact their goals (Andersen, 2000; Lassen, 1997; Levende Hav, 2000b; Autzen and Ounanian, 2021). In this sense, the approach of Living Sea in the 1990s was similar to current ASMP initiatives focused on low impact gear types (input) instead of quantities of fish caught, responding to local challenges and incorporating local, traditional knowledge (Penca, 2019; Penca et al., 2021). In trying to emphasize how this approach was different from the dominant idea of 'sustainable fishing' at the time (related to harvest management on the basis of stock assessments), Living Sea conceptualized it as Naturskånsomt Fiskeri, in this context translating to Fishing with Care (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021). Fishing with Care was based on the interconnection between caring for the environment and caring for fishing communities. It proved difficult, however, to exclude considerations about stock assessments, which had already taken center stage in international and national discussions of fisheries sustainability. In addition, the criteria and guidelines of Living Sea's labelling scheme were easily contestable as they were deliberately based on what fishers agreed were responsible and low impact practices—not directly referring to science.

4.3. Perspectives on and engagement with social sustainability

The last theme to consider before analyzing how NaturSkånsom has been structured to sublate these three sustainability tensions is the social and sociocultural aspect of sustainability in fisheries labelling. Social sustainability, in its diverse forms, is not a traditional object of concern in capture fisheries ecolabelling schemes (Agnew, 2018; Autzen and Delaney, 2021). In recent years, however, there has been increasing attention to social aspects of fisheries value chains in relation to a rising awareness of violations of human rights in seafood supply chains (including

fisheries) (Teh et al., 2019). Currently, only two quasi-international labelling schemes for capture fisheries address social sustainability as part of their core principles; FairTrade USA and the Responsible Vessel Standard (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Capture fisheries schemes focused on social sustainability

FairTrade USA Fisheries Standard is concerned both with the environmental impact of fisheries, fisheries management and social aspects in fishing and the processing industry. This is a comprehensive scheme that includes both a rigorous criteria section on working conditions and a call for co-management and community development (Fair Trade USA, 2017). The other, the Responsible Vessel Standard (RVS, developed from the UK-based Responsible Fishing Scheme) is currently under development by the Global Seafood Assurances and partners. This scheme is focused primarily on securing human rights, fair and decent working conditions including crew training, vessel management and safety in compliance with International Organization of Standardization requirements (Global Seafood Assurances, n.d.) and therefore not an alternative to schemes such as MSC, but a socially-oriented addition. Both FairTrade and RVS differentiate between kinds of vessels in their standards in attempt to increase accessibility for especially small-scale and artisanal fisheries. While the FairTrade scheme encourages organizations to enter certification of partnering fisheries, RVS is currently the only vessel-based program on a global scale—designed as such in order to make it possible and operative for individual vessel owners to enter certification (Global Seafood Assurances, n.d.).

4.3.1. Marine Stewardship Council

MSC has received strong critique for its lack of focus on and criteria for securing social sustainability in certified fisheries (Teh et al., 2019). Aspects such as worker's rights and working conditions have not been objects of concern in MSC both because of the original intention and motivation of the scheme and because of the challenges (and expense) of creating such criteria and certifying and auditing them (Vandergeest et al., 2015; Barclay, 2012; Agnew, 2018). This is problematic as severe human rights violations in fisheries have been uncovered, but also as MSC has successfully created a definition of 'sustainable fisheries' on the global market as based on their Fisheries Standard (Vandergeest et al., 2015)—a conceptualization hitherto without considerations of social aspects of sustainability.

As concerns about the above have been raised, MSC has looked into possibilities for securing at the minimum, no forced labor or child labor in certified fisheries. In recent years, MSC has discussed and workshopped different approaches with stakeholders (MSC, 2020). A group of these organizations, focused on human rights and labor conditions, have raised concerns about a MSC idea of incorporating a labor standard on the basis of Responsible Fishing Scheme or FairTrade: *"both of which we have serious reservations about in terms of their ability to be scaled to a global standard for labor auditing on fishing vessels, particularly in fisheries at high-risk of human trafficking"* (McGill, 2018, p. 1). This testifies to the difficulties of establishing and auditing a global, universal standard on these issues in capture fisheries, but also to the scale and seriousness of the problem that will require multiple efforts to address in realistic and manageable ways (McGill, 2018). On the basis of recommendations, so far MSC has implemented requirements of transparency of labor practices in certified fisheries through public statements and actual labor audits in the processing industry in high-risk countries (MSC, 2020).

4.3.2. Living Sea's Naturskånsomt Fiskeri

Living Sea's labelling scheme was founded on small-scale fishing communities as a central object of concern in the context of increasing industrialization of fisheries and the spreading of neoliberal management systems such as ITQ. In Living Sea's comments on their labelling guidelines, they state that a motivation behind the scheme was *"to strengthen the survival possibilities of and the development in the smaller coastal communities"* (Levende Hav, 2000b, p.1). Living Sea aimed to do so through an alliance with conscious consumers pushing for a shift in fisheries management towards community-based fisheries instead of support of large-scale investments in 'efficient' fishing gear and vessels. In their criteria, Living Sea encouraged a focus on quality of catch instead of quantity and had specific limits on, for instance, how many nets each fisher should set in order to make room for other fishers (Levende Hav, 2000a; Andersen, 2000).

Living Sea argued that the interconnectedness of the wellbeing of local fishing communities and the environmental state of their local waters should be the basis of fisheries management (Lassen, 1997). For Living Sea there was a reciprocal relationship between well-functioning fishing communities and well-functioning local ecosystems, Fishing with Care, thus, was conceptualized as practices that cared for both. Their main rationale was that what fishers needed to become environmental stewards was empowerment in order to maintain their sense of collective responsibility for the environment that they depended on. Members of

Living Sea felt this was lost in the outsourcing of responsibility to NGO schemes and bioeconomic modelling of fish stocks and harvest management.

