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How does imagery matter for activists dissemination of their ideas and political mobilization?

A case study of the exposure of the fur industry in Norway

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change
the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead



Photo: Nettverk for dyrs frihet

Abstract

Imagery can be a powerful tool to raise awareness in a society, with research showing that imagery can realize both social and political change. Media plays an important role by setting the agenda of what is important, and the media can therefore have a significant role for activists when disseminating their images. This study aims to determine and analyse the effect imagery can have on a society by examining a case study of the exposure of the fur industry in Norway. Building on existing theories on the potential of images to impact society and policies, this study aims to answer the research question “What was the effect and outcome of publicizing images from fur farms in Norway?” To answer this question, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five informants, as well as a media research and a document analysis.

The activists images of suffering animals on Norwegian fur farms led to a political and public debate about the fur industry. During the years in which the activists images were disseminated by the media, political parties and professional bodies to take a stand against the fur industry and worked towards a ban. In addition, the public's engagement against the fur industry increased. Eventually, the majority of the Norwegian public across the political spectrum favoured a ban. Based on the findings in this study, one can conclude that imagery and collaborating with the media to disseminate the images is effective for activists to use to elevate their cause to the agenda and to spur a social and political debate that potentially can lead to a policy change.

Keywords: Imagery, impact of imagery, activism, social change, political change, medias impact, the fur industry

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List of abbreviations

NDF: Nettverk for dyrs frihet

DN: Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge

DVA: Dyrevernalliansen

Ap: The Labour Party

R: The Socialist Red Party

Krf: The Christian Democratic Party

H: The Conservative Party

Mdg: The Green Party

Sp: The Centre Party

NFSA: Norwegian Food Safety Authority

NPA: The Norwegian fur team

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1 Introduction

This thesis aims to determine how imagery can impact society by examining the case of the exposure of the fur industry in Norway, over a period of four years, from 2008–2012. The literature shows that documenting injustice and suffering through imagery can be an effective tool to elicit empathy and political responsiveness (Martinez and Renteln 2015, p. 6). The activists in this study were frustrated by not getting results for their efforts to raise awareness about the suffering endured by fur animals in the industry. They therefore implemented a new strategy using imagery to raise awareness and elevate their cause to the public and political agenda. Through imagery, the activists inspected and documented gross misconduct according to the terms of the Animal Welfare Act on every inspection round they conducted during these years at Norwegian fur farms. The animal protection activists collaborated with various media outlets to disseminate their images as widely as possible to the Norwegian public. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972, p. 90), the media's daily selection and portrayal of the news shapes our worldviews and focuses our attention and influences our views about the important topics of the day. Through the media, the public and politicians receive subtle, yet powerful messages about what is significant in the vast realm of public affairs. The media sets the agenda and is therefore an important part of disseminating imagery.

Building on this knowledge, this study aims to explore the case study of the exposure of the fur industry in Norway to gain an in-depth understanding of why and how the activists implemented their new strategy and what effects these images had on Norwegian society. Before the activists implemented imagery from the fur farms, the fur issue was rarely part of the political or public debate; this changed after the images were released.

1.1 Problem statement and topic justification

Imagery can play a central role in society, informing citizens about important political and societal issues. Imagery can be used to stir emotions, inform, raise awareness about suffering, and convey ideas about problematic issues in society, all with the objective of moving people to action. There are many examples of powerful and iconic images that

have led to significant changes in society. Nevertheless, little work has explored activist subjective experiences of using imagery, particularly with respect to why and how they use this as a strategy and how they experience the effects of using imagery.

Using the case study of the exposure of the fur industry in Norway, this project aims to better understand how imagery can be used as a strategy by activists to get their cause on the agenda, and what the public and political effects of using images can be.

Qualitative methods are used to gain in-depth insight into the motivations and perceptions of activists using imagery to raise awareness about their cause and the effects of using this strategy. This data is contextualized with a review of literature on imagery, media research on the effects the activists images had on the public and political debate in Norway, and a document analysis to research the activists findings from their four issued reports. This can help develop a more robust theory of imagery and how images can impact a society and potentially lead to change policy.

I wanted to research something that interested me, and I always knew that it would be something relating to animal protection. According to Bryman (2016, p. 469), it is necessary to consider what about this subject is puzzling to me. Before the activists started to systematically document the conditions of the animals in fur farms in Norway through imagery, little attention was paid to the industry and the fur animals. There were rarely any public or political debates about the issue. However, the cause gained increasing attention as people and politicians increasingly began to take a stand against fur farming. In a 2010 survey, 62% of respondents said that they were against keeping foxes and mink in cages to produce fur. Only 15% were in favor of fur farming (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge og Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2020). So, what changed? A new strategy of systematic documentation through providing imagery of fur farms in Norway was implemented to raise awareness and spark a political debate about fur farming in Norway. When the suffering that the animals endure in the farms went public, it had an impact on the Norwegian public and caused a public and political debate. This leads to the puzzle: If the content of the activists messages was the same, then how and why did the use of imagery create such a transformation in the awareness and attitudes of the general public? This raises an even larger and more general question: How does imagery matter for activists dissemination of their ideas and political mobilization?

I had to narrow my focus down, and I wanted to move from a general research area to a specific research question that was clear and researchable and, following (Bryman, 2016, p. 83), had some connections with established theory and research. In addition, the research question should at the very least enable the possibility of making an original contribution, however small, to the topic. According to Bryman (2016, p. 470), I should ask myself the question, ‘what do I need to know in order to answer my research questions?’ In my thesis, I wanted to research how the activists ‘experienced the effects of using images from fur farms to raise awareness about the industry, and how the images and their media strategy mobilized the public and the politicians and spurred social and political change. To understand this, I needed to research what the level of awareness and engagement among the public and the political situation with respect to the fur industry were before the images went public, how the activists implemented imagery as a strategy, and what the effects and outcomes of the images were. Based on this I have formulated the following research question:

What was the effect and outcome of activists decision to publicize images from Norwegian fur farms?

By answering this question, I aim to understand the impact that the images from the activists had on the public and the political debate regarding the fur industry in Norway. The strategy I adopt is one which takes advantage of a natural experiment, wherein I: (1) examine the strategies and consequences of activists strategies *before* the use of imagery; (2) explain the motivation behind and implementation of the *treatment* (the employment of strategy); examine the *effect* of the treatment upon activists success in “getting the message out”.

1.2 Thesis structure

This chapter has outlined the problem statement and the justification of my thesis topic, as well as providing a brief introduction. The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows; The next chapter presents the theoretical framework of this thesis. In order to answer the research question, special attention is given to the theory of how imagery affects the viewer, the potential of imagery to realize social and political change, and

finally the media's role and importance in imagery dissemination. Chapter 3 discusses and reflects on the methodological framework of this study. The main focus in regard to methodology is placed on the data collection strategy, ethical considerations, and interpretive phenomenological analysis as the approach taken in this thesis. I also provide insight into the specific case study examined in this thesis. In chapter 4, I present the data and discusses and analyses the findings in three sections. The first section examines the awareness and public and political engagement before the images from the activist were published. The second section considers why and how the activists implemented their strategy. The third section looks at what the effects and outcome of the imagery from the activists were. Chapter 5 offers a discussion and concluding remarks of the findings.

2 The impact of imagery: Theoretical framework

In this case study, activists used imagery to expose the animal welfare problems in the fur industry in Norway. This chapter aims to introduce the theory and the literature used within the context of thesis. Martinez and Renteln (2015, p. 7) argue that imagery convey great meaning. They can be used as evidence, to stir emotions, and to incite social, political, and cultural change. Theory about imagery are utilized as it constitute the nature of how the activists worked to raise awareness about the suffering of fur animals as well as the fact that it is relevant to addressing the thesis's research questions and larger understanding in relation to how imagery can lead to political and social change, Thus, it is important to comprehend and get familiar with the theory before getting to the case study. This chapter is going through the theories and literatures which are useful for the study analysis to answer the research question and will present a conceptual framework of imagery. In order to highlight the informants' views and explain how imagery can be a powerful tool for activists dissemination of their ideas and political mobilization, this chapter starts with discussing of the emotional impact of images. It further discusses how imagery can have a social and political impact on society, and the medias role in disseminating imagery.

2.1 How imagery affects the viewer

Imagery can impact people in different ways, raise awareness and can spur political and social change. This section will focus on how imagery impact the viewer emotionally and human behaviour. In the context of this study, the public and the politicians reacted strongly to the images of the suffering fur animals and lead many to take a stand against fur and demanding the industry to be banned. I considered it relevant for this thesis to research how imagery can affect the viewer and lead to behavioural change. Therefore, this section will describe how imagery can impact peoples emotion and behaviour.

Imagery have several qualities that help communicate meaning (O'neill, 2013, p. 11), and images act to draw in people through vivid and emotive imagery, and in doing so, they enable both cognitive and affective processing (O'neill, 2013, p. 10). Images – in moving and still form – can have powerful emotional and political effects. Conveying the meaning of political events across time and to distant viewers. Earlier literature shows images transcend linguistic and geographical barriers, and studies have shown

images are particularly powerful in activating a set of cognitive and affective responses when people evaluate social and political settings (Fahmy & Wanta, 2007, p. 17). According to Domke et al. (2002, p. 135), images role in people's processing of political and mass media messages has received relatively little attention. However, considerable bodies of scholarship in psychology and social psychology suggest that images are recognized and subsequently recalled more quickly, and for a longer period, than lexical words (Domke et al., 2002, p. 135). And research confirms that images make a greater, longer-lasting impressions than facts and figures, (Ball & Smith, 1992, referred to in Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 19). Nicholson-Cole (2005, p. 260) argue, that the symbolism of an imagery arouses emotional feelings and help generate a meaningful experience or interpretation.

The images the activists took from the farm, and which were later published in different media outlets, portrayed shocking conditions and suffering among the animals. The images showed on TV were sometimes so bad that the reports had to warn the viewers in advance that images in the news segment would be graphic and difficult to look at. In this section I will discuss how shocking images affects the viewer. Sociologist James Jasper coined the term moral shock, which is defined as when an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action, even in an absence of a network of contacts. For a moral shock to lead to protest, it must have an explicit cognitive dimension as well as moral and emotional ones (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 498). Moral emotions are based on moral intuitions and principles and involve feelings of approval and disapproval, but also the satisfactions we feel when we do the right (or wrong) thing, and when we feel the right (or wrong) thing, such as compassion for the unfortunate or anger over injustice (Jasper, 2011). According to Jasper and Nelkin (2007 p. 227), animal protection activist most powerful tool is shocking visual images. In igniting and then building on moral outrage, animal protection activists can act as moral entrepreneur. They appeal to widespread beliefs about the similarities between humans and animals. The activist uses shocking images of standard practices that violate deeply held sentiments about decency and justice, to raise awareness and get people involved in their cause. Most moral shocks try to shock viewers into thinking about how animals are treated, and to make people think about their own actions and contribution to animal cruelty. Thus, the activist force us to think of animals as living beings and not as mere commodities (Jasper & Nelkin, 2007 p.

227). In relation to this research, the activists images of suffering and terrible living conditions for the animals on the fur farms shock the Norwegian people. The activists goal was to create a public and political debate, and ultimately that the industry were to be banned. Moreover, activists try to recruit people by creating a moral shock, with information or events suggesting to the public that the world is not as they had assumed. Their visceral apprehension sometimes leads to political action as a form of amends. Moral shocks have helped recruit people to several different movements, such as: the animal protection movement, the movement for peace in Central America, abolitionism, antiracist movements, and the famous *Madres* in Argentina (Jasper, 2011).

However, what motivates other, might irritate another. According Mika (2006) referred to in Jasper (2011), the powerful rhetoric and imagery that could shock some individuals into action is likely to put off or even annoy most people. The effectiveness of moral shocks and subsequent emotional reactions has been questioned. Decoux (2009) referred to in Wrenn (2013, p. 379), argues that to recruit members it is important to effectively utilize descriptions of suffering. And according to Wrenn (2013, p. 379), a review of literature surrounding the use of moral shocks in social movements, suggest that the exploitation of emotional reactions to portrayals of suffering can sometimes prove valuable to recruiting people to their cause. However, successful use of moral shock is contextually rooted in preexisting frameworks, ideology, and identity. Thus, the links between images and emotions are complex. And according to Schneider and Nocke (2014, p. 13). there are two rather opposing scholarly take on the subject. The first is in in social phycology, were there is an extensive literature that discusses the so-called “identifiable victim effect.” The literature shows that close-up portraits of victims are the type of images most likely to evoke compassion in the audiences. The second take is compassion fatigue (Schneider & Nocke, 2014, p. 13). They argue that showing images of suffering can lead viewers to end up rejecting images of suffering because the suffering is too much to bear. So, what the activist are set out to do - elicit change and make people take action – can lead to the opposite, resignation. Susan Sontag cited in Martinez & Renteln (2015, p. 22), argue that imagery of suffering makes us voyeur, and not activists. She argues that social action is not incited by watching others in pain, rather, these images lead to feelings of guilt, disgust, angst, and anger. She further notes that millions of images of suffering, such as images of war crime, torture, abuse, genocide, and others, still persist in our

modern world. These images have not led to change, and that humans capacity for causing suffering and pain to others has only increased as time marched on (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 22). According to Campbell (2012, p. 24), proponents of the idea of compassion fatigue in relations to imagery, built their arguments with little evidence. He argues that the existing evidence show that far from diminishing compassion, the public at large still gives generously to charitable appeals using familiar and recurring imagery to prompt a response to international events. The compassion fatigue thesis only encourages resignation, and plays into the hands of the powerful who seek to maintain their status and control over society (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 236).

The imagery in this research led many people to take a stand against and protest against the fur industry in various ways. This section will discuss how imagery can lead people to political action. Imagery can shockingly remind us of the lived reality behind different abstractions. Images serve as “an eye we cannot shut” (John Berger, 1991 cited in Bleiker, 2018, p. 12), and are central to the politics of our time, with the power to stimulate emotions and elicit engagement. Images tap into a fundamental element of human reasoning. They have a resonant power to stir strong emotions – of fear, dislike, love, hate, and everything in between. And contrary to the traditional view that emotions are an impediment to rationality, research suggest that emotion can serve as a potentially powerful vehicle for motivating political engagement among the public (Pagano & Huo, 2007). According to Bleiker (2018, p. 12), images seem to express the pain and distress of victims better than words do. In the context of war imagery: “the abundance of refugee images does not just tell us that there are millions displaced. They tell us how we should feel” (O’neill, 2013, p. 11). Images can be particularly potent when they not only portray, but instruct us about social norms – when they shape attitudes and behaviour on everything from the role of women to ideas about nationhood (Lilleker et al., 2019). Images are central to how the viewer worldwide perceive, understand and respond to different issues. However, even with the pervasive use of emotionally laden imagery to influence and spur citizens to political action, we still know little about whether and how such emotional images work (Huddy & Gunthorsdottir, 2000, p. 745). Nevertheless, imagery used in order to raise awareness is common. A study on the use of imagery for climate change engagement, show that the experiential system is engaged when using imagery, and that this is playing a role in influencing the emotions we feel about a specific cause, for example climate

change. Arresting, startling, attention-getting, amazing, uplifting, upsetting and even shocking images have potential to raise awareness, in addition to inspire people to explore possible actions to take in the face of climate challenges (O’neill et al., 2013). Moreover, according to Martinez and Renteln (2015, p. 23), some view images at best being powerless and at worst exploitative, while others believe images drives us to act and can help end suffering and abuse. But the truth is likely somewhere in between. Nicholson-Cole (2005, p. 260), argue that showing emotive imagery can attract people’s attention and motivate people to act. And there is evidence that images are effective tools for mobilizing people to push for social change (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 236). Images make violations real, and once we are confronted with them, there is a moral responsibility to act (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 23). However, Martinez and Renteln (2015, p. 9), argue that images must encourage people and they must be more than just showing the public something awful, or even pretty. The images need context and be accompanied with a useful course of action or discussion of how conditions might be improved. In the context of this study, the activists message and what actions were needed were clear: end the fur animals suffering - ban the fur industry.

2.2 The social and political impact of imagery

The images from the activists had a strong impact on the Norwegian society, and therefore I wanted to understand and research if and how images have impacted social and political change in societies trough history. In this section I will discuss how images can have a social and political impact on society, and I will draw upon different examples of well-known and iconic images that demonstrate how some images have spurred social and political change.

