

## **Preface**

This master's thesis is made as a completion of the master education in Communication, Culture and Globalization within the stream of Consumption and Market Communication, at Aalborg University May 2016.

The thesis' focus is on the global health trend LCHF on Instagram and identity in relation to this trend. The interest has emerged from preconceptions about LCHF and Instagram as a social network site.

I want to thanks my supervisor Pernille Hohnen for professional, inspiring and constructive supervision.

Enjoy the reading

- *Camilla Overgaard Larsen*

## 1.0 Abstract

*“A qualitative study on health in relation to identity”*

This thesis is a qualitative study in the field of intercultural communication, and attempts to provide an understanding about the health wave in a Danish context, with special focus on the global health trend LCHF amongst Danes. The health trend LCHF is examined in relation to the Danish Instagram users, where the main focus is to gain an understanding about LCHF amongst Danes, their experience, perception etc. of the concept and how their chosen lifestyle can be seen as affecting their identity.

The analysis of this study, which should provide answer for the problem formulation of this thesis, is based on the empirical data emerged from a semi-structured qualitative interview with nine Danish informants who all have LCHF as a lifestyle and have Instagram profiles that reflect this.

The health wave has hit the western world in the last 10 years and resulted in an increased focus on health amongst Danes. Health has changed status and the pursuit for a healthy lifestyle has become more dominant, and can be seen in the many various diets that the Danes have been introduced to over the last decade. Some trends have been more dominating than others, and one of them is the food concept LCHF. LCHF started as a local trend in Sweden, and with the web's involvement it has spread to other parts of the world, hence earning it the label of a global health trend. The Danes were introduced to LCHF in the early 00s, a time during which a large proportion of Danes embraced and incorporated the trend into their life. At present this health trend is recognized in Denmark, one in every ten Danes currently living by the ideals of this food concept.

The health trend LCHF is a lifestyle that suit Danes as it is a concept that is flexible, easy, relatable and allow one to eat “good food”, which the Danes appreciate as they associate good food with a good quality of life. The trend LCHF has influenced the Danes perception of health, and has resulted in a more natural and positive view on health and relationship with food.

The digital development of the Internet, namely the expansion from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has opened up for social software such as the social network site Instagram, which plays a major role in relation to health and the trend LCHF. Instagram is characterized as the “place to be” if you have an interesting in health. The Danish informants are using Instagram as an active part in relation to their

healthy lifestyle, as they post images on their Instagram profile of LCHF food. The Danish informants are using their LCHF lifestyle to define themselves, to tell others who they are, and who they certainly are not. The images of LCHF food can be seen as a way of telling a personal narrative. The images create and reverse a set of narrative biographies, which influences the social construction of identity. There are made some choices about which images the informants want to post and which things they wish to conceal from their followers in relation to create a situation specific identity, which in this case is related to health. It is the rose-tinted side of the lifestyle that is shown through the images on Instagram as one's lifestyle is associated with the kind of person one is, and by having a healthy style of living one is deemed as being more successful, wiser, a better person etc.

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## 2.0 Introduction

The health wave has hit the western world in the last 10 years (Rohde, 2008). It is in the face of the unhealthy, meaning that it is when there is a deviation from a health ideal, the focus is on health. But what is a healthy life really? It is certainly not suggestions about it that is lacking in neither the public debate, in the media, the workplace nor around the Danish households. When there has been enough said about the unhealthy Danes, public health diseases, obesity epidemic etc., a new trend within the areas of health, diet, exercise and well-being arises, which promises a solution to the problems and shows the way to a healthier life. These trends mainly take the form of various food concepts, diets and lifestyles.

The health wave that washed over Denmark in recent years can be measured, inter alia, on the spread of new fitness culture, the increase in the release of cookery books/lifestyle books with a healthy character, as well as coverage of health-related advice and recommendations in the media, on various blogs on e.g. Instagram (Munch, 2015). This new flow opens up for the emergence of various movements such as “Core Healthy Family”, “Raw Food- and LCHF concept”, Detox diet etc.

Health has become a trend and should not only be perceived as being a passing trend or fad, but should be looked at as being a megatrend that is strong and widespread and affects the whole community (Sylvest, 2013). Some also believe that;

*"In general, the discourse of health and disease become a new social mega discourse that sets new boundaries and has major consequences for both individuals and groups. Health has become the new overall value in Western societies [...]"*

(Brinkmann 2010, p. 8) (Own translation).

Carl Cerderstöm and his English colleague Andre Spicer explain in their book “The Wellness Syndrome” (2015) a large number of conditions in the US, the UK and Sweden, which indicates that “feeling good” in recent times can be seen as a kind of religion (Jørgensen, 2015). The comparison between “feeling good” and a religion must be understood in the relation to health being something that we engage in, believe and live our lives by (Hvas, 2014). According to Carl Cerderström we have reached a point where one is a failed human if you are not healthy, happy and in general understand how to take care of yourself. Health has become a moral issue (Jørgensen, 2015). Health status and our state of health can be seen as a reflection of how capable we are as

people and citizens. According to Carl Cerderström it is taboo to take unhealthy choices. Health has almost become a way to define others, and if you are healthy, happy and in general are able to take care of yourself, you are considered to be “a good person”. If you are fat, then you are deemed to be a person who is unable to take responsibility for oneself in addition to your health and life, and therefore considered to be a “bad person”. It has become common to pigeonhole people who do not live healthily as being lazy and unintelligent. (Jørgensen, 2015) (Sylvest, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, health is an issue that most people have an opinion about and is something that is being spoken about in the public debate, the workplace, around the Danish household and in the media. The media has succeeded to place a focus on health within multiple levels of society and spread the message that it is not acceptable to live unhealthily. Due to the fact that the message is spread of to the different layers of society, the media’s fixation on healthy living is here to stay (Sylvest, 2013).

The digital development of the Internet, namely the expansion from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has opened up for social software (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). Web 2.0 refers to a second generation of Web-based services and it is a popular term that defines developed internet technologies and applications, including blogs, wikis, podcasts, social networks sites (SNS’) etc. (Akar & Topçu, 2011). Since the expansion from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, lots of different SNSs have been established such as; Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

According to lecturer in visual communication Fausing (2014) social media has within the last 5 years become very visual and has thereby become a tool to show and communicate to others about one’s healthy lifestyle (Okkels, 2014) (Fausing, 2014). As mentioned above there are many different SNS’ and one of the SNS where people have embraced the concept ‘healthy lifestyle’ is the SNS Instagram. A rising trend has flared up on Instagram, the use of healthies. Healthies are images that are posted on Instagram showing well-trained bodies and healthy food. The body and your healthy lifestyle thus becomes a visible proof that things are going well and that you are successful. Instagram is used as a visual tool to show one’s healthy lifestyle to others through healthies and furthermore Instagram can be seen as a “place” where people today fashion their identity (Okkels, 2014) (Fausing, 2014). Self-realization can be equated with recognition, and we seek recognition increasingly through SNS’. We communicate with each other on these sites, and one of the forms of communication is visual communication, which are mainly used on Instagram. On Instagram, the new concept, healthies is very popular amongst the Danish users present on the

SNS. The users like to portray themselves in a specific way, but also very much to be seen by their followers, who can then accept with a 'like'. Fausing (2014) argues that Instagram is a place where users can get a sense of community, and this sense of community is important for the users. Instagram provides an exclusive network that acts as a platform for some interests, interests for whom one's group of friends in the real world might not always share "(Okkels, 2014).

Many images of health, in the form of images of healthy food and exercise, flourishes around on Instagram and one of the many different food concepts that some Danes have embraced is the global food concept LCHF (Low Carb, High Fat). The food concept LCHF can be seen as being a global trend, due to the concept have been known in Sweden since the Swedish doctor Annika Dahlqvist in the beginning of the 00s began to follow the dietary concept and lost weight and afterwards began to guide her patients after the same principles (Faerber, 2013). The message of LCHF became widespread through her blog on the internet. Since then, the concept was further spread by the Swedish doctor Andreas Eenfelt, which in 2007 also created a blog about LCHF called 'Kostdoktorn' and afterwards published a book 'Matrevolutionen' (Faerber, 2013). LCHF is now so widespread that it is supposed that every four Swede eats by the principles. Besides the trend is extremely popular in Sweden, it is also a concept that has spread to other countries such as Denmark, Norway, Finland, etc., can hence be seen as a global diet trend (Gordon, 2012). In the view of the above the following problem formulation is prepared.

## 2.1 Problem formulation

**Based on an analysis of Danish LCHF blogs on the social network site Instagram, this thesis will examine how the global health wave can be understood in a Danish context, and in what way it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity among Danes?**

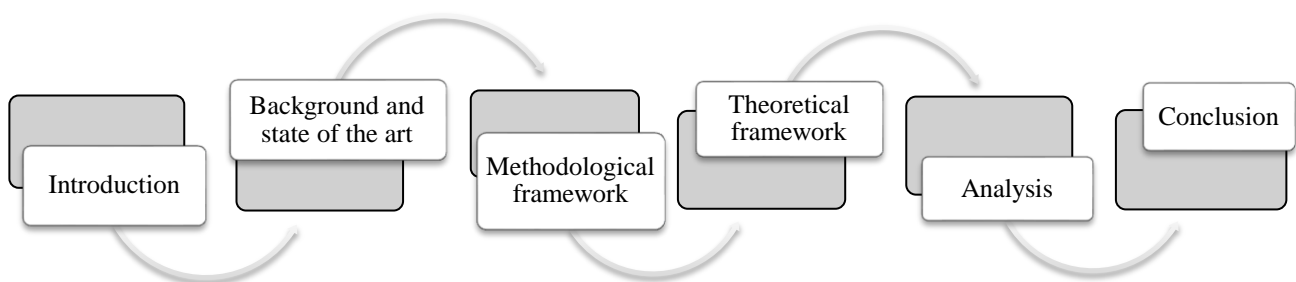
- *How can you understand globalization in light of recent social theories?*
- *How can you understand identity construction in modern consumer society?*
- *How is the Danish informants' perception of the LCHF concept?*



This thesis is a qualitative study in the field of intercultural communication, and attempts to provide an understanding about the global health wave in a Danish context, with special focus on the global food concept LCHF amongst Danes. This thesis is looking at a global health trend LCHF in a Danish context. The food concept LCHF is examined in relation to the Danish Instagram users, where the main focus is to gain an understanding about LCHF amongst Danes, their experience, perception etc. of the concept and how their chosen lifestyle can be seen as affecting their identity. The structure of the thesis is explained in the section below.

## 2.2 Structure of thesis

Below is a model created in order to provide a visual overview of the structure; this will be additionally presented through a brief summary of different parts of the content.



**Part 1 – Introduction:** The first section of the thesis aims at providing an overall presentation of the thesis, thus it includes the introduction, which in a situational context explains what makes the thesis interesting. It is also in this part that the problem formulation of the thesis is presented.

**Part 2 – Background and state of the art:** This section aims at providing an understanding about the health wave in Denmark and its development. Some of the dominating global health trends that the Danes have been introduced to in recent years have been highlighted. This section clarifies how health and a healthy lifestyle today, may appear as a size of almost religious character, and can be considered as a moral issue. Finally this section contributes with an insight into global health trends,

while also giving an understanding of social media's role in relation to local health trends becoming global.

**Part 3 – Methodological framework:** Focuses on the choices made in the thesis, thus the ontological and epistemological stance, likewise the research paradigm is accounted for. In addition the methods are also presented in this part, justifying for the choice of theorists and empirical data applied.

**Part 4- Theoretical section:** The main theories used to examine the problem formulation of the thesis are introduced. This part is divided into three parts: the first part, dealing with globalization includes theories on globalization and involves the term glocalization. This part is chosen to be included in the theory section to be able to provide an understanding about how people are under the influence of global as well as local trends and is chosen to provide an understanding about how the concept of healthy lifestyle has become a global concept. Furthermore the term glocalization is highlighted, due to the fact that this thesis will look at the global health trend LCHF in a Danish context in order to provide an understanding about the health wave in a Danish context, hence the term glocalization can be considered as being the frame for this thesis. Furthermore Giddens theory on globalization is also highlighted, due to the fact that he is considering the technological development into his views on globalization and arguing that the internet contributing to global interconnectedness. This study sees the internet as having a decisive role in relation to making local trends to global trends, thus Giddens view on globalization is considered appropriated. Giddens is, inter alia, talking about separation of time and space, which can be seen in connection to web 2.0, and because of that, theories on web 2.0 is highlighted in the second theory section, social media. After clarification web 2.0 roles in relation to social media, and Instagram, Castells theory of community on social media is also considered relevant. Finally a theory of Instagram as a SNS is provided to contribute with an understanding of the character traits on the site. The third part begins with a helicopter perspective on identity, followed by Goffmans theory of identity, with focus on his two concepts front stage and backstage. His work is relevant in relation to the problem formulation of this study because he is considering human identity as a role play and identity as something that continuously changed through self-promotion. Giddens is also included because he is contributes to an understanding of identity in a modern/late modern society, which means that he is considering the development of technology, e.g. Instagram, in relation to constructing one's

identity. Finally, identity will be looked at in relation to consumption/possession and include Belk and James which are, amongst other, scholars that address the relationship between identity and consumption/possession.

**Part 5 – *The analysis:*** This section will provide an analysis of the empiricism on three different levels; self-awareness, critical common-sense and theoretical understanding level. On the self-awareness level, meaning condensation will be used as an analytical tool, which provides an understanding of the informants' opinions, actions etc. on a self-awareness level. The analytical tool on the critical common-sense level is narrative structuring, and is used to try find and understand some overall connections that the individual narratives suggest. The knowledge from the background and state of the art section will be used on this level. On the third level, the empiricism will be analyzed based on the theoretical framework of the thesis.

**Part 6 – *Conclusion:*** An overall conclusion of the thesis and its findings will be presented.

### **3.0 Background and state of the art**

This section will provide some background knowledge in terms of healthy lifestyle and its development. This section will provide an overview of the different health trends. The section will also look at health and Instagram.

#### **3.1 Healthy lifestyle and its development**

As mentioned in the section *2.0 Introduction*, the health wave has hit Denmark in the last 10 years and health has become a phenomenon that is much debated (Rohde, 2008). Over the years, the Danes have been presented to lots of various food concepts, diets and lifestyles. (Østergård, 2012). Some trends have been more dominant than others. The trend has caused a health wave that on a societal level have dominated and escalated over the years, which, according to Knud Juel head of research at National Institute of Public Health, has had a significance in relation to the Danes worry much about their health. The media has increased the focus on health, behavior and lifestyles, and this increased focus has had an impact on the Danes (Østergård, 2012).

The Media produced, in the 80s, information about the Danish average life expectancy and concluded that it was significantly shorter than in the countries that we normally compare ourselves to (Østergård, 2012). This "news" came as a shock to the majority of Danes and meant that towards the end of the 80s and in the beginning of the 90s, a growing interest in health both politically, in the media and amongst the population arose. Campaigns from, amongst others, the National Food Agency of Denmark should try to get people to reduce the overuse of fat dairy products. The message that was spread in the 90s about fat being the enemy and that it should be held down at any cost seemed to worked, which could be seen on the Danes' total energy intake from fat in the diet, which fall significantly up through the 00s (Østergård, 2012).

#### **3.2 Various health trends**

The focus on health in Denmark has only grown through the years and in pursuit of a healthy lifestyle more people choose to embrace the new health trends that continue to emerge. Looking at various health trends in recent years, the Danes have been presented for many different health trends. The pursuit for a healthy lifestyle appears today as a size of almost religious character (Hvas, 2014). Health is longer just a physical matter. Health has been morally. The more obviously you can portray a healthy style of living, cutting out that which is deemed 'unhealthy', the more successful you appear. If you are wise, you must also be healthy (Sylvest, 2013) (Hvas, 2014). The pursuit for health is not only a matter for the individual, but a concern of the whole society,

institutions, companies and food producers who currently works determinedly to help increase health amongst Danes (Fremtidsforskeren, 2010). Looking at the health trends that Danes have been introduced to in recent years, the majority of them can be considered as being global trends, due to the trends being created in foreign countries such as the US and Sweden (Terkelsen, 2014).

After the 90s, where an increased interest in health was created, various health trends gushed forth. As claimed above, Danes were afraid of fat in the late 80s and in the beginning of 90s, due to the fact that Danes were convinced that fat was what made us overweight. This belief was replaced by a new way of thinking in relation to food, as the American doctor Robert Atkins introduced the US for a new and different food concept, which subsequently became known in many other parts of the world, including Denmark. The Danes were introduced to a different way of eating compared to the previous years where there had been focused on reducing the grease from the food. This trend, which was referred to as the Atkin lifestyle, recommended that one should eat bacon, steak and butter, and avoid eating carbohydrates (Stove, 2015) (Leith, 2003). This new way of eating meant that, amongst other, Danish people's attitudes to what was healthy and what was unhealthy was challenged.

Another food concept that the Danes also were introduced for in the '90s was 'Super Foods', which is a popular generic term for food that will carry special nutritional and health-giving benefits, e.g. blueberry (Aggerbeck, 2009). This concept was quickly criticized by foreign professionals and therefore did not get the same breakthrough as many of the other health trends. Around the millennium a new global trend had its breakthrough and referred to as the blood type diet (Aggerbeck,, 2009). The author of this diet is an American naturopathic physician Peter J. D'Adamo, who developed a theory that by eating right in relation to our blood type can preserve our health, live longer and keep our ideal weight. Peter J. D'Adamo believes that we are differently decorated in our ability to endure, absorb and transform the food because of our different blood types, and therefore we must also eat differently (Aggerbeck,, 2009).