4.4. Ecolabelling in opposing forms

In summary, the different certification and owner structures of the two schemes analyzed above impact their level of legitimacy and credibility, but also their accessibility for small-scale fisheries. MSC is based on neoliberal structures of market-based approaches to management and to reaching 'sustainability'. Based on market incentives and access, ecolabelling schemes raise questions of inclusion/exclusion dynamics and equity—especially in a large-scale, global scheme like MSC that strongly influence access to markets in the Global North. It is clear that schemes' interactions and relations with both the industry, buyers, environmental NGOs and states are decisive for their success. Ecolabelling schemes need to constantly balance these in order to secure credibility and operationality. While MSC's incentive structure is built on economic benefits for fishers, Living Sea argued that fishers needed to be empowered through an inclusion of their knowledge—and that this was essential in order to ensure compliance and responsibility (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021).

The schemes' conceptualizations of sustainable fishing, their different objects of care and the structure of their standards have implications for their credibility, but also for which fisheries are likely to enter certification. Living Sea's scheme catered to small-scale fisheries in its simple input (fishing gear) focus and in the way that it was vessel-based, as opposed to MSC's approach to target species and expensive output estimations. MSC's incentive structure stems from market logics, economic rationales and 'green' consumption. MSC's scheme assumes that fishers will be incentivized to enter the scheme by price premiums, while consumers and retailers are to care about a scientized definition of sustainable fisheries. In contrast, Living Sea aimed to empower fishers to take care of the environment from which they derive their livelihoods for the sake of their industry, their communities and future generations. This was to be further enabled by an alliance between certified fishers and environmentally conscious consumers who cared about fishing communities and fishers' ability to function as local environmental stewards.

While fishers and fishing communities were a central object of concern in Living Sea's scheme, in MSC, social aspects have only recently been attempted to address. Social sustainability in labelling can take different forms with implications for producers. Discussions of human rights, labor rights and working conditions in MSC and the standards of the FairTrade and RVS schemes are to a

high degree based on a wage worker life-mode and -context that is not globally applicable especially in small-scale fisheries where fishers are often characterized as, self-employed, independent and self-sustained (Autzen and Delaney, 2021). While this wage worker centrism (Autzen and Delaney, 2021) is important in labelling of social sustainability, in many contexts, and especially in a welfare state (with highly managed fisheries) context such as Denmark, such considerations are not as relevant for realizing the self-employed life-mode in small-scale fisheries. These kinds of criteria, such as maximum working hours, could potentially be an added barrier for small-scale fisheries if included in large-scale labelling schemes. However, around the world social aspects, values and contributions of small-scale fishers are promoted for market differentiation purposes (Penca, 2019, Penca et al., 2021; Stoll et al., 2019; Witter and Stoll, 2017). Such social sustainability aspects are invisible in a scheme like MSC that thus does offer small-scale fishers the market differentiation that ASMP are able to offer through an explicit focus on small-scale fishing communities.

The contrasts of MSC' and Living Sea's approaches to ecolabelling display the challenges and tensions of defining fisheries sustainability, and how to measure and audit it. Beyond the apparent differences in scale, structures, motivations, accessibility and operationality, the schemes are based on contrasting ideas of how to achieve sustainability with real implications for small-scale fisheries. While scholars agree that international ecolabelling schemes are not catered for small-scale fisheries (Penca, 2019; Stoll et al., 2019), there are consistent calls for some kind of common small-scale fisheries criteria or a *"clear standard of practice"* (Penca et al., 2020, p. 60; Penca, 2019) for marketing and communication purposes—and for wider recognition of small-scale fisheries in markets where ecolabelling schemes dominate (Stoll et al., 2019; Penca et al., 2020). The Danish NaturSkånsom is the first implemented national attempt at such an approach.

5. Sublating these opposing certification modes: NaturSkånsom

Based on Living Sea's ecolabelling ideas and the concept of *naturskånsom* fishing, Danish small-scale fishers have at least since 2013 suggested such an approach as part of sustaining small-scale fishing (Rafaelsen, 2014). In the meantime, MSC has become increasingly dominating on the Danish seafood market, and a majority of Danish fisheries (calculated in catch volume) is certified MSC—a process led by DFPO that for some years has had a goal of getting all Danish fisheries certified (DFPO, n.d). Aware of the problems of ecolabelling schemes for small-scale fisheries, MSC certified as well as non-certified small-scale fishers have advocated for an alternative to MSC on the Danish market (Autzen and Hegland, 2021). In 2018, FSK promoted the idea as one of their key issues: "*Consumers should be able to choose fresh fish from the low impact coastal fishing by means of an ecolabel. The label shall support the alliance between the coastal fishers and the people who care about quality and sustainability*" (FSK, 2018, p.2 (authors' translation)).

NaturSkånsom is the result of different stakeholders' (with the National Association for Low Impact, Small-scale Fishing Producers' Organization (FSK) as a main participant) requirements and negotiations including the ministry's financial and structural limitations for the scheme. For the ministry and FSK, a main aim has been to make a better model for ecolabelling for small-scale fishers, but this aim has had to be reconciled with other stakeholders' wishes and requirements. These different ideas of how an ecolabelling scheme should be structured stem from the structures of MSC, as *the* example of a widespread, recognized ecolabelling scheme, but also, especially for small-scale fishers, Living Sea's ideas of what kind of knowledge should be the base of a scheme and how to address 'sustainability'. NaturSkånsom, thus, has been, and still is, an arena of resistance for small-scale fishers resisting international, standardized ecolabelling scheme, and the result of the dynamic interplay between different practices and structural processes. On the basis of the analysis of the previous section, this section analyses how different certification modes have been sublated in NaturSkånsom and what consequences this has.