We live in a visual and cultural age - images surround everything we do. Imagery are all around us, used by corporations, governments, legal institutions, and social movement groups (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 2). Images can transcend borders, nationality, and citizenship, inspiring ideas of global community (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 23). All cultures in the world uses images in one form, and opposed to language, everyone can see and “read” images, albeit we might end up with different interpretations (Bleiker, 2018, p. 13). The omnipresence of images is political and has changed fundamentally how we live and interact in today’s world. Images tell us something about the world,

and how we understand the world. Images are witnesses of our time and of past times (Bleiker, 2018, p. 2). And they are political forces in themselves – often they shape politics as much as they portray politics. And they can be a strategic part of a war. James Der Derian cited in Bleiker (2018, p. 4), speaks of a ‘war of images,’ where images, in many ways, become weapons themselves. They can project fear, recruit soldiers, sway public opinion and guide drones and missiles. Images can also serve as direct proof of government wrongdoing and violations committed by others. This all makes imagery very valuable in political contexts (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 23). Using imagery to mobilize support and apply pressure to the state is a strategy that activist has done throughout the early history. And according to (Bogre, 2012, p. 12), an activist photographer is an engaged citizen with a camera. Attentive of when fairness and equality are being violated by the state. Rather than using the power of the camera to “punish” the crime, an activist photographer captures freezes and immortalizes it, so it becomes evidence of the crime - showing what that has to be corrected. Martinez and Renteln (2015, p. 6) argue, that documenting injustice and suffering through imagery can be an effective tool to elicit empathy and political responsiveness. Imagery has been used in all parts of society to raise awareness on important issues, from femicide, to apartheid and in recent year, the animal protection movement and climate change. The images used by activist are to stir emotions, to inform, to raise awareness with complex or distant suffering and to convey ideas about issues that can be hard to grasp without being seen personally. The goal is to move people to action, either to boycott, sit-in, donate, join a group, send letters, vote, demonstrate, etc. (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 6). Imagery play an important role in exposing gross misconduct, but it is what happens after the images is ‘shown’ that’s critical - the goal ultimately is trying to change people, and to accomplish that it’s important to organize and build the community (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 237). Thus, imagery should not be used as a “gotcha” tool, but as part of a bigger strategy intended to create the potential for change (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 238).

It is not an easy task to prove that a particular image has led to a particular political event, because it’s challenging to prove a clear, direct and causal link between any two things. And especially between complex things and multifaceted as imagery and social and political change. Images tap into attitudes, but not always in the same way for every viewer (Lilleker et al., 2019). Individuals interpret and respond to images in different

ways. Based on our identities, personal-political orientations and past personal experiences, people have a widely diverse tolerance for depictions of graphic violence and can feel various levels and types of emotions in response to what an imagery depicts. An image may drive one person to direct action, another to vote differently and another to do nothing at all (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 228). Bleiker (2018, p. 22) also argue that it's not easy understanding the impact of a precise images. They work in complex ways, crisscrossing a range of geographical and temporal boundaries, and because of new technologies there is also a fast pasting flow of images. There's is little work done to make us understand which, why, and how certain images may inspire and lead to change. While sometimes images are anecdotally associated with changes in public opinion, policy, and history. Other times, it leads to no justice or social change, despite an image's apparent resonance or renown (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 13). While there are passing reference to image impact, political significance, popularity, or self-conscious adoption of particular images by social movements, most scholars do not directly pursue such matters, or what they may mean for broader politics.

However, we do not need to look for exceptional circumstances to find images having political power. In this section I will illustrate with examples of how an image can lead to social and political changes. There are several examples of imagery leading to powerful impact and opinion-shaping and were images had a direct political impact. For instance, Martinez and Renteln (2015, p. 209), examined three cases of police brutality were images are credited with driving the social changes and policy reforms that came to the victim's respective countries; Hector Pieterse of South Africa, Stephen Lawrence of England, and Rodney King of the United States. The images of the brutality they endured raised awareness from both local and international level, it launched social movements and led to gradual changes and improvements regarding the scourge of police violence. The images led to an outrage in the population and lead people to join social movements and support in changing the ways of their police forces. The images and stories behind them, were brutal, but also empowering in that it gave people the power to create change (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 228). Another example is with the refugee crisis in 2015, were the image of three-year-old Syrian refugee, Alan Kudi, lying dead with his face down on a Turkey beach. Immediately, the image of Alan circulated around the world, reaching 20 million screens in 12 hours. People reacted with an unusual amount of empathy. And suddenly the public's attitude

towards refugees changed across Europe, especially in Germany. Were a culture of welcoming refugees emerged. There were images of refugees arriving in Munich being cheered and welcomed by the German People (Bleiker, 2018, p. 23). According to Bleiker (2018, p. 23), the image of Alan Kudi change both public attitudes and policies. The shift correlated with the image going viral. An empirical study show that there was an immense spike in the discussion of the crisis in social media, and that the more positive word 'refugee' increased far more than the more pejorative term 'migrant' (Vis and Goriunova, 2015 cited in Bleiker, 2018, p. 23). A more progressive policy towards refugees were implemented in Germany. This illustrate the power images have to shape political and public debate and policy directly. However, it's rare that images directly cause political events. In most cases the impact of image is more diffuse, and it would be difficult to measure with cause-effect-models. Bleiker (2018, p. 23) argue that causality is not the right concept to understand the impact of images, but one should rather speak of 'discursive casualty' or 'discursive agency.' Because this would hold the notion of impact, but acknowledge that images across time and space work gradually. Images slowly challenge how we view, think of and thus also how we conduct politics.

The literature also shows that famous iconic images have been influential in driving public opinion formation. Iconic images is defined as widely distributed and known images that represent "historically significant events, activate strong emotional identification or response, and are reproduce across a range of media, genres or topics" (Bogre, 2012, p. 10). Well-known examples of iconic images are Nick Ut's Pulitzer prize winning image from 1972, of nine-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc, naked, scared and badly burned running from her village in Vietnam after it was napalmed. The images depicted the atrocities committed in wars towards innocent civilians. According to (Bleiker, 2018, p. 10) The image changed public and political perception of the war, so much that it led to further eroding of the war's legitimacy. Still, the images stand as a symbolic representation of the Vietnam war and the suffering it caused. Another well-known example of an iconic image and Pulitzer prize winning image is by Kevin Carte's image of the famine-stricken Sudan in 1993. The image portrays a starving child helplessly on the ground, with her hand sin her head, while a vulture watches over. The iconic pictures of the executed Viet Cong in Saigon, the protestor at Tiananmen Square, and imagery of the battered American pilot in Somalia are good examples of how images can trigger emotional reactions and ideological certainties (Perlmutter, 1998

referred to in Fahmy and Wanta (2007, p. 19). A more recent example is when the news industry imprinted the title of “icon” on the fall of the Saddam Hussein statue in Baghdad - making it the most celebrated and documented iconoclasm of the Iraq War (Major & Perlmutter, 2005; Fahmy, 2007). Icons can shape public opinion, because they are a part of the collective fabric through which people and society’s makes sense of themselves (Bleiker, 2018, p. 11).

These examples demonstrate that images can be powerful – they can shape public opinion and lead to policy changes. However, an image alone will neither make a dictator fall nor write a new law, but the people who see troubling images can make these critical changes (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 235). The images must inform both the casual observer and the activist, and further make suggestions about the structural, social, cultural, political, and individual problems both implied and on display. A single image generally cannot be expected to do all of this on their own (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 11). A thoughtful range of possibilities for meaningful action should be presented to the viewers, to create a space where action can be organized. Research shows that people are more likely to act if they are asked, and if they are explicitly offered concrete possibilities for action (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 12).

2.3 The role of the media

A significant part of the activists strategy was collaborating with the media. They collaborated with different media outlets, but mostly with NRK, which is the largest media organisation in Norway. The activists were dependent on the media to reach widely with their images and to get the attention of the public and the politicians. Therefore, it is relevant for this study to research how exposure in the media impact and shape political and public opinion. In this section I will discuss the media's role and importance for imagery dissemination, and how the media can shape and impact public opinion and politics.

The media’s role is to present information and alert citizens about important events. The media sets the agenda when they choose what cases and information that is important for the viewer and the reader. This may affect the way people feel and think about an issue, as well as their behaviour. The fur case became a highly political case during the years the activists documented and released imagery from the fur farms. The activists collaborated with the media, and findings from this thesis show that the media's role, and

especially NRK was important for how broad they reached with their cause and the public and political engagement it created. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972, p. 90), the medias daily selection and display of the news shape our worldviews and focus our attention and influence our views about what the important topics of the day is. Thus, the media plays a major in public life. Because the media influences individuals focus of attention and providing many of the facts and opinions that shape the perspectives on the topics of the day. In addition, the public and politicians also get subtle, yet powerful messages about what is significant in the vast of public affairs. Resulting in, over time, that those aspect of public affairs that are prominent in the press regularly become prominent among the public and politicians. This ability to focus attention on a few public issues and other aspects of public affairs, is the agenda-setting role of the media (McCombs, 2005, p. 156). McCombs and Shaw (1972, p. 89), found in their research that the media does not tell people what to think, however they tell people what to think about. Hence, the media determine which issues that will be put on the public agenda for discussion.

According to Gerber et al. (2009, p. 35), citizens learn about politics and government mainly from television and newspapers. And the different media outlets can influence voters both through the angle of a particular news case and by which stories they choose to cover. Gerber et al. (2009, p. 35), studied the effect of newspapers on political attitudes, behaviour and subject knowledge of news events. And looked at how free subscriptions to a newspaper with either liberal or conservative content impacted voters' political opinions and knowledge. The study shows that getting either paper had no effect on voters' political knowledge and attitudes regarding news events in general. But, despite of the political angel of the newspapers, it resulted in an increase in the likelihood of voting for the Democratic candidate. The effects were similar for both liberal and conservative newspapers. Their findings suggest that even short exposure to a daily newspaper appears to impact voting behaviour and may affect turnout behaviour. And that the informational effect of news exposure was stronger than the effect of the angle (Gerber et al., 2009, p. 47). Moreover, Gerber et al. (2011), studied the impact of political ads on public opinion and examined differences in randomly assigned launch dates and volume of TV advertisements, focusing on the incumbent's campaign. The results show that the maximum volume of TV ads led to an enhancement of the official's standing. However, the effects of the ads did not last longer than on week from the end of the advertising

campaign. This indicates that TV ads have strong impact on voting behaviour, however the effect is short-term.

Television is a visual medium that appeals to emotions in a powerful way. A cinematic portrayal of political issues offers the audience a visceral experience, because they combine narratives, images and sound. It offers the spectator not just an abstract depiction of politics, but a form of cinematic storytelling that allows them to identify with individuals and their circumstances. Resulting in complex and distant political issues become more accessible (Bleiker, 2018, p. 12). According to Schneider and Nocke (2014, p. 17), images that's get taken up by the media, gain collective visibility, and can imprint their gestalt onto the memory of the viewer. When images are extensively disseminated, they are indeed able to shape how the world is seen and thought about. They can become catalyst for future actions - today's images might become the blueprint for tomorrow's realities (Schneider & Nocke, 2014, p. 18). Imagery can play a central role in society, because they keep citizens informed, the authorities in check, and democracy robust and flourishing. It also gives us insight on what is going on elsewhere, and to make informed decisions about how best to support struggles for rights and freedoms where injustice is being done. The oversight function it has on everyone from police to politicians and to corporate enterprises is reason enough to lift photography from a hobby and profession to the heights it belongs (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 235). In this case study, the activists images from the fur farms in periods appeared regularly in the media, and sometimes every single day for several weeks. Current literature indicates that images which appear in the media may have an impact on public opinion, and according to Fahmy and Wanta (2007, p. 18), studies suggest images have a variety of emotional and attitudinal effects and may correlate positively with shaping public perceptions and an understanding of news events. Images are often central to commemorations, giving the viewer instantaneous visual references representing deeply rooted cultural values. And the repetition of these images in the media makes them even more powerful (Spratt, 2008, p. 97). According to Perlmutter (1998) cited in Fahmy & Wanta, (2007, p. 19) there are strong links between images in the media and public opinion. Especially during times of war images power to shape public opinion is evident. Sloan and Startt (1996) cited in Fahmy & Wanta, 2007, p. 19), argue that public opinion is a key factor in war. Shown through history, the media neutralizes opposition to bombing and amplify claims of good versus evil. Viewers of

Al-Jazeera news reported, in a recent survey, that graphic visuals are important in communicating the ugliness of war, helping those who are far removed from a conflict to understand the degree of brutality and force enacted and applied. Further, research suggests that individuals' processing of news coverage and following evaluations and judgments concerning one's social and political environments may be notably influenced by images (Domke et al., 2002, p. 135). The visual coverage of 9/11 and the Afghan War represented selections from possible solutions that have been at disposal at various stages of the news-making process, allowing newspapers to visually report news according to their understanding of the events in a politically and culturally advantageous manner (Fahmy & Wanta, 2007, p. 18). According to Fahmy and Wanta (2007, p. 21), news images of 9/11 and the Afghan War may have played an important role in public opinion formation, and influenced opinions on matters of racial and religious profiling and reinforcing negative perceptions of Islam, Arabs, and Muslims.

Scholars within media have long proclaimed that news coverage of events have a considerable impact on public opinion. However, there are different opinions about the power of images in regard to get attention and provoke persuasion. Fahmy and Wanta (2007, p. 18), states that in current literature there are few scholars that present the conception that public response to images is much more complex than a linear relationship. Domke et al., (2002) referred to in Fahmy & Wanta (2007, p. 17), suggest that the notion that images drive public opinion is too simplistic. It's a common assumption of political theorists, elites and news pundits that vivid, striking images have a profound impact on public opinion and in turn, on people's political behaviour. Domke et al. (2002, p. 131), argue that claims done by political and news elites about the 'power' of images are far more common than actual evidence of such effects. And that the common perception that graphic and evocative images often drive public opinion is too simplistic. Imagery most often interact with individuals' existing understandings of the world to shape information processing and judgments. According to Domke et al. (2002, p. 131), research suggest that news images influence people's information processing in ways that can be understood only by taking into account individuals' predispositions and values, and at the same time appear to have a particular ability to 'trigger' considerations that spread through one's mental framework to other evaluations. Domke et al. (2002, p. 147), further argue that the limited evidence indicates that individuals respond and react in complex ways to news images, even

extensively disseminated and discussed ‘icons of outrage.’ Images interact, as mentioned, with individuals’ predisposition, experiences and values – and that all this combined shaped information processing and judgments. Thus, individuals can be persuaded by imagery in the media, but individuals pre-existing values, cognitions and feelings often play a key role in how images are interpreted and acted upon.

Later in the thesis, I will, based upon these theories and definitions guide the interviews by these concepts and theories in order to maximise validity.

3 Methodology

3.1 Qualitative methodology

I have found that due to my research area and topic that qualitative research strategy was the most appropriate to this case study. Because I wanted to understand the worldviews of the activists and explore their thoughts and experiences on the subject of my thesis. The methods of social research are firmly tied to different views of how we should study social reality. Methods are not neutral tools, they are linked with the ways on how social scientist perceive the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined (Bryman, 2016, p 17). Bryman (2016, p. 31), argues that one of the main differences between qualitative and quantitative research is that quantitative researchers use measurements and qualitative researchers don't (Bryman 2016, p. 31). However, there are some deeper differences. Quantitative research strategy emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that entails a deductive approach to the relationships between theory and research. With norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism which embodies a view of social reality as an external and objective reality. Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data, and which priorities an inductive approach between the relationship of theory and research. The emphasis is on how individuals interpret their social world and that the view of social reality constantly shifting and created by individuals (Bryman 2016, p. 32-33). According to Bryman (2016, p. 392), an underlying premise of many qualitative researchers is that the subject of matter of the social sciences (people and their social world) differs from the subject of matter of the natural sciences (atoms, molecules etc). The social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied.

3.2 Informants

3.2.1 Description of informants

The purpose of my study is to understand how the activists used imagery to creative awareness among the public and mobilize a political debate. Hence, I selected informants purposively based on their direct reference to the research questions and goals in mind (Bryman 2016, p. 410). Thus, the informants were all animal protection

activist, either for the organisation DN or NFD, and who had key roles in regards of the inspection on fur farms and working with the media strategy. The informants are above 18 years of age. Those with whom I already knew and were a part of my network, were reached out to in person and the project information was communicated to them verbally. They then gave me suggestions to other activists that were considered relevant to interview. I contacted them via e-mail with the enclosure of project information.

I tried to reach out to informants with diverse traits in terms of age, background and gender. However, since there were not that many persons that were involved in the strategy, there were not that many informants to choose from. Therefore, consideration to diversity had to come second. It was most important for this thesis to interview informants that had key roles in the strategy. And who could give good insight in their work form, experiences and facts.

Since I knew some of the informants already, it was not so challenging to get in contact with them. I was able to recruit five informants, three male and two females. As the purpose of qualitative research is to achieve in-depth information, rather than breadth, few study participants are needed (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 17). Therefore, I considered five informants to be appropriate for this research.