The 00s also offered another global food concept as compared with previous trends have received enormously much attention and have become a lifestyle for many Danes (Dahlager, 2015). This trend is known as the LCHF concept and is created by a Swedish doctor. Despite the fact that the Swedish doctor gets credit for having "invented" the LCHF concept, it is in many ways similar to the concept Atkin, due to LCHF also, as the name reveals, focuses on eating a lot of fat and reduce

the intake of carbohydrates (Leith, 2003). The 00s also presented the concept Raw food and the Detox concept. The 10s has presented Stone Age diet and 5: 2 the cure (Terkelsen, 2014).

In spite of the fact that LCHF was introduced in the beginning of the 00s, it is still a concept, or lifestyle, that is very popular in Denmark and in other foreign countries. It is estimated that every 10 Dane live by LCHF and up to every four Swede follows LCHF principles (Dahlager, 2015) (Kofoed, 2013) (Dahlager, 2015).

LCHF can be seen as a global health trend, which has received much attention amongst Danes. There have been published various Danish books about it, different blogs about LCHF etc. The LCHF concept is explained as being a very simple food concept which "allows" a person to eat a lot of good food (such as a prime steak with thick rind of fat garnished with cream sauce or herb butter) and yet find that one's weight falls or remains stable. But despite the immediate positive explanation about the food concept, there are several experts, such as nutritionist Arne Astrup, who criticizes it and claims that it is a food concept that, for most people, is difficult to incorporate into daily life, because they say goodbye to, amongst other things, bread, rice, pasta, fruits and berries, and this is difficult for most people (Lønstrup, 2013).

### **3.3 Health as a moral issue and a religion**

As mentioned above, the Danes worry much about their health (Østergård, 2012) and it is no longer just a physical matter, but has also become a moral issue. Some even talk about health as a religion (Jørgensen, 2015)

In the book "The Wellness Syndrome", they authors write about health fanaticism and expand greatly upon today's increasing focus on health. In the book the argument is put that our pursuit of healthy living has become so extreme that it is starting to hit us in the neck like a boomerang. Rather than feel happier, because of the healthy lifestyle, more and more develops both stress and anxiety of not living healthy enough. Health has become the new religion, but also an individual matter, as they argue in their book (Jørgensen, 2015). Cederström and Spicer are not the only one who looks at health as a kind of religion. Nanna Mik-Meyer, who has researched a number of years in the Danish 'views on health, believes that it is healthy living that sends a strong signal to the world that you are in control and can take responsibility for yourself (Nørr, 2015). Unlike the unhealthy, which is out of control and indifferent. Health has been a defining and, in many cases absolute size, as no one speaks against. For health is good. That is the way it is. This has resulted in

a health fanaticism, which can have unfortunate consequences for the individual, but also for those who do not meet the agreed standards for healthy lifestyle (Nørr, 2015). They have an increased risk of being marginalized in a society that increasingly cultivates health as their new religion. Studies of Danes view on health shows that in recent years there have been a significant breakthrough in our whole approach to health. We put increasing similarity between 'the good life' and the healthy life. Health is according to the experts been a defining and increasingly important factor when we tell the story of ourselves - and perhaps more importantly - who we are not (Nørr, 2015). Health has become the new god. It shows a new sociological research on Danish attitudes to diet, exercise and health. Health has simply taken over the function of religion had in the past (Mikkelsen, 2011) (Meyer & Obling, 2012).

### **3.4 Instagram and health**

We mirror our global interest in our media consumption. Both newspapers and electronic media, such as the SNS Instagram, provide a wide range of information, culture and entertainment from many different parts of the world (Waters, 1995). What was local, and later was national, has now become global (Waters, 1995). The SNS Instagram and the various health trends can be seen as consequences of globalization. The SNS Instagram was launched in 2010 in the US and since then it has been extended and adopted to cultures around the world and is today considered to be generally known and extensively used worldwide. As mentioned in the section 2.0 *Introduction*, the food concept LCHF started in Sweden as a local trend and since then it has been extended to other countries such as Denmark, Norway, Finland, England etc., hence the local health trend have become a global health trend.

The development of the internet, e.g. the various social media such as blogs, SNS' etc., have made it easier to present local health trends to people outside a certain locality, hence expand local health trends into global health trends. SNS', such as Instagram, has a huge influence on the fact that local health trends have extended into global trends (Sylvest, 2013). Social media plays an important role when it comes to how health trends are spreading, and Instagram is a medium that helps spread the different food concepts. The different images that are being posted on Instagram are very positive, and when one is engaging with these health-inspired images, it becomes part of one's identity. The images that people post on Instagram are not, according to Cathrine Frederiksen, a food-trend spotter and entrepreneur, true picture of who they are. It is the picture that we want to have of ourselves and the image we want others to have of us (Ritzau, 2015). Cathrine Frederiksen believes

that there has been a huge focus on perfectionism in Danish society, and it is about optimizing itself in many ways. This can be, amongst others, a reason for the huge focus on health, because dieting is a way of optimizing oneself (Rizau, 2015).

Social media is part of the zeitgeist today, where information and inspiration are easily accessible and quickly shared with others. The platforms are places where it is easy to learn something about dieting and diet. On Instagram, users have the option to use hashtags, which is one of the ways users can get inspiration to certain diets and healthy lifestyles and learn something about what health trends that is in vogue (Ritzau, 2015). Another reason why Instagram is effective in relation to spreading the message about the various health trends, such as LCHF, is because it is much easier to relate to a human being than to the official dietary recommendations, and in contrast to authorities, they are exempt from having to document their results with scientific studies (Terkelsen, 2014). They just need to show their beautiful bodies and happy families. Peers are a very important channel for health information, because it is people you trust, in contrast to authorities and food producers (Terkelsen, 2014).



## **4.0 Methodology**

In order to give the reader of this project an insight into the basis considerations and assumptions, the following section will deal with the methodological considerations for this research. The philosophical assumptions underpinning this research will be elaborated, as well as the research strategy and the applied empirical collection techniques.

### **4.1 Philosophy of science**

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the question of which research paradigm the study is applicable to, is one of the most essential and important questions when conducting a research, thus writing a thesis, as it is impacting the entire research and not least the way the empirical data is collected and applied throughout the research. This means that when producing scientific knowledge it is necessary to establish how reality is perceived. Before the elaboration and discussion of the chosen research paradigm, the ontological and epistemological stances, about the overall perception of this thesis will be discussed.

#### **4.1.1 Ontology and epistemology**

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality, thus the ontological position determines one's theoretical position (Saunders et al., 2009). In simple terms, ontology is associated with a central question of whether social entities need to be perceived as objective or subjective. Accordingly, objectivism (or positivism) and subjectivism can be specified as two important aspects of ontology. There are two different positions of ontology, and depending on which scholar you choose the positions have different names. According to Saunders et al. (2009) the two stances are referred to as being the subjective and objective positions, whereas e.g. Bryman (2012) refers to the positions as being objectivism and constructivism. In this thesis the positions will be referred based on Saunders et al (2009) referring, as objectivism and subjectivism.

Objectivism “portrays the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerned with their existence (Saunders, et. al., 2009, p. 111), meaning that objectivism is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors. Having a subjectivist view, you believe that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (Saunders et. al., 2009 p.111). This ontological view is often associated with the term constructionism and this follows from the interpretive philosophy that it is necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating the

actions of social actors in order for the researcher to be able to understand these actions (Saunders et al., 2009).

The differences between the two positions are as mentioned their view on the nature of reality. Basically, objectivism is about “*how social entities exist independent of social actors*” and subjectivism is about “*understanding the meanings that individuals attach to social phenomena*” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.111). Researchers with an objective position, have the belief that only observable phenomena can provide credible data, thus they are often generalizing and concluding things (Saunders et al., 2009). In addition the researcher with an objectivist position believes that the researcher can maintain an objective stance thus stays independent of the data and research conducted (Saunders et al., 2009). This also means that the aim of a research here is rather to get an explanation instead of an understanding about the researched area. Researchers with a subjective position on the other hand, are aiming at finding an understanding behind the actions, rather than explanations (Saunders et al., 2009). The problem formulation of this study is seeking, through an analysis of Danish LCHF blogs on Instagram, to examine how the global health wave can be understood in a Danish context, and in what way it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity amongst Danes, which is the reason for this study to have a subjectivist ontological view. Because of that, it is the qualitative methods that are appropriated to use in order to answer the problem formulation of this study in the most fruitful way. The qualitative methods provide an opportunity to explore a phenomenon deeper than the immediate observable. The qualitative methods thereby allows to study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words the qualitative study allows e.g. peoples own words, perception and frame of references shine through in their answers, in order to attempt to explain what is behind trends, in contrast to the quantitative study where the goal is to make the answers measurable, in order to generalize on trends. In order to answer the problem formulation I am interested in, amongst other things, to gain an understanding about the informants’ opinion of LCHF and the value that they attach to the health trend, an understanding about the link between health and identity and furthermore to understand how health has changed status through the years. It is impossible to acquire knowledge of these certain things by using quantitative methods such as questionnaires.

The above combined with the fact that online technology, e.g. Instagram, are evolving continuously in all matters, hence the tendencies within this subject being constantly in change, it therefore makes it difficult to find an ultimate truth but rather a profound impression of what is currently going on. Furthermore the opportunities for gaining enough empirical data in order to find an ultimate truth about the subject are almost impossible for the researcher, due to it being time-consuming combined with the constant change in technology, on Instagram.

The former, the ontology, is concerned with the nature of being, while epistemology deals with the nature and scope of knowledge. According to Saunders et al. (2009) epistemology relates to the researcher's view concerning what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Saunders et al, 2009. p. 119). As with ontology, epistemology, is also divided in two positions, thus the way one conceive and generate knowledge is either objective or subjective (Saunders et al., 2009). The objective position believes that it is possible to acquire knowledge about the world unmediated and with no interfaces, that everyone observes things in the same way (Saunders et al., 2009). The subjective position, on the other hand, argues that there is no real world to observe, since all things or actions obtain meaning only by actors and not by sheer existence (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 112). The objective nature embraces the so-called positivist philosophy, whereas the subjective is adopting the interpretive philosophy (Saunders et al, 2009). Having the thesis' ontological position defined as being subjective, also indicates the epistemological stance being of a subjective matter, as there are multiple different realities that can be analyzed, and thereby people do not observe things in the same way, meaning that they have different opinions, attitudes and understand things differently. This means, that the researcher is seeking to understand the subjective reality of the Danish informants in order to be able to make sense of, and understand, their motives, actions and intentions of having LCHF as a lifestyle in a way that is meaningful. Because of that this thesis is seeking to gain an understanding and not to find measurable facts and generalizing as a conclusion, as it would be, if the researcher's position was of an objective matter (Saunders et al, 2009).

The researcher's subjective position means that the knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Carson et al., 2001, p.5). Researcher with an interpretive philosophy avoid rigid structural frameworks such as in positivist research and adopt a more personal and flexible research structures (Carson et al., 2001), which are receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction and make sense of what is perceived as reality (Carson et al., 2001). The researcher and his informants are interdependent and mutually interactive, and in

this study the knowledge is developed through the interaction between the informants and the researcher (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of informants. Therefore, the goal of interpretive research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behavior rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

#### **4.1.2 Research paradigm**

After determining the ontological and epistemological position for this thesis, the research paradigm will now be clarified and considered. Given the problem formulation of this study being about gaining an understanding about the health wave in a Danish context, and gain an understanding about the way it can affect the social construction amongst the Danish Instagram users, the thought, feelings and experiences etc. of the chosen Danish Instagram users' are to be analyzed. The fact that this study is of a subjective matter, it is not possible to find an ultimate truth but rather a profound impression of the health wave in a Danish context and an impression of how it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity amongst the Danish Instagram users.

Drawing from the above, combined with the ontological and epistemological stances being of a subjective matter, it is in consistence with the paradigmatic stance of the study being interpretive (Saunders et. al., 2009). The interpretive paradigm advocates that it is necessary to understand the differences between humans in their roles as social actors (Saunders et. al., 2011). This means that researcher working within this paradigm believes that it is only through intervention in reality and the subjective interpretation reality can be fully understood. The paradigm is characterized with the acknowledgement that scientists cannot avoid affecting the phenomena they study, together with studying the phenomena in its natural environment (Bryman, 2012 p. 30-35). Because the aim of this study is to investigate and analyze the social actors, which in this study are the Danish Instagram users, and the premise of the problem formulation is to understand the health wave in a Danish context and understand how it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity, it is in correspondence with the paradigm of the study being interpretive since this paradigm, according to Bryman (2012), revolves around emphatic understanding and interpretation of human actions.

In addition the interpretive approach has close links to the hermeneutics, which in the thesis is the methodology, which is the underlying basis, of the chosen research methods (Bryman, 2012). For the hermeneutics it also applies that whatever phenomenon the researcher is investigating, the

researcher will have a role in the interpretation, and that the researcher's experiences and social backgrounds will have an influence on the interpretation of reality (Bryman, 2012). The hermeneutics are also viewed as appropriate to apply in the thesis as the underlying basis of the methodology, due to it focusing on the interpretation and understanding of social actions, by analyzing the meaning behind the actions and thereby being very useful for understanding and interpreting all kinds of human activities created in the society (Bryman, 2012). Learning and understanding is achieved through a process in which one understanding is developed into a new understanding, and is the core of the hermeneutics, and what differentiates it from other scientific theories is the previous mentioned subjective researcher, which is influenced by presumptions and prejudices (Bryman, 2012). The motivation for dealing with the particular focus area in this thesis is an indication that there is a preconception about the field of research. These preconceptions are formed on the basis knowledge about Instagram being a "place" where the global health trend LCHF is embraced by the Danes, and with the preconception about it, to some extent, affect the social construction of identity, hence the hermeneutic approach is considered useful in relation to this study, as the hermeneutic describes the process one goes through when having a preconception (Bryman, 2012 p. 560-561). These preconceptions have helped to construct the problem formulation. It is through the hermeneutics that the connections are found, when empirical data and theoretical knowledge creates new preconceptions, as new empirical data is created and interpreted, which in the end the final "results" are based upon. The researcher will thus throughout this study have an active role in the interpretation and analysis process. This is also consistent with the fact that the researcher in the initial stages of the process has formed some pre-understandings of both of the studied areas. It is recognized that the personal framework of understanding and experience of the researcher will influence on the interpretation, thus it should be mentioned that the researcher has a profile on Instagram and to some extent embrace the concept of healthy lifestyle.

## **4.2 Methods**

The philosophy of science described above, concerns the general approach to research, whereas the methodology is rather a general plan of how to go about answering the problem formulation. In the following, the methodology of how the empirical data is to be collected for answering the problem formulation will be elaborated, based on the above scientific theoretical approach of the study, given that the methodological choices hinge on one's ontological and epistemological stance.

#### **4.2.1 Qualitative approach**

The qualitative research is relevant when the researcher will capture how people describe, perceive, construct meaning, and express their understanding of themselves, their experiences and their surroundings. Due to the fact that this thesis is focusing on the informants' narrative, the qualitative approach is considered as being appropriated. Qualitative methods attempt more directly than quantitative methods to focus on subjectivity, which is the reason why qualitative studies is not suitable in terms of statistical generalization but more suitable in terms of providing generalization opportunities in a theoretical or analytic perspective (Saunders, 2009). This thesis attempts to gain an insight into the informants' perception of health and how health has changed status through the years. Furthermore, attempts are made to gain an understanding of how health to a greater extent than previously is included in the informants' story about themselves and how these narratives can be considered to contributing to the social construction of identity. Because of that, this thesis has a qualitative approach and the method that is considered appropriate in relation to producing the necessary knowledge to answer the problem formulation is qualitative interviews, and will be primary data for this thesis.

##### **4.2.1.1 Interviews**

There are different kinds of interviews used in qualitative research (Saunders, 2009), and in this study the empirical data will be conducted through personal interviews. There are two main types of personal interviews, unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012, p. 469). An unstructured interview does not have an interview guide where the interviewer has some key questions made in advance. However it has questions based on the interviewee's responses and proceeds like a friendly, non-threatening conversation. Because each interviewee is asked a different series of questions, this style lacks the reliability and precision of a structured interview (Saunders et al, 2009, p.320-323). The interviews in this thesis will be semi-structured, which means that the researcher will prepare an interview guide. The questions do not necessarily follow the way outlined in the interview guide, giving the informants more room for how to reply (Bryman, 2012, p.471). The chosen interview style is due to the advantage of the semi-structured interviews, opening up for descriptive answers, which is the aim due to the fact that the interviews attempt to find and understand the informants' narratives. It thereby not only enables the researcher to gain an understanding of the health wave in a Danish context, and how the healthy lifestyle on Instagram can be seen as affecting the informants construction of identity, but also allows for

following up on emerging topics given by the reflection on the processes discussed with the informants.

An interview guide is to be followed during the interviews in order to maintain the structure in the right way. The interview guide is thereby to be made in advance prior to the interviews, and has to include all the overarching themes planned to cover in the interview. This means that the interview guide gives instruction for the researcher during the interview; however it is possible to ask questions outside the interview guide, if something interesting comes up (Bryman, 2012, p 473) (Saunders et al, 2009, p 329).

There are many different forms of interview, each of which is suitable for various research purposes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 168-181). The interview form that is most suitable in relation to addressing the problem formulation of this study is narrative interview. The narrative interview focuses on the stories told by the interviewees. The stories can appear spontaneously during the interviews or be induced by the interviewer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 173).