5.1. Who is in charge? Who certifies?: State-led, co-created with the industry, and 'environmental NGO-friendly'

NaturSkånsom is run by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark, who facilitated the official development of the scheme. It was the FSK, however, that introduced the idea in ministry-led committees and through their strategic political work (Autzen and Hegland, 2021). FSK builds on the initiatives of Living Sea (FSK, n.d.b.), which is also one of their collaborators. In the development of the scheme, environmental NGOs have come to play a prominent role as both promoters of the scheme and stakeholders with specific requirements. Starting before the official development of NaturSkånsom, an alliance has formed between environmental NGOs, people from the organic movement and FSK with a common interest of supporting "low impact" fishing as an alternative to demersal trawling (Autzen and Hegland, 2021). NaturSkånsom is thus an initiative taken up by a responsive state reacting both to this alliance behind "low-impact" fishing, public opinion and the changing focus' of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (Autzen and Hegland, 2021). The responsible ministry made this co-creation process a central strategy in the making of the scheme. Thus, a range of other stakeholders also participated in a ministry-led working group on the scheme; fish mongers, restaurant actors, catering firms, fish processing businesses and retail chain representatives.

The NaturSkånsom process has been driven by small-scale fishers behind FSK and their collaborations with other organizations but hosted and implemented by the ministry. As stated on FSK's webpage: "*In November 2020, our joint label NaturSkånsom was launched and Denmark thereby became the first country in the world to have a state-controlled label for fish from healthy fish stocks caught with environmentally low impact fishing gear*" (FSK, n.d.b. (authors' translation)). NaturSkånsom synthesizes a bottom-up, relational approach like Living Sea and a top-down governmental process. This has multiple important implications for the scheme. The most notable are a tacit acceptance of the scheme from the DFPO, whose bottom trawling members are excluded. Nonetheless, DFPO has been participating in the working group and have not officially or publicly gone against the scheme. Also, Danish fish auctions, some of whom have tried to work against it, have been encouraged to accept the ecolabel in accordance with legislation. Actors in public cafeterias (hospitals, schools, municipalities etc.) have shown a widespread interest in the label articulated as based on the fact that it is state-led and -controlled. This should be viewed in connection to the Danish organic label that is likewise state-controlled and enjoys a high level of public trust (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri, 2012).

Because it is state-controlled, NaturSkånsom make use of traceability and control measures already in place in Danish fishing. It is a vessel-based scheme where the individual vessel operators and their vessels are certified for labelling approved species. The scheme is state-financed, and free for fishers to join (except for a quality assurance course of about 47 EUR), there are no sales fees for using the label and the ministry provides free marketing material and information about the scheme. In contrast to MSC and similar schemes, this means that it is inexpensive for fishers to enter certification, inexpensive for fish shop to sell certified products, and that marketing material is easy and free to access.

NaturSkånsom draws recognition and credibility from its state-led nature—without some of the otherwise common label structures such as third-party certification. This works well in a Danish context with a centralized, welfare state system with a high degree of public trust (Svendsen, 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, n.d.). Surely, this is contextual and state-led schemes in other countries might not enjoy the same credibility, authority nor public trust. Still, the NaturSkånsom case show the potential of the combination of a state-led and -controlled and industry- and environmental NGO co-created scheme. Consequently, in contrast to MSC and Living Sea's scheme, NaturSkånsom has established credibility among national buyers, retailers and NGOs while being structurally and economically accessible for small-scale fishers.

5.2. Market-driven 'stewardship' and 'sustainability': Who is supposed to *care*, about what and how?

In the initial draft act of NaturSkånsom, fish stock assessments and MSY were not a part of the standard. Instead, as suggested by FSK, the environmental criteria were based on the conceptualization of skånsomt fishing (and a vessel size limit). Instead of output assessment, these criteria are formulated as input restrictions of defined "low impact" (*skånsomme*) fishing gear types. This definition of "low impact" was already implemented in Danish fishing policy in 2014 as part of a Coastal Fishing Scheme incentivizing low impact coastal fishing – thus already an object of concern in Danish fishing policies. The definition is based on scientific estimations of fishing gear impacts as assessed in a report ordered from the ministry in 2013. Compared with demersal trawling, the passive gear types (and Danish seine) have generally shown to have a lesser impact on the sea floor, lead to lower discard levels, lower bycatch of unwanted species and a lower energy consumption (Gislason et al., 2014). NaturSkånsom's "low impact" criteria are thus based on Danish ecological science about impact of fisheries gear types (Giaslason et al., 2014), international categorizations of passive gear types (adapted to common

Danish fishing gear types such as Danish seine) and on the concept of *naturskånsom* advocated by Living Sea and FSK (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021). Hence, the boundary work of defining 'sustainability' for NaturSkånsom has been based in scientific expertise and fisher-led types of knowledges as well as common ways of talking about coastal fishing in Denmark. This can both be problematized for the lack of direct output assessments of certified fishing units, but the simple, clear input restrictions, based also on fisher's knowledge, makes the scheme comprehensible and transparent for small-scale fishers and has so far provided FSK with a sense of co-ownership.

While NaturSkånsom's standard is much simpler than Living Sea's, NaturSkånsom has so far been successful in establishing credibility and legitimacy among Danish buyers and NGOs. In discussions in the working groups, buyers and retailers have articulated the exclusion of demersal trawling as one of their main interests in the scheme. NaturSkånsom's definition of "low impact" works as an (somewhat problematic) exclusion of all demersal trawling, but one that gives a clear marketing story. In contrast to MSC, NaturSkånsom provides small-scale fishers with a simple and closer-to-the-sector environmental standard that fishers can easily navigate. Small-scale fishers' attempt of resisting MSY and conceptualizing the "eco" of the ecolabel as founded on the definition of low impact fishing, however, was not accepted by the otherwise supportive environmental NGOs. A coalition of environmental NGOs made both public letters to people in the parliament and hearing statements for the first draft act of NaturSkånsom addressing the initial lack of considerations of MSY (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021; Autzen and Hegland, 2021). This led to an intense negotiation between FSK and these organizations ending with an incorporation of stock assessments and MSY in the final act of NaturSkånsom. The incorporation of MSY is central for the support of the label from the environmental NGOs—both of which arguably been important for NaturSkånsom's positioning in relation to MSC. For these reasons, FSK has come to accept this otherwise highly inconvenient addition to the standard both practically and conceptually (Autzen and Ounanian, 2021; Autzen and Hegland, 2021).