Hereby are some features of the participants:

<i>Informant 1</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>39 years</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
<i>Informant 2</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>44 year</i>	<i>Freelancer</i>
<i>Informant 3</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>43 years</i>	<i>Researcher</i>
<i>Informant 4</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>44 years</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
<i>Informant 5</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>35 years</i>	<i>Student</i>

Table 1. Overview of the informants 1

3.2.2 Recruitment process

I reached out to those who I had known before, and these again gave me suggestion to other activist that were part of the inspections and the media strategy. I got to know

these activists after I became a part of the animal protection movement in Norway. I have not worked closely with them, but the community of animal protection in Norway is small, therefore I knew of them and their work. I contacted the informants either in person or via facebook or e-mail. For me it was important that the informants I interviewed was a significant part of the strategy. Therefore, to target the most relevant people, I applied the snowball sampling method, where the researcher at first samples a few informants that are relevant to the research question, and then these again propose and recommend other participants I could approach who had the experiences and characteristics relevant to the research project (Bryman, 2016, p. 415). I was recommended and got the contact information of the informants they deemed more relevant to this case study, I contacted them and asked if they were willing to participate in the research. According to Bryman (2016, p. 174), there is a risk of sampling bias due to the dependence on interpersonal networks and, consequently, the sampling can miss members of the population who are not part of the network that the researcher's main participants are familiar with. Thus, the findings will only showcase a partial picture with the characteristics of those certain networks.

3.3 Data collection methods

3.3.1 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the practice of applying several sources of data or multiple methods to analysing data to increase the internal validity of the findings and my conclusions of a research study and enhance confidence in the ensuing finding (Salkind, 2010). Therefore, to strengthen the quality of data collected and to get richer, fuller data to help confirm the results of the research, I used more than one method for gathering data. In addition to the interview I conducted an extensive media research and document analysis to discuss and analyse the effects from the activists' images.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

I have chosen this approach because I want an in-depth understanding of the informants. A semi-structured interview gives some structure to the interview but it also gives the interview a great deal of flexibility, which gives the person being interviewed room to

talk about what he or she think is important, rather than what I think is important. What I first presumed as being important before the interview can thus change, and give me and the research a greater understanding of what is being researched. Phenomenological research is concerned with the question of how people make sense of the world (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). The emphasis is on the subject's point of view and on how the informant's frames and understand issues and events - as in what the informants view as significant in explaining and understanding different patterns, forms of behaviour and events (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). The rather unstructured nature of the semi-structured interview generates an ability to provide insights into how research informants view the world. Therefore, in the context of this research, the data is collected through semi-structured interviews with activists that had key roles in the strategy using imagery.

Semi-structured interview gives the subjects a leeway in how to reply, it also prompts flexibility in the order of question during the interview, were the researcher can change direction during the interview much easily than in quantitative research, so that the subjects can talk about what they see as relevant and important (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). The method also encourages elaborations and digressions from informants for more in-depth information (Bryman, 2016, p. 466) The interview form also encourages a more conversational and two-way communication, which provides not just answers, but the reasons for the answers. This gives the interview a more natural conversation flow. It also allows informants time to open up about sensitive issues. The interviewer follows an interview guide prepared beforehand to help guide the conversation and keep the informants on topic (Keller & Conradin, 2020). The purpose of this study case about the animal protection activists is to learn about their motivations, attitudes and beliefs about how and why they used imagery to raise awareness and spark a political debate about fur farming in Norway.

The flexibility in semi-structured interview enabled me to freely adapt during the interviews and to dive deeper and get more details about subjects that emerged during the conversation with the informants. During the interviews I discover different aspects that were new, which was valuable for the analysis and relevant to answer the research questions.

3.3.3 Interview guide

The interview guide was prepared with 3 main questions regarding how the activists used imagery to raise awareness about the fur industry in Norway, to understand how awareness about fur was before they published images from the fur industry, how they implemented the strategy and what the effects from realising the images were. The interview guide was changed and improved compared to the version submitted to NSD. The English version of the interview guide is included in the Appendix. Due to the method of semi-structured interview, the order of questions during the interview were sometimes changed as the form of the semi-structured interview lead the informants to speak freely and naturally about their experiences, sometimes they answered questions during another question. And new information sometimes lead to unanticipated questions. The informants were encouraged to answers from their own experiences and told that they don't need to answer in any particular way, because there is no right or wrong answer.

Before the interview started, the activists were informed about the project, information consent and their rights as well, and the informants could ask questions if needed. The interview started with questions about face sheet information and background question about why they started as activist for animals. To get an indication of their level of their commitment about animal protection and how long they worked as activists for animals. Then the interview continued with the main questions. For example, the question 'How did you work to raise awareness about the fur industry before you started using imagery?' This question aims to explore how they worked in different ways to help the fur animals and how if and how their different strategies actually led to raising awareness. The question, 'How do you think these images and videos changed perspective in the public?' Is to discover how the informant experiences the effects of publicising their images. The interview ended with some clarifying questions, informants could add information if they weren't covered by the question. Some informants also handed over reports and books that were relevant to my research. When the data result were mostly done the informants were given the opportunity to read through the chapter to ensure that the informants were comfortable with the information they had provided to the research, and to give feedback and corrections if they wished.

3.4 Interpretative phenomenological analysis

There is little qualitative research in the field I'm researching, and I wanted to acquire an in-depth understanding of the experiences and thoughts of the activists through their own words. The empathic stance of seeking to see through the eyes of the research participants is very much in tune with interpretivism and demonstrates well the epistemological links with phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and Verstehen (Bryman, 2016, p. 349). In my research study, I choose to conduct data collection, discussion and analysis in the traditions of interpretative phenomenological analysis approach (IPA). The aim of IPA is to explore in detail how informants are making sense of their personal and social world, and to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and study the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for the subjects (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 53). IPA draws on phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography theoretical approaches to inform its distinctive epistemological framework and research methodology. And also acknowledges a debt to symbolic interactionism, concerning how meanings are constructed by people within both the social and a personal world (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 54). The phenomenological stance provides IPA with a rich source of ideas about how to examine and comprehend lived experience (Shinebourne, 2011, p. 17). Opposed to attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself, IPA attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 53).

Social researchers needs to be reflective about the implications of their methods, values and biases and decisions for the knowledge of the social world that they generate (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). During all stages of the research it's important to be aware and critical about one's own biases and presumptions. IPA is also recognises the role of the researcher in making sense of the experience of participants. Smith (2004) cited in Shinebourne (2011, p. 20), mentioned a double hermeneutics, were the informant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world, and the researcher is trying to make sense of the informant trying to make sense of their personal and social world. The researcher's understanding of informant's experience is through their accounts and through the researcher's own pre-conception. Thus, the challenge for the researcher is to critically and reflexively evaluate how these pre-understandings influence the research

(Finlay, 2008, p.17 cited in Shinebourne (2011, p. 20). Consequently, in order to get to know about the informants perceptions, experiences and their own interpretations in this case study, the IPA approach is implied in all stages of the research process. From forming the research question as well as data collection discussion and analysis.

3.5 Case study

3.5.1 A case study of the exposure of the fur industry in Norway.

According to Gerring (2004), a case study can be understood as an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units. And according to Bryman (2016, p. 61), the researcher aims to provide an in-depth examination of an object of interest, with the researcher usually aiming to reveal the unique features of the case. A common concern with case study research is the external validity or generalizability (Bryman, 2016, p. 62). Case studies have both strengths and weaknesses. One of their key strengths, according to George et al. (2005, p. 19), is conceptual validity: Case studies allow a researcher to achieve high levels of conceptual validity or to identify and measure the indicators that best represent the theoretical concepts that the research intends to measure. Another strength is how case studies examine the operation of causal mechanisms in individual cases in detail. Within a single case, we can look at a larger number of intervening variables and inductively observe any unexpected aspect of the operation of a particular causal mechanism (George et al., 2005, p. 21). One of the key weaknesses of case studies is selection bias, and the most harmful consequences arise from choosing only cases whose independent and dependent variables vary in accordance with the favoured hypothesis, while disregarding cases with broader populations (George et al., 2005, p. 24).

In the years 2008–2012 (except 2011), parts of the animal protection movement adopted new strategies. Activists from the animal protection organisation Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge (DN) and Nettverk for dyrs frihet (NDF) inspected over 200 fur farms around Norway and documented the conditions in the fur industry with images and film footage to expose the serious animal welfare problem in the industry. During this period, they inspected fur farms and systematically documented the animals' living conditions with the use of photo and video cameras from the farms. Every year, the activists documented extensive violations of the animal welfare act on the farms. Never before had so much documentation been obtained about conditions in the fur industry (Søreide,

2018). The imagery was then featured in various news broadcasts, documentaries, and debate programs and in a number of other media contexts (Ellefsen, 2013, p. 4), with the goal of creating a public and political debate and ultimately getting the industry banned, as eventually occurred.

Mahoney (2008, p. 414) argues that case-oriented researchers aim to explain particular outcomes in specific cases and try to identify the values of variables that actually caused the particular outcomes in the specific cases. This study examines what specific effect the images had on the public debate about fur in the Norwegian society. Before the images, there was rarely a public and political debate about fur, but during the years in which the activists released images, fur was became part of the public and political agenda. The images from the farms led to strong reactions from professional bodies, politicians, and the public that were not as prevalent before the images, and the fur case became part of the public and political debate and was discussed several times in the Storting. I wanted to gain concrete, contextual, in-depth knowledge and to explore the key characteristics of the effect and outcome of publicizing images from fur farms in Norway were. Therefore, a case study seemed an appropriate research design for this thesis. The strengths of using this method is that it provides an in-depth understanding of what the effects of using images can be. This research aims to explore how and why the activists used images as a strategy and to determine what the effects of using imagery were. Three types of data were collected: 1) a document analysis of the activists reports, 2) an extensive media research related to the images to determine what the effects were on the Norwegian society, and 3) interviews with the activists to determine their perceptions of the effects of using imagery to raise awareness about their cause.

3.6 Ethical considerations

3.6.1 Information letter and letter of confirmation

The guidelines of The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) are followed throughout the process of the research project. Before the fieldwork started, I had received approval and comments from the NSD. The informant's protection of their identifiable information is prioritized. And only I have access to the data which is

securely registered and stored. The information letter is given to the informants in Norwegian so that they were provided with information about ethical considerations, short description of the project purpose and information emphasising that the participation in the research project is voluntary and that they can choose to withdraw from the project at any time. The letter also includes the form of consent request. If an informant withdraws from the project, their personal data and information collected is removed.

Only relevant data was collected in the interviews to help answer the research questions. In the thesis's the interviews are presented in a way that the informants or third parties cannot be identified. And their name is replaced by a code. To distinguish between the informants and to tell the difference in the data they provide, background information such age, gender and occupation is provided in a table 1. The publication of this information and their contribution to this research is approved by the informants. At the end of the project, all the collected data and digital recordings will be deleted.

The information letter includes the preliminary project title and information about the background and the purpose of the project. The Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) at the Arctic University of Norway is mentioned as the data supervisor of the master thesis. The letter also offers information about the methodology and how the data is registered, stored and protected to guarantee confidentiality. And the estimated schedule for the project's completion – which were altered and prolonged due to COVID-19. The emphasis on their voluntary participation is also mentioned. They are informed that they can withdraw their participation whenever without providing reasons. If they withdraw all their data will be deleted. The participants have the right to proofread the data and decide if any data about themselves should be altered, deleted or further anonymized. In case the informants have any questions or concerns about the project, the contact information of researcher and the thesis supervisor is provided in the letter. Finally, the Informants are also informed that research project has been notified to NSD and that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with their privacy regulations.

4 Result and discussion of findings

This chapter consists of a synthetic presentation and analysis of the data which was collected. This is divided into three sections in order to maximize the clarity of how I systematically addressed the research question: *What was the effect and the outcome of publicizing the images from fur farms in Norway?* I call these sections “stages” of the causal process. In the first section, “stage one”, I discuss the state of affairs *before* the application of the “treatment” the use of images. The second section, “stage two”, analyses the decision of why and how the strategy of using imagery was implemented, i.e., the application of the “treatment”. In the third section, stage three, I analyse the effects and outcome of using images as a strategy, i.e the *consequences* of the treatment. Stated differently, my dependent variable is public awareness, and I examined the effect upon that variable of a change in my dependent variable, the incorporation of imagery in the strategies of activists.

4.1 Stage One: The awareness about the fur industry *before* the images

All the informants were either employees or volunteers for different animal protection organisations before they started a new form of activism using imagery to expose the living conditions of the animals in Norwegian fur farms. To understand whether and how the imagery from the activists had an impact, I researched the state of the public and political awareness and the debate about the fur industry before the imagery exposed the fur industry and how the activists worked to acquire media and political attention to their cause. The overall impression from the interviews and the media research is that there was little awareness, engagement, or debate about the fur industry in Norway prior to the images being released from 2008 to 2012. The subject was rarely discussed among the public or by politicians and was not on the public and political agenda. To determine whether there was a difference in how much the media wrote about the subject before the first images were released in 2008, I decided to search the word “pelsdyr” (fur animals) in the media archive Atekst to see if there were a difference in how many times the term “fur animals” was mentioned in the media before 2008, and through the years during which the activists released their images. In 2007, before the activists images, “fur animals” was mentioned 81 times. In the years before the word was mentioned even less. In 2008 the word “fur animals” was mentioned 135 times and in 2010 733 times, in 2012 the word was mentioned 592

times. The results show that during the years the activists' images were released, there was a significant increase in how many times the media wrote about the cause during the years the activists released the images. To see whether there was a difference in terms of public engagement before the images, I conducted online research at the National Library of Norway to search for differences in the quantity of readers' letters in different newspapers, mostly local, about the subject of fur before the images were publicized and after. When I searched the library for the terms "pelsdyr" (fur animals) and "leserinlegg" (readers' letters), a significant difference was apparent. In 2006 to 2007, there were 89 readers' letters about fur. In 2008 to 2009, there were 194. Finally, from 2010 to 2014, there were about 350 readers' letters every year. This shows that engagement among the Norwegian citizens on the subject of fur increased after the images from the activists went public.

The informants reported that most people who were aware about the conditions and the production form prior to the first images were released in 2008, were against it but that involvement was weak among most people. Moreover, while there was resistance to fur in a few political parties, there was not enough to get the majority required to enact a ban on fur. The informants said that welfare of the fur animals and the industry was not on the political agenda, was rarely in the media, and was not a big issue among the public before the activists disseminated images from the farms. This was similar for other animal welfare issues. Before they used imagery as a strategy, the informants worked in different ways to try to make their cause a political issue and to educate people about the conditions under which the animals lived and through various forms of street activism such as leafletting, demonstrations, or stunts. They eventually felt frustrated that their efforts failed to lead to any changes for the animals and started to look at other strategies to be more effective and goal-oriented in setting fur on the public and political agenda.

I aimed to study the variable before the images, and in this chapter, I have chosen not to use theory, because there is no relevant theory to explain the state of affairs prior to the images. Thus, in this section I instead explain, analyze, and describe the treatment before the images.

4.1.1 Before the images, there was little awareness about the fur industry among the public

The first pictures from the Norwegian fur farm went public during the fall of 2008.

Before the activists documentation work, little focus was placed on the fur animals, whether in the media, among the population, or on the part of politicians (Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2019). Prior to this, the informants worked in different ways to get media attention, increase the awareness among the public, and ultimately get the cause on the political agenda and achieve a ban on the industry. The informants reported that most people were not that aware of the conditions and animal welfare problems on fur farms in Norway or were active and loud about the fur animals and the industry. However, before the images, there was concern about the industry. In 1995, the first opinion poll on fur farming showed that 48.5% of respondents thought that it was “important to work against the fur industry” (NOAH - for dyres rettigheter & Animalia, 2015, p. 30). This indicates that many people, prior to the activists images, were already against the industry. Furthermore, the Council for Animal Ethics had already stated in 1994 that fur farming should be phased out (NOAH - for dyres rettigheter & Animalia, 2015, p. 30). And in 1998, DN filed a lawsuit against two random fur breeders. DN's claim was that the fur industry was in violation of the Animal Welfare Act (Ellefsen & Asbjørnsen, 2013, p. 4). Eidsivating Court of Appeals ruled that the law is based on the premise that animals will suffer because society exploits animals for economic reasons, and the court therefore concluded that the fur-animal industry is not in violation of the Animal Welfare Act. However, the judgment stated that “fur farming is contrary to the animals original and basic needs. And if only an ethical consideration was used for assessing fur farming, such activity would be difficult to accept” (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a). Thus, by the court of law, fur farming in Norway were already in 1998 considered unethical. In 2002, the program "Rikets tilstand" on TV2 showed a documentary on Norwegian fur farming. The documentary shows various problematic welfare issues with the production form. Shortly after, Hanssen goes out with the news that he is starting to work on an Animal Protection act.-In 2003, the Animal Welfare act was adopted in the Storting. Here it is stated: "If significant breeding improvements are not achieved with regard to the health of the animals over a 10-year period, the dismantle of the fur animal industry should be considered (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a).