#### **4.2.1.2 The Interview guide**

The interview guide starts with a briefing and presentation about the thesis and then the themes that will be covered in the interview will be presented. The informants are asked to tell about themselves, their names, age, gender and the name of their Instagram profile. This presentation will not be included in the transcription because the informants have been depersonalized, which means that the presentation shall be seen as a way to start the dialog. The interview guide is divided into three themes, which are; LCHF and food story of the informants, Instagram and posting of LCHF images and the informant's own Instagram profile. At the end of the interview the researcher is asked about whether the informant has more to add. This is done in order to make sure that all the things that the informants consider relevant are included in the interview. The questions in the interview guide, and hence the answers from the informants are in Danish, due to the fact that the informants are Danes.

The questions in the interview guide have emerged from both the section *3.0 Background and State of the art* and from theoretical framework of this study. The questions which belong to the first theme are made to create an understanding about the informants' own perception of LCHF and to get an insight into their food story through the years. Some of the questions such as the question of whether the informants have tried other diets emerged from the knowledge that is to be found in the section *3.0 Background and state of the art*, which provides an understanding of the development of

the global health trends that have contributed to the development of the Danish health wave. Some of the questions in the first theme have also emerged from the section 5.3 *Identity*. The questions in theme 2 emerged as well from the section 3.0 *Background and state of the art*. The questions that belong to the last theme emerged from theories about identity and social media.

#### 4.2.1.3 The informants for the interviews

It is essential that the informants have an Instagram profile. Furthermore it is central that the informants, to some extent, post images that embrace the health trend LCHF. Another criteria is that all the informants' must be Danes, due to the fact that the problem formulation in this study is focusing on how the global health wave can be understood in a Danish context, and in what way it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity amongst Danes.

The informants for the interviews are eight women and one man, all having a profile on Instagram. All the profiles have a certain extent of images that embrace LCHF. Some of the informants are found with the help of my online network on respectively Facebook and Instagram or through my network's network on the two SNS'. In order for me to find relevant informants for the interview I chose to post an update where I explained my network on the two SNS' about my thesis and the fact that I was searching for informants for the interview process. Below are the two different posts on Facebook and Instagram.



Figure 1: Print screen of the post on Facebook





Figure 2: Print screen of the post on Instagram

Besides posting an update from my own profile on both Facebook and Instagram, I also became a member of different LCHF groups on Facebook, where I also explained about the interview and the fact that I was searching for some people that would participate in it. I also used my own profile on Instagram to search for interesting profiles that posted LCHF images. The transcriptions of the interview can be found in *appendix 2-11*.

#### 4.2.1.4 Transcription of interviews

To register the stories from the informants', I choose to record the interview on my Iphone. The transcription of the interviews between two people, who are physically present, becomes abstracted and fixed in written form. A transcript is a translation from a narrative form (oral discourse) to another narrative form (written discourse) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 199-204).

Following my interviews with the informants, considerations regarding how the recordings will be prepared for a proper interpretation are made. As for transcribing procedures it follows no specific references, which means that it is up to the individual researcher to explain its choice (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 200-2002). It is important to reflect about what the empirical data should be

used for, as it can put some standards to whether there must be whole or partial transcript of the recordings (Launsø & Rieper, 1997, p. 159) (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 200-202). As mentioned above the informants have been depersonalized, which means that the first part *Briefing and presentation* is not going to be transcript. A part from that the whole interview will be transcribed, due to the analysis purpose is to find some interesting narrative stories, which is the main reason for transcribing the entire interviews with exceptions of irrelevant talk and phrases such as; Øhm, Hmm etc. There are places in the transcriptions where I use my own words, which is done to make the transcription easier to read. These passages are marked with ((...)) in the text.

The transcriptions can be found in appendix 9.2-9.9.

#### **4.2.1.5 Verifying the interview with informants**

There can be a choice to transcribe interviews and subsequently let the informants approve the written. The main advantage of this procedure is to ensure the validity of the thesis, i.e. to achieve a 'more true' picture of reality as the informants are given the opportunity to reflect on what they have said and subsequently approve the material that will be used in the analysis. The disadvantage is that it is huge job that may require too much of the researcher. I have chosen not to offer the informants a copy of the transcript. This is done by time and resource reasons. Instead the informants' had the opportunity to listen to the recording immediately after the interview was finished, which gave them the opportunity to approve it or to regret. Due to the fact that the informants and I, immediately after the interviews were conducted, listened to the recordings, meant that a technical error, which meant that some of the interview with one of the informants was not recorded correctly, was discovered. This is the reason why one of the nine recordings is divided into two parts and will be referred to as part one and part two of the interview with informant 8. The transcription itself is in one document, but there is marked in the document when recording 1 ends and when recordings 2 begins.

#### **4.2.1.6 Ethical considerations in the thesis**

According to Kvale & Brink (2009, p. 80), the ethical issues influence the entire course of the interview study; hence one should take into account possible ethical problems from the beginning of an investigation. The relationship between the researcher and the informants is essential in a qualitative research. With this in mind, it is important that the researcher is aware of the fact that ethical issues might occur, in the meeting with the informants, and needs to be dealt with (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 80-100). When conducting empirical data it is not just a matter of choosing the

right tools or techniques to produce knowledge, but should also reflect on how and whether the study affects the implicating people. There should, in order words, be made some moral reflections on the work processes.

In this thesis there have been made some ethical choices and considerations through the process. Overall, I have tried to describe the workflow through the thesis as transparent, as possible, to the reader and describe the choices and rejections. Furthermore, I have made some ethical considerations in addition to working with the informants. Many of these choices appears already in the section *4.0 Methodology* as ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, information about the purpose of participating in the personal in-depth interview as well as the purpose of the thesis, reflection on verification of informants and considerations about transcription.

Apart from that, it is, inter alia, required for me as a researcher to be able to maintain a safe, respectful and trustworthy situation where each informant has the opportunity to speak out about the things that they find relevant. I find it very important to ensure that there is a sense of security, since the interview affect some sensitive issues, perhaps for some, amongst others weight, the relationship to food, the self-perception and the story in relation to eating (informants' food history). If the informants do not feel comfortable in my presence there may be a risk that they do not open up and tell their story to me. If there is a situation where an informant feels that he has expressed himself about something sensitive, I can only refer to the informants' ability to subsequently withdraw the statement back or add something to the understanding. This is possible, due to the fact that I, as mentioned in section *4.2.1.5 Verifying the interview with informants*, gives the informant the opportunity, together with me, to listen to the recording after the interview is finished and then has the ability to withdraw a statement or some certain information and then I will either correct it or delete it in the data material. I believe that by giving them this opportunity, to listen to the recording and withdraw anything they want, and present it before the start of the interview might make them more confident and thus there is a greater possibility of the informants opens up.

Furthermore, I have made some ethical considerations in relation to my analysis. I conclude on the basis of what has been said and I will extract and conclude things that go beyond what the informants have said in the interviews. It is therefore important to consider how the size of the sample group will have on the conclusions that are drawn from this study and can only be interpreted by the information given by the informants (Kvale, 1997, p. 222).

I will try to avoid it, as much as possible, by clarifying in the text when it is the informants' opinion and when it is my interpretations that appear. To clarify this, quotes from the informants will be in italics and appear indented on the line for themselves.

#### **4.2.1.7 The quality of the study**

As an introduction to this final section, it should be stressed that the quality of a study should not specifically be collected in a final methodical section, but instead appear implicit throughout the research process by virtue of the choices made in the study (Olsen, 2002, p. 149) (Kvale, 1997, p. 231). However, there may still be attached some general comments. When the quality of a study shall be assessed, much of the literature centers on the use of the concepts of validity, reliability and generalizability (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 270-292). There are, as explained, different opinions and attitudes to which concepts that should be applied when the quality of a study be assessed. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) use the concepts of validity, reliability and generalizability. These concepts are consistent with the interpretive/hermeneutic approach and there would probably have been used a different set of concepts if there had been a positivist approach to the project. Kvale & Brinkmann explain reliability as following;

*Reliability concerns the consistency and credibility of research results; reliability is often treated in relation to the question of whether the result can be produced at different times and by other researchers. This has to do with whether the informants will change their answers in an interview, and if they will give other researchers other answers*

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 271) (Own translation).

In this context, I realize that I only have created a current status of the global health wave in a Danish context and a current status about how it can be seen as affecting the construction of identity amongst Danes. If I, as an example, did the same study in a year or so, the picture would probably look different. Additionally, I have chosen to transcribe all the interviews, and hence I am aware that it will always be my interpretation that applies to the material. Based on that, the reliability is determined to be low, as the interviews took place in an inter-subjective context, which means that it is unique and therefore cannot be reproduced in exactly the same way by new interviews. By repeating the conversation with the same informants, the conversations itself produce new knowledge.

Validity can be explained as the truth, accuracy and strength of a statement. A definitive answer is sensible, well-founded, strong and convincing. In order to validate the study, there must be consistency between what the researcher wants to examine and what have been examined (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 272). Validity is therefore about the quality of the researcher's competencies during the study. To make the analysis more valid and provide transparency in the study, I have chosen to enclose audio files of the interviews, so they are available to the readers.

I am aware that the degree of validity depends on the degree of fairness in the interpretation. It is the researcher who is the criterion of validity and there must therefore be consistency between what has been said and my presentation of it. It can thus be made more valid by presenting the interpretation to the informants. Related discussion was made in the section *4.2.1.5 Verifying the interview text with informants*, where I chose not to let the informants review the transcript. I have made the same choice about my analysis; hence, the validity of this study can be seen as being low.

Analytical generalization is an assessment of the extent to which results from the interviews can be transferred to other interviewees or situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 287). To conclude this section, I emphasize that the thesis generalization is characterized by a humanistic view, each situation is unique, and each phenomenon has its own internal structure and logic. I am aware that the study, the meaning, perception and opinions expressed cannot be generalized to apply to all Danish Instagram users who have LCHF as a lifestyle and post images, which embraces LCHF, on Instagram. Based on interviews with nine informants, it is impossible to talk about generalization and it has never been the purpose of this study.

### **4.3 Analysis Strategy**

Kvale emphasize in his book that there is no analytical "highway" to expose transcripts sense and meaning (Kvale, 1997, p. 186). This is clarified by the literature review, which highlights a number of different strategies, each of which is tools that are useful for some purposes and relevant for certain types of interview. The analysis in this thesis is considered as being a narrative analysis, due to the fact that this type of analysis focuses on the narratives told during the interview. The thesis has as explained in the section *4.1 Philosophy of science* an interpretive scientific approach, which means that the analysis will be on the interpretation of the empirical material. The analysis will look for some different things that have arisen from the background- and state of the art section. Here it is, amongst other things, health as a religion, health as a moral issue, Instagrams role in the diffusion of global health trends, the way Instagram is used to create and tell narratives about

oneself, and how it can help in relation to the social construction of one's identity. It is partly some of the points that form the framework for the interview guide. It is also the points, which the analysis will focus on in relation to the informants' narratives in the interviews. The interpretation of the empirical data will be divided in three levels; self-awareness, critical common-sense and theoretical understanding (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p.237-239). The above mentioned points that have emerged from the section *3.0 Background and state of the art* are going to be the framework for the interpretation on the critical common-sense level. On the third level it is the knowledge that the theory sections provide that is going to be the pivotal point for the analysis on this level. The analysis has also an explorative approach, which means that I let the empirical data generate ideas in relation to what will be look at in the analysis. The different analytical tools that will be used on each interpretation level will be elaborated later in the section *6.0 Analysis*.

#### **4.4 Delimitation**

Besides the fact that the thesis is limited by a maximum number of pages it may consist of, there is also a limit to the extent of the thesis. This is due to the fact that when studying a particular phenomena or field of study, as this study aims to do, it is impossible to evaluate all the elements that may be considered as relevant for the studied area. In this connection it is necessary to leave out some elements that might be interesting to examine in relation to the problem formulation. This thesis has delimited from focusing on other SNS' than Instagram, and the focus in relation to the health wave has also been on the global health trend LCHF.

This thesis is not a comprehensive examination of all Instagram users in Denmark that have LCHF as a lifestyle and its "results" must therefore be read in relation to the empirical chosen texts and examples. It can also be concluded that only the results rising from the analysis is interpreted and these cannot be conclusively generalizing for all Danish Instagram users who have LCHF as lifestyle.



## **5.0 Theoretical framework**

In order to answer the problem formulation for this study, the chosen theories that form the theoretical framework for this study, are theories on globalization and glocalization, theories about social media with primarily focus on the SNS Instagram and theories about identity. The chosen theory contribution is emphasized in each theory section.

### **5.1 Theory on globalization**

The theory section about globalization will include Bauman and Giddens as scholars to provide an understanding about the phenomenon. The section will start by presenting Bauman's theory about globalization and glocalization (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008). His theory about globalization and glocalization is considered appropriated for this thesis, due to the fact that this study will look at the global health trend LCHF in a Danish context in order to provide an understanding about the global health wave in a Danish context. This theory section will provide an understanding about how global health trends, such as LCHF, can be seen as a local trends that have become global, meaning that the process between globalization and glocalization will be highlighted in this section. Due to the fact that this study is looking at LCHF in a Danish context, it can be argued that there is case of glocalization and because of that Bauman's work with the theories of globalization and glocalization is considered relevant in relation to answering the problem formulation of this thesis. Bauman's theory of glocalization is the frame for this thesis, and is used in order to explain about LCHF being a global health trend and to suspects that it unfolds in a certain way in a Danish context, which is consistent with Bauman's understanding of the global and local (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008). He believes that the population is under influence of global as well as local influences, and believes that the two concepts 'globalization and glocalization' should not be seen as two individual concepts, but collaborating phenomena (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008). Giddens theory on globalization will be presented as well; due to his view on the phenomenon globalization is interesting because he argues that globalization can be seen as wider cultural changes, and sees globalization and its consequences as significant in relation to how we organize our entire life through e.g. SNS' such as Instagram (Giddens, 1999, p. 27). The following theory section of globalization will not be included directly in the analysis of this thesis, but are included as a part of the theoretical framework. The reason why it is included in this theoretical framework, when it is not used as an active part in the analysis, is to explain the global and intercultural dimension in relation to this thesis. This thesis attempts to examine the global health trend LCHF in a Danish context, which is explained within Bauman's theory of globalization and glocalization. Due to the



fact that LCHF is a global trend that the Danes have embraced it might be seen as something that can be understood in the process of glocal-global, and global-local. Giddens is also included in the theory section of globalization. His way of understanding globalization is included to create an understanding of how the development of social media can be seen as part of the separation of time and space and disembedding as Giddens argues being some of the characteristics of globalization (Giddens, 1999). (Giddens, 1991, p. 14-21).

### **5.1.1 The sociological understanding of globalization**

Bauman has over the years made a significant contribution to the interpretation of the phenomenon of globalization. However, he was by no means the first to consider processes of globalization sociologically. Roland Robertson has also contributed to a sociological understanding of globalization. Robertson's name has become synonymous with the formalization and specification of globalization as a viable concept. Robertson (1992) understands by globalization the 'compression of the world', which is to say 'the intensification of a consciousness of the world as a whole' (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 138). He identifies social processes that have created a greater concentration of global interdependence, so that individual and national reference points can be related to the supranational or global level. That is, increasingly, local issues affecting individuals and small groups are seen to be the result of global processes. This is reflected at the political, economic and cultural level of society, as locality and globality become mutually constitutive (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 138). Indeed, the relationship between the local and the global as articulated by Robertson's concept of glocalization is a central feature of Bauman's own writing on the subject (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 138).

### **5.1.2 Bauman and the term glocalization**

Zygmunt Bauman is known for being critical of late-modern trends. He chooses to focus on the negative social consequences of changes in society, and stresses that, what someone has earned, others have lost (Bauman, 1998, p. 43). Bauman stands for a reflected development pessimism, which is not about being critical of the development itself, but to figure out what globalization really does. According to Bauman globalization divides as much as it unites. The consequence of the global and local fusion, mentioned amongst other Bauman as "glocalization" (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 140).

Globalization and localization should not be seen as individual concepts, but collaborating phenomena, which means that the boundary between these two concepts leaches. The population is

under the influence of global as well as local influences that not only influence the daily interactions and the way in which those considered, but also in the perception of the global world and its problems. According to Bauman, globalization and localization go hand in hand which means that rather than globalization we should instead talk about “glocalization” (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 140- 151). This takes the population's ability to think globally in local contexts into account, which the Danish informants' LCHF lifestyle can be seen as an expression of. The health trend LCHF started as a local trend in Sweden and was expanded to other countries, which meant that the health trend became a global trend. This thesis is looking at the trend in a local context, due to the fact that the aim is to provide an understanding of the global health wave in a Danish context.

Globalization is not about what we all wish or hope to do, it is about what is happening to us all (Bauman, 1998, p. 39). Globalizing and localizing trends are mutually reinforcing and inseparable, but their respective products are increasingly set apart and the distance between them keeps growing, while reciprocal communication comes to a standstill (Bauman, 1998, p. 45) (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008). Bauman is more critical towards the phenomenon, compared to Giddens which will be explained later in this section, and believes that the technological compression of time and space polarizes rather than homogenizing the human condition and believes that glocalization polarizes mobility – that ability to use time to annul the limitation of space (Bauman, 1998, p.45). That ability – or disability divides the world into the globalized and the localized. Globalization and localization might be inseparable sides of the same coin, but the two parts of the world population seem to be living on different sides (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008). Bauman believes that globalization reinforces already existing patterns of domination while glocalization indicates trends to dispersal and conflict on neo-traditional grounds (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p 137-152). Together with such concepts as ‘civilization’, ‘development’, ‘convergence’, ‘consensus’ and many other terms of early- and classic-modern debate, universalization conveyed the hope, the intention and the determination of order-making. Those concepts were coined on the rising tide of modern powers and the modern intellect's ambitions. They announced the will to make the world different from what it has and better than it was, and to expand the change and the improvement to global, species-wide dimensions. It is also declared the intention to make life conditions of everyone everywhere, and so everybody's life chances, equal. Nothing of all that has been left in the meaning of globalization, as shaped up by the present discourse. The new term refers primarily to ‘global effects’ notoriously unintended and unanticipated, rather than the ‘global undertakings’. Bauman uses the tourist and the

vagabond to describe the consequences' of globalization and by using these two concepts he explains that there is an inequality in society, and that globalization helps to maintain it, because only the upper class can benefit from the new opportunities and offers that globalization has brought. (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 142-146).