Criteria for fish stock assessments exclude a wide range of species targeted by the Danish small-scale sector, making the label less usable for the segment and therefore also considerably lowering the potential labelled catch volume with consequences for both fishers and the accessibility to labelled products. However, this has already shown to be handled creatively by fish sellers. Both the Danish initiative Blue Lobster that delivers high quality, locally caught fish to high-end restaurants and the Danish meal kit delivery company Årstiderne have approached certified fishers in order to establish sales agreements. Both companies have come to the pragmatic conclusion that they want to embrace NaturSkånsom,

but also buy and market fish species that cannot be labelled—but are caught by fishers with low impact fishing gear—"skånsom" instead. As such it seems that although it is too early to see if NaturSkånsom will provide certified fishers with price premiums, the awareness of the label, the creation of the concept of "naturskånsom" fish and the ministry's marketing material and campaign have already benefitted certified fishers.

5.3. Perspectives on and engagement with social sustainability

As co-created with FSK, (low impact) small-scale fishing is a central object of concern in NaturSkånsom: The scheme is limited to (in Danish terms) small-scale fishing vessels. The size criteria for fishing vessels builds on the Danish politically negotiated definition of "coastal fishing vessels" which is vessels below 17 meters with 80% of their fishing trips below 48 hours (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri, 2021). The size limitation, which is clearly an exclusion of the majority of the fishing sector (as it is currently composed), has almost not been challenged or problematized. This is most likely due to the decline of small-scale fishing and the politically articulated aim of protecting this sector especially in the context of the VQS management system. Both buyers, environmental NGOs and FSK agree that the focus on small-scale fishers is key for NaturSkånsom—both environmentally in relation to the size of vessels also affecting size fishing gear—and as a marketing strategy. In other arenas, FSK also often links the small-scale (and independent fisher) component with environmentally friendly practices: "*Being a coastal fisher is a good life. The coastal fisher is out in nature, takes good care of it [nature] and comes home every day to the family*" (FSK, n.d.b (authors' translation)). While contributing to the branding of small-scale fisheries, however, NaturSkånsom also contributes to the ongoing division of the small-scale fishing fleet into "low impact" fishers and demersal trawlers, potentially negatively affecting the cohesion of fishing communities with both small-scale trawlers and small-scale fishers with "low impact" gear types.

Some of the largest demersal quota holders, in the Danish public known as 'Quota kings' (Autzen and Winter, 2020), are based in the pelagic fishing sector that is also characterized by the use of "low impact" fishing gear (no demersal trawls). Interestingly, members of the (Danish) Pelagic Producers' Organization have taken part in ministry-led meetings about NaturSkånsom. Although they have not objected to the size limitation, they have made clear that they too only use the defined "low impact" gear types (in their case: pelagic trawls and purse seines), thus associating their fishing with the label. This testifies to the

establishment of “naturskånsomt” as a market strategy and alternative to ‘sustainable’ fishing.

5.4. Unresolved challenges

NaturSkånsom has sublated some of the contrasts with implications of small-scale fishers between MSC’s globally standardized labelling structure and Living Sea’s bottom-up initiative. Most importantly, NaturSkånsom has been structured to be sensitive towards, and inexpensive for, small-scale fishers that are co-creators of the scheme, and its engagements with environmental NGOs and its state-led nature have provided the scheme with trust, credibility and public awareness. In the process, NaturSkånsom has encountered and created new challenges yet to be addressed. The most important is the inclusion of MSY in NaturSkånsom. The environmental NGO requirement of stock assessments and MSY contradicts with the original idea of skånsomt as an alternative to this kind of bioeconomic modelling of ‘sustainable’ fishing. The attempt of combining “low impact” fishing methods and MSY raises dilemmas as they are based on two different understandings of environmental consciousness in fishing—and how to achieve it.

While the incorporation of MSY has been essential for NaturSkånsom to be recommended by environmental NGOs (Autzen and Hegland, 2021), it creates a central practical contradiction too. It means that some of the key target species of the small-scale fishing sector are excluded from the scheme, either because there are no assessments of these species or because they are not on EU level managed in accordance with scientific advice. While with MSC in large-scale fisheries, instances like these might mean that key fishing actors push for better governance in order to get fishing for these species certified, for small-scale fishers this seems unlikely for them to be able to influence. In a Total Allowable Catch Share system, like the one in EU, where annual TAC levels are set collectively by member states (Autzen and Hegland, 2021), catch levels will not be affected by NaturSkånsom. In this context, small-scale fishers feel disempowered and question why it is not still better to market and encourage catches to be caught with low impact gear types through NaturSkånsom. With the examples of Årstiderne and Blue Lobster, it seems that this is also what buyers think when they plan to sell non-certified fish caught by certified fishers marked as “skånsomt”. The incorporation of MSY has created an unintended spilt between low-impact, small-scale fishers targeting MSY-managed fish stocks and the fishers with the same gear types targeting stocks not currently managed on EU level in accordance with MSY. With the privatized VQS system, fishers cannot easily change target species and small-scale fishers are limited further by being place-based and having to rely on local

species that in certain areas are not managed in accordance with MSY. The MSY compromise is therefore a threat to the organization of these fishers that from the beginning wanted to create an ecolabelling scheme not based on this conceptualization of 'sustainable' fishing.

Despite unresolved challenges, NaturSkånsom has come to be a part of a larger redistribution of political attention from the large-scale fishing to the small-scale fishing sector. This is evident in new fishing policies that explicitly links NaturSkånsom to a governmental management focus on sustainable fisheries (Autzen and Hegland, 2021; Miljø- og Fødevareministeriet, 2019). This stands in contrast to earlier administrations' (and the large-scale fishing sector's) understandings of the small-scale fishing sector as mainly of touristic value—a perspective that FSK has strived to change: "*Often the low impact [skånsomme] coastal fishing is referred to as 'museum fishing'. At FSK-PO however, we see it as an important component of the sustainable fishing of the future*" (FSK, n.d.a. (author's translation)). In addition, the NaturSkånsom process has contributed to establishing 'naturskånsomt' fishing as an alternative to 'sustainable' fishing with growing impact on the Danish seafood market. This has been made possible not least because of the essential alliance between the small-scale fishing organization, FSK, and environmental NGOs; an alliance that has increased the social capital of small-scale fishers and their ability to push for better considerations of their practices and livelihoods in fishing policies (Autzen and Hegland, 2021).