Participant 2 elaborated on why he believes that the fur cause was not on the political or public agenda prior to the images:

“I didn't feel it was a strong commitment, at the same time I can also say that there were probably many already then who were maybe a bit sceptical. . . . As you always see in Norway, people think that it is probably terrible in China and the US and such, but in Norway it is better. . . . I should not claim that everyone thought it was okay, there was some scepticism, but not something that was lifted up as a part of the collective consciousness or of the larger narrative in public, it was not something that got special attention. . . . Most people probably didn't know how it was produced or that it was even going on in Norway”.

Similarly, informant 4 mentioned the level of awareness of the fur industry prior to the inspections:

“It wasn't a big deal, people weren't too concerned about it. It was not in the media or a political issue”.

Because the issue was not in the media and was not politically important, the public seemed to forget about the issue and failed to commit to more than simply taking a stand, either for or against the industry. Informant 1 mentioned reflected as follows:

“Those who happened to get a little into it or made up their minds about what side they belonged to, well they kind of got stuck there and then it wasn't moving further from that in the population, because it wasn't such a regular news case”.

4.1.2 Before the images, the fur industry was not an important political issue

Through the interviews, the informants mentioned that animal welfare was a topic that was rarely addressed or discussed by politicians. It is the Storting that defines, through legislation, which activities are considered harmful for animals on the basis of overall social considerations. Hence, its primarily a political question what treatment of animals are liable to accept and to what extent the purpose of an activity can legitimize the animals suffering. To understand the level of political engagement prior to the images, I researched the political parties' policies and statements on the fur industry. Some had negative stances with respect to the fur industry before the images. The red party (R) and the green) party (Mdg) were in favour of a ban early on. Following the documentary in 2000, Sv forwarded a proposal in the parliament to introduce

regulations to ensure that more of the animals' behavioural needs were met. However, the proposal was not passed (NOAH - for dyres rettigheter & Animalia, 2015, p. 30). In their political programme from 2001 to 2005, SV decided to work to end all fur production over a ten-year period, in line with other countries in Europe (Sosialistisk Venstreparti, 2001). In 2005, the left party (V) took the stance in their programme that "Animal welfare for fur animals is not satisfactory, and stated that they will dismantle the fur industry by 2012 unless the animal welfare becomes justifiable" (Venstre, 2005, p. 98). In 2009, MDG stated in their programme that they opposed fur farming and that they would work towards a total ban on breeding animals primarily or solely for their fur. (Miljøpartiet De Grønne, 2009, p. 24). Thus, some parties opposed the industry. However, the subject was not a part of the political debate prior to the images.

Informant 1 reported that there were a few political parties that were against fur farming before the images were released:

"SV were against fur from very early on. Mdg have always been against it, however they were very small. But it was SV who was one of the very first after Mdg, that took a stand. . . . But it wasn't a matter they wrote much about, but it was in their political programme".

Informant 3 mentioned that there was some discussion about fur farming before 2008. However, according to him, fur farming was not considered an important political issue:

"There were a few political discussions, and also statements from the Animal Ethics Committee ... Fur farming has been the focus for many years in the animal protection movement, however it is not seen as a very important political issue".

Informant 2 expressed how animal welfare issues were rarely on the political agenda and that this eventually changed with the fur case:

"Politics and animal welfare were not a topic discussed. . . . One of the things I feel is the big shifts with the fur case, is that it is the first animal welfare case that has ended up at a higher political level. There was no talk about animal welfare at all before that, it was not taken seriously".

4.1.3 Street activism is the main way to bring attention to their cause

Before the activists conducted the inspections and documented fur farms with imagery, they worked in different animal protection organisations, either as employees or as volunteers. To understand how they worked to get the fur case on the public and political agenda, I inquired about their strategy before using images and if their work was effective. The informants discussed the different ways they worked to get attention to their cause. While they also used to write readers' letters, their strategy tended to centre on different forms of street activism, including leafletting, demonstrations or stunts, and talking to and educating people about the industry and the fur animals' suffering. The interview indicated that the different ways of advocating for the fur animals failed to create much public, political, or media attention, and failed to make their cause part of the larger public and political debate. They tried to get as much media coverage as possible. My impression from the interviews is that their efforts to attract attention to the cause were not systematic and that there was not a specific strategy to achieve results for the fur animals. However creative the activists were in trying to achieve attention, their efforts were not effective. Their goal was to create a public and political debate about the fur industry and ultimately to realize a ban on the industry, but their efforts, did not end up at a political level – which is necessary to change policy.

Informant 1 told a story about a stunt he and another activist did to try to attract media attention to the suffering endured by fur animals which did end up in a newspaper:

“We tried in every possible creative way, a little bit like Peta style, and we collaborated with Peta and other organizations on various types of stunts. . . . I put myself in a cage of 1x1 meter cage, that I think was standard size of fox cages at that time . . . me and other activists sat in common in front of the Storting. We did that a little for the audience, but mostly because it gives a good press image”.

When asked in a follow-up question whether these efforts led to any form of results for the animals, he responded:

No. It was no political matter. So, it played a little role for the Norwegian fur animal industry. . . . It had no ripple effects for politics in Norway”.

The activists worked in different animal protection organisations, some as volunteers and others as employees. Informant 3 described how the activists worked before they began with the inspections:

“We worked more widely, many topics . . . we were not happy with that and wanted to start something different and work in a different way, work more directly with activism that we thought was effective, and avoid too much administration”.

The activists did not work in a goal-oriented, systematic, effective manner. Informant 5 mentioned how they used to work before they started using images as a strategy to attract attention to their cause:

“We used a lot of flyers, outside fur shops, or random on the street, writing reader posts, and demonstration like the NOAH’s Torchlight March. . . . However, it was not in a systematic way”

4.1.4 Frustration emerged due to the lack of results

I wanted to determine what the decisive factors were that led the activists to change their strategy. Some said during the interview that before using images, the effort of both them and animal protection organisations had little impact on the fur industry and had no political ripple effect. They eventually felt that the methods that they were using were ineffective and not leading to any changes for the animals. Accordingly, the activists reported that they had experienced a growing feeling of frustration that they were not getting anywhere with their efforts. They wanted to work in a more effective and systematic way to reach their goal to realize a ban on the industry. They wanted to attract more media attention to spur a public and political debate. The informants began to consider other strategies implemented by animal protection activists which had been successful in other countries, including using imagery to expose a husbandry industry and animal cruelty.

All the informants mentioned in a variety of ways that they felt that their approaches were ineffective and failed to lead to any results. When asked about why he wanted to document the living conditions of animals on fur farms, informant 2 reflected:

“After we tried for years with advocacy work . . . there was a frustration emerging and a realisation that we didn't move forward”.

Informant 1 mentioned that he did not want the activism to simply be about what is morally right: He wanted their efforts to lead to results for the fur animals. The activists thus began to think more about strategy and how to be effective:

“We started to think a lot more about strategy . . . And how we are reaching our goal, not just what we feel is morally right to do personally”.

Informant 5 described how using images instead of words is powerful and more effective in educating people about the production form:

“We began to realize that it is a very powerful tool compared to just writing reader posts . . . images reach people in a completely different way, instead of just using a logical explanation for why something is wrong, the images hit in a completely different way . . . It's proof, and not as easy to argue against”.

4.2 Stage Two, the Treatment: Why the strategy of imagery emerged and how the activist implemented it

To understand the impact of the activists the images on Norwegian society, it is essential to understand how they implemented the strategy of using images. In this section, I analyse and discuss the activists actions. From 2008 to 2012 (except for 2011), NDF and DN documented and revealed the conditions of over 200 Norwegian fur farms (Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2019) through videos and photos. They also made reports from their inspections describing their findings. In the inspections, the activists documented gross misconduct with respect to the Animal Welfare Act in most of the farms they inspected. As discussed above, the informants expressed frustration with not getting a result from their efforts to try to realize a ban on the fur industry. The informants wanted to achieve real changes for the fur animals, but their efforts failed to lead to major media attention or public and political debate. Thus, the activists sought other strategies to elevate an animal welfare case into the public and political sphere and were inspired by a Finnish animal protection group that had previously documented and exposed animal suffering and cruelty in the meat industry. The activists decided to document the fur industry through imagery in order to expose the conditions under which the animals live. They collaborated with TV 2 and NRK to disseminate the story to the public and to create political pressure.

Until the activists began documenting and releasing images from Norwegian farms, the industry itself had dictated the narrative on animal welfare in the farms and repeatedly said that the animals were healthy and content. For the activists, it was important to change that narrative, because they knew that it did not reflect reality. They wanted the public and politicians to see the truth, so that they could make an informed decision about the industry. Chapter 3 provides several examples of how images impact public and political opinion and cases in which images have had a direct political impact. However, these social and political changes often occur gradually. Images can spur outrage and political debate, but changing policy often takes time, especially realizing a ban on an entire industry, as the activists in this thesis aimed to do. The activists were conscious of this and were therefore goal-oriented and systematic in their approach, implementing their strategy over several years. They knew that achieving a ban would take a long time, but they also knew that it was an achievable goal, and their strategy was thus to work slowly and eventually to directly address politicians – who have the power to change the law. They wanted to create political pressure that could not be ignored, and in repeating their strategy over several years, they were able to achieve this goal: On 13 June 2019, the Storting passed a law prohibiting fur farms in Norway. It is difficult to assess whether resolution was a direct result of the activists images. The fur industry in Norway were in decline before the ban. Four out of five fur farms have been discontinued or closed down since 1999 in Norway. In the peak year 1999, there were 1287 fur farms in Norway. By the end of 2019, this figure dropped to 145 farms (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge, 2020). Also, a report from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in 2016 concluded that it is socio economically profitable to dismantle fur farming, based on the average fur price over the last 25 years (Dyrevernalliansen, 2016). However, it is reasonable to believe that the images played a key role. The examples of effects and outcomes in the next section show that the activists images created a political pressure to ban the industry.

All of the informants expressed during the interviews that the images were an effective way to depict the animal welfare problems in the fur industry. The informants expressed the importance of the media, and especially NRK, which is considered to be highly trustworthy among the citizens of Norway. As the literature shows, images in the media can shape public and political opinion and lead to political change, and the media sets the agenda for what is considered important. Their cause would probably not had such a

broad impact without the media. Therefore, the activists decision to collaborate with the media and use them as part of their strategy was an important element of them to achieve their goals of creating a public and political debate and in the end, get a ban on the industry. Moreover, I wanted to research what type of images the activists considered to be the most effective and to have created the most debate. What the activists found in the farms was shocking, even for them, and every year, they documented serious injuries and suffering among the animals. Consequently, many graphic and shocking images were handed over to media, which the media decided to release. The informants reported that the shocking images were effective and generated outrage. Furthermore, the activists tried to be creative and have different “spinoff” cases in the media to hold the momentum, and they achieved this in several creative ways, using interesting stories that became big media cases.

In this section, I discuss and analyse relevant theory alongside the data and findings. As mentioned in Chapter 3, imagery can have a powerful impact on society and citizens and lead to social and political change, and there are strong links between images in the media and public opinion (Fahmy & Wanta, 2007, p. 18). Images have a variety of emotional and attitudinal effects and may correlate positively with shaping public perception, and emotions can serve as a potentially powerful vehicle to motivate political engagement among the citizenry (Fahmy and Wanta 2007, p. 18). Showing emotive images can attract people's attention and motivate them to act (Nicholson-Cole, 2005, p. 260). Shocking images have a profound impact on people, and, as discussed in Chapter 3, images can evoke and appeal to emotion (Bleiker, 2018, p. 12). The media plays an essential role in the dissemination of images, setting the agenda for what is considered important and influencing individuals' focus of attention. It can therefore shape our worldviews and influence the public and politicians about what is significant in the vast of public affairs (McCombs, 2005, p. 156). Chapter 3 provides several examples of images having a powerful and direct political impact and shaping opinion. Often, however, these social and political impacts and changes occur gradually. Images can spur outrage and political debate, but changing policy often takes time.

4.2.1 The activists began to document conditions on fur farms through imagery

I wanted to understand whether and how the informants planned to implement their media strategy. Prior to the period 2008–2012, the systematic use of imagery to

document the conditions under which the animals lived was not the strategy used before it were employed by NFD and DN. From 2008 to 2012, the activists used photos and videos to expose the suffering that the animals endured in standard fur farms in Norway. On the inspections, the activists found gross misconduct according to the Animal Welfare Act on most of the farms they inspected. The findings from their inspection are described below. Before the activists started their documentation work in 2008, there had been little exposure of Norwegian fur farms or other areas of animal exploitation, and the subject was not part of the public and political debate. This could be because the subject was rarely in the media. As discussed in the theory chapter, the media set the agenda of what is important and influences individuals' focus of attention, thus giving the public and politicians subtle yet powerful messages about what is significant in the field of public affairs. Accordingly, what is prominent in the press becomes prominent among the public and politicians (McCombs, 2005, p. 156).

During the interviews, the informants said that to distribute the story as widely as possible, the documentation material was given to different newspapers, namely, TV 2 and NRK. I examine in more depth how the activists collaborated with the media and the effects of this in the section 6.3. In the interviews, the activists said that they had worked thoroughly with their media strategy and had met with a media strategist in the PR industry to get guidance on their strategy.

Their findings from the inspections in 2008 are depicted in a report made by the activists themselves, entitled "Skinnet bedrar" ("Appearance Deceives"). The report summarizes what the activists found when they inspected 100 fur farms across the country with photos and videos; at the time, this was 20% of the fur farms in Norway (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2008). The investigation resulted in over 10,000 photographs, dozens of hours of video footage, and detailed reports from the fur farms inspected. The activists uploaded images and videos from their inspections on their Flickr¹ account, Nettverk for dyrs frihet, which is still available. The inspection revealed shocking conditions for the animals. The evidence showed animals living in their own defecation, in too small or broken cages. Many of the animals had serious untreated injuries, including eye inflammation, gum injuries, chewed-off body parts,

¹ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dyrsfrihet/albums>

and large open wounds. A lack of protection from weather and wind were also common (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2013). Of the cages controlled for abnormal behaviour, 82% showed that all or several of the animals in one cage had sign of compulsive behaviour – which is a sign of severe stress (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2008, p. 12). Injured animals were found in just under half of the inspected farms. However, while the injuries were many and severe, the psychological problems for the caged animals appeared to be even more prevalent.

In 2009, only two months after the Minister of Agriculture stated that "Norwegian fur animals are doing well", DN and NDF conducted new, unannounced inspections at 45 of the 331 remaining fur farms. Again, injuries and suffering among fur animals were documented. Among the findings were bite wounds, killings of puppies, cannibalism, injuries, and behavioural disorders. Little had thus changed since the previous year's inspections. Their findings also showed that the severity of the situation on the farms was the same, regardless of whether the farms followed the regulations (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2013, p. 1).

In 2010, DN and NDF inspected 40 new farms, and the findings again revealed critical and unacceptable conditions. Among the findings were animals with chewed-off body parts, mothers who killed their own puppies, and compulsive behaviour (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2013, p. 1). Nothing had improved in the industry, even though politicians had demanded it and the industry had promised to “clean up”. This led to the question of whether the industry was unable to get rid of the “bad guys” or whether the industry itself was the problem. According to Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge and Nettverk for dyrs frihet (2013, p. 1), the unannounced inspections demonstrated that the violations and the injured and suffering animals were not individual cases, but were widespread and extensive on Norwegian farms.

The fur industry had been given countless chances to improve animal welfare. Nonetheless, when DN and NDF inspected farms in 2012, they found injured and suffering animals on all the 24 farms that they inspected across the country. Among the findings were animals with chewed-off bones, tails, and ears; painful bite injuries; and compulsive behaviour (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2013, p. 2).

It was important for the activists to disseminate the images from the fur farms as widely as possible to create a public debate and political pressure. Therefore, they worked thoroughly on their media strategy. In the words of Informant 5:

“We laid out quite concrete when things were going to be released, and had some follow-up stories ready and we talked to some media strategists and got some guidance, but we planned mostly our self . . . the strategy was just to get it out very wide . . . we had very clear to us what was going to be our angle. It eventually became very important to point out that it was not a case of just some individual cases, and then we had to put it in all our press releases . . . we had to be one step ahead, and tried to think what is the fur industry's next step . . . and how to accommodate it”.

Informant 1 also expounded on how they worked with the media strategies in a new and thorough manner way, conscious about what narrative they wanted to tell. For instance, it was important for them to target the industry and not the individual farmer, believing that the problem of the industry was on a systemic level. Another reason for this was that focusing on a single farmer could lead to sympathy for the farmer and to animals' situation being overlooked:

“We worked a great deal on press strategy. It was very different from how we had worked before. Now, we worked very hard to think about target audience and what story we wanted to tell and we were aware on what role we would have and how what we did affected the other actors, such as the fur industry, the farmers, parliamentary politicians and police. And we discussed a lot and received help from someone we knew in the PR industry, to test out different ideas, and became very conscious of not steering them (the farmers) into a victim position”.