A part of Bauman's theoretical apparatus is dedicated to the description of the separation of time and space, which is identical with Giddens' view on globalization which will be elaborated in the below section *5.1.3 Giddens and globalization*. Bauman believes that technological compression of time and space polarizes rather than homogenizing the human condition (Bauman, 1998, p. 45). He argues that the shortening of time to the level of instantaneity have meant that much social life can now be conducted at the speed of electronic signals such as communicating by text message or via email – and the shrinking of space have meant that people worldwide are able to share common experiences of global events/trends. This means that local events/trends such as the various health trends, e.g. LCHF, might become global, due to the opportunity that the technology offers about sharing and communicating across borders on e.g. Instagram.

To sum up, Roland Robertson created the catchword by combining globalization and localization. Bauman is inspired by the work of Robertson, but use the term glocalization differently. The term globalization was used by Robertson to illustrate the development of communication technologies that increasingly connected the global platform with the local platform. Bauman uses the catchword differently. The core of Bauman's own understanding of glocalization is the claim that it results in a world-wide rest ratification of society based upon the freedom of movement. Geographical and social mobility are dichotomized; populations are refigured as tourist and vagabonds, where the tourist is rich and have the ability to travel between countries and exploit the opportunity that exist elsewhere where the vagabond symbolize the poor people that do not have the opportunity to move between countries, in the same way as the tourist has. Bauman believes that globalization helps maintain it, due to the fact that, in his opinion, only the upper class can benefit from the new opportunities that globalization has brought (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008). As mentioned above Robertson combining globalization and localization, and is talking about glocalization as something positive, whereas Bauman splits the catchword glocalization up. He believes that tourists, through travel, become globalized while those without means (the homeless) to journey out into the world remain localized. Looking at this definition in relation to this study, one can say that the health trend LCHF can be seen as the tourist, due to it being a health trend that have been globalized, due

to it being a local, Swedish, trend that have been expanded to other countries such as Denmark, meaning that it has been globalized. In this thesis, due to the fact that the LCHF trend is being looked at in a Danish context, amongst the Danish informants, it can be looked at as being the vagabond, due to the fact that the trend is localized (Jacobsen & Poder, 2008, p. 142-146).

### **5.1.3 Giddens and globalization**

Giddens is more positive about globalization and the consequences' of it, compared to Bauman. The reason for involving Giddens into the section about globalization is due to the fact that he is taking different changes into consideration when working with globalization. He is considering the technological development into his views on globalization (Giddens, 1999), the expansion of web 1.0 to web 2.0, which will be explained in the following theory section on social media. Giddens argues that modern society's reconstruction is a result of globalization so that local- and global actions affect each other and is compounded by information technologies such as the Internet which contributing to global interconnectedness (Giddens, 1990) (Giddens, 1999). Due to the fact that this study sees the internet as having a decisive role in relation to making local trends to global trends, Giddens view on globalization is considered to be appropriated.

The intensification of socialization and communication across cultural boundaries and localities is according to Giddens the effect of modernity, and thus describes globalization as:

*"[...] 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'.*

(Giddens, 1990, p.64)

Globalization is according to Giddens (1990) both intensive and extensive. He emphasizes that globalization is not a transient and single theme, but a number of processes that inter alia have an impact of our immediately community. Giddens highlights despite the demarcations that the world is no longer strictly divided but closely linked by a network of both communication and commerce. The specific of globalization is the speed at which it takes place and there is, according to Giddens, three reasons for this development (Giddens, 1991, p. 14-21).

1: Separation of time and space: This reason implies that one is no longer bound to its proximity, but has the opportunity to interact in a wider context. This separation is a result of the new invention (telephone, Internet etc.), which makes it possible to standardize the manner and

communicate across large distances. Separation of time and space may be associated with the expansion from web 1.0 to web 2.0, which has opened up for new opportunities in relation to communication with other people regardless of time and space, and thus influence each other locally and/or globally, which is the case with health trend LCHF. Instagram can be seen as a result of separation of time and space, due to the fact that it has opened up for the opportunity to communicate in a wider context, both locally and globally. Instagram is created in the US in 2010, but have been embraced to countries/cultures around the world, and is considered to be generally known and extensively used in much of the world.

2. Disembedding: "Removal of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space". Instagram, which is the medium that is being focused on in this thesis, can be seen as a place that contributing to the removal of social relations from local contexts into global contexts, due to the fact that the site makes it possible to communicate outside one's local context.

3. Modern society reflexivity: Reflexivity is the last factor for modernity's dynamics. With modernity's technological advances, hence the increased knowledge, our existing knowledge is constantly challenged by a new one. The various health trends that the Danes have been introduced to, including the trend LCHF, can be seen as an example of the increased knowledge that technology offers.

Giddens consider globalization as a strengthening of the individual options. Individuals have many benefits of mutual boundless contact by the internet, amongst other things have eased, and Giddens (1991) believes, therefore, that globalization opens up new possibilities for the individual.

As mentioned above the separation of time and space has a connection to web 2.0. The way I understand globalization is that web 2.0, and the way you can communicate through Instagram can be seen as separation of time and space and disembedding. The development of Web 2.0 created new ways of communicating (Dimmick et. al., 2009), and because this thesis attempts to understand the global health wave in a Danish context based on an analysis of Danish LCHF blogs on Instagram, this social media theory section shall contribute to an understanding about what social media is, and provide an understanding about its role in relation to local trends becomes global.

Furthermore the thesis aims at gaining an understanding about how health wave, more specific the LCHF trend, on Instagram can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity amongst Danes, and because of that theory about Instagram as a SNS is likewise included in this section. As emphasized in the section *3.0 Background and state of the art* Instagram plays an important role when it comes to spreading different kind of health trends (Sylvest, 2013), which raises the question whether all social media, e.g. Facebook and Instagram, are the same or whether there is a difference between them and what they contribute with. In view of this wonder is theory of the SNS Instagram included in this section.

## **5.2 Social media**

In the previous section, it was explained that the development of technology means that local and global actions affect each other and that the Internet contributes to increasing global connectedness (Giddens, 1990) (Giddens, 1999). The global development of the Internet has led to a revolution of communication, which means that people now have the opportunity to communicate with other people from different places in the world through the internet (Dimmick et. al., 2009). This global development of the technology has influenced how people are using the internet, causing a development from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is a platform which consists of various new technologies on which a variety of popular SNS' such as Facebook, Twitter, My Space, Instagram etc. have been built (Richard et. al., 2011). The development of Web 2.0 has meant that people no longer are passive users of the internet, but have taking on a more active role in connection to being a user of the internet (Richard et. al., 2011) (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). These SNS' are providing a constant connectivity amongst people that previously could not communicate with each other, due to the previously communication barriers.

According to Boyd and Ellison (2008) SNS' can be defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). This definition gives an understanding about what SNS' are and what it can offer, and Kaplan & Haenlein follow up with a definition two years later and define social media as;

*“Social network sites are a group of Internet-based applications that build the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.”* (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, p. 61)

Apart from the two definitions are two elements common for SNS'; relations and user creation. In addition you cannot avoid the concepts web 2.0 and user-generated content (UGC), which according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, p. 61) builds the foundation for SNS'. The concept of Web 2.0 was, according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) first used to describe a new way of using the Internet. They describe the concept as following;

*"[...] a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in participatory and collaborative fashion."* (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, p. 60).

Before the previously mentioned expansion from web 1.0 to web 2.0, the internet was used as a one-way communication platform. This digital platform did not offered private persons the same possibility of communicating with other people. The expansion from web 1.0 to web 2.0 has opened up for social software such as the different social communication platforms like Instagram (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). The expansion has revolutionized the way people use the Internet today. Web 2.0 is characterized as a two-way communication platform, enabling people to communicate with each other (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). The expansion of Web 2.0 has opened up for social software such as the well-known SNS' Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

The internet has become late-modern society's new communications medium (Castells, 2003). In addition to its breakthrough, it has been a subject of some debate. The debate has centered on whether the internet will lead to new forms of social interaction (Castells, 2003, p.113-117). On one hand, it was interpreted in the virtual communities or networks, where the individual no longer need to be physically present to socialize. *"New selective forms of social relationships replace territorially bound forms of human interaction"* (Castells, 2003, p.113). On the other hand there are also some who believes that the internet is helping to create social isolation. The social communication that is present in a physical meeting will be degraded. The internet is accused of gradually enticing people to live out their fantasies online and thereby escape from the real world in a culture that increasingly is being dominated by a virtual reality (Castells, 2003, p. 113).

The internet has become a part of everyday life for most people and the various SNS' such as e.g. Instagram has likewise become a part of most people's everyday life. This is seen in the number of users on Instagram, which will be elaborated in the following section. According to Castells (2003) social media platforms creates an opportunity for creating a new or different identity and there have been created a new context where the individual can choose their own identity. Despite the new opportunity that social media platforms offer, Castells (2003) believes that individuals create online identity that is consistent with their offline identity. This way of looking at identity, the opportunity of creating or having a new or different identity on the various social network sites, can be related to the work of Goffman, due to the fact that he believes that the individual appear to others with a social mask or a so-called face and works with the concepts front stage and backstage (Jørgensen, 2008). His work on the concept of identity will be elaborated later in the section 5.3.2 *Goffmans work on identity*.

When the internet got its breakthrough it was with the promise of creating new forms of communication. These new forms of communication should link individuals closer together, particularly individuals with common interests and attitudes (Castells, 2003).

According to Castells (2003), the internet creates room for interaction, which is the basic element for the community. According to this claim, one can assume that the internet, SNS', creates community. Therefore it is necessary to look at communities from a new perspective, especially communities which are created through the internet. Community must now be seen as something which could attach less importance on the community's cultural elements and more emphasis on its supporting role for individuals (Castells, 2003b). An appropriate definition can be;

*"Communities are networks of interpersonal ties that help to produce socialization, support, information, membership and social identity"*

(Castells, 2003, p. 123).

The shift from the community to the network is, according to Castells, very important. Network is built through strategies, the choices that the users choose amongst. This achieved among other things on Instagram, when looking at which persons the users of SNS want to follow. The individual choose certain persons in addition to create a particular identity. It could e.g. individuals who choose to follow people that are living by the health trend LCHF.



### 5.2.1 Instagram as a global medium

Looking at Instagram as a social phenomenon, it is important to look at it, in relation to its context, namely the Internet, because Instagram cannot be looked at as an isolated and a spontaneously occurred phenomenon. As mentioned above the Internet has undergone a remarkable development from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, where the new web allowing people to be connected and communicating through the e.g. various SNS' such as Instagram (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008), which might be one of the reasons why SNS' have become that popular.

Instagram is a social medium that was launched in October 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger (Hu et. al. 2014). As other SNS', like Facebook and Twitter, Instagram is a global SNS. Currently there are more than 300 million monthly active users worldwide and more than 700.000 monthly active Danish accounts on Instagram (Hu et. al. 2014). The SNS offers the same features regardless where you live in the world. Instagram, a mobile photo (and video) capturing and sharing service, has quickly emerged as a new worldwide medium in spotlight in recent years. The SNS provides its users with an instantaneous way to capture and share their life moments with the people within their online network through a series of images and videos (Thiago et. alt., 2013). Since Instagram was launched in 2010, the network has grown to more than 300 million active users worldwide (Thiago, 2013) (Hu et. al. 2014). The site offers its users a way to post photos and videos using their Smartphone, apply various appearance of an image, and share them instantly (Thiago et. alt., 2013). The site has some similar features with Facebook such as the "like button, chat option" etc., but previously studies in this area shows that the different SNS' available for private persons are used differently. It shows that there is a relatively large difference when looking at which functionalities that are weighing the most on the various SNS' (Kietzmann et. al., 2011). Instagram offers its users a unique way to post images and videos using their Smartphone, apply different manipulation tools. The site also allows users to add captions, hashtags using the # symbol to describe the images and videos, and tag or mention other users by using the @ symbol (which effectively creates a link from their posts to the referenced user's account) before posting them (Hu et. al., 2014). Instagram also provides similar social connectivity as the SNS Twitter, which allows a user to follow any number of other users, which are called "friends on Twitter and "followers" on Instagram. Instagram can be defined as being asymmetric due to the fact that a user can follow another user without this user follows back. Furthermore the user has the opportunity on Instagram to set their privacy preferences such that their posted images and videos are available only to the

user's followers and that it requires approval from the user to be his/her follower. Instagram is, as Facebook, an empty stage where the content is generated by the user, meaning that the user on Instagram consume images and videos mostly by viewing a core page showing a "stream" of the latest posts from the different users that they follow on Instagram (Hu et. al., 2014).

Instagram is a medium that differs from other SNS' such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc., as there is much focus on the visual communication. The way the Danish Instagram users use this visual communication in relation to their LCHF lifestyle might provide an understanding about the health wave in a Danish context and provide knowledge about how it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity amongst Danes. In order to gain an understanding about the social construction of identity, the following theory section is considered relevant. The following theory section focuses on identity and the construction of it, and involves some different perspectives in connection to how identity can be understood.

### **5.3 Identity**

When searching for a definition of identity, you will find different scholars that have given their thoughts on how identity should be defined as well as the factors that are contributing to build one's identity. Identity is a concept that can be difficult to define, since it is used in many different contexts (Giddens, 1991) (Belk, 1988) (Goffman, 1959) (Jørgensen, 2008) (James, 1890) etc. This section begins with a helicopter perspective on the concept of identity, which is done to give the reader an idea about how broad the concept identity is and to show that it is a concept that can be perceived from many different perspectives. Afterwards I will try to narrow the perspective and focus on the scholars that have contributed with the theory, within the area of identity, which I find most interesting in relation to my problem formulation. Erving Goffman's theory of identity is chosen because he presents some useful concepts, front stage and backstage, which can be used to analyze human interaction and identity, which is presumed to take place on Instagram. Goffman, 1959) works from the conviction that human identity is like a role you play and are continuously changed through self-promotion. This way of looking at identity, is interesting in relation to gain an understanding about how the global health wave is fashioned on Instagram, and in what way it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity amongst Danes. Besides Goffman, Giddens' (1991) theory of identity is also included in this section, and shall contribute to an understanding of identity in a modern/late modern society. Giddens speaks about identity and self-identity and emphasizes the individual's own active part in the process of creating an identity. He is talking about reflectivity, and states that identity is something that is created through our actions and our

life as a process through life (Giddens, 1991, p.5-10). This way of understanding identity is suitable in relation to the problem formulation of this thesis. In the problem formulation there is a preconception about the Danish Instagram users' create a narration about themselves through the images that they post of LCHF food, and that the narrative is helping to create one's identity (Giddens, 1991, p.5-10). Finally Belk (1988) and James (1890) are included as well, due to these two scholars, amongst others, look at identity in relation to consumption/possession, and is considered as relevant in this thesis, due to the health trend LCHF and the SNS Instagram can be considered as a possession that might influence the construction of identity.

### **5.3.1 Helicopter perspective of identity**

In everyday language the concept identity is used to define and determine the individual's affiliation, often with strong emphasis on unification and insignia. People are expected to belong to certain groups and other units. For convenience, people like to categorize and classify each other, find patterns and logic (Hammaren & Johansson, 2010).

When we try to approach an understanding of the individual and trying to conceptualize what it means to live in a particular society, we encounter a number of terms and concepts such as; the self, the individual, personality etc. Additionally there are numerous variants of the concept of identity, such as self-identity, social identity and cultural identity (Jørgensen, 2008). These are often used to describe relatively similar phenomena, but sometimes there can be crucial difference between the different conceptual apparatus. Roughly terms such as 'I' 'superego' and personality belongs in area of psychology, while in the area of philosophy it will be referred to as 'individual and individuality', and in the area of sociology, social psychology and cultural studies it will use the identity concept (Jørgensen, 2008). The human identity lies in the border area between the individual and contemporary culture, between individual psychology and sociology. The psychoanalytic developmental psychologist speaks, for example, about respectively an inner or personal identity and a cultural - or group identity. A bridge is built between the idea of a more essential personality and the fact that people sensitive adapts to each other in a given situation (Jørgensen, 2008).

### **5.3.2 Goffmans work on identity**

Unlike the psychological definitions of identity, associated with e.g. internal development processes, social psychology and sociology work towards a more society-oriented and collective concept (Jørgensen, 2008). With the foundation of symbolic interactionism draws attention from

internal mental processes in the direction of the continuous interaction between the individual and the groups and cultures that surround it. Subsequently, the symbolic interactionism has been the impetus for a number of sociological or social psychological identity theories. Some have focused on how society and social structures influence the individual's identity and others have, such as Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959) increasingly considered identity as a situational size or social determined fiction or construction and staging that are deeply embedded in concrete situations (Jørgensen, 2009).