6. Discussion: Ongoing dilemmas and how to understand these

6.1. Tension 1: The call for an overall standard but an emphasis on contextual considerations

An ecolabelling scheme for small-scale fishers is not an alternative to (other forms of) alternative seafood marketing programs (ASMP)—these address some of the same issues, overlap in certain areas but have different scopes. A label like NaturSkånsom does not in itself change fishers' dependence on fish auctions, middlemen etc., but can create a demand that supports alternative seafood supply chains. ASMP initiatives can thus benefit from labels that promote small-scale fishing, and both in a North American context and in Southern Europe there have been calls for a structuring of core principles and values, or criteria, for environmentally and socially sustainable small-scale fishing (Witter and Stoll, 2017; Stoll et al., 2019; Penca, 2019).

In North America, the Local Catch Network[13], which links consumers to producers and supports fishing communities, have defined core values for their organization both for internal clearance and consistent communication purposes (Local Catch Network, n.d.). In a final report for the project "Developing a Labelling Scheme for Mediterranean Small-scale and Artisanal Fish Products" from December 2020, participating researchers suggest an overall guideline for responsible Mediterranean small-scale fish products that can contribute to wider recognition, a coherent story and an upscaling of local initiatives (Penca et al., 2020).

The Local Catch Network's core principles and the above proposed guideline have in common a focus on supporting the livelihoods of independent, small-scale fishers through fair prices, acknowledgement of traditional practices and the importance of communities, environmental considerations and quality of fish (Local Catch Network, n.d.). While these objects of concern are echoed many places, including in Denmark, in the two above mentioned cases they are (deliberately) not translated into operational criteria in the form of a standard. There is a clear tension here between the call for overall principles, or for a functioning

[13] Local Catch Network works to support and develop local and regional seafood systems through different initiatives such as community supported fisheries (Local Catch Network, n.d.)

labelling scheme catered for small-scale fishers, and the acknowledgement of small-scale fishing as something that needs to be considered on a local level, fitted to specific contexts and needs. As an example, the Slow Food organization that includes the Slow Fish network, had a discussion in a public workshop in 2018 about the possibility of establishing a Slow Food ecolabelling scheme for small-scale fishers. While there were agreements on a focus on environmental sustainability by passive fishing gear restrictions, it was not possible to establish a consensus on social criteria such as 'owner-operator' restrictions as this would exclude members in contexts where this is not feasible or perhaps against traditional practices. This discussion needs to be understood in the context of small-scale fisheries being both hyper local and contextual, while at the same time a part of a hyper global seafood system: A market context that increasingly demands general standardization and harmonization also of standards such as for instance the organic standards in the EU and USA (Penca, 2019; Roheim et al., 2018).

Scholars working with small-scale fisheries agree that international ecolabelling schemes with universal standards are not suitable for small-scale fisheries due particularly to the three themes presented in this synthesis. At the same time, there are some general features that are common for small-scale fishers and are used for marketing purposes in different areas of the world such as (plural understandings of) low impact fishing methods, community-based fishing (not fishing companies) and quality of catches (a feature that is not universal, but often appears in marketing for small-scale fisheries' products) (Local Catch Network, n.d.; Reed et al., 2012; Johnson, 2018; Højrup and Hansen, 2001). The tension between the rejection of universal criteria plus standardization and the call for a gathering standard based on such features have led scholars to suggest a reframing of the concept of a "standard".

For instance, Penca (2019) argue that while the ASMP and label initiatives are local (or national) and are catered for local socio-ecological contexts, they are also responses to transnational issues with political marginalization of small-scale fishers and to neoliberal fisheries management regimes. Moreover, initiatives inspire each other and are in conversation through organizations such as Slow Fish and Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE). Therefore, according to Penca, they could be reframed as a small-scale fisheries 'standard' and supported on an international level as *transnational localism.* Transnational localism is defined as *"the reinforcement of local-specific approaches (reflecting local ecologies, values, and socio-economic specificities) within a transnational structure that provides support and recognition"* (Penca, 2019, p. 143). This would require new ways of addressing transnational challenges in a way that makes room for plural practices and contexts and thus *"a rethinking of standards away from fixed technical rules*

that are uniformly applied across the globe" (Penca, 2019, p. 143). Such a standard or ecolabelling scheme would, according to Penca, be focused on descriptive indicators rather than technical, be based on common characteristics, but open to contextual ways of addressing social and environmental sustainability (Penca, 2019).

How and who should organize such a plural, transnational standard is an open question that also points to the question of whether this should be the responsibility of public authorities or private entities. NaturSkånsom as a state-led, but voluntary scheme is, like examples of the organic label(s), interesting in this context, as it is an example of a state embracing a consumer-oriented (market-based) approach to management. This does not only place responsibility for sustainability of fisheries on consumers, but also risk the question of why state regulation is not enough to secure social and environmental sustainability. Penca (2019) frame the non-state driven ASMP initiatives as 'empowerment strategies' that are also a resistance to universal standards and neoliberal management which, as described earlier, reveals another tension.

6.2. Tension 2: Resisting neoliberal structures by forming new market-based approaches

As discussed by Witter and Stoll (2017) and Penca (2019), neoliberal approaches to management, often in the form of ITQs and other market-based principles, are one of the key reasons why ASMP initiatives are formed—they are, also in the case of NaturSkånsom, strategies for small-scale fishers to protect their livelihoods in systems that pose significant challenges to these livelihoods. However, these same initiatives, and a label such as NaturSkånsom, are based and dependent on the very same structures, they are said to resist (Witter and Stoll, 2017; Konefal, 2012; Guthman, 2008). Witter and Stoll define this as a key structural challenge whereby promoting non-market values (such as community-based fishing and low impact fishing methods), small-scale fishers are able to adapt to and survive in neoliberal settings in ways that at the same time keep fishers tied to these market-based structures (2017). Similar issues have been identified in agricultural contexts (Witter and Stoll, 2017; Guthman, 2008) where it is discussed how alternative food movements reproduce the neoliberal structures that they are said to resist; for instance, by relying on 'green' consumerism and *"highly individualized purchasing decisions"* (Guthman, 2008, p. 1171).