Informant 3 described how the activists worked with their media strategy and highlighted the importance of following the development of their cause in the media:

“We were a core group that met all the time, and everyone followed the media . . . It has been absolutely crucial . . . it requires that you know all the details and that's the strength”.

Informant 2 reflected on how images can impact us on an emotional level and that our emotions are what motivates us to change and act. As discussed in the theory chapter, images have a variety of emotional and attitudinal effects and may correlate positively with shaping public perception (Fahmy and Wanta 2007, p. 18). In contrast to the traditional view that emotions are an impediment to rationality, findings suggest that they can serve as a potentially powerful vehicle to motivate political engagement among citizenry:

“Images have an emotional impact . . . It affects us on an emotional level and that's what strong images do . . . we're supposed to be fact driven, but this is a twisted picture of how humans work . . . there is no contradiction between acquiring knowledge and being fact-based and being more influenced by emotions, no one is driven by pure rationality, it is an illusion, the rational man . . . we must be aware that emotions affect us and that is what gives us motivation . . . it's an essential factor when changing actions and in motivating and engaging us”.

4.2.2 Changing the existing narrative through imagery

One of the main reasons the activists implemented the strategy of using imagery was that they believed it to be an effective way to let people see for themselves how the form of production in the fur industry negatively affected the animals. Rather than explaining with many facts about the suffering the animals endure in the industry, they believed that imagery would be a more effective way to depict it. Another important reason was to change the narrative that the industry had created about the welfare of animals on fur farms and thus to disseminate the true story to the public and politicians, using images that depicted a reality far from what the industry itself presented. During the interviews, the informants talked about reasons they felt it to be important to document the conditions on the farms and publicize their findings. Until the inspections, it was the industry that had “owned” the narrative on animal welfare on the fur farms. The common story from the industry was that the animals were content and thriving. It was also typical for Norwegians to perceive Norway as the country that is “best in the class” when it comes to animal welfare, and thus, the narrative from the industry was rarely challenged other than from animal protection organisations. As reflected in the theory chapter, imagery can play an important role in keeping citizens informed and can provide insight so that we can make informed decisions on how to support struggles for rights and freedoms where injustice is being done (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 235).

The activists felt that most people and politicians did not know how terrible the conditions were for the animals in Norwegian fur farms and that they had a right to know what was happening in order to make an informed decision. Thus, the images became an effective tool to open people's eyes about the animal welfare problems in the fur industry.

As reflected in the words of informant 3:

“Images can show another version of reality that has dominated, ‘the rose-red’ picture of Norwegian agriculture, that Norway is the best in the world. . . . In the long run, people see that not everything is in order and that shrugs slightly at the broader idea that Norway is the world’s best on animal welfare, we too have animal welfare problems. Breaking down this image has been an important part of it . . . and changing people’s understanding of reality”.

Without the images, the public and the politicians lacked all the information about the industry's production form was and how it affected the animals. The images were important to portray the reality of the industry, so that the public and politicians could make informed decisions about the industry. Informant 2 expounded:

“I think those pictures had a public interest, it was something the public needed to know. . . . I felt that people did not have an understanding of how fur farming operated . . . they did not know the details, they did not know the extent of the animal welfare problems that existed. It was the industry itself that defined that narrative themselves, and they had mainly done so by secretly hiding things or not showing it, and when they showed it, they presented an image that did not match the reality. . . . It is necessary, if you are going to have a debate about it, and politicians and ordinary people are going to decide on it, they need an understanding of what is actually happening and what it actually looks like. And it is the main reason to spotlight the issue, to show the reality that has not been shown in other ways”.

Showing the suffering that the animals endure in the fur farms was an important reason for informant 4 to carry out the inspection and releasing the images:

“What happens on the fur farms is so terrible that we must do what we can to stop it. . . . There are so many animals that have been hurt, both mentally and physically”.

Imagery from the animal husbandry in Norway documenting animal welfare issues was rare at the time. Informant 3 mentioned how images portraying the animal welfare issues in the industry are necessary to attract attention to the problems and to realize change for the animals:

“Images are basic, there are no images available from Norwegian agriculture, the images were from the industry themselves. It was an important and necessary documentation to achieve change and focus on the issue”.

The informants were detail oriented so that they could prove what farms they had been on and when. They also made four reports, which included, among other things, findings and images that they had documented on each inspection round. Informant 4 explained how she believes that this allowed the activists to reach a broad population: *“A lot of the preparation we had done before, I think made us reach quite far . . . we could prove where we had been and on what farms, we had inspection reports, and it was very detailed. Also, there were terrible images, for better or worse, but we had so much material and it was so bad that it could not be ignored, and people strongly reacted to them”.*

4.2.3 Using shocking images is effective

I hoped to gain an understanding of what images the informants choose to use and what type of images they perceived to be the most effective and why. As discussed earlier, the activists found shocking conditions on the fur farms that they inspected. Therefore, the images they took and publicized were often graphic and showed terrible injuries on animals living in horrific conditions. As mentioned in the theory chapter, to ignite and build on moral outrage, the most powerful tool of animal protection activists is shocking images (Jasper & Nelkin, 2007 p. 227), and according to Nicholson-Cole (2005, p. 260), showing emotive imagery is one way to attract people's attention and motivate people to act. During the interviews all the informants said that the images shocked people and led many people and politicians to take a stand against the fur industry. The images of suffering animals in fur farms impacted the public and politicians, and most people reacted strongly to them. Especially shocking images have a profound impact on people, and, as discussed in Chapter 3, images can evoke and appeal to emotion

(Bleiker, 2018, p. 12). To raise awareness, the activists used images of standard living conditions on fur farms and highlighted how the animals suffered in them. And the result was shocking for the Norwegian public, altering the strong held notion that Norway is “best in the class” when it comes to animal welfare.

However, merely showing gruesome injuries does not show all the suffering that the animals endure. For instance, an image alone cannot explain how animals that are deprived of an outlet for their natural needs are affected mentally. In the fur industry, the animals live in small cages in an impoverished environment, and whereas in nature, mink have a territory of 2.5 kilometres (NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter, 1998), in fur farming, a typical mink cage is about 1/4 square meter (Forby pels, 2020). In nature, foxes have an even larger territory than the mink and dig caves and corridors and may have yards with intricate underground systems; a common fox cage in a fur farm, by contrast, is 0.8 square meters (Forby pels, 2020). Adding this information is imperative, so that the public and politicians are aware of all the problems of the industry. The activists highlighted these issues in their reports and in different ways in the media.

Even the informants did not expect the animal welfare problems to be so widespread, and they were shocked about what they found. Informant 2 expressed how he felt about what he saw:

“It was a shock that it is so widespread, and it was a shock to me, and I realized when I saw the pictures from the first year, I got a little bit like, shit its actually this bad . . . It was absolutely horrible images and I wasn't expecting that . . . it was much worse than expected”.

As reflected in Chapter 3, activists force us to think of animals as living beings and not as mere commodities, using shocking images to try force viewers to think about how animals are treated and to make people think about their own contribution to animal cruelty (Jasper & Nelkin, 2007). Informant 5 mentioned how the graphic images from the fur farms were shocking and served as a wake-up call for many:

“A mix of showing injuries, at least in the beginning, I think it was more effective, I think everyone is surprised, shocked and horrified . . . it was a wake-up call”.

I asked informant 5 in a follow-up question if there were any farms they inspected that had acceptable conditions for the animals:

“No, [there] wasn't. Although there is a farm with not a lot of injuries . . . it was always animals with abnormal behaviour, that were terrified and apathetic and that had given up”.

Informant 4 reflected on why she considered imagery were effective and accentuated the benefits of using many images:

“Using many images is wise. It shows a whole and are more credible . . . You also have to interpret what you see yourself. It is not our [the activists] opinion, people make up their own minds. And then you have to take a stand, it can't just be dismissed”.

Informant 1 mentioned that images that had the largest effect in the media were the shocking images of injuries but that these do not highlight all the problems the animals endure:

“Eventually we realized that what ‘kicked’ in the media is seeing hurt animals, and not because it’s a bigger problem. It [the injuries] is of course terrible, but we don’t really know what’s worse for the animals. . . . However, it was the injuries people tore their hair out for, not that the cages were too small”.

So, even though shocking images can be effective, it was important for the activists to also highlight the other problems of keeping animals in cages. The fur animals live their entire lives in netting cages, with no outlet for their natural needs. This often results in compulsive behaviour among the animals, such as wandering back and forth or waving unstopably with their head and body. The monotonous existence and unpleasant life of the animals can also result in them gnawing on themselves and others or killing their own offspring (NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter, 1998). In 2008, the activists found abnormal behaviour among the animals in 80% of the cages they controlled (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2008, p. 12). Showing shocking images portrays a series of problematic issues with the industry; however, it cannot capture the entire story. Still, showing injured animals was a good entry point to highlighting other problems in the industry. Informant 3 elaborated:

“The challenge with such a shock effect and discussing injuries is, of course, to get the discourse and focus to be on the more general problems with the industry. But it is the shock effect that opens that opportunity, so one has to make sure to also focus on the other problems when that opportunity comes”.

4.2.4 The activists used creative media strategies to attract attention to their cause

The activists reported in the interviews that after years, showing the same images did not have the same effect as it had in the beginning and that it was important to vary the means with which they attracted attention to their cause. Aside from cooperating with TV 2 and NRK after each inspection they conducted, the activist creatively managed to gain attention to their cause in various other ways, emphasizing different “spinoff” cases to help hold their momentum in the media. The examples in this section illustrate how the activists thoughtful and thorough media strategy was successful in getting media to talk about their cause and making it an issue at the top political level. Moreover, the activists used the arguments from the industry against themselves and showed in different ways, illustrated in this section, that the problem of animal welfare in the industry is not just a case of a “few bad apples”. It was important for the informants that the industry did not get away with the excuse that these issues were just a problem because of a few farmers. The activists wanted to show the public and politicians that the fur industry has fundamental animal welfare problems and is itself and not compatible with good animal welfare.

Informant 1 mentioned how they worked to hold momentum in the media:

“In advance, we had tried to figure out as many spin-offs as possible. which we didn't release at the same time”.

One of the main arguments from the industry is that the problems the activists showed through imagery were the result of “a few bad apples” and not representative of the industry as a whole. The activists were prepared for this and had a strategy to counter this argument. Informant 2 explained during the interview how one of the strengths of their strategy was some of the engaging spin-of cases that made their cause a recurring news story. One such story was the imagery from the farm of the leader of Norges pelsdyrlag (NPA), the member organization for Norwegian fur farmers, Bertran Trane Skadsem. Images from Skadsem farm were effective in showing that it was not just the

case of a few bad actors not following the rules and that even industry leaders had these issues:

“It became the dominant narrative from both the Minister of Agriculture and the fur industry ... that these are just some bad guys, most farmers operate well . . . the activists had luckily thought that they will probably say this, so they inspected the farm of the leader . . . who had said earlier, ‘No, no, these are bad guys’, so when a few days later you could drop pictures on NRK Dagsrevyen and say here are the pictures from the farm of the leader who just said that only bad guys have these problems on their farm . . . then had he an explanation problem . . . it became such a dream case . . . and it became a very engaging news story and it also made these cases roll day after day . . . a big case on the daytime television one night is one thing, but making it persists was one of the strengths . . . an ongoing conflict is an interesting narrative and it did get quite a lot of attention”.

Inspecting Skadsem farm created a huge media storm in 2010, and several news media outlets ran a story about it. During the main disclosure at NRK Dagsrevyen in 2010 (More details about the disclosure will be provided in the following section), 11 days before the activists inspected Skadsem farm, Skadsem stated that he is not proud when animals suffer, but that he is sure that the Norwegian breeders care for their animals very well. He further said that it is a crusade against fur farmers, and that the activists are committing criminal acts against them, breaking in in the night with the media and scaring the animals (NRK Dagsrevyen, 2010, 01:15). NRK Dagsrevyen, showed images of injured animals taken from NDF and DN at Skadsems farm and showed a clip of Skadsem in a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Lars Peder Brekk, before images from his farm were released, saying, “those who do not run the business in an acceptable way must be eliminated” (Dagsrevyen, 2010, 01:21). The newspaper *Dagbladet* ran a story with the headline “Found injured animals at the fur leader”. The minister of Agriculture responded to *Dagbladet*, saying that he was disappointed and angry: “I have given clear instructions that the industry must clean up” (Marie Melgård & Jonas Sverrisson Rasch, 2010).

The activists noted that it was important to adopt new and different angles to hold their momentum in the news media and to attract more media attention to their cause. One of the angles the activists chose did not concern the problem of animal welfare, but other

problematic issues with the industry. The activists tipped the media about a farmer who, at the time, was the largest mink breeder in the country and had 17 workers from Poland that lived under horrible conditions. Several news media wrote about it, including *Dagbladet*, who wrote a case of social dumping and about the shocking discovery of a Polish worker under a pile of mattresses in a locked room. The publication also mentioned that the mink does not get the conditions that the legislation requires (Per Flåthe & Jonas Sverrisson Rasch, 2012). NRK Dagsrevyen (2010, 13:30), also had a story about it, showing and talking about what the inspectors from the Norwegian labour inspection authority found. The story highlighted that work environment law was systematically broken in the farm, with circumstances shocking inspectors. Øystein Hansen from LO (Norway's largest employee organization) said, "It does not get any better for the fur industry after this". NRK ended the news story by saying that the farmer was also undergoing a police investigation due to neglect of the fur animals.

Thus, highlighting and tipping off the press about other issues in the industry still returned focus to the main issue for the activists. As expressed by informant 1: *"It has nothing to do with the fur animals, but it still puts a focus on the issue"*.

Another creative angle the activists used was with the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (NFSA), the state's supervisory body of plants, fish, animals, and food, which is responsible for ensuring that mink and foxes are kept in compliance with the regulations. The NFSA conducted an inspection round on Norwegian fur farms, and on all the farms had nothing to report. Based on this, the Minister of Agriculture declared that Norwegian fur animals were doing well. However, the activists knew from experience that this was not the case and wanted to see what it looked like after the NFSA had been on inspection. The activists inspected 45 farms, and according to their own documentation, which includes 7,000 photos, they found injured animals on all the farms. The activists reported all as violations of the Animal Welfare Act. Informant 1 reflected:

"We got access to the report and everything is perfectly fine on the farm, and then we go out a week later and it is completely 'Sodom and Gomorra' . . . this is a nice dynamic, when we can take on the government regulatory authority and show that they do not manage to knock down on these things. . . . They are caught with their pants down".

4.3 Stage Three: The effect and outcome of publicizing the images

Through the images, the activists were able to lift an animal welfare case to a high political level. To understand the impact of these images, I highlight some of the most important outcomes and effects of the images during the years in which the activists documented from the fur farms in the following sections. During the interview it emerged that a political and public debate on this scale about animal welfare had never before been seen in Norway, and all political leaders during this time had an opinion about the fur industry, either for it or against it, and most eventually favoured a ban on the industry. Every political party debated fur, either for or against a ban, and the parties that had not previously voiced an opinion eventually included the subject in their political programme. The activists expressed that they wanted to start a public debate which would lead politicians to have to respond to their electors and thus pressure the politicians to act and change policy. The public's opposition to the fur industry increased during the years in which the activists released images. It is impossible to conclude with certainty that this is primarily due to the images the activists realised, but it is reasonable to conclude that the images from the activists were an important part of this increased engagement. Among other, the activists collaborated with the largest news station, mostly with NRK, who has a considerable number of daily viewers. According to the theory in Chapter 3, The media sets the agenda and choose what cases and information that is important for the viewer and the reader. This can affect the way people feel and think about an issue, as well as their behaviour. The repetition of images in the media can make imagery especially powerful (Spratt, 2008, p. 97). In particular, then, NRKs position among the Norwegian public could be an important factor in explaining the strong public opinion against the fur industry that emerged during the years the activists released images. However, as discussed in the theory chapter, an image alone rarely leads to critical change. Imagery plays an important role in exposing gross misconduct; however, it is what happens after the images are shown that is critical. In order to change people and policy, it is important to organize and build the community (Martinez & Renteln, 2015, p. 237). Several of the informants mentioned other animal protection organisations work with lobbying and mass-mobilization to

achieve a ban on the fur industry as contributing factors in creating a strong public opinion against the industry and political pressure to achieve a ban on the fur industry.

In this section, I discuss and analyse relevant theory and findings from my media research alongside the data and findings. The literature indicates that images which appear in the media can impact public opinion, shape our worldviews, and focus our attention and influence our views as to which are the important topics of the day (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 90). As discussed in the theory chapter, measuring the impact of an image is a challenge. In this study, the images impacted the Norwegian citizen and the political debate. According to Schneider and Nocke (2014, p. 17), when images are extensively disseminated, they are indeed able to shape how the world is seen and thought about. They can become catalyst for future actions (Schneider & Nocke, 2014, p. 18). However, in most cases, the impact of the image is more diffuse, and it would be difficult to measure with cause-and-effect models. Bleiker (2018, p. 23) argues that images have an impact across time and space, work gradually, and slowly challenge how we view, think of, and thus conduct politics. According to Gerber et al. (2009, p. 35), citizens learn about politics and government mainly from television and newspapers, which influence voters both through the angle of a particular news case and by which stories they choose to cover.