Goffman (1959) considers identity as a social construction. He believes that a person shows an image of itself as it tries to get others to recognize. The individual appears to others with a social mask or a so-called face. He sees the individual as a product of social interactions; hence there is no core or a real identity behind the person's façade (Goffman 1959). Goffman draws on the symbolic interactionism, based on the fundamental assumptions from George Herbert Mead (1934), who believes that humans are created and shaped through the meeting with others. Thus the individual meets the world with a kind of social mask, which is carrying the individual's identity construction.

Goffman introduces the concepts front stage and backstage and states that identity should be seen as a role developed from a continuous regulation of the individual's self-presentation. In his book from 1959 "*The presentation of self in everyday life*", he presents a dramaturgical theory in which society is perceived as a theater where the individual fills one or more roles. The roles we assume or are assigned, subjugate the individual with a form of social coercion. When the role is ingested, a framework for the individual's self-expression is provided. However, there is opportunity for some room for interpretation, but there are clear limits to how far one can draw a role in one direction. The manuscript can be considered as the societal and general social structures that limit the individual's action. Goffman (1959) introduces the concept 'façade', which can be regarded as an outer and expressive manifestation of the individual. When the individual stages a facade, a social position is created, corresponding to an identity that is more or less volatile or situational.

Goffman believes that individuals can be seen as performers, audience members, and outsiders that operate within particular "stages" or social spaces. Goffman suggests that how we present ourselves to others is aimed toward 'impression management', which is a conscious decision on the part of the individual to reveal certain aspects of the self and to conceal others, as actors do when performing on stage. Impression management is a central concept in Goffman's dramaturgy and is concerned with how people try to control the impressions that others have of them. (Goffman,

1959). He argues that any person who enters into a social context, want to make a certain impression on those present, which translates into so-called performances. As social individuals we constantly enter into social meetings of various kinds – virtual or physical meetings. In these meetings, we assume roles that we define ourselves by based on the image we want others to have of us (Goffman 1959). Whether we are conscious of it or not, we send signals to people around us that describe how we feel about the situation and our own participation in it. These signals are read by people around us, forming an image of us and at the same time we are reading their signals to form an image of them. Thus, we form an initial definition of the interaction, and this creates the basis for interaction (Goffman, 1959). Goffman believes that when we meet people, we will, through the decoding of signals, try to adapt to the social situation. We try to adapt ourselves, because we want to predict what will happen and thus act correctly. This performance is defined as a part of the individual's self-promoting activity in front of an audience, but also the audience's reaction to the performed. Interaction is viewed as a "performance", shaped by environment and audience, constructed to provide others with "impressions" that are consonant with the desired goals of the actor (Goffman, 1959).

The process of establishing social identity, then, becomes closely related to the concept of the "front," which is described as that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance (Goffman, 1959). The front acts as the vehicle of standardization, allowing for others to understand the individual on the basis of projected character traits that have normative meanings. As a "collective representation," the front establishes proper "setting," "appearance," and "manner" for the social role assumed by the actor, uniting interactive behavior with the personal front (Goffman, 1959). The actor, in order to present a compelling front, is forced to both fill the duties of the social role and communicate the activities and characteristics of the role to other people in a consistent manner. The individual's specific motivation and intention with this kind of impression management varies from person to person, but according to Goffman (1959) individuals are trying to control the impressions others have of them in order to meet the outer normative expectations and social conventions that frames social interaction in everyday life. Goffman involves the concept 'front stage' and 'backstage' to explain the degree of impression management, which are typically linked to specific areas and situations where social behavior is controlled. The concept front stage can be explained as the produced part of the individual's appearance in front of the audience and can be

characterized as “the place where the performance is presented (Goffman, 1959). It is where the individual assume his social mask (façade) and joins the expected role that the situation dictates and acts by a certain set of standards/rules. Front stage should be seen in this thesis as Instagram. According to Goffman, there are various roles one can assume, depending on the scene (situation) and the actor adjusts his role after the current scene (situation). Backstage, behind the scene is the place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude (Goffman, 1959). Behind the scene, back stage, it is not necessary to reflect and adjust its attitude to any applicable norms. Behind the scene you can throw the mask and breathe easily. The main purpose of performing on front stage and acting in a certain role is because the individual wants to give a certain impression of themselves, which in this context is the impression of being a healthy individual. In this context, Goffman (1959) emphasizes the concept of idealization, which will inter alia form the basis for this thesis understanding of the individual’s self-presentation and use of the concept in a wider analytic context. Idealization is about the performers present themselves better or more consistent than his behavior and concrete actions really reflect. The individual is trying to adapt to the social conventions that apply in a concrete social situation, which actively emphasized certain aspects of themselves, while others is being toned-down or suppressed (Goffman, 1959). These reductions and suppressions come to expression in the area referred to as backstage. In this area, the performers can avoid the judgmental eyes from the audience and you should not control the information, which could potentially be contrary to the desired self-image (Goffman, 1959).

### **5.3.3 Giddens work on identity**

Giddens (1991) describes identity as both something that is a result of socialization and psychology, but also as a cultural and historical structure. Giddens (1991) contribution to the discussion about identity is relevant, because he is looking at identity as being a process rather than a given and constant entity. He believes that self-identity must be constantly produced and reproduced, which happens as part of the individual's reflexive routine activities and actions. He sees the individual's self-identity as a reflexive project, an effort we are constantly working on and reflect on. We create and revise a set of narrative biography - stories about who we are and how we have become who we are (Giddens, 1991, p. 74-80).

Giddens has a theory on late modern society in which he places great emphasis on three key areas; separation of time and space, disembedding and modern society reflexivity (Giddens, 1991, p.14-21) (Giddens, 1999). These characteristics are emphasized in the theory section *5.1.3 Giddens and globalization*. The three characteristics contribute to a society where the foundation of social

relations has changed from the close (local) to the global, and where a detraditionalization has taken place and where a horizon of options is available to the individual. It results in consequences on the individual level. The individual in late modern society is left to him/herself in the process of constructing an identity.

Giddens does not only speak about identity, but also about self-identity. He distinguishes between identity and self-identity by claiming that self-identity is the way individuals perceive themselves whereas identity is the way others perceive one through the narratives told by the individual. The individual possesses hereby multiple identities which are differently expressed depending on the social context, but the individual only possesses one self-identity. Giddens explain the self and the construction of self-identity as following;

*Self 'identity' requires ... (...) ... reflexive consciousness. Self Identity is what the individual is aware of the basis of the concept of 'self-awareness'. Self-Identity is not something that is just given as a result of the continuity of the individual's action system, but rather something that routine must be created and maintained in the individual's reflexive activities.*

(Giddens, 1999, p.68) (Own translation).

Giddens describes the construction of identity as a path of life or a biography. According to Giddens, we do not only have one biography, but 'live' a biography that is reflexively organized based on flows of social and psychological information on possible ways of living (Giddens, 1999, s.25-26). To live one's biography or to control one's path of life is strongly influenced by late modernity dynamics at all levels. There are requirements in relation to reflexivity, trust in expert systems etc.

During pre-modernity it would have been absurd to discuss identity, because identity was largely determined at birth based on, amongst other, relationship, gender and social status (Giddens, 1991, p. 74). Factors that were tied to traditions and customs were the foundation of self-identity during pre-modernity (Giddens 1999, p.30). It was external circumstances and tradition that decided your identity. Today it has become appropriate to talk about identity, since it is in much greater extent than previously possible for the individual to create his own identity. Giddens believes that the individual, on the basis of the traditions break-up, forms its identity through the diversity of choices. In line with this development, where traditions no longer can provide the individual with a self-identity, the individual is facing issues such as; what should I do with my life, how should I act

in relation to certain issues, what would I like to obtain in life etc. The individual reflect and answer these questions when they act, and the choices that one make are a part of the continuing personal narrative and thus our self-identity. The late modern individual is constantly facing choices in regard to their private life, working- and social life. There is a requirement at all levels in regard to individual's ability to reflect and thus structuring of its self-identity. In order to provide answers and solutions to the many existential questions each face in daily life requires a high degree of ontological security because this is the basis of the individual's self-identity. Identity construction is not an individual project, but a part of a social development, where social relations and structures are formed and developed in cooperation with other people and the existing society. Giddens talk about the self as a reflexivity project, where reflexivity permeates the innermost parts of the self (Giddens, 1991, p. 32). This reflexive project consists of, how the individual continuously creates and revises itself through the individual's self-narratives and through the choices made throughout life (Giddens, 1991, p. 74.80). In this way the individual is not perceived as a passive human being, but as a human being that actively creates its own self-identity. This reflexivity can cause the individual to have a feeling of being left behind and alone in a world without certainty. In addition, only through other people's recognition of the person's behavior, the individual might feel psychologically secure in his self-identity. This means that the sense of identity is depended on the individual's ability to maintain a credible self-narrative that can be integrated within the contexts in which individuals are socialized.

Giddens' view of identity, construction of the self through narratives, is interesting and is the setting for the interview guide in this thesis. In order to answer the problem formulation of this thesis in the best possible way the focus will be on informants' narratives. The questions in the interview guide are, as mentioned in the section 4.2.1.2 *The Interview guide* formulated with reference to produce some interesting narratives from the informants.

#### **5.3.4 Identity as consumption and/or possession**

As mentioned in the beginning of this theory section 5.3 *Identity*, identity will also be looked at in relation to consumption/possession, due to the fact that the health trend LCHF and the SNS Instagram can be considered as possessions that can influence the construction of identity.

In extension to Giddens theory, you can involve the American consumer behavior researcher Russel W. Belk. He is one, amongst others, that address the relationship between possessions and self-identity. Compared to Giddens he expands the conceptual part. In the article from 1988



“*Possessions and the Extended Self*”, he threats the relationship between possessions and self-identity. He does not believe that consumption should be seen in the traditional shopping perspective. The things we “consume” or embody in our self-identity can also be places, people, body parts, pets etc. The central concept of his work is the extended self, because he believes that we extend, expand or manifests our self-identity with consumption of different objects – something, according to him, that we all do to some extent, due to the object helps defining the self. In this way, one can say that the modern individual is what it holds. In the article “*Possessions and the Extended Self*” an example about lost belongings is emphasized, and with the conclusion that people who somehow have lost personal belongings, often feel torn out of context and often feel that some of their identity have disappeared with the lost belongings (Belk 1988, p. 143). Because of that, he believes that there is a clear link between the sense of identity and consumption, because our possessions help defining how we are – towards ourselves and others. The objects we consume become a part of us and are reflected in the way we and others think about us. In this way, one can say that our possessions also help to create a kind of ontological security because they act as a framework that ensures us against unpleasant destabilization of our identity. We are what we have, collect, drive, drink and eat (Belk 1988, p. 160).

Besides Belk other scholars have argued that individuals use consumption to construct their identity. The relationship between identity and consumption has been a topic for much debate and has obtained a view that suggests that it is through consumption that people are empowered to construct their identity. Due to the attention that this topic has attracted through the years, lots of scholars have contributed with their view on the relationship between identity and consumption. One of the scholars that also consider consumption in relation to construction of identity is James (1890).

James (1890) published his two volumes of *Principles of Psychology* and in his work he identified three types of self-identities, whereas one focuses on identity in relation to consumption, and is referred to as being the material self (James, 1890, p. 292). The material self is an extended self, which contains the individual’s own body, family, and possessions. It is a broad sense of the individual’s possessions, including bodily parts and interpersonal relationships. These possessions are not valued simply for their functions, but valued because they are a part of the self (James, 1890, p.292). The explanation of material self is consistent with Belk’s (1988) idea of extended self. The extended self involves possessions and more importantly, the experience attached to those

possessions. Thus various facets of the individual's behavior, including product acquisition, product care, gift-giving, or disposition of possessions, are considered major contributors to and reflections of self-identity.

This view of identity is included in this thesis, as it can be argued that health trend LCHF and the SNS Instagram can be seen as something that is consumed or as a possessions that might have influence of the construction of identity.

## 6.0 Analysis

The qualitative analysis is based on interviews with nine Danish informants who all, to some extent, live by the trend LCHF and have an Instagram profile that reflects this lifestyle. The thesis has, as emphasized in the section *4.1 Philosophy of science* an interpretive scientific approach, which means that the analysis strategy will be on the interpretation of the empirical data.

### 6.1 Interpreting levels as analytical method

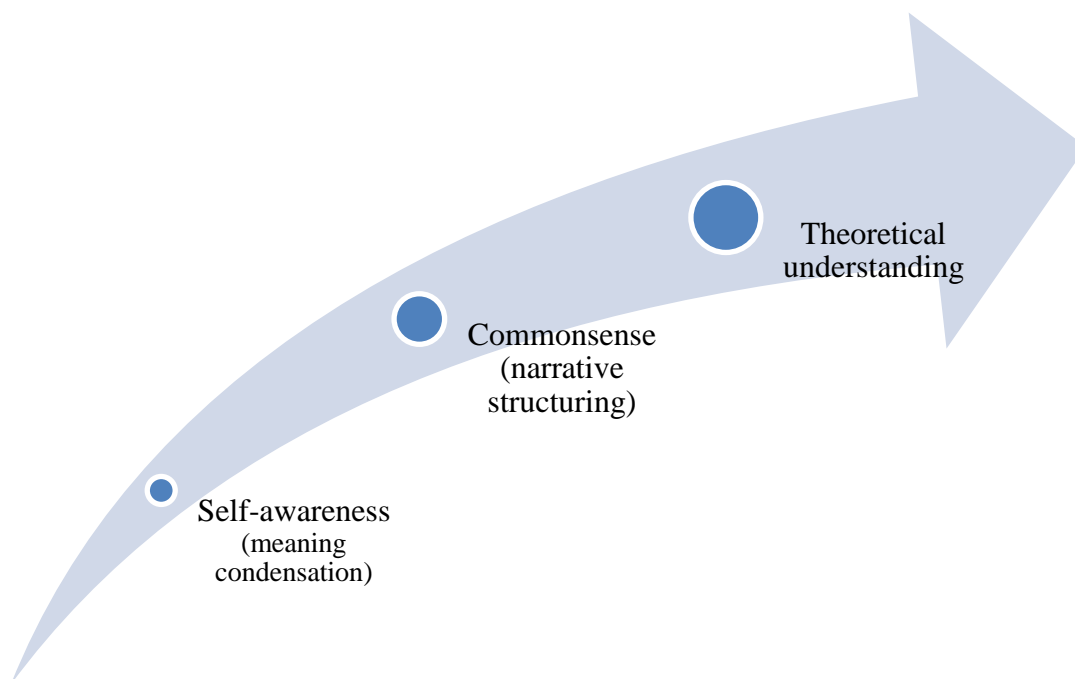
I will not go blind and aimless into my analysis, but instead I choose to continuously return to my empirical data and build a dialogue between theory, empirical data and new knowledge. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p. 237-239) operates with three levels of interpretation, which can be applied to the proper interpretations of the interview statements. The three levels are respectively called self-awareness-, critical commonsense-, and theoretical level (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 237-239).

These levels are hierarchically placed, whereby an analysis of self-awareness level opens the eyes of some deeper considerations on the critical commonsense level, and the same is also applicable in the following transition (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 237-239). It thus ensures that the researcher is taking into account the different depths of the empirical data and at the same time prevent that the researcher's perspective and interpretation context remains implicit in the analysis, whereby it may appear arbitrarily and subjectively. The first step in the analysis will be on a self-awareness level where I let the inductive approach come into use. I will analyze exclusively and loyally in the light of what has been said by the informants, by which the necessary empathy and openness to the informants' significations ensures. The analytical tool for this first level will be meaning condensation, which means that the explanations that I choose to emphasize in the analysis will be drawn together into shorter formulations, and through which I will gain valuable insight into the informants' motives, preference etc. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 227). There will be strived for an accurate representation as possible, to ensure that the main importance is presented. The interpretation of the self-awareness level will be divided into the three different themes, as with the interview guide.

The next analytical step will be a more detailed understanding of the empirical data. On this level the opinion of the informants will be interpreted critically in relation to the knowledge that has been acquired from, inter alia, the section *3.0 Background and state of the art* and be interpreted on the basis of my generally preconceptions within the area (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 238). On this level, the researcher will be critical of the things told by the informants in the interviews, and

highlight what have not been said directly by the informants, but can be read between the lines. The analytical tool for this step will be narrative structuring, and the purpose of using this narrative structuring method is to make a summary or reconstruction of the different narrative, told by the informants', to a richer, more dense and cohesive story than the individual informants scattered stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 246). The last step in the analysis will be based on considerations from self-awareness- and commonsense level and will break the empirical data further and by including theory gain a deeper understanding.

The analysis will be some movements between the three levels. The understanding becomes evident only through the upward movement and the involvement of both common sense and a theoretical contribution thus re-contextualizes it softly. The upward movements of the various levels are graphically depicted below in Figure 3. The analysis strategy will in other words be characterized by an upward interpretation where the informants' self-understanding is exceeded by involving knowledge and the empirical data are confronted with the theory.



**Figure 3: Upward interpretation levels, (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 238)**

### 6.1.1 Part 1 - Self-awareness level

On this level the informants' description, opinion etc. will be interpreted. It will be interpreted and analyzed in the light of what has been said by the informants. The interpretation and analyze will be divided into the same three themes as the interview guide is.

#### 6.1.1.1 Theme A: LCHF - food history for the informants

The informants are all quick to specify how they define the health trend LCHF and their immediate descriptions of it have positive vibes and is knowledgeable. With their statements, it appears that LCHF is a trend which focuses on consuming low carbohydrate and much fat. Throughout the interviews it appears that the different informants immediately have a very unified definition of LCHF as shown by their initial descriptions. It can partly be interpreted based on the fact that the name of the trend "says it all". Furthermore the way the informants were asked to explain about it resulted in a very short and precise explanation, due to the fact that they were asked how they would explain LCHF to a person who was completely unaware of it. Through the opinion of some of the informants the health trend LCHF is nicely summarized.