With NaturSkånsom being a state-led scheme, this issue of *"participation and resistance"* (Witter and Stoll, 2017, p. 139) is even more precarious. Within FSK and Danish fishing communities, there has been an ongoing

debate about the risk of an initiative like NaturSkånsom being viewed as a (regulatory) protection mechanism for small-scale fishing that then justifies a continuation of the current ITQ-like management scheme. In fact, when NaturSkånsom was first introduced as an initiative by political parties, it was a part of a larger revision of fisheries policies including an extension of the notice of the VQS system from 8 to 16 years (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2016). Although small-scale fishers fought fiercely against the introduction of the VQS system in the 2000s, no one commented on this extension as it is viewed as practically impossible to cancel the system anyways. A cancellation, even with a 16 years notice, would also be problematic for a large part of the small-scale fishing sector that have bought into the quota market and have their quota shares as collateral for bank loans that are not likely to be paid off without being able to sell the quota shares (Høst, 2015; Autzen and Winter, 2020). Thus, there is a level of problem displacement at play in which small-scale fishers' issues in neoliberal modes of fisheries management (privatization) is handled as a problem with market differentiation through ecolabelling.

NaturSkånsom, just as ASMP, cannot effectively address the major challenge for small-scale fishing; access to fishing resources—often compromised by ITQ-like systems (Autzen and Delaney, 2021). NaturSkånsom can help increase fish prices and enable new markets but just like ASMP in North America *"fisheries policies that increase access costs and enable fleet consolidation remain a persistent threat to independent and small-scale fishers"* (Witter and Stoll, 2017, p. 136). Scholars continually identify it as problematic to take part in these market-based approaches when trying to promote non-market-based values and alternative food systems (Konefal, 2012; Witter and Stoll, 2017; Guthman, 2008). Danish small-scale fishers who carry features of the self-employed life-mode (independent fisher), however, are used to being dependent on a market—and on fish auctions where their catch is often sold out of Denmark to Southern European high-end restaurants. As stated by a small-scale, pound net fisher: *"It's not the auctions, or global market for fish, that troubles us, no it's the closing of local fish auctions and the MSC demand of the retail chains that really limit our access to markets"* (Erik, interview, April 14, 2019). Market differentiation, often in the form of ensuring high quality of catch, has long been one of the strategies of independent small-scale fishers. They are not trying to 'not be for the market' as Konefal (2012) discusses—they are trying to sustain their life-mode specific livelihoods in a fisheries management system that is not well-suited for their life-mode. With fisheries management diminishing the possibilities to increase catch or shift target species without increasing debt further (quota purchase), with high interest rates to pay for quota purchases and with labels such as MSC dominating the market without

providing benefits for these fishers, engaging in an ecolabel catered for small-scale fishers is a relevant strategy. Pushing for NaturSkånsom is thus a way of resisting current large-scale ecolabelling structures while trying to adjust to new conditions with the resources that these fishers have available.

An initiative such as NaturSkånsom does not address the root causes of the problem and it was not intended to—it is a part of a neoculturation process wherein small-scale fishers seek to impact the structures and conditions under which they operate. Dealing with a market is not new for small-scale fishers, but privatization of fishing rights is (Høst, 2015). In the context where the state no longer ensures access to fishing rights, they have pushed for a state-led ecolabelling scheme that can secure market differentiation. For Danish small-scale fishers, the participation in the market is a part of their concept of freedom. While profit or the accumulation of capital might not be the goal of their fishing, Danish small-scale fishers are fishing for the demands of a market (Høst, 2012; 2015); they are market agents and thus not just an expression of anti-market values. They are also not against the state, or state regulations, as long as these create acceptable conditions. In fact, the state is the prerequisite for their access to the fishing resources.

Danish small-scale fishers are challenged in a number of different domains: Among others, on the quota share market, where many of them are forced to rent quota shares from actors in the large-scale fishing fleet. This they have addressed by pushing for ever more useful Coastal Fishing Schemes, that work as a national quota share pool for small-scale fisheries, and by establishing common quota share companies, such as the Thorupstrand guild. As stated by FSK after the political Fishing Agreement that initiated the ministry work on NaturSkånsom and introduced a new Coastal Fishing Scheme for low impact gear users:

> "*The coastal fishing is no longer phasing out. It is under pressure, yes, but with good support we see a silver lining. Thanks to the [political] majority whom, without the government, adopted a Fishing Agreement supporting the low impact coastal fishing . . .. And thanks to those who supported FSK in the time where we fought with the administration. The battle is not over yet*" (FSK, 2018, p.2 (Authors' translation)).

On the fish sales market, small-scale fishers are challenged by volume-based fisheries, vertical integration between quota-investing companies, processing companies and corporate retail chains, and large-scale, dominating ecolabelling schemes such as MSC. This market challenge Danish small-scale fishers have addressed by trying to create strong, state-led and -supported market differentiation by means of NaturSkånsom. NaturSkånsom, thus, is but one out of several

strategies, a part of a neoculturation process, but a part that cannot, and is not meant to, stand alone.

7. Conclusions: Ecolabelling of small-scale fisheries —harmony or dissonance?

The main objectives of this PhD project were to critically examine ecolabelling in the context of small-scale fisheries and use this knowledge to contribute constructively to the concurrent process of establishing an ecolabelling scheme for small-scale fishers in Denmark. Accordingly, two research questions guided this thesis:

1. How can an ecolabelling scheme be structured to the context of small-scale fisheries?

2. What dilemmas and contradictions are created in such a process and how can these be understood?

In the following the research questions are answered first by a summary of insights from the cases followed by specific and succinct conclusions.