4.3.1 The majority of the public are against fur

The literature shows that images which appear in the media could impact public opinion, because the media's daily selection and display of the news shapes our worldviews and focuses our attention and influences our views as to which are the important topics of the day (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 90). And according to Gerber et al. (2009, p. 35), citizens learn about politics and government mainly from television and newspapers, and the different media outlets can influence voters both through the angle of a particular news case and by which stories they choose to cover. The engagement around the fur animals and the fur industry increased during the years in which the activists released images from the fur farms. In this section, I introduce several examples of the various ways in which this was evident. The fur case is a subject that has elicited outrage and recruited many supporters.

The findings from the interviews have answered the research question and accord with some of the theories and literature presented in Chapter 3. For instance, resistance to the

industry has steadily increased, within the population, among politicians, and among animal welfare professionals. One by one, the political parties have advocated a controlled phase-out of the fur industry. In line with the theory, the results of this study show that the media displaying these images over several years was an integral part of the eventual strong public opinion against the fur industry. Among other, VG sought out to understand how the voters felt about fur after the disclosures in 2010. A survey they conducted shows that voters have become more sceptical of the fur industry, with 40% saying that they were more sceptical about using fur after the disclosures and 43% believing that the fur industry should be banned (Johnsen & Hegvik, 2010). In 2010, DVA created the Facebook page “Forby pels nå” (Forbid Fur Now), and in just a few months, it became one of Norway's largest Facebook pages, with over 260,000 followers (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a). Moreover, every year since 2003, NOAH – for dyrs rettigheter (NOAH) has organized a torchlight march for fur animals. This has developed from a small demonstration to one of Europe's largest demonstrations for fur animals (NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter, 2020). When the first torchlight march was organized in 2003, around 200 people gathered in Oslo and marched to the Storting (Sissel Hoffengh, 2018). In 2011, 4,600 people gathered to demonstrate against the industry (NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter, 2011), and in 2016, this number had risen to more than 8,000 people in 26 cities (NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter, 2016). The last march, in 2018, was a victory march, demonstrating that engagement with the issue of fur animals has grown significantly since the imagery from the farms was first released 2008. In addition, the Oslo Fashion Week (OFW) in 2010 ban the use fur on their catwalk. At the same time, 220 players from the Norwegian fashion industry signed under to take a stand against fur (Tyssen, 2010).

Figure 1 below, shows the result of opinion polls conducted by DVA in 2008, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2016, which show that there has been steady growth in support against fur farming during the years in which the activists released images from the farms. From 2014 onward, a clear majority were against fur farming (Dyrevernalliansen, 2016). In the survey conducted in 2016, only 15% responded that keeping animals in cages for fur is the right thing to do. Unsurprisingly, the survey also shows that younger people hold the most negative views of the fur industry. In the age group 18–22, as many as 83% believed fur farming to be wrong. In the age group 23-35, this figure was

69%, and among the elderly, from 56 to 80 years, 55% believed fur farming to be wrong (Dyrevernalliansen, 2016).

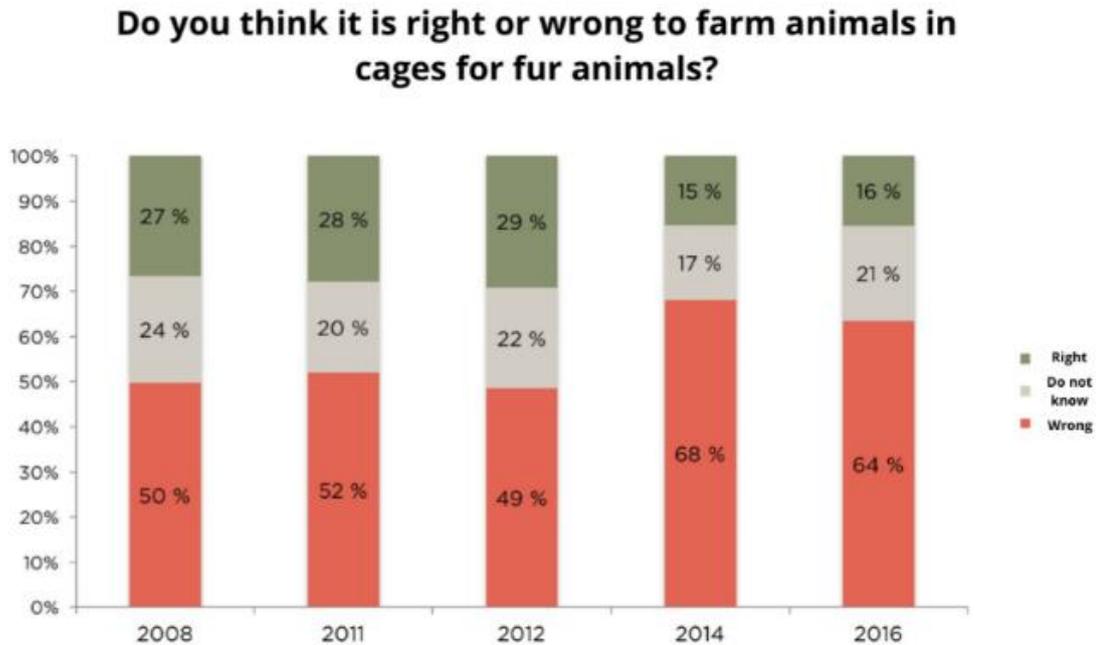


Figure 1 - opinion on fur farming

A majority of voters across the political spectrum eventually came to favour a ban. A survey conducted on behalf of DVA in fall 2014 showed that a majority of voters of all parties in the Storting believed fur farming to be wrong (Dyrevernalliansen, 2015). As shown in Figure 2, among voters in H, 63% believed fur farming to be wrong, while 23% agreed with their own party and supported the fur industry. Sixty-three percent of voters in the Progress Party (FRP) also believed fur farming to be wrong, while only 19% believed it to be right. In V, 68% believed that fur farming is wrong, and 18% believed that it is correct. Among the the Labour Party (Ap) voters, 69% reported thinking that fur farming is wrong, and in SV, as many as 82% were against fur farming. Even in the Centre Party (Sp), a small majority of voters believed that fur farming is wrong, 52%. The Christian Democratic Party (KRF) is the party in which the fur animal industry has the most support; however, even here, the majority did not support the industry, and almost 38% believing that fur farming is wrong and 31%

thinking that it is right. MDG is the party with the most voters who are critical of fur farming. Nearly 88% believed fur farming to be wrong, and only 5% believed that it is correct. The head of communications in DVA, Live Kleveland, said that it is a democratic problem that the resistance to fur farming in the population is not reflected in the Storting (Dyrevernalliansen, 2015). The opposition to fur eventually became evident among the public: They wanted a ban, and there remained no indication from the Storting that this was imminent.

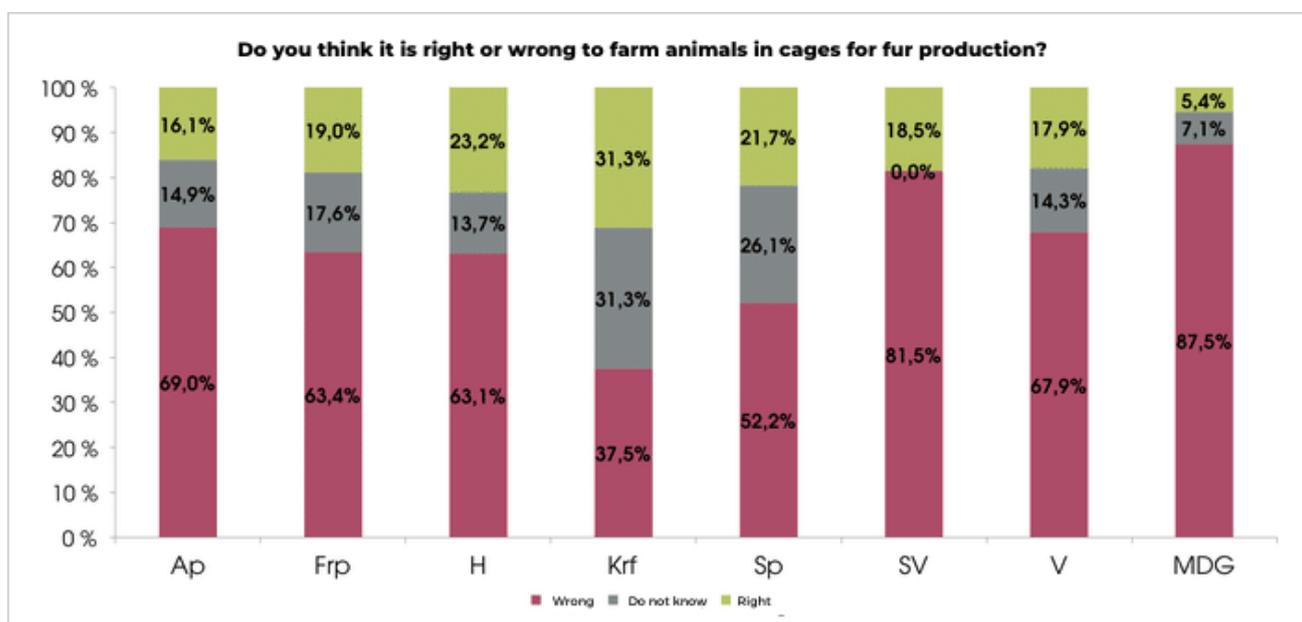


Figure 2 - opinion on fur farming

From the point of view of informant 4, public opinion is crucial to make political changes, and she believes that without the strong opposition of the public to the industry, there would not be a ban today. However, she also mentioned that the concern about the fur animals could also be a testament to the time in which we live, with animal welfare in general perhaps being regarded as more important now than before, which could partially explain why the images made such an impact. In Europe, an increasing number of other countries banned fur farming, including England and Wales, Scotland, North Ireland, Bosnia Herzegovina, Austria, Ireland, Makedonia, and Denmark, all of which have a prohibition on fox farming. The Netherlands introduced a ban on fox farming in 2008 and a ban on mink farming starting in 2024. Slovenia

banned fur farming in 2015 and Croatia in 2017. More stringent regulations in Switzerland have led to fur farming being phased out. In Sweden, stricter regulations have also led to the abandonment of fur farming. In addition, four out of five fur farms had been discontinued or closed down since 1999 in Norway. The industry was clearly in decline. In the peak year of 1999, there were 1,287 fur farms in Norway. By the end of 2019, this figure decreased to 145 farms (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge, 2020). Farmers in Norway were increasingly also choosing to shut down the operation due to low profits and stricter regulations.

“And it would clearly not have been a ban if there had not been support in public opinion or strong opposition against the fur industry, whether it is the time we live in, or one or the other, at least there has been a change the last 10 years”.

As inspections and the media work demanded much time and energy from the activists, few resources were available to work on other strategies to mobilize the public and politicians. Informant 1 further described why the activists did not work more with mobilisation among the public and how the work of the NDF and DN were complemented with the work of other animal protection organisations that worked with mass mobilization and lobbying:

“We were a bit bad at it . . . aside from getting that first boost in the press, so it was kind of a weakness . . . when we finally got them [the images] out, it was a bit like, ah now we don't have energy more, but we held, a few demonstrations here and there outside the Ministry of Agriculture . . . but it wasn't that kind of mass mobilization. . . . We knew DVA was good at politics and that NOAH was dealing with mass mobilization. We didn't do much beyond that really . . . the organizations have accidentally found strategies that work and complement each other”.

Similarly, informant 3 described that mostly due to a lack of resources, the activists did not have the capacity to mobilize the public further after releasing the images:

“The network had some markings, but there has not been much focus on it, a little because there have been arranged torchlight march, but mostly because of resources. We were few people and were volunteers. We had struggled enough to conduct the inspections, with the media work and follow that up, that there were up no energy left for mass mobilization”.

However, informant 5 mentioned that there were other animal protection organisations that worked more closely with politicians:

“We didn't work very much with lobbying. We thought our role was to get the pictures and then other organisations worked more with lobby, and in a great way. . . . It is not our merit alone, however, it makes it easier to lobby with that foundation and those images”.

In a follow up question, I asked Informant 5 which organisations she felt worked best with lobbying:

“DVA has been very good at working goal-oriented and is good at strategy . . . and has had a number of meetings with politicians”.

Informant also 3 mentioned how the images made it easier for the organisations to work with politicians:

“Those who work with it have said that it was easier to work with lobbying after the images came, it has opened doors for others . . . we had limited capacity to work with it”.

Informant 2 reflected on how the images were essential to the case reaching the media and the news, which is again what involves the public:

“The images are the basis of the media case and the media case is the basis for people to get involved . . . it's a bidirectional dynamic”.

4.3.2 Important outcomes and effects of the images in 2008

Using TV to disseminate their images to the public was a significant part of the activists strategy. According to Bleiker (2018, p. 12), television appeals to emotions in a powerful way and it makes distant political issues more accessible. The televised portrayal of political issues offers the audience a visceral experience that combine narratives, images, and sound and offers the spectator not just an abstract depiction of politics, but a form of cinematic storytelling that allows them to identify with individuals and their circumstances, all of which makes complex and distant political issues more accessible. TV is thus a powerful medium for activists to disseminate their

images. After the inspection, the activists contacted connections they had in TV2 and gave them the material from the inspections. This led TV 2 to make a documentary about the fur industry in Norway which was shown on TV2's programme, Dokument 2 on 10 October 2008. Among other things, the documentary addresses the activist first unveiling of animal abuse on Norwegian fur farms (TV 2, 2008). However, during the interviews, the informants said that they were not happy with the end result of the documentary. One reported that TV 2 felt uneasy about cooperation with animal protection activists. Possibly because of a failed strategy by other activists in the animal protection movement in earlier years that had taken a more extreme and militant approach to saving and protecting animals. In particular, Animal Liberation Front Norway engaged in a set of serious and violent actions during the period between 1996 to 2004 (Jahnsen, 2007, p. 76). These actions set the movement back, because the animal protection activists then got the reputation of being extreme and dangerous. This most likely had consequences for the informants when they wanted to collaborate with TV 2 years later. According to some of the informants, Tv 2 seemed sceptical about cooperating with the activists and were therefore reluctant to use much of the material from the activists. TV 2 did not show how many farms they had been on and selected material and adopted the angle that it was more as if the problem in the industry were just a matter of some individual cases. The activists felt that they were not taken seriously and that TV 2 did not dare use them as sources, and the activists were thus not interviewed in the documentary.

Informant 2 mentioned how the collaboration with TV 2 did not go as planned:

“The first year . . . there was a documentary on TV 2 . . . didn't feel like we reach the full potential that year. There was a lot of local press . . . there were some reactions . . . and some evasions from the fur industry, we struggled a bit with that the first year. I didn't feel like that the year after that, if I remember correctly, that's when we partnered with NRK, that's when it got a bit of a breakthrough”.

Informant 1 reflects on how scepticism against animal protection activists in general effected their work with TV 2, resulting in a documentary where their perspective was disregarded:

“Radical animal protectors were not unknown and we suspected that Tv 2 became nervous and the documentary therefore, was not, as a big revelation, but rather a review of Norwegian fur farms with some pictures from the inspections. It got very shallow and it was little bang for the buck. “. “

Informant 1 further elaborated on the consequences of the illegal actions and why their strategy failed:

“We talked about gaining the most trust. Because of the history of the illegal actions, we saw that the press coverage and sympathy did not go quite as many might hope, so it became quite obvious to everyone eventually. . . . More and more people felt that it was really not a good strategy and it just ruined it for everyone else, and played them [fur farmers and salespersons] into a victim role were they got a lot of sympathy. Even some animals died. It's a hard story to sell ... It only works on hardcore activists who are very black and white ... another important part of that story is that those activists were 'hidden'. They never said anything about who they were ... they didn't play with open cards . . . they were someone in masks . . . the message comes out more clearly when you are a specific person”.

Little media press and public outrage was seen after this first revelation compared to in the following years when the activists collaborated with NRK. This could be a result of how TV 2 chose to angle the documentary in a more review fashion rather than the more expose angle NRK adopted. In addition, TV 2 is a channel with fewer viewers than NRK. However, there were some outcomes of the documentary. Informant 2 mentioned how following the disclosures in 2008, the NFSA launched a national inspection project. According to Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge and Nettverk for dyrs frihet (2012, p. 9), the NFSFA carried out inspections on 244 of the country's then 331 fur farms.