*If I have to describe what LCHF means, then I would explain it by saying that it is a concept that focuses on plain food. I believe that it is a lifestyle that most Danes will be able to follow without too many changes in their current lifestyle. I do not think that I have changed much in my cooking".*

(Appendix 9.3 on p.105) (Own translation).

*"For me, LCHF is a concept where you consume few carbohydrates and instead eat a lot of fat, which means that you can eat a lot of delicious food, but you cannot eat bread, pasta and rice – but are instead allowed to eat lots of sauce, good meat and lots of dressing and cheese".*

(Appendix 9.4, on p. 120) (Own translation).

All the different explanations have a positive vibes and the informants use positive words such as; "real food" "right food" "plain food" "delicious food" "easy lifestyle" etc. in relation to explaining the health trend LCHF.

The informants explain that they have, at some point within the last five years, tried other diets such as; Paleo, Weight Watchers, Dukan diet, Nupo diets, personalized diet plan etc. Even though all the informants have tried different diets there is a difference between the informants approach and overarching goals in relation to trying these mentioned diets. Eight of the informants have a very

similar food story, when focusing on which diets that they have tried within the past five years, and the approach and overarching goal in relation to trying them is also very comparable. Their approach and overarching goal have been weight loss. Through statements from informant 3 and 6 is food story for eight of the informants illustrated..

*I am, and have always been, an extremely food-lover girl, which means that I have always, as long as a can remember had problems regarding my weight. Because of that, I have throughout the years tried many different diets and lifestyles. I have tried Paleo food, the Dukan cure, Nupo cure – everything – you name it. The reason for trying all these different diets is because I had a goal to lose weight. My primary goal with everything in life the last several years have been to lose weight.*

(Appendix 9.4 on p. 121) (Own translation).

*“I have all my adult life struggling with the weight and therefore I have throughout the years tried many different diets. I hone’stly do not think that there is a diet that I have not tried. Due to the fact that I have always had problems with my weight the approach, every single time I started on a diet, was to lose weight and I remember my overall goal was to be able to squeeze myself into a pair of white jeans as I once could fit”*

(Appendix 9.7 on p.174) (Own translation).

As mentioned above all informants have tried different diets, but for one of them the approach and overarching goal have been different because her food story differs from the rest. Informant 4 has for many years been ill and controlled by the disease anorexia, which has meant that her approach and overarching goal of trying these different “diets has been to gain weight. Her food story is illustrated below.

*“My story is a little special because I have had anorexia and I have had it since I was 14 - on and off with three relapses. What was my hurdle every time was that when I had come up in weight and should not gain more, I was still hungry. I had this extreme hunger, which meant that I continued to eat and then a gained a few kilos, which caused a relapse. I needed to find a way to live my life without constantly thinking about food and a lifestyle that could provide me with a sense of satiety without that I gained weight”*

(Appendix 9.5 on p.138) (Own translation)

The informants agreed that none of the former diets have been satisfying. There are some different attitudes on why the former diets have not worked for them and some different statements to why LCHF is working. Presented below are statements from three informants and these three statements representing the nine informants' attitude to this area. Looking at the statements from the informants it is distinct that there are three main reasons for choosing LCHF as a lifestyle, and the reason is; Relatable, easy and controllable. Below are three statements that explain the three words resurrection.

*“The other diets have just not worked for me. LCHF, on the other hand, have worked because I think it is easy to live by. The food that you should, or are allowed to eat is available in all places and is a part of most meals. As an example, if I go and have brunch with some friends I can still eat in relation to LCHF principles, due to the fact that there is always something that you can eat when having LCHF as a lifestyle. LCHF is easy to live by and ease is very important for me and it is a factor that is essential if a diet shall become a lifestyle for me and not just something that I can manage to live by for 14 days. LCHF works for me and have become a lifestyle, which is partly because I have a child, hence it should be as easy for me as possible. LCHF is easy to follow, due to the fact that I can make, as an example, curried veal with rise and just replace, for myself, the ordinary rise with some made out of cauliflower”*

(Appendix 9.3 on p. 107-108) (Own translation)

*The other diets have not worked for me because there are too many rules of what to eat and when to eat it. On LCHF which is the lifestyle I have kept the longest time, almost all food is allowed. I am not counting every gram on my plate and I should not think so much about what I can eat and what I need to avoid. LCHF is much more manageable and it is closely related to the food that I ate before I started on the LCHF lifestyle. I grew up in a family where one cares much about the traditional Danish dishes, and LCHF is the lifestyle that lean the most on the traditional Danish cuisine. Rice, pasta, potatoes and other products that contain starch do not belong to the LCHF lifestyle, but there are many good alternatives to what one can eat instead in addition to the Danish dishes”*

(Appendix 9.4 on p.121) (Own translation)

*I have tried different diets and personalized diet plans, but the problem was that the things that I should eat according to the personalized diet plans did not provide any sense of satiety. I have tried*

*with all sorts of whole grains and proteins, all the things that should provide a sense of satiety, and none of it worked. I was so hungry all the time and I constantly thought about food and it was terrible. I almost became even sicker because of it and I actually experienced some relapse because of it. Then I started to eat more fat and achieved some kind of peacefulness. Having LCHF as a lifestyle provide me with calm, meaning that I do not think as much about food as a used to. I can now eat whenever I am hungry without any fluctuations on the weight.*

(Appendix 9.5 on p.138-137) (Own translation)

Despite the fact that words such as “food concept” “diet” and “lifestyle” all have been used by the informants during the interviews there is no doubt that all informants perceive LCHF as a lifestyle. Through the opinion from informant 4, illustrated the summary how informants perceive LCHF.

*“LCHF is a lifestyle that I have complied with the last two years. It is something that takes up less and less, due to the fact that it has been incorporated into my everyday life. A first it was obviously something that I needed to think about because I had to change the food that I was eating, but at this point it has become the most natural thing in the world”.*

(Appendix 9.5 on p.137-138) (Own translation)

There is no direct relation between how the informants became aware of the trend LCHF. Some have heard about it through friends, acquaintance etc. and others have seen images on Instagram that embraced health trend LCHF. Despite the fact that there is a difference in the way the informants became aware of LCHF there is one thing that is applicable for all of them, which is that they all have used Jane Faerbers books and her blog to obtain more knowledge about LCHF.

LCHF has influenced the informants’ relationships with food. Even though the approach and overarching goal differs, there are still some similarities regarding how it has influenced the informants’ relationship with food. Below are statements from informant 1 and 4 highlighted as they are considered to be representative since the other informants have the same opinion of how the health trend has influenced their relationship with food.

*“It has certainly been a very big change for me. I have gained much knowledge about what things I should eat and what things I should avoid eating. Besides that I have gained knowledge about how the food’s satiety affects my day. Before LCHF became my lifestyle, I could easily eat a large*



*sandwich and then be hungry soon after, and then I ate more food, and then I started to gain weight.*

(Appendix 9.2 on p.94) (Own translation)

*“After LCHF became my lifestyle, food is now something that will keep me running and give me energy - and it should taste good. Now I enjoy going out and eat some delicious food, but it is not like if I eat something that I think is a little boring, then my world collapses as it did before. Before I felt it was waste of calories. I do not think like that anymore – now I just need to eat to obtain energy”.*

(Appendix 9.5 on p.143) (Own translation)

Given that all informants perceive LCHF as a lifestyle and have had it for several years, it is not surprising that they all explained in the interviews that they would miss something to lean towards if they had to live without it. Before I began the interviews I had made conceptions about which informants that used Instagram the most in relation to having LCHF as a lifestyle, and these conceptions were made based on their personal Instagram profile, the amount of images of LCHF food etc. Based on these conceptions I had an idea about Instagram was important in relation to whether they would continue to have LCHF as a lifestyle. Only one of the informants claims that Instagram is crucial for her in relation to continue to have LCHF as a lifestyle. She explains that she could not do without Instagram because it means a lot for her in relation to having LCHF as a lifestyle. She uses her Instagram profile as a food diary, and explains the need for Instagram in relation to her lifestyle as following;

*It will affect me incredibly much if I had to do without my Instagram profile. I am very lucky that there are so many followers that believe my profile is interesting, and it helps me to continue my own healthy lifestyle with LCHF. My Instagram profile serves as a food diary, which means that I must try a lot of different recipes, which I then take images of and post it on my profile. I am afraid that, without my profile on Instagram, my motivation would decrease drastically”.*

(Appendix 9.9, part 1, p. 214) (Own translation)

The other informants explain that it will certainly affect them if they had to do without their Instagram profile, but claim that it would not change anything in relation to their lifestyle. They would still have LCHF as a lifestyle even though that they had to do without their Instagram profile.

They agree that they use their personal profiles to motivate others through their images of LCHF and also get motivated and inspired by other people's images of LCHF food. The informants also claim that their profile on Instagram helps them to maintain the focus on their LCHF lifestyle and uses their profile to spread a message to others about LCHF. Beyond that, they explain that they feel a sense of responsibility towards their followers, which also help to maintain their lifestyle. Through the opinion from informant 7, illustrates the summary of how the informants explain Instagrams role in relation to their lifestyle.

*“It would be difficult for me to do without Instagram. I use my profile to send a message to others about how I choose to live my life and what LCHF is about. I share images of my lifestyle with all my followers; I feel that I have something I am accountable for. I believe that I will have LCHF as a lifestyle no matter what, but my Instagram profile certainly helps to motivate me and to maintain the lifestyle”*

(Appendix 9.8 on p.196) (Own translation)

#### **6.1.1.2 Theme B: Instagram and posting images that embraces the LCHF concept**

There are observable differences with regards to how long the various informants have had their profiles on Instagram. The difference between the time which the informants have had a profile on Instagram are not reflected in the number of images available on their profile, due to it being about how active the informants have been in regard to posting images. The informants explain that they created a profile on Instagram out of curiosity and because it was and still is “the place to be” when wanting or having a healthy lifestyle. They explain that it is a medium that offers some other things compared to the other SNS’ like Facebook and Twitter. The informants describe Instagram as a visual forum, where the images are the main focus and where the communication happens through images. Furthermore the informants claim that it is a medium where the focus is on content rather than the relation you have with others. On Facebook you tend to be friends with people you know in real life, meaning that your crowd on Facebook consist of people that you know from your “offline life”, whereas Instagram is a SNS where your followers, as it is referred to on Instagram, consist of people that your share the same interest with. This means that your crowd on Instagram differs from you crowd on Facebook, due to the fact that your followers on Instagram might often be people that you do not know outside the forum. This explanation from the informants is very well connected with their explanation about a feeling of being a part of a community. People who share the same interest often follow each other, which mean that communities are established on Instagram. The

informants claim that there is much focus on health on Instagram, which fits well with their explanation about Instagram being a place where they often search for new inspiration in relation to new recipes. Motivation and inspiration are words that are used several times by the informants as they state that Instagram is the place where they get inspired by others within the community. Besides that they explain that they use their profile to inspire and motivate others and are using their profile to spread the word about LCHF. Below is the opinion from informant 3 highlighted as her explanation represent the other informants opinions.

*“I had heard people talk about Instagram. Instagram is much more visual and a place where you follow the profiles you like and the persons you share the same interest with. Facebook is a SNS where you are friends with people you know – old colleagues etc. Instagram is a place where the focus is on the content rather than relationship with people, as it is on Facebook. After I created a profile on Instagram people that I did not knew began to follow because of the LCHF images that I posted. Because you tend to follow others with the same interest as you, you gain a feeling of belonging to a community”.*

(Appendix 9.4 on p.126) (Own translation)

The description of Instagram and their explanation about Instagram creating a sense of community is accordance with all the informants follow other people on Instagram that have LCHF as a lifestyle. The main reason to follow other profiles that post images of LCHF food is to be inspired in relation to new recipes. The nationality of the profiles does not matter, due to the fact that the images “speak for itself”. The informants think a profile is interesting, and would like to follow it, when it is; inspirational, motivational, active, focus on the visual aspect, creative and when the profiles is easy to relate to. This is emphasized by informant 1 and 5.

*“The profiles should be easy to relate to. I like to follow people who are in the same situation like me, because then we have something in common. I give them support and they give me support”*

(Appendix 9.2 on p.98-99) (Own translation)

*It is very interesting when the user is active and often post images of LCHF food and recipes of it. The images must be inspirational and contain existing and creative LCHF food.*

(Appendix 9.6 on p.164-165) (Own translation)

All the informants express that they perceive Instagram as a SNS where anything is allowed. There are no formal or informal rules in relation to what a person can post images of. They believe it is up to the individual to decide what he/she wants to post on Instagram. However, there is a common perception about Instagram being a place where the majority of the images are rose-tinted and exhibit a form of perfection. The explanation about this tendency on Instagram, people only post images that demonstrate perfection, are not explained by the informants as being something negative. Below is a statement from informant 3 highlighted, due to her explanation drawing a good picture of the overall attitude of the other informants.

*“I think it is up to the individual to decide what images they will post on Instagram. I believe that there is a tendency to post images that are very rose-tinted and that everything has to look the best. You do not post an image of half a steak on Instagram, but instead you post an image in which you have served the food so it looks delicious. It is generally the case with all the images on Instagram. It does not matter whether it is food images, selfies etc.*

(Appendix 9.4 on p. 131) (Own translation)

### **6.1.1.3 Theme C: The informants own Instagram profile**

The understanding and the positive attitude about this tendency on Instagram can be seen in the light of the informants themselves are part of this tendency, meaning that the images that the informants post can be characterized as rose-tinted. All informants make a virtue out of editing and arranging their images, and are expressing that it is important that their images are presentable and look the best. The reason why it is important that the images are presented best possible is very similar. They all want to inspire their followers, and the informants are of the opinion that the food should look as good as possible in order to inspire others to have LCHF as a lifestyle. Below is the opinion from informant 1 emphasized to show the general opinion amongst the informants about editing and arranging the images that are posted on Instagram.

*“I care about it, but there is also a limit for me. It does not have to be the same plate every time, but I believe that one should use a filter on every image in order for the images to look best possible. I do that; use a filter on every image that I post on Instagram, but it does not have to be the same edge and same filter every time. I just choose whatever I think is suitable to a certain image.*

(Appendix 9.2 on p.101) (Own translation)

In spite of the informants explain that it is important for them to edit their images before they post them, they also explain, some directly and others indirectly, that another reason for putting much effort into the images that they post on Instagram is to achieve likes from others. Images that are neat and arranged nicely provide most likes.

*I edit my images because it has to look delicious. It provides a lot of likes and maybe someone discovers one's profile because of a nice image and begins to follow.*

(Appendix 9.6 on p.168) (Own translation)

*I can easily see, on the number of likes I receive, if I have not done my best in terms of editing and arranging the images. People care about the way the images are presented.*

(Appendix 9.10 on p.235) (Own translation)

Based on the informants' earlier explanation about the tendency on Instagram, posting images that are rose-tinted and radiates perfection, and the statements about editing and arranging images, it could give reasons to believe that the images on the informants' Instagram profiles only shows the rosy side, and thus do not reflect their real life outside the online forum. When it comes to the contention around whether or not the images on each informant's profile reflect the life they "really" live, the immediate responses from the informants is that the images reflect their real life. They claim that the images are not misleading, but the deeper the conversation is the more the informants, some more than others, open up for some interesting discussion.

The informants explain that the images that they post of LCHF food are, naturally, the food that they eat, but there is a strong consensus about the fact that they also eat certain food, which they deliberately choose not to post images of.

*"Of course, I also have some cravings once in a while where I eg. eat a Marsbar, but I do not post an image of that"*

(Appendix 9.4 on p.133) (Own translation)

The reason for choosing not to post an image of it, and thus show their followers that they also eat food that is not a part of the LCHF lifestyle differs. Some of the informants claim that it is due to their profile being a LCHF profile, which means that they do not think “other food” belongs on their profile. Others claim that they post images hoping to inspire and motivate others, and explain that there are certain types of food, that are not interesting to post images of, despite the fact that it is something that they eat. Looking at the different reasons, which the informants have in relation to not posting images of certain types of food, there can be draw parallels to the fact that in some degree it is about achieving likes from others, hence get recognition, but also to show the best possible self. The informants agree about the fact that they are not wreaking their food as nicely every day, but do it whenever they are going to post an image of it on Instagram. They justify or explain it by saying that the images of food have to look delicious.

*It is not always so fine - usually it is not always arranged as beautiful on the plate, but I think it has to look delicious on the images you post on Instagram. I do not only eat fancy food, and it is far from always that I arrange the food on my plate if I know that I will not post an image of it”.*

(Appendix 9.3 on p.115) (Own translation)

Looking at the informants’ opinions about the personal achievement of posting images of LCHF food, it can be looked from two overall achievements. First of all it is about inspiring and motivating others that share the same interest as them. A part from being able to inspire and motivate others to achieve a healthier lifestyle, the informants also explain that it is motivating for them to post images of LCHF food in relation to maintaining their own healthy lifestyle. They all express an opinion about them being motivated by likes and comments from their followers. Below is the opinion of informant 3 highlighted, as her opinion summarizes the informants’ attitude about personal achievement in relation to posting images of LCHF.