7.1. Opposing certification modes and implications

While this PhD project involved research in ecolabelling schemes and among small-scale fishers, the main object of study has been the emergent process of establishing and implementing NaturSkånsom. NaturSkånsom is shaped by common ecolabelling structures, but also the specific Danish attempt by Living Sea. Ecolabelling schemes are market-based approaches to reaching sustainability and managing fisheries through neoliberal features such as commodification and consumerism. As such, neoliberalism structures the way ecolabelling is developed and implemented. As discussed in this thesis, structures of ecolabelling schemes, and the way they work, make such schemes inaccessible, and in some cases unsuitable, for (a large part of) small-scale fisheries.

Through a dialectic analysis of MSC and Living Sea's ecolabelling attempt, I have presented different conflicting and opposing modes and structures of these schemes (summarized in Figure 3.) and their consequences for small-scale fishers. These modes and structures impact the levels of trust and credibility of the schemes and have implications for the accessibility (and usefulness) of the schemes for especially small-scale fishers. It is the typical ecolabelling structures of (costly) third-party certification and audit, and the complexity of assessments based on science and 'expertise' that are the basis of a scheme's claim of credibility (e.g., MSC). It is these same structures, however, that challenge the inclusion of small-scale fisheries in such schemes, because of the expense of certification and the

exclusion of local knowledge and insensitivity towards different kinds of producers, fisheries and practices. While Living Sea's ecolabelling initiative struggled establishing the needed credibility, in contrast to MSC, it was designed together with fishers with a focus on caring for a healthy relation between ecosystems and fishing communities.

Figure 3. Summary of contrasting modes with implications for small-scale fishers

MSC	Living Sea NaturSkånsomt Fiskeri
NGO-led/top-down	Fisher-led (industry-driven)/bottom-up
Third-party certification + audit	First-party/self-certification
Output assessments of fishing	Input restrictions of fishing gear + quantities
Scientific knowledge/expertise	Local (fisher) knowledge
Wage-worker focus (if any)	Fishing communities
Price premiums incentives	Empowerment through collaborations with consumers

NaturSkånsom, as it is structured today, points to several contrasting relationships that define each other such as (demersal) trawling versus "low impact" fishing gear and large-scale fishing versus small-scale fishing. There is another relationship, however, that is more important in the context of ecolabelling for small-scale fishers and that is: consumer versus fisher. MSC relates to consumers by outsourcing the responsibility of securing fisheries 'sustainability' to third-party certification bodies on the basis of their science- and expertise-based Standard. Fishers, in MSC's structure, are supposed to be motivated by price premiums. In contrast, Living Sea wanted to empower fishers—by means of strong alliances with consumers—to take responsibility for their fishing practices and thus protect their local ecosystems. The empowerment was supposed to come from an inclusion of fishers' local ecological knowledge and the co-ownership structure of Living Sea's scheme.

7.2. NaturSkånsom and ongoing tensions

NaturSkånsom sublates the opposing modes of MSC and Living Sea by being state-led, but industry- and NGO-co-created; by using (inexpensive for fishers) state

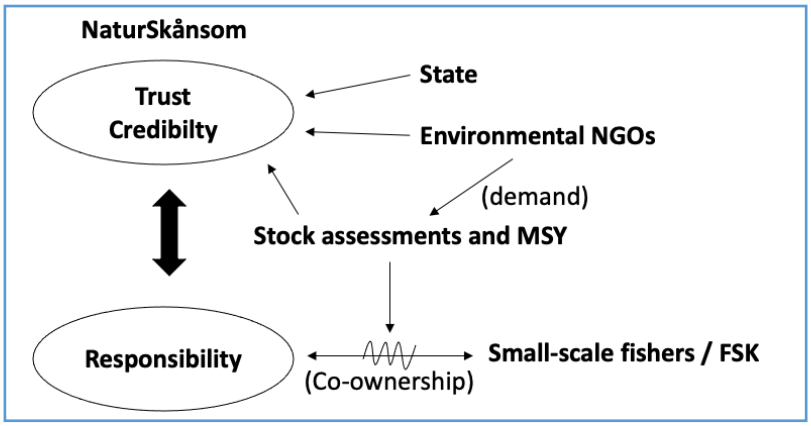
certification and control; and by including both scientific and fisher/local knowledges (Figure 4.).

Figure 4. Structure and focus of NaturSkånsom

MSC	NaturSkånsom	Living Sea NaturSkånsomt Fiskeri
NGO-led/top-down	State-led, industry co-created, NGO-friendly	Fisher-led (industry-driven)/bottom-up
Third-party certification + audit	State-controlled and –certified + MSY	First-party/self-certification
Output assessments of fishing	Input restrictions of fishing gear	Input restrictions of fishing gear + quantities
Scientific knowledge/expertise	Scientific and local (fisher) knowledges	Local (fisher) knowledge
Wage-worker focus (if any)	Small-scale fisheries	Fishing communities
Price premiums incentives	Awareness and price premiums	Empowerment through collaborations with consumers

There is, however, as discussed in this thesis, one ongoing contradiction that shapes NaturSkånsom and has implications for a large proportion of the Danish small-scale fishers: the incorporation of stock assessments and MSY. In the context of Denmark, the state-led nature of NaturSkånsom coupled with the support of the scheme by environmental NGOs have positive impact on the credibility and trust of the scheme. The inclusion of fishers' knowledge and the co-creation process have contributed to a shared sense of responsibility among stakeholders, and for FSK a sense of co-ownership. FSK's sense of co-ownership, which impacts their sense of responsibility, is affected negatively by the inclusion of MSY. The MSY and stock assessment criteria, however, contributes to a stronger positioning vis a vis MSC, strengthens the credibility of NaturSkånsom and was a non-negotiable demand from the environmental NGOs—who are also essential for the credibility and success of the scheme (Figure 5.).