“After the documentary on TV 2 there was a reaction. It led the NFSFA to carry out a supervision campaign on a significant number of Norwegian fur farms . . . however, it happened in a dubious way . . . They had concluded in advance and sent out an instruction in advance to all those who would go on inspections that in principle, the industry should be acquitted. The note leaked and it became a minor media case about it”.

The NPA responded with a press release, stating that what was depicted in the documentary had nothing to do with professional animal husbandry, and good and proper animal husbandry requires compliance with laws and regulations. They further stated that this was not representative of the Norwegian fur industry. This is what the industry works for. The organization also sent a letter to TV 2 criticizing the use of material from the activists and saying that they had illegally acquired it (Nordlys, 2008). This became the repeated argument from the industry, that only a few farmers fail to follow the rules and run their farms illegally. As the activists indicated through their years and with their massive amount of material, these animal welfare problems were a constant and recurring problem. The industry cannot operate in compliance with the law: It was not just a few bad farmers that were the problem but the industry itself.

4.3.3 Important outcomes and effects of the images in 2009

As discussed above, the activists were not pleased with TV 2 and the end result of their documentary, so they decided to look elsewhere. They considered one of Norway's most read newspaper, *Verdens Gang*, but the danger then was that it could end up becoming a "one-day story". They had too much material for that to happen, so they finally decide to contact NRK. NRK Dagsrevyen, is the largest news broadcaster in Norway, with an average viewership of 840,000 in 2002 and 730,000 in 2012 (Brakstad, 2013). NRK is regarded as Norway's most important news distributor and has topped the list on the Ipsos reputation survey for several years. This indicates that people have a high trust in NRK. Thus, collaborating with NRK was a strategic significant decision made by the activists. On 23 August 2009, NRK aired the first exposure case about the fur farms in Norway based on the activists material. In the news story, NRK Dagsrevyen (2009c) interviewed an activist from NDF who reported that they wanted to inspect farms that a few months earlier had been approved by the NFSA. The activists reported that all of the 45 farms they inspected displayed for gross misconduct according to the Animal Welfare Act. In the news clip, Gorm Sanson, a veterinarian representing the fur industry, responded to the images saying that this shows that some isolated case are worthy of criticism and that the farmers should follow rules and regulations. Again, the argument from the industry was that it was caused by a few bad farmers. The NFSA and the Minister of Agriculture, Lars Peder Brekk, refused to look at the images from the activists (NRK Dagsrevyen, 2009c, 02:08).

The next day on Dagsrevyen, however, Brekk had to look at the images after pressure from NRK. After looking at the images, he said that condition should not be like this and that the images showed clear violations of the Animal Welfare Act: “It is terrible to see such images”. He furthermore told the NFSA to go through the images (NRK Dagsrevyen, 2009b, 00:41). Informant 2 reflected on how this became a good news story:

“NRK went to the agriculture minister, he says he is not interested in the activists images and that he have received a report from the NFSA saying that everything is good . . . that was his statement on the exposure from NRK and then they rolled the pictures over the screen while he stood and said it, so then the next day he had to retreat what he had stated, and said that he would look at it . . . it became a good media play”.

In 2009, the controversy surrounding fur farming led to massive media coverage, through television, radio, and newspapers. DN conducted a large number of interviews with the media and helped to keep the focus on fur farming high through press releases and personal contact with journalists (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge, 2009b, p. 17). Some of the major results after the 2009 exposure were, among other things, that the Veterinary Association went from merely expressing concern about the industry to discussing a ban of the industry. Four days after the main revelation on NRK in 2009, the association posted a press release saying that they wanted to close down the entire fur animal industry in Norway because it was based on holding active predators in small netting cages without providing them an outlet for their natural behavioural needs. Furthermore, the association said that there were still major problems regarding animal welfare and that the changes and more frequent inspections by the NSFA obviously had not led to improvements in the industry. Keeping wild, active animals to produce fur was also becoming more and more ethically controversial (Stine Barstad, 2009). This statement from a professional institution advancing academic arguments as to why good animal welfare in the fur industry cannot be achieved was highly significant for the activists cause.

Jens Stoltenberg's second government was elected in October 2005, with A, Sp, and SV forming a government (Regjeringen.no, 2020). Sp is the farmers party and was a strong supporter of the industry and during the years in which the activists exposed the

industry through imagery, the Minister of Agriculture was Lars Peder Brekk, from Sp. After pressure from the media, Brekk called the industry into an emergency meeting, threatening a withdrawal of his political support unless the industry cleaned up (NRK Dagsrevyen, 2009a, 05:44). About the fur industry, he stated “They have the knife on the throat . . . my support will disappear on the day that shameful circumstances again are documented” (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2013, p. 1). Another result of the exposure in 2009 was that leader of V and former Minister of Agriculture, Lars Sponheim, demanded that the entire fur industry be banned after reacting strongly to the imagery from the DN and NFD. He told *Dagbladet* that it was awful and that he was furious, both at the farmers who failed to help the animals with chewed-off feet and at the Minister of Agriculture, who did not show an understanding of the suffering endured by the animals (Vikås, 2009). V stated that they wanted to close down the industry if it did not follow up on the Animal Protection Act and clean up within three years (Venstre, 2009). There was also a ban on breeding species other than foxes and mink, which meant that fur production of rabbits and chinchillas was now completely illegal. In addition, stricter rules were implemented in 2009 that made it more difficult for many fur breeders to continue in business (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a).

Informant 4 mentioned that the second year they released the images, they were more focused on reaching politicians:

“The first year we just wanted to get it out – everyone should know about it . . . the second year was directed more politically, we wanted to remind the politicians that there is no improvement . . . it is up to the politicians to get it turned and stopped”.

During Ap's national meeting in 2009, the proposal for a resolution to end fur farming was voted on, losing by 15 votes out of 300 (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a) due to a strong warning from the Minister of Agriculture and the reassurance from the industry itself (Svein Kristoffersen, 2010). DN stated in a press release that the disappointment was enormous. However, DN was optimistic about the closeness of the vote and said that at least the party was divided in the case. DN further stated in the press release that “This gives a good outlook to the years to come. As we now prepare ourselves for the work on fur in the years to come. It is certain that a large parts of Ap are already supporting us in the demand for a ban of fur farming” (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge, 2009a). DVA said in a press release that Ap betrayed the animals. However, they also stated that such a close

vote indicates that resistance to the fur industry was growing in Ap as well (Bjørn Grimen, 2009).

The images from the fur farms led public opinion to strongly favour a ban. According to Schneider and Nocke (2014, p. 17), images that are taken up by the media, gain collective visibility and can imprint their gestalt onto the memory of the viewer. When images are extensively disseminated, they are indeed able to shape how the world is seen and conceived of and can function as a catalyst for future action (Schneider & Nocke, 2014, p. 18). Therefore, a crucial part of the strategy of the activists was collaborating with the media, as doing so allowed their images to reach a wide swathe of Norwegians and be broadly disseminated. When asked which are the most important effects and outcome of the images, informant 5 shared:

“The most important thing was that we managed to get the public opinion with us ... that we managed to get out what it was like on the farms, there was no doubt how it was and how that in turn affected the politician's opinion and the law. I feel that those images played a very big part in getting the ban, or a big contributing role. . . . And another really important thing was, I think people started to open their eyes more to how animals are treated in general . . . if you pave a little way for people to open their eyes that it is important to care about how animals are treated and that it cracks the notion that Norway is the world's best animal on welfare. The ban is very important, but it is also very important . . . that you can put the debate on another level”.

Similarly, Informant 4 described how she thinks the images changed people's attitudes towards fur and that this again created a political pressure:

“I believe and hope that it has helped to change people's attitudes to fur enough that it became a political change, and that is connected. And it would clearly not have been a ban if there had not been a support in the opinion or strong opposition against the fur industry, whether it is the time we live in, or one or the other, but at least there has been a change in last 10 years”.

4.3.4 Important outcomes and effects of the images in 2010

A new exposure story aired on NRK Dagsrevyen in October 2010. In the news story, NRK followed three activists on an inspection and showed images of badly hurt

animals. Furthermore, NRK wanted a professional assessment of the images and showed the pictures to experts from the Norwegian Veterinary College, who concluded that the animals are in a great deal of pain. Brekk was a guest in the studio and reacted to the images by saying that the conditions were sad and unacceptable. The reporter noted that last year, he said that the industry had a knife at its throat and that he stated that he would withdraw his political support if they did not clean up. The reporter further noted that this segment did not show an industry that had cleaned up and asks Brekk where he put the knife at that point. Brekk replied by stating that the situation is not good enough but that he has the impression that the industry has worked purposefully to improve the situation. He said that the images show situations in which some fail to follow laws and regulations and went on to say that Ministry of Agriculture are working to make stricter rules and conduct more supervisions. The reporter was critical of Brekk's response regarding more supervision and noted that with supervision, these problems still exist, and even where the supervision has been notified in advance, around 15–20% of inspections reported serious conditions. Brekk said that Ministry would consider withdrawing support but that there is no tradition of collective punishment in Norway (NRK Dagsrevyven, 2010, 01:15).

In 2010, the reactions to the published material was the strongest and during this period, the fur animal case appeared in the media every single day for several weeks (Ellefsen, 2013, p. 4). The images from the 2010 revelation elicited strong reactions from many political parties, including Ap. The head of the Storting's Standing Committee on Business and Industry, Terje Aaland, from Ap, stated that the images are distressful and that he was shocked and angry that breeders did not care to correct the conditions. He further stated that this was their last chance to clean up before Ap at its next national meeting pushed for the closure of the industry (Verdens Gang, 2010). V reacted strongly to the new images of injured and neglected fur animals. Vice-chairman Ola Elvestuen wanted to elevate the fur issue to the Storting, saying that Ap is holding the key. He did not believe that Sp would manage to take the necessary steps against the fur industry, since Ap held power in the government. Svein A. Flåtten from H was also upset in response to the images. On behalf of H, he sent a letter to Brekk demanding an explanation for the situation and of what was done (Verdens Gang, 2010). Following the disclosures in 2010, the fur industry responded by levelling accusations against the activists for invading private property and crusading against the industry. V leader Trine

Skei Grande summoned Brekk to the Storting to ask what was necessary for the government to take action to stop the fur industry. In her interpellation, she wrote in October 2010 that activists had once again uncovered horrific conditions on several fur farms and that it was now clear that the fur animal industry would not achieve the goal set by the Storting in 2003 for significant breeding improvements over a 10-year period (Stortinget, 2010).

Vice-chairman of V Ola Elvestuen stated that Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, and Austria had closed their fur animal industries and that Norway should follow suit. The left wanted the political parties to make the necessary decisions at their respective national meetings that spring (Svein Kristoffersen, 2010). The activists carefully noted the political landscape and timed their inspections according to political situations that could lead to a ban. Ap considered pursuing a ban of the fur industry in their political programme in 2011, issuing a report, “Should Fur Farming Be Banned?”, and sending it to all their political representatives. The report contains key findings from their inspections in 2008, 2009, and 2010 and facts and information about the industry and why it should be banned (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2011).

Informant 3 mentioned that the activists sometimes timed their inspections to important political events:

“It's about timing. When there were important decisions that could be taken in the direction of a ban, there was at least once or twice the triggering factors for taking new inspection rounds. Especially when they were considering taking it into the party programme, we timed it in relation to national meetings. We made reports that they sent to all the representatives”.

After the revelation in 2010, several newspapers criticized the fur industry in their editorials. The editor of *Nettavisens* declared "Shut down the fur industry", *Dagbladet* wrote that "the industry does not have the right of life", and *Tromsø* stated that it was time for the fur industry to "pack it up" (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a). *Aftenposten* wrote “No to fur farming” in their editorial in 2016 and stated that predators in cages cannot be reconciled with good animal welfare. It was unusual for an animal welfare issue to

receive so much media coverage, and especially for so many editorials to take a stand against an industry based on animal welfare issues. Informant 1 reflected on this:

“When you think about the impact it had, now I do not remember how many newspapers articles, but it was in the editorial in Aftenposten, I think it was Dagbladet, it was almost all the big newspapers and lots of local newspapers, and then in the editorial that they wanted to shut down the fur industry . . . and that it is quite rare.

Fur was the first major animal welfare case discussed at a high political level for years, and it was a case that eventually changed the policy due to the animal welfare problems. According to informant 2, this led to a shift towards a more general focus on animal welfare in Norway, which was as important to him as getting the ban:

“One of the things I feel is the big shifts that happened with the fur case is that it is the first animal welfare case that has ended up at a higher political level. There was no discussion about animal welfare at all before, it was not taken seriously. It came to a point where all political parties felt that they had to have an opinion on this . . . it was discussed at all political meetings . . . and fur were taken into political programmes, etc. It had not happened before and it would not have happened without the documentation and media attention the case got, it came as a result of it, and is one of the most important victories, which I think is as important as the fur ban. It opened doors for animal welfare to be discussed at a higher political level . . . all the high-ranking politicians have had to think through it and make a decision . . . if you go back to 2008 . . . animal welfare was so far down on the agenda”.

When asked about her thoughts on the role of the images in changing the perspectives of Norwegians about fur, informant 5 reflected:

“I think it was very significant because that . . . it becomes proof of how it is. It becomes difficult to speak against it and it is such a large scope. I think it made many people open their eyes to how the animals are living on fur farms, and that we got the opinion with us to a much greater degree than we had done before. . . . Everyone had seen it. . . . And the fact that it became one of the top stories of Dagsrevyen meant that it was taken very seriously”.

Similarly, informant 4 discussed when she felt that the perspective on fur had changed among the public and the politicians:

“I remember sitting at work and hearing people discuss fur farms, and that was kind of new . . . it was like, oh wow, now talk they about fur in the staff room, but to go a little further out of the staff room, we noticed as it became more talked about, and the media talked about it and in a different way. Eventually, I noticed that they were talking about fur in a slightly different way, it was no longer, the fur industry did get away with the notion that this were just some rotten eggs and exceptions. It became more so that this is the way it is, there I think I noticed a difference”.

4.3.5 Important outcomes and effects of the images in 2012

2012 was considered an important year in which the fate of the fur industry could be decided, since the Norwegian Parliament promised to evaluate fur farming in 2012/2013 in the White Paper on Animal Welfare from 2002/2003 (NOAH - for dyres rettigheter & Animalia, 2015, p. 31). It also promised that dismantling the industry would be considered if no significant improvements were made, and the industry had been given a clear deadline to make improvements within 10 years. The White Paper on Food and Agriculture from 2011/2012 required the red–green government to return to the Storting with an assessment of fur farming. In the paper, the Ministry also acknowledged that fur farming was controversial in Norway (Landbruks- og matdepartementet, 2012). However, the final decision led to the continuance of the industry in 2014, and the decision to ban the industry did not come until 2019. It thus took some years from when the activists began using imagery as a strategy to when the ban eventually happened. This does not mean that the imagery was not effective; as the literature shows, the effects of the images usually come gradually. Images slowly challenge how we view, think of, and thus conduct politics (Bleiker 2018, p. 23). The discussion and the opinions from the public might be instantaneous, but changing policy and banning an entire industry, which has never before been done in Norway, require more time. However, the activists knew this and therefore implemented their strategy over several years.

On 24 October 2012, a new exposé of the fur industry was aired on NRK Dagsrevyen. The news story shows the activists images of injured animals and the findings from

their inspections, as well as a clip of the activists from one of the 24 farms they inspected. In the segment, they interviewed a farmer who had animals with chewed-off legs, which is considered gross misconduct. NRK showed the farmer the images, and the farmer responded by saying that the animals have no problem losing a leg and that he did not think that they could feel pain. He further stated that animals are simple and can adapt and famously that they do not have the same need as us to travel to Mallorca (NRK Dagsrevyen, 2012b, 00:44). Animal welfare researcher Cecilie Mejdell at the Veterinary Institute responded to these claims by saying that it is quite sensational in 2012 for a person who works with animals to believe that animals do not feel pain. She further stated that the nervous system and anatomical and physiological structures are very similar in all mammals, including humans (Håvard Grønli & Anders Brekke, 2012). An activist was interviewed in the segment and said that their findings from the inspections that year were even worse than what they had found on previous inspections: Conditions were only worsening, according to him. NRK also pointed out that the number of emergency regulations due to the food inspection had increased since Brekk said the industry had a knife at its throat. NFSA said that if the industry was to have any trust and be allowed to continue, they must improve. Further in the broadcast, adviser for NPA Guri Wormdahl was interviewed and proclaimed that the findings were unacceptable and that they do not accept that some animals have injuries like those portrayed in the images from DN and NFD. She further stated that this is not representative of the industry as a whole and that the industry works seriously every day to overcome these problems.