*“I hope that I can help inspire and motivate others and help them achieve a healthier lifestyle, but besides that I also get motivated when people like and comment on my images. The likes and comments from the different people are highly motivating in addition to continuing on the LCHF lifestyle”. It is hard to admit, but everyone loves the likes and comments from other people”*

(Appendix 9.4 on p.134) (Own translation)

The informants explain that a 'like' is a way to recognize others and through likes get recognition. It is a way to say "I like your image" and that 'likes' provides recognition and thereby influence the informants' self-esteem. The informants claim that 'likes' are important and that it is partly one of the reasons why they put much effort into the images that they post. There are some differences in how much the informants think about their images as being a way of expressing themselves and a way to be perceived by others. Some of the informants' have made few thoughts about how they want to be perceived by others through the images that they post on Instagram. Others have put considerably more thoughts into it and believe that it is through their images others define them. The deeper the conversation is about images being a way to express themselves and a way to be perceived by others, the informants' express that they sometime consciously and sometimes unconsciously think that their images must illustrate something specific.

There are amongst the informants' consensus on the importance of spreading the word about LCHF, and they all want to show others how much delicious food you are allowed to eat when having LCHF as a lifestyle. They, some explain more openly about it than others, find it important that the Danes should stop being afraid of eating fat and realize that fat it is something that is good for one's body. Below is the attitude of informant 1 emphasized as it provide a very clear and direct explanation about using one's profile to spread a message about LCHF, and is an opinion the other informants share.

*"I use my profile to spread a message about LCHF. I feel that I get something substantive out about what can be healthy - that fat is healthy, and that one should not be so frightened to eat fat. I try, through my images of LCHF to show others that there is another way to lose weight and live a healthy life than just eating the things that people associated with a healthy lifestyle. I think it is very important to spread the message about the food concept LCHF and help to reveal what it is about.*

(Appendix 9.2 on p.103) (Own translation)

As mentioned earlier the informants have all struggled with their weight and taken this into account it makes sense that the self-perception have changed since they started on LCHF. They explain that they have gained a better self-perception and that the LCHF lifestyle has had a major positive impact in relation to their self-esteem and self-confidence. They explain that the 'likes' and comments from others have contributed to the positive changes.

The informants claim that there is a clear link between the fact that they have LCHF as a lifestyle and the fact that their self-perception is improved. There is amongst the informants' statements clear consensus about the fact that LCHF has contributed with many great things and explains it by using these statements; more energy, lost kilos, got more control over the food, become a happier and more fresh person, a better self-esteem and more confidence. The opinion from informant 3 and 7 illustrate the link between LCHF and the improved self-image.

*“The food concept LCHF has had a tremendous effect on my self-perception. It is 100 percent because I have made a lifestyle change; hence have lost many kilos. I have spend the past several years focusing on losing weight and now I have found a lifestyle that works for me, which has contributed to a weight loss and it has meant that I have become a much happier person. Besides that, the ‘likes’ from others has also had a positive impact on my self-perception”*

(Appendix 9.4 on p.134) (Own translation)

*Before I started on the food concept I often experienced defeat. It can still occur, but it is not quite the same as before. I looked at myself as being a person that found it hard to maintain diets and often dropped in a hole and returned back to the bad lifestyle and then became upset and tired of myself. LCHF has definitely helped me to get the feeling that I am able to maintain a diet and incorporate it to become a lifestyle and this has made me stronger and more determined.*

(Appendix 9.8 on p.207) (Own translation)

There are differences in how many LCHF images that the informants have posted. Some of the profiles consist of LCHF images only, whereas others have posted images of both LCHF food and images of other things such as selfies, images of their children etc. Although some of the informants have images that have nothing to do with the health trend LCHF, it is obvious that the images of LCHF food are important to them, and is also the images that they are very proud to have on their profile. The type of images that the informants explain as being special for them is the type where the visual is completed, which means that the layout and editing is top-notch. Besides from the visual aspect, the informants explain that they are proud of the images that show the width of the LCHF lifestyle. They like to show their followers that it is possible to make different food from LCHF “rules”, e.g. make waffles, traditional Danish dishes, smoothies etc. Informant 2's opinion is highlighted below.



*“I think it is cool to post images when you have made some fancy and creative food such as roulade and spinach waffles etc., but at the same time I like to post images of more traditional dishes such as meat balls with some cabbage or Swedish sausage casserole. I like to post images of different types of food to show people that LCHF lifestyle allows you to eat lots of different food; fancy/creative food, Danish traditional food with small changes etc. “*

(Appendix 9.3 on p.118) (Own translation)

Some of the informants' explain that the number of likes plays a role in relation to how satisfying the image is. Informant 4 and 6 express directly that the number of likes is determining how much they like an image.

*"I have some images that mean a lot to me, which are images of special evenings with family etc., and images where the visual is good. But I also have a rule that I have a maximum of images on my Instagram profile because I believe it should be easy for people to scroll through my images. The rule of having a maximum of images means that I often have to delete some, and it might be images where I have something personally associated but where the number of likes is low. It is difficult to erase an image with 100 likes compared to an image that has 30 likes, because it shows something about what my followers like – and then it is not what I am deleting.*

(Appendix 9.5 on p. 156) (Own translation)

*“I am positing images of different types of LCHF food. I love when I learn something new, e.g. to make poached egg, and post an image of it, due to the fact that I am proud of it. Besides that, I love of course when my images receive lots of likes from my followers and potential followers on Instagram, and I must also admit that my husband and I compete with each other about whose images that receive the highest number of likes”.*

(Appendix 9.7 on p. 188-189) (Own translation)

#### **6.1.1.4 Sub conclusion on level one**

Based on the informants' own understandings, I can at this level of the analysis conclude that all the informants' have a positive attitude and great knowledge of LCHF. They all perceive LCHF as a positive lifestyle that, amongst other things, has contributed to weight loss, increased control, better and healthier relationship with food, better self-esteem and self-confidence. All informants have

tried other diets, but none of them have become a lifestyle as LCHF has. According to the informants LCHF offers many different options according to what you can eat and is easy to follow and is considered as suitable for most Danes.

There is no relation between how the informants became aware of the food concept, but one thing is applicable for all informants, which is that they all have used Jane Faerbers books about LCHF to obtain more knowledge about the concept and see new recipes.

The majority of the informants started on LCHF to lose weight and one of the informants had the reverse reason as she had struggled with anorexia for years; hence she needed to gain weight. LCHF has changed the relationship with food in a more positive direction, meaning that all informants have gain a bigger insight into the food that they should eat and the food that they should avoid in relation to losing weight/gaining weight and being healthy.

The informants have had LCHF as a lifestyle for several years and claim that they would not live without the concept as they would miss something to learn towards. Instagram is for some of the informants important in relation to have LCHF as a lifestyle, because they are motivated by being able to post images that others can like and comment on.

The informants use their personal profiles to motivate others through their images of LCHF and also get motivated and inspired by other people's images of food embracing the food concept LCHF. The informants also claim that their profile on Instagram helps them to maintain the focus on their LCHF lifestyle and use their profile to spread a message about LCHF. Beyond that, they explain that they feel a sense of responsibility towards their followers, which also helps to maintain the lifestyle.

Instagram is characterized by the informants as being a medium where the focus is on the content rather than the relationship you have with people, which is reflected by the crowd of people following one's profile. Due to people following each other based on the content, common interest, it creates a sense of community. All the informants follow other profiles that post images of LCHF to get inspired and motivated. The nationality does not matter, due to the fact that it is the content that determines whether or not the profile is interesting to follow. .

Some of the informants profile only consist of images of food that embrace LCHF, whereas the other informants profile consist of both LCHF food and images that have nothing to do with the

LCHF, images such as; selfies, images of families etc. They consider the images that embrace LCHF as being the images that are most important to them. This can have a connection with the informants' statements, direct and indirect, about 'likes'. Images of LCHF food often get many likes. This may be associated with the community, as informants feel a part of, where people tend to follow other people that have the same interest and through that support each other by liking or commenting each other's images. Besides being thrilled about images that attracts a high number of likes, the images that are able to show the width of the LCHF trend is also very important for the informants.

At the end of this level of analysis, it can be concluded that there are many comparisons according to the informants' approach and overarching goal of having LCHF as a lifestyle. Furthermore, there are some connections in how and why the informants use Instagram in addition to their lifestyle.

### **6.1.2 Part 2 - Critical common-sense level**

The interpretation on this level will not be divided by the themes because the focus is on creating a relatively coherent and complete history.

All the informants have in one way or another always had a struggle against weight and a negative relationship with food, which has had a negative impact on their self-perception, self-esteem and self-confidence. Almost all the informants have through a great deal of their life weighed too much and one of the informants has for many years been fighting against the disease anorexia, which also meant that she throughout the years has had problems with weight, which also has had an impact on her relationship with food and have influenced her self-esteem and confidence in a negative direction.

Due to the fact that all informants have struggled with weight, either overweight or underweight, they all have knowledge of the variety of other diets/health trends. The approach and the overarching goal in relation to trying all these different diets, etc. can immediately be deemed as being different, because most of the informants have tested the diets to lose weight whereas one informant has tested them to gain weight. Despite the immediate difference in relation to the approach and the overarching goal, it can be interpreted as being more alike than first assumed. The informants recount that before they incorporated LCHF as a lifestyle, food dominated their thoughts and they often thought about what they were allowed to eat and were very uncertain about the type of food that suited their body, which can be interpreted as it was about more than "just" a weight loss or weight gain, but also an underlying need and desire to achieve a greater knowledge about healthy

food and gain control over the food, creating a healthy and natural relationship with food, and to be able to reduce the enormous focus on food. This may point to the fact that food is difficult to consume because it is often consumed wrong. Given that the informants did not succeed with the other diets may indicate that “other” food has been problematic for them and has not been easy for them in relation to consuming food in the right way, in relation to achieving their goal of a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore the way the informants describe LCHF can be interpreted as an expression that, before they started on LCHF they had a perception of healthy lifestyle as being complex, difficult to relate to, and associated a healthy lifestyle with something that was difficult to incorporate into their lives.

The informants have had LCHF as a lifestyle for several years, and they state that the lifestyle amongst other things works for them because it is a simple concept that is easy to relate to and live by. The informants think that LCHF is a good match for them, which can say something about Danes perhaps not border to changes to much. They want to have a healthy lifestyle, and achieve their goal of having a healthy lifestyle but do not want to changes to much. The informants mention in the interviews that LCHF is an easy lifestyle that allows them to eat a lot of delicious food, and also a lifestyle that you can live by without having to think too much about what you are allowed to eat, due to the principles of the LCHF trend being very clear. The Danes love delicious food and is one of the reasons why LCHF is suitable for them as a lifestyle it allows one to eat good food. This might indicate that Danes do not just eat because it is necessary, but associate food with life quality.

LCHF is considered as an easy lifestyle and the informants’ recounts that there are many alternatives that make it possible to eat the food you are used to and the food you like. This can be interpreted as the food, which is allowed within LCHF principles, both reflects, to some extent, the food they ate in the past and at the same time it is a lifestyle that meets their requirements for "good" food. This can be interpreted as being one of the reasons why the informants all describe LCHF with positive vibes and recommend the lifestyle to others. They recount that LCHF is a flexible and easy lifestyle where you do not have to count calories or eat at certain times during the day. This is likely to be another important reason when considering why LCHF is effective for the informants, as it can be interpreted as a lifestyle which is about liberating the control that food have had because you do not have to count calories and eat certain food at certain times. This create a healthy and natural relationship with food,. In addition you can reduce the constant thoughts of food, which might be difficult to do by other diets because they tend to have rules about how many

calories one must intake as well rules about precisely when and what one should eat. This may be an indication that Danes will not feel controlled. They will have the feeling that they themselves decide and not subject to some rules.

This way of life can be interpreted as being, amongst other things, a demanding and inflexible way to live, and may be associated with the thoughts that the informants had before they started on LCHF in relation to a healthy lifestyle.

The informants report that they have experienced some skepticism and incomprehension from other people in connection to their choice about having LCHF as a lifestyle. It can be interpreted as an indication that people are ignorant about what LCHF is about and/or have a conviction about fat being dangerous and that it is fat that makes people obese. The opinions from other people in relation to the informants' lifestyle with LCHF may point to the fact that it may not only about the ignorance of the trend, but also about the fact that health can be seen as a moral issue.

The media has contributed with conflicting information that makes the Danes unsure of what they should eat and drink in order to stay healthy, which can be interpreted as being the reason why Danes are at times afraid of eating fat, and at other times obsessed with vegetable oils. The media's idea about what is healthy changes constantly, which creates confusion. The constant changing image about what is healthy can have a connection with the fact that all the informants have tried many different diets. It might also tell something about how health is perceived. The fact that the informants' have tried a lot of different diets in recent years may indicate that the Danes pursuit for a healthy lifestyle and this pursuit can appear as a size of almost religious character. The Danes have through years search for a healthy lifestyle that suit them and provide them with the same things as religion provides religious people with, namely support, something to believe in, hope, a feeling of community etc. Health trends e.g. LCHF has as religion some general guidelines that help people in relation to how they should live their lives.

The informants recounts that LCHF allows a lot of good food, just with few substitutes. The recommendations include some of the traditional Danish dishes, which are also in line with the Danish food culture, which amongst other things is characterized by the Danish traditional dishes. Despite globalization that, amongst other things, has made it possible to travel around the world and thereby experience lots of different culinary food profiles, such as; Italian, Spanish, Chinese, etc., the Danes still like traditional Danish dishes.

According to the informants, Instagram has played a major role in their diets and health since they first got started on LCHF; partly because it has been through Instagram that they have acquired knowledge about it and also report that it is through Instagram that they get inspiration for new LCHF recipes. It can therefore be interpreted that Instagram is a powerful social platform, where much of the focus is placed on health. It is a medium on which healthy recipes are readily available, and can also be interpreted as being a social networking site, easily navigable in relation to being inspired towards adopting a healthy lifestyle. This interpretation is supported by the informants' explanation and attitude in relation to their opinions about Instagram being "the place to be" if you have an interest in health, due to the fact that health accounts for much of the content on the site.

LCHF is a lifestyle and has a major importance in the informants' lives, which is interpreted from the explanation about the informants' explained that they will not do without LCHF in their lives. This can be interpreted as the informants, to one degree or another, have become a bit dependent on the health trend and that they use it as a form of bolster or support within their daily lives in pursuit of a healthy balance. If LCHF was removed from the informants' lives, it could create uncertainty, insecurity, loss, fear etc. This can also point in the direction of health possibly being psychologically affected as the informants judge themselves based on the ideals behind the trend. It can also be interpreted that health may be seen as a form of religion because the informants state that LCHF acts as a form of bolster or support within their daily lives, which indicates that the health trend holds great meaning for them. In addition to the informants' explanations about that they will not do without LCHF may raise the question about whether health trends, e.g. LCHF, can be seen as a possession. The way the LCHF trend has been described by the informants can point in direction of the trend being a possession that influences the social construction of one's identity.

The informants indicate that Instagram plays a significant role in relation to their healthy lifestyle and that their presence on the site is important for them. The way Instagram has been described by the informants can point in direction of Instagram also being a possession that influences the social construction of one's identity. The informants are using their profiles on Instagram to inspire and motivate others, but they also claim that they use it as a platform to inspire and motivate themselves. The informants explain the concept of 'likes' on Instagram and explain indirectly that the 'likes' that they receive on their LCHF images are important to them. This could mean that Instagram as well will be difficult to do without since there through the presence on Instagram, and through 'likes' from others is created a motivation that helps them to maintain their lifestyle and at

the same time the ‘likes’ from others can be interpreted as a form of recognition that might contribute to a better self-esteem and self-confidence.

The informants’ use of Instagram in relation to their healthy lifestyle can tell something about that it is not only one’s relationship to food and the fact that the informants want to have a healthy lifestyle that is important, but also that it is important to show one’s healthy lifestyle on Instagram through the images that is posted.

There are many different SNS such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. and the informants have a profile on both Facebook and Instagram. The profiles on the two SNS are used differently and for different reasons. From the informants’ explanations about their profiles and the two SNS, it can be interpreted that Facebook is a “place” where one is present to follow one’s friends, family, and colleagues’ etc. and your “friends” on Facebook, as it is referred to on this particular site, can be characterized as people you know in your “real life”.

On Instagram you communicate through images, and can be interpreted as being a superficial media compared to other media, where the text/conversation is in focus. This interpretation is also in accordance with the explanation about one’s crowd on Instagram mainly consists of people with whom you share interests, and do not know in real life. The informants’ recount that a large part of their crowd of followers consists of people they do not know, but share interests with. The fact that there is much more focus on the content, the images, on Instagram compared to the relations you have with people is accordance with the interpretation about Instagram being a superficial media. It can also be interpreted that Instagram is a media, where many types of communities are created, due to the fact that there is a tendency about people with similar interests follow each other, and this might create a sense of community - the feeling of being part of something. This feeling of being a part of a community, which Instagram creates for people with interest in e.g. health, can be compared to the sense of community religion creates for religious people. The community within a certain religion is, as it is on Instagram through health, created in relation to the content of the religion and not on the basis of the relations people have with each other. On Instagram the community is, as mentioned above, created through the similar interest in health, and not by relations.

The informants find it important to spread the message about LCHF and to spread a message that the Danes should stop being so afraid of eating fat. The informants recounts that, as previously

mentioned, people are ignorant about LCHF and have a belief about fat being dangerous and fat being guilty of making people obese, which may have a connection to the message spread in the 80s and 90s by the media about fat being something that should be reduced as much as possible. Back then you avoided any butter on the bread and only put cream in the sauce for the holidays. This thought about "the fat" still looks like it is a thought some Danes still have, and can be interpreted as being the reason for people's ignorance of LCHF. The informants recounts, some directly and others indirectly, that the reason why they want to spread the message to others is to inform others, which I interpret critically and believes that it could point in direction of some personal accomplishments behind the desire of spreading the message about LCHF through their images. The feeling of being a role model and to show others that you have control over your lifestyle and live by a lifestyle that should be considered as the best one might be some of the accomplishments that can be achieved. Furthermore, a feeling of helping others can also be a reason for wanting to spread the message about LCHF, and might be interpreted as having a positive effect on self-esteem.