Figure 5. Remaining contradictions challenging NaturSkånsom



Despite the above-mentioned tension, the process of NaturSkånsom has facilitated a stronger alliance between environmental NGOs and small-scale (non-trawling) fishers as organized in FSK. This alliance, as well as the NaturSkånsom process in itself, have increased fishers' cultural and political capital and capacity to influence fishing policies. The alliance between environmental NGOs and FSK has also enabled a further recognition, publicly and politically, of the concept of skånsomt fishing (in opposition to 'sustainable' fishing).

7.3. RQ1: How can an ecolabelling scheme be structured to the context of small-scale fisheries?

While NaturSkånsom needs to be understood in the context of Denmark and Danish small-scale fishers, some of the process' characteristics and general experiences could potentially be useful in other contexts. First of all, an ecolabelling scheme needs to be inexpensive to be accessible for a large segment of small-scale fishers. In NaturSkånsom, the state is financing the scheme and the certification and audit processes, but this could also be structured differently, for instance in large-scale ecolabelling schemes by setting aside funds for less-resourceful fisheries.

Next, there is a need for balancing credibility with complexity of ecolabelling standards. In NaturSkånsom, as in the Swedish ecolabelling scheme KRAV, the standard is based on fishing gear restrictions instead of expensive output assessments (such as in MSC). In KRAV, such input restrictions are further developed including for instance restrictions on energy consumption. NaturSkånsom includes small-scale fishers' concept of skånsomt while drawing legitimacy and

credibility from its state-led and -controlled structure, from the support from environmental NGOs and from its inclusion of Danish ecological science. There is a need to include small-scale fishers' local ecological knowledge in ecolabelling schemes, or at least differentiate standards and certification systems to cater to small-scale fishers and their life-mode specific practices (e.g., Forest Stewardship Council's initiatives for smallholders, or Participatory Guarantee Systems for organic smallholders by IFOAM (Autzen and Delaney, 2021; IFOAM, 2008)).

Lastly, inclusions of social sustainability criteria need to be differentiated for different kinds of producers/modes of production (such as in the Responsible Vessel Scheme), so it does not present an added barrier for self-employed small-scale fishers for whom the wageworker centrism of many social sustainability indicators are irrelevant. NaturSkånsom is limited to (a particular definition of) small-scale fishers, which contributes to market differentiation and general branding and awareness of this sector. Like the cases of ASMP, labelling initiatives, if co-created with other stakeholders (including fishers), can contribute with more than price premiums by enhancing social and political capital of fishers through alliances positioning these fishers stronger in political contexts.

7.4. RQ 2: What dilemmas and contradictions are created in such a process and how can these be understood?

As seen in the case of NaturSkånsom, the general focus (and inclusion) of stock assessments and MSY pose a significant challenge for small-scale fishers in ecolabelling contexts. Living Sea's ecolabelling attempt was a resistance to this overarching focus on MSY in fisheries management. NaturSkånsom was, like the attempt of Living Sea, originally a resistance towards such bioeconomic conceptualizations of 'sustainability' and the domination of international ecolabelling schemes. As a market-based approach, ecolabelling is embedded in specific structures of commodification that fits well with common ways of addressing MSY such as TACs and privatization of fishing rights. It is these same neoliberal structures of fisheries management, that pose a significant challenge to the self-employed life-mode, and thus make small-scale fishers engage in new strategies of survival, such as NaturSkånsom, as part of their neoculturation process.

As discussed in this thesis, scholars have problematized the use of market-based approaches when wanting to resist neoliberal structures. Should small-scale fishers avoid market-based approaches then? In this thesis, I have argued that a market-based ecolabelling attempt such as NaturSkånsom should be understood in the context of a neoculturation process of small-scale fishers. This argument is both a response to a view of NaturSkånsom and ASMP initiatives as merely ways of

accepting (and thus contributing to) current structures, and as romantic or futile attempts of resistance. Through the lens of life-mode analysis, I have viewed small-scale fishers as simple commodity producers that are used to operating on a market and used to employing strategies for market differentiation. While there is a level of problem displacement in NaturSkånsom as the answer to sustaining small-scale fishing, the scheme also contributes to Danish small-scale fishers' current struggle for survival and recognition in a fisheries management system that challenges their livelihoods. Thus, while NaturSkånsom poses the challenge of contributing to current neoliberal structures, it also works as a resistance battlefield where the concept of skånsomt fishing is reinforced, and new alliances are created supporting the life-mode specific livelihoods of small-scale fishers.

7.5. Methodological reflections: ending the research, but staying with the case

The applied and 'industrial' aspect of this PhD project has remained a priority throughout the project. The construction of the project and the fact that the implementation of NaturSkånsom was delayed more than once have meant that I never left the field. As I am finishing this PhD thesis, I am also planning a meeting between fishers, people from fish auctions and public servants focused on limiting barriers and logistics of NaturSkånsom. The most important (methodological) challenge of this research was this dual role of applied work and research. The dual role that I have taken on has affected both my access to data, my analysis and my relationship with the informants and the collaborators of the project. It has been a constant exercise in persistence to keep analyzing and asking questions when there has been a need to finish the work and get things to function in an applied sense. It has likewise been a constant exercise to reflect on my way of being an active part of a fishing community, living there with my family, and using the knowledge created in this context for analysis. While people I have talked to and worked with know of my PhD project, not many have taken an interest in what I was writing or how it would be used. I cannot claim that everyone that I have talked to has understood my research, nor tried to, but there has been a degree of reciprocity in the general awareness of how I have supported fishers and different processes and how this has also informed my research.

Ending the formal research project does not mean that I am stepping away from the field, or even ending the analysis. One of the important achievements of NaturSkånsom has been the facilitation of a sense of co-ownership and responsibility of the process and ecolabel among different stakeholders; most importantly, environmental NGOs and small-scale fishers organized in FSK. Having

followed and actively engaged in the process of NaturSkånsom since its infancy, I too share a sense of responsibility for the scheme and for using this research to continually contribute to sublating contradictions with the aim of making it more coherent, appropriate and valuable for small-scale fishers and their local ecosystems.

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Appendix A. Codes (in Danish) for paper 2.

Appendix B. Codes for paper 4.

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