There is a tendency about posting images on Instagram, which are rose-tinted and approaching perfection; the informants make up a part of this trend. The informants explained that the visual aspect of an image is very important for them and through various examples state that they could not post an image of food that was not served nicely and were the image was not edited. Based on this opinion, there is one more thing that indicates that there is a difference in the way the informants live their "real life" compared to the life that their images reflect.

#### **6.1.2.1 Sub conclusion on part 2**

Before the health trend LCHF was introduced to the Danes, the Danish food culture was embossed by the image that the media had created in the late 80s / mid 90s, namely the image of fat being dangerous and that it was fat that made people obese. LCHF have changed that, and have created a more natural relationship to fat. It has also created a more natural relationship with food in general and has contributing to a better self-esteem and confidence for the informants.

All informants have struggled against the weight, which have meant that they throughout the years have tried different diets in their pursuit of lifestyle that was suitable for them. Before they started on LCHF the relationship with food have been problematic, and has been something that was consumed in the wrong way, which had a negative impact on their self-esteem and confidence. The other diets have been embossed by rules about when and what to eat, and have not worked for them



because they want to have a lifestyle that is easy and relatable and where they can maintain the feeling of having control about the food. The Danes want to live healthy, but do not want to be changed too much in their lives, which can be one of the reasons why LCHF is considered as a perfect match for them, due to it being an easy lifestyle and relatable in relation to the food they ate in the past. A part from LCHF being a lifestyle that works for them because it allows one to intake a lot of delicious food, which the Danes appreciate as they associate delicious food with quality of life. They want to live and be healthy and take good care of themselves, but at the same time they still want to eat good food and not having a feeling of being on a diet, due to it generate the feeling of being controlled and to be a subject to some rules.

The LCHF trend can to some degree be seen as a moral issue and a religion. LCHF is very meaningful for the informants. They explain, defend and live by the concept. Because of that health, e.g. the health trend LCHF, can appear as a size of almost religious character. The Danes have through years search for a healthy lifestyle that suit them and provide them with the same things as religion provides religious people with, namely support, something to believe in, hope, a feeling of community. Health trends e.g. LCHF has as religion some general guidelines that help people in relation to how they should live their lives.

Instagram plays a significant role in relation to a healthy lifestyle and the informants would unwillingly live without Instagram. If they had to live without it, it might generate uncertainty, insecurity, loss, fear etc.

The informants' use Instagram to be motivated and inspired by others having the same healthy lifestyle as them, but is also participating actively in the health "debate" on Instagram, due to all the informants post images that embrace the health trend LCHF. It is not only about having LCHF as a lifestyle, but also about showing images of one's healthy lifestyle to the people that follows you on Instagram. Instagram is a media where there is much more focus on the content rather than the relations you might have with people from the offline life. People are connected to each other based on common interests and the majority of people in one's crowd consists of people that you share interest with, but do not know in real life.

The informant use Instagram as a way to spread the message about health and the health trend LCHF, which can create some personal accomplishments such as a feeling of being a role model and a way to show others that you have control over your lifestyle and live by a lifestyle that should

be considered as the best one might be some of the accomplishments that can be achieved. Furthermore, a feeling of helping others can also be a reason for wanting to spread the message about LCHF, and might be interpreted as having a positive effect on self-esteem.

### **6.1.3 Part 3 - Theoretical understanding**

This part is seeking to gain an understanding of the empirical data based on considerations from self-awareness- and critical commonsense level and will break the empirical data further and by including theory, gain a deeper understanding.

Giddens (1999) argues that globalization contributes to increased global interconnectedness, which results in global and local actions affecting each other, which can in turn be related to the health trend LCHF. The trend started as a local trend in Sweden, and with the web's involvement has become a global trend, which a large proportion of Danes have embraced. Instagram is one of the social media platforms which have contributed massively to the trend expanding from being a local fad, to becoming recognized on a global scale.

Instagram is a result of the expansion from web 1.0 to web 2.0, and according to Richard et. al. (2011) and Cormode & Krishnamurthy (2008), the expansion has meant that the Internet is no longer a one-way communication platform where users are passive, but instead web 2.0 has opened up for social software such as the different social communication platforms like Instagram, which is characterized as being a two-way communication platform where the user have an active role in relation to communication with others, locally and globally. This way of explaining about web 2.0 and the two-way communication platform is accordance with the way the informants use Instagram. They use Instagram in many different ways amongst others to be motivated and inspired in relation to their LCHF lifestyle, to post images of their LCHF lifestyle and to communicate with people in one's community, both locally and globally.

According to Castells (2003) the internet has become the late-modern society's new communications medium and explains that the internet creates selective forms of social relationships. His way of looking at the web's contribution, creating selective forms of social relationships, is consistent with the fact that a large part of the informants' network on Instagram exist of people they do not know from the "real world", which indicate that Instagram is not, as Facebook, a media where you create relationships based on relations you have with others, but selectively choose to build relationships with people who share the same interests as you. Furthermore Instagram can be considered as being asymmetric in relation to the fact that a person

can follow another without this person is forced to follow back, which gives a freedom to be selective in terms of who you want in your network on Instagram.

When the internet got its breakthrough it was with the promise of creating new forms of communication, and these new forms of communication should link individuals' closer together, particularly people with common interests (Castells, 2003). This is exactly what Instagram, as a result of the internet, does for the informants. Instagram provides them with a "place" where they can cultivate their interest in LCHF as a lifestyle and create new relationships with people sharing the same interest as them, and through this similar interest become a part of a community. According to Castells (2003) community can be seen as networks of interpersonal ties that help to produce socialization, support, information, membership and social identity. This is achieved, amongst other things, on Instagram, when looking at which persons the informants follows on Instagram. They tend to follow people that have LCHF as a lifestyle, because they explain that they become inspired and more motivated by seeing them. One can assume that people in their network can influence their identity, because they tend to mirror the actions and images of people from within the community.

Instagram is a SNS where the focus is on the visual communication. Users have the ability to post all sorts of images and through their images create a story. The various SNS' are used, according to Hu et al. (2004) differently, and on Instagram users have the option to use hashtags to describe their images, and also to search for interesting images/profiles, which the informants claim that they do, and that hashtags helps them much in relation to navigate on Instagram and hence become inspired and motivated by others and through their own images that they post on their profile inspire and motivate others. The informants confirm that they use their profile on Facebook and on Instagram differently, and state that they are present on Facebook to maintain their relationship with people that they know from the real life, and argues that their crowd on Facebook mainly is people they have a relation with such as colleagues', acquaintances, friends, families etc. Instagram, on the other hand, is a "place" where one's interests are the main focus. This is the reason for which one's followers tend to consist of people that you do not know in real life, but share interests with.

The informants perceive LCHF as a lifestyle and argue that it is a lifestyle because it is something that they have incorporated into their lives, which can be seen as being linked to Giddens way of defining a lifestyle, which is an integrated set of practicing, and argues that it gives a material form

to a specific story about self-identity (Giddens, 1991). The informants' lifestyle with LCHF becomes the form to a specific story about themselves, and this narrative influences the identity.

Based on the information that emerged during the interviews there seem to be some common narratives amongst the informants. One of the common narratives is that the informants have throughout their lives been struggling with their weight and that food has become more and more problematic for them. All the informants, except one, have the majority of their life been overweight and have struggled to create a natural relationship with food that should contribute to a weight loss. One informant has for many years struggled with an eating disorder, which has also meant that she has spent much time on finding a lifestyle that provided her with control over the food and made her put on weight, and a lifestyle that could manage to keep her weight stable. All of the informants have dedicated their lifestyle to LCHF, and use their lifestyle as part of the storytelling on Instagram. In addition to the common narrative about the informants all have struggled with weight, there is also a common narrative about using LCHF as a way to tell others about who you are. The informants post lots of images of LCHF food, which can be seen as a way of creating a story about oneself, which can be seen as a foundation for their identity (Giddens, 1991) (Giddens, 1999). The fact that they continuing to post images of their lifestyle can be seen in relation to Giddens way of defining identity as he argues that identity is not a constant entity but should be considered as being a process (Giddens, 1999). Giddens (1999) sees the individual's self-identity as a reflexive project, an effort we are constantly working on and reflect on. We create and revise a set of narrative biography - stories about who we are and how we have become who we are, which is what the informants do when they post images of LCHF food on their Instagram profile – they create and revise a set of narrative biographies (Giddens, 1991). The informants have chosen an active choice about creating a profile on Instagram and posting images of their lifestyle and through that create narratives that become a part of their social construction of identity. Giddens do not only look at identity as narratives, but also state that identity construction should not be seen as an individual project, but a part of a social development, where social relations and structures are formed and developed in cooperation with other people and the existing society. This way of looking at identity, something that is constructed in cooperation with other people, is in accordance with the informants post images on their Instagram profile that create narratives which the informants' followers then comment on (via text or equivalent). Thus, their narratives are constructed in cooperation with their followers.

The informants explain during the interviews that they feel their images reflect their "real life", but in other parts of the discussion some of their accounts can point in the direction that this is not always the case. There are numerous points made that indicate that there might be differences in the way the informants act, according to what the images tell, and the role that they assume, when posting on and using Instagram (front stage) compared to when they are not online (backstage) (Goffman, 1959). The informants explain that they sometimes eat food that is not included in the LCHF concept, and when they do that they choose deliberately not to share it with their followers. This way of acting, can be viewed as "impression management", which is about how we present ourselves towards others, and is about that we as individuals makes some conscious decisions about what certain aspects we will reveal and what we will conceal (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, the informants also claim that they spend much more time decorating a plate when they have intention about posting an image of it, compared to the time spends when no one else sees the plate. This can likewise be seen as a conscious decision about showing others a certain picture of whom they are, and through these certain images create a situational identity, which in this case is an identity related to health (Goffman, 1959).

The informants all perceive LCHF as a lifestyle and have had the trend as a lifestyle for several years, and claim that they would not do without it. Because of the way the informants explain about how it would make them feel if they has to do without it, could point in the direction that LCHF can be seen as a possession. This can be seen in relation to how Belk (1988) (James, 1890) sees possession in relation to one's identity. The things we consume or embody in our self-identity can also be places, people, body parts, pets etc., and in this thesis the thing the informants consume shall be seen as the health trend LCHF, due to the informants extend, expand or manifests their self-identity with the consumption of the health trend LCHF. According to Belk different object helps defining the self and the interviews with the informants indicate that the informants use their LCHF lifestyle as a way to define themselves. Belk (1988) claim that people with lost personal belongings feel torn out of context and often feel that some of their identity have disappeared with the lost belongings, and this could be seen in relation to the feelings that the informants claim that they would have if they had to do without LCHF. They explain that it would create uncertainty, insecurity, fear etc. The informants define themselves through their lifestyle and it helps them to create a kind of ontological security because it acts as a framework that ensures them against unpleasant destabilization of their identity. Belk (1988) believes that we are what we have, collect, drive, drink and eat, which fits well with the fact that the informants define themselves from their

lifestyle. It is not just about having a healthy lifestyle because you will be healthy, but just as much because you want to show others that you live a healthy life, which can point in the direction of Instagram also being a possession, as it can be seen as an object that is consumed by the informants in accordance to creating their identity.

### **6.1.3.1 Sub conclusion on part 3**

With theoretical inspiration from Richard et. al. (2011) and Cormode & Krishnamurthy (2008), it is possible at this level of the analysis to conclude that the informants' attitude and the way they use Instagram is consistent with the attitude about the expansion from web 1.0 to web 2.0. The informants have an active role on Instagram: sharing images, commenting, bestowing “likes”, etc. Their active roles can be seen to have an effect on Instagram being perceived as a medium that contributes to the expansion of the trends, e.g. LCHF from being a local trend to become a global trend.

With theoretical inspiration from Castell (2003) it can be concluded that Instagram is a medium which creates selective relationships as informants generally specify who they want in their network in a very critical and selective manner. This leads to their network mostly consisting of people that they share interests with, often people they do not know in real life.

With the theoretical understanding of the concept identity from Giddens perspective it can be concluded that the informants post images on their Instagram profile in order to create a narrative which has an influence on their identity. The informant continuously post images of their lifestyle, which can be seen as a way to produce and reproduce their personal narrative and confirms Giddens way of seeing identity, as he believes it is a process rather than a constant entity.

With theoretical inspiration from Goffman (1959) about his theory of front stage and backstage, it can be concluded that the informants behave differently depending on whether they are behind the scenes (off Instagram) or in front of the scene (on Instagram) and in this case it can be concluded that the informants make conscious choices about what things they will reveal to the audience (their followers) and what things they will conceal from them in order to create the desired identity, which amongst the informants is an identity related to health.

With theoretical inspiration from Belk (1988) and James (1890) LCHF can be seen as something that is consumed by the informants, which can point in the direction of LCHF being a possession. LCHF is an object which the informants use to help define their self-identity. This may mean that

we are what we eat, in this case LCHF food, which fits well with Belks (1988) way of defining identity in relation to consumption/possession. LCHF is not just about eating healthy because the informants want to take good care of themselves and to attain their goals, but it is also about showing others that you have a healthy lifestyle. This way of perceiving LCHF and the reason for having it as a lifestyle can point in direction that Instagram, as LCHF, can be seen as a object that influence one's identity construction because the informants consume Instagram in the construction of identity.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The thesis was set to explore how the global health wave can be understood within a Danish context. In order to create an understanding of which, the thesis has focused on the global health trend LCHF; as this trend is recognized in Denmark, one in every ten Danes currently living by the ideals of this concept. Furthermore, the thesis was set to explore how the global health wave could be seen as influencing the social construction of identity. Below is the problem formulation, which provides the framework for this thesis, highlighted;

***Based on an analysis of Danish LCHF blogs on the social network site Instagram, this thesis will examine how the global health wave can be understood in a Danish context, and in what way it can be seen as affecting the social construction of identity among Danes?***

The thesis is a qualitative study, meaning that the answer to the problem formulation is based on an analysis of the empirical data. The data has emerged from a semi-structured qualitative interview with nine informants who all have LCHF as a lifestyle and have Instagram profiles that reflect this.

LCHF started as a local trend in Sweden, and with the web's involvement it has spread to other parts of the world, hence earning it the label of a global health trend. The Danes were introduced to LCHF in the early 00s, a time during which a large proportion of Danes embraced and incorporated the trend into their life. LCHF has changed the informants' perception of health as the LCHF principles have rebelled against the old rules and beliefs about fat being dangerous and fat being guilty of making people obese.

LCHF has influenced the informants' perception of health, and has resulted in a more natural and positive view on health. In addition, it has created a better relationship with food because the informants are allowed to eat "good" food, which they appreciate as they associate good food with a good quality of life.

The images of LCHF concept can be seen as a way of telling a personal narrative. The informants are using their LCHF lifestyle to define themselves, to tell others who they are, and who they certainly are not. Images of LCHF food are posted regularly, hence it can be concluded that identity construction is an "on-going" process, which is confirmed by Giddens (1991; 1999). He sees self-identity as something that must constantly be produced and reproduced, which happens as part of the individual's reflexive routines and activities. These routines and activities can be seen as the continuous post of LCHF food on the informants' profiles. The images create and reverse a set of narrative biographies (Giddens, 1991; 1999).



LCHF is about more than a healthy lifestyle, but also about being able to show one's healthy lifestyle to others. Health has changed status and the pursuit for a healthy lifestyle has become more dominant, and can be seen in the many various diets that the Danes have been introduced to over the last decade. One's lifestyle is associated with the kind of person one is, and by having a healthy style of living one is deemed as being more successful, wiser, a better person etc.

Health has become a way of defining oneself as well as something to judge others on the basis of. Health can be perceived as a moral issue, and as something that may appear as having the size of almost religious character, as one's healthy lifestyle provides guidance for how one should live one's life. The LCHF lifestyle contributes with a sense of community. Instagram is greatly helping to form these communities, as Instagram is characterized as being a SNS where the focus is on the content, common interest, rather than relationships. There is a tendency on Instagram to follow people that you share interests with; which in turn creates communities of people with similar interests.

Goffman (1959) considers identity as a social construction, and argues that the individual appears to others with a social mask, which is carrying the individual's identity construction. He emphasizes the concepts of front stage and backstage, and argues that the individual assumes different roles on front stage and backstage. This can be confirmed with regards to the informants, who make conscious choices about which images they want to post on their profiles and which things they wish to conceal from their followers. It can therefore be concluded that there is a difference between the way the informants behave "outside" of Instagram (back stage) and the behavior that their images portray on Instagram (front stage) (Goffman, 1959). The informants' images of LCHF food can be seen as signals that are sent to their followers, describing how they feel about the situation and their own participation in it. The images that the informants post help to create a situation specific identity, which in this case is related to health.

Health can be seen as something the informants consume, and as being a possession which is helping the social construction of identity amongst the Danish informants. This is confirmed by the way Belk (1988) perceives identity; namely that we are what we have, collect, drive, drink and eat. If the informants had to live without LCHF, it would generate uncertainty, insecurity, fear, etc., which can also confirm that LCHF can be seen as a form of possession for the informants.

It can therefore be concluded that the global health trend LCHF has affected the Danes health perceptions, and has resulted in a more natural and positive relationship with food. The images that are posted on the informants' Instagram profiles serve as narratives that impact their social construction of their identity.

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