After the 2012 revelation, there were several more political discussions about the fur industry. The day after the NRK exposé, Secretary of State Harald Oskar Buttedahl (Sp) and Head of the Standing Committee on Business and Industry on Storting Terje Lien Aasland (Ap) met at Political Quarter at NRK P2 (a political news radio programme), to discuss whether the government had decided if the industry would be banned by the government. Aasland said that he was horrified and shocked to see the images from the DN and NFD, and went on to say that despite some regulatory changes for the industry following previous disclosures, we still see these serious effects of animal suffering and lack of attitudes towards animals. Secretary Harald Buttedahl from Sp said that he was just as horrified by the images, but that these were individual cases. Sp stood firm on its

statement in the White Paper from 2011/2012 and would wait until after the evaluation was complete (Krekling, 2012). Guri Melby from V said to NRK that it was terrible that we had to see such images again and shows that the industry did not deserve our trust. V aimed to pursue a controlled phasing out of the industry (Krekling, 2012). Kjartan Alexander Lunde, head of Rogaland V, stated that animal torture must end now. The new revelation again demonstrated why it is necessary to end the fur animal industry. Sp and the government had failed the animals for the past seven years that they had governed agricultural policy (Larsen, 2012). While SV and Ap both included in their programme that the industry should be phased out, Sp did not act drastically enough. Buttedahl stated that he thought the fresh images from the fur farms were bad, but claimed that the industry has gotten much better and said that the fur industry had been very constructive and serious in terms of improving conditions. He further stated that the government had created a new regulatory framework that was one of the strictest in the world for fur husbandry, that Sp need not ban fur farming, and that this would then be presented to the Storting for discussion (Myklebust & Olsson, 2012). In June 2012, Trygve Slagsvold Vedum took over as Minister of Agriculture. Vedum was a strong supporter of the industry, and he along with Alf Holmelid Storting of SV and Siri Martinsen of NOAH met to debate fur farming the day after the NRK Dagsrevyen aired their case. Vedum stated that the reports were of individual cases and that as long as the regulations were kept, animal welfare was good. Holmelid was an avid speaker against the industry and stated that enough is enough – that is was not possible to have good animal welfare while holding active predators in cages. Further in the debate, Vedum also admitted that fur farming is one of the most demanding animal husbandries in Norway. Martinsen from NOAH argued that the interests of the industry outweighed the welfare of the animals, and that opinion against the industry was strong (Dagsnytt 18, 2012, 39:09).

As discussed earlier, Ap was key to getting a ban, and hope for a ban was strengthened when Ap voted in favour of a “controlled phasing out” of fur farming in 2011 (NOAH - for dyres rettigheter & Animalia, 2015, p. 30). Ap justified the stance against the fur industry by stating that the likelihood of fur farming being able to operate in accordance with today's requirements for ethical animal husbandry appeared small. Of the 295 votes cast, 170 supported the resolution. The delegates broadly stated that the industry had

had enough chances and that a controlled phasing out of fur farming had to be realized. They further agreed that farmers in the industry should receive restructuring funds from the state to begin other agricultural activities (Verdens Gang, 2011). According to Therkelsen and Bergsli (2011), after videos and images of injured and neglected mink and fox ran in the media in 2008 and 2009, the industry came under heavy fire. The industry itself promised improvement, but the fact that further documentation of suffering animals was published in 2010 was likely decisive for Ap's National Assembly delegates to lose their patience and vote for a ban. However, Minister of Agriculture emphasized that he would fight for the fur animal industry inside the government. His ambition was to make it possible for the industry to survive in the future. Sp thus pushed hard against Ap's decision to phase-out the industry and responded by saying that part of its programme was to continue the industry (Therkelsen & Bergsli, 2011).

Informant 2 mentioned that when Ap finally turned in 2011 and voted for a phasing out of the industry, this was a major victory:

“One of the big victories on the road was AP's decision”

Similarly, informant 3 noted on the significance of Ap's decision to phase out the fur industry:

“The most important thing is to get fur farming on the political agenda and open those doors. . . . AP was the most important change, an important turning point that marks the shift. . . . Without that, I don't think we would have gotten a ban”.

Informant 3 stated that the media attention helped their cause reach many people, which strengthened public opinion against fur farming and increased political pressure:

“The images had widespread reach and created a change of attitude in public opinion and when that focus becomes so broad and creates some pressure or reactions in public opinion, it is only then that politicians also feel a little pressured to do something . . . it is not until you come there, they will do something . . . that you get some political power . . . that's what creates that pressure, that media attention”.

Informant 1 reflected on how NRK was an important part of reaching a wide audience with their images and cause:

“When you get horror pictures from fur farms in prime time, then it get stuck with you in the end, when you get that effect for a few years in a row, that matter . . . it would have been a lot less successful without NRK.

Also in 2012, the activists reviewed the NSFA. During the period 2009–2011. The activists decided to systematically review the NFSA’s inspections and issued a report with their findings, “An Examination of Food Inspection's Control of the Fur Animal Industry”. They wanted to conduct the examination because of the NFSA major impact on the political handling when it comes to the future of the fur industry. The results of the NFSA inspections were used as a factual basis for politicians. The activists report was based on comprehensive data on various aspects of the NFSA and the agency's reporting on the state of the industry (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge & Nettverk for dyrs frihet, 2012, p. 4), and it revealed serious systemic failure in the NFSA and continuous animal welfare problems in the industry. According to Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge and Nettverk for dyrs frihet (2012, p. 4), the report gives politicians and the general public more nuanced insight into the NFSA inspection's supervision of the fur industry. Prior to the disclosure in 2012, NRK ran a news story on *Dagsrevyen* about the NFSA’s false reporting, and the NFSA admitted errors in its reporting. Ole Fjetland from the NFSA said to NRK “that it is serious and embarrassing that we have reported wrong” and stated that “we have to, and we will, correct this”. This was, as mentioned, a serious revelation, because the NSFA reporting had the power to have a direct effect on what the Storting decided regarding the industry. The segment further showed that a representative from DN handed over the report to politicians Alf Holmlid from SV and Guri Melby from V. Melby said to NRK, “I think we have to say stop and put our foot down and say that the time is out”. The Minister of Agriculture said in a comment to NRK that it is serious when the NFSA delivers incorrect numbers and that he expected them to clean up (NRK *Dagsrevyen*, 2012a:11:59).

4.3.6 The debate about fur continued until the Storting passed a law 2019 prohibiting fur farms in Norway.

As discussed and analysed above, the impact of images work gradually, and slowly challenge how we view, think of and conduct politics (Bleiker, 2018, p. 23). The impacts of images are usually gradual, and this case study presents no exception. Therefore, I consider it relevant for this thesis also to consider important occurrences, effects, and outcomes after 2012 resulting from the activists images.² In 2012, H, the FrP, and KrF had no plans to ban the fur industry. Thus, the future still appeared bright for the industry in the event of a change in government after the 2013 parliamentary elections. Svein Flåtten from H said in 2012 that the party had no plans to ban the industry. When the government of Erna Solberg was elected in 2013, represented by the parties H and Frp, there was little optimism among the activists that a ban would be implemented. However, the prime minister was personally against the industry: Solberg said in an interview with P3 in 2013, that while her party is for the industry, she was against fur. She further stated that she did not wear fur and that fur is best on animals (Sætra, 2013).

In December 2014, NRK Brennpunkt showed the award-winning documentary *Inside Fur*. The documentary was the first "undercover" investigation in a Norwegian animal welfare context (Brennpunkt, 2014). Nervik visited 17 fur farms over a period of two years and filmed everything that went on with a hidden camera. The total recording time was just under six days of material. In addition to the footage from Nervik, the documentary consists of footage from DN and NFD (Kumano-Ensby & Platou, 2014). One of Nervik's goal was to demonstrate that the problems in the fur industry also apply to the best producers. The documentary shows illegal animal husbandry and handling of animals and also reveals bad attitudes towards animal welfare in the industry. Nervik said in an interview with NRK that it is the politicians' responsibility, not that of the farmers themselves. There has been too much focus on individual deviations (an emphasis encouraged by the industry itself) and that the entire industry was a rotten pill. It is not justifiable to breed animals in that way (Kumano-Ensby &

² In 2013, the activists broke into a mink farm in Sandnes for purposes of documentation. At the farm they took pictures of several injured animals- By law, this is a burglary, and the activists were sentenced to 30 days probation in Jæren District Court but were acquitted of the compensation claim. However, later the activists were sentenced in the Gulating Court of Appeal to pay 550,000 NOK in compensation to the fur farmer. The activists raised all the money to pay for their compensation fee.

Platou, 2014). Wormhald, from NPL, said in the same interview that is important to know that the film was made by an activist who wants to ban the industry. He had filmed using a hidden camera in the industry and generated the comments and pictures that he wanted in order to promote his vision and that what he depicts was not representative of how fur farms were run in Norway (Kumano-Ensby & Platou, 2014). Then Minister of Agriculture Sylvi Listhaug of Frp reacted strongly to the serious violations of animal welfare regulations that were shown in the documentary, saying that they were unacceptable and demonstrated unacceptable attitudes and disrespect for both the animals and regulations. She took the initiative to meet with NPL and the NFSA (Verdens Gang, 2014).

The documentary elicited strong reactions. Sveinung Rotevatn from V said to NRK that “We soon [will] have a majority in the Storting” and that the problem is not individual farmers but that the industry is inherently challenged in realizing good animal welfare, because these are wild animals that will never thrive in tiny cages. Karin Andersen from SV said that there have been several cases over the years in which activists and the NFSA have revealed these problems and that such does not appear to have helped. She further stated that fur is not a necessary product and that animals are not bred to be in captivity. This is an important element that can also explain the effects of these images and the mobilization to which they led. Fur is seen as a luxury and viewed as not essential, and the product therefore does not legitimize a breeding which is so detrimental to animal welfare. This could also have been a contributing fact that made it easier for the activists to gain the amount of public and political mobilization and support that they did. Knut Storberget from Ap commented that it makes an impression to see the kind of pictures that appear in the documentary and said that Ap believes that the time has come and that Ap is in favour of a good settlement process. In 2014, H and the KrF wanted to keep the industry, with Line Henriette Hjemdal of KrF saying to NRK that the party is for a sustainable development of the fur industry but that it seeks to impose strict requirements for the animals' living conditions. However, it would consider a controlled phasing out of the industry if the committee unambiguously came to this point. Frp wanted to remove the state subsidies to the fur industry. In November of 2014, Mdg presented a proposal asking the Storting to shut down the fur industry and ban fur imports (Hirsti & Mon, 2014).

A few days after the documentary aired, a governmental report on fur farming, NOU 2014:15, was published. The majority in the committee recommended a sustainable development of the fur industry and suggested more measures, especially to meet animal welfare challenges (Landbruks- og matdepartementet, 2014, p. 112). However, according to NOAH - for dyres rettigheter and Animalia (2015, p. 31), the measures described were much the same as those suggested by the White Paper of 2002/2003. Accordingly, three of the authors of the report recommended the phasing out of fur farming. The recommendations were a great disappointment to fur opponents. Live Kleveland in DVA said that this was just a continuation of a dying industry and that the majority of the committee's view is contrary to what the Veterinary Institute, the Veterinary Association and the Council for Animal Ethics recommend – all of whom recommend that fur farming be banned. She further argued that the NFSA's inspections has not yielded results conducive to good animal welfare and that despite this, the committee recommended further research and even more supervision (Verdens Gang, 2014).

On 17 January 2018, Solberg's government expanded from representing H and the Frp to also represent V. The new government declaration stated that fur farming would be dismantled by 2025. On 22 January 2019, Solberg's government expanded to also represent the Krf, thereby becoming a majority government (Regjeringen.no, 2020), and on 10 April 2019, the government presented a bill to ban fur farming from 2025, with compensation to fur farmers. On 13 June the Storting passed a law that prohibits fur farms in Norway. The first paragraph states, "It is not allowed to keep animals solely or primarily for the animals or their offspring to be killed for the purpose of sale or other exploitation of the fur" (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019a). The law prohibiting the keeping of fur animals was passed by 101 against 68 votes in the Storting. Surprisingly, Ap voted against the ban, together with Sp. Terje Aasland of Ap said that the party was still for the closure of the fur industry but that they did not believe the government in its proposal had legislated a right to a decent compensation for the farmers (Verdens Gang, 2011). V, Sv, Mdg, and R voted for the law to ban fur farming and were supported by H, Frp, and Krf, who voted for the sake of government cooperation with V (Dyrevernalliansen, 2019b). V and Trine Skei Grande secured the ban in the government negotiations. She said at the V national meeting in 2018 that Lars Sponheim gave the industry 10 years in 2002, that restructuring the industry did not

succeed, and that now V were taking the consequences out of it. She further said that V were dismantling the industry with compensations funds to the farmers so that end of the industry would be reached as quickly as possible (Nykqvist, 2018).

Informant 2 described how media can help raise awareness among the population and politicians and can lead people to reflect on animal ethics:

“When it year after year becomes the big media issue, then it becomes what people talk about in lunch and people have to think about it . . . I think this is an important side effect that sets in motion different processes. And a very important effect is that it normalizes and makes one conscious about of the pros or cons, and where the limit for what I think is okay to do to animals goes”.

Informant 1 expressed how the images showed people the reality on the farms and the fur animals’ suffering. What the images depicted was something that most people and politicians could not accept. He therefore believes that this made the images a crucial part of achieving a ban on the fur industry:

“I think those images have been a real trigger for the whole of the fur industry, or the fur animals, becoming a political issue at all. . . . It opened people eyes on what it looks like on a fur farm and how the animals live. . . . It is a bit of cognitive dissonance, either, you have to adjust your own worldview and say that this is okay, or you have to push it away. And I think that was what triggered people in the end. And with politicians as well, it became a matter that you could not quite accept anymore, because you realized that this was no longer just a few ‘rotten apples’, so I think those images were absolutely crucial for achieving a ban”.

5 Conclusion

This thesis has explored the effects of using imagery as strategy. In this case study, animal protection activists documented the animal welfare problems in the fur industry in Norway through imagery and collaborated with different media outlets to disseminate their images. Before the images, the fur industry and the fur animals' suffering were rarely a part of the public and political debate. The activists worked in different ways to achieve this. However, they eventually grew frustrated of not getting any results for their efforts and implemented a new strategy – using imagery to raise awareness. The findings in this study have answered the research question: *What was the effect and the outcome of publicizing the images from fur farms in Norway.* The result show that the images from the activists, in collaboration with the media, managed to elevate the fur industry and the fur animals' suffering to the public and political agenda. The images spurred a political debate and public outrage, the political debate concentrated around whether to dismantle the industry and the public demanding that the industry be dismantled. Politicians and Norwegians across the political spectrum reacted directly and strongly to the images depicting injured and suffering fur animals, with political parties changing their policies and professional bodies demanding that the industry be dismantled. The public's engagement became stronger, and eventually, a majority of the Norwegian public favoured a ban. This increased engagement is shown through opinion polls, record attendance in mass mobilization events against the industry, and an increase in readers' letter regarding the fur industry.

There are, however, other factors to take in consideration when assessing what led to the strong engagement against the fur industry and eventually the ban against it. The theory chapter demonstrated that it is difficult to assess specific outcomes of imagery. The fur industry in Norway was already in decline, with increasing numbers of farmers in Norway choosing to shut down the operation due to low profits and stricter regulations; indeed, several other countries in Europe had already banned the industry. Another important factor is that fur in Norway was deemed unnecessary and was considered a luxury product which most Norwegians did not use. Therefore, the product – fur – did not legitimize the production form, making the industry's dismantling a cause to which it is easier to mobilize support than other industries that exploit animals, such as the meat industry. Another important factor is the hard work of other animal

protection organisations in Norway working with lobbying and mass-mobilisation against the fur industry. Most likely, all these elements made mobilization against the fur industry more feasible and attainable, making it easier for the government to propose the prohibition of fur farming. Even though the images alone likely did not lead to the ban, the findings in this study demonstrate that the political debate and the strong public opinion favouring a ban were direct effects of the images. It is evident in this study that a public and political debate and engagement with the issue of the treatment of fur animals were not as prevalent before the images. Thus, one can conclude that imagery and collaborating with the media to disseminate the images were effective tools for activists to use to elevate their cause to the agenda and to spur a social and political debate that potentially can lead to a policy change.

Despite the richness of the findings presented in this thesis, and the clear effect that the use of imagery had upon public perceptions and the success of the Norwegian political activists, limitations exist. This is a case study, based upon one particular context, the Norwegian context. In such a context, predispositions already exist amongst the populace, predispositions based in national cultural norms, values, and socialization. It could be that such a context, which places high value upon equality and equal rights, might very well be one that is unusually highly sensitive to animal rights as well. Such a context is already predisposed to react strongly if exposed to imagery intended to sensitize us to the abuse of animals. If this is the case, then in fact it is the interaction of (1) the use of imagery, and (2) the Norwegian political/cultural context which explain the success of the activists' strategy.

We thus see a prime example of the limitation of the case study method: we have learned very much about the Norwegian case and context, but whether or not these findings would be the same in a different context is a question that my study is unable to answer or explore. Is it not likely animal protection activists would experience less success in a different context even if they too utilized the identical images strategy? Such a question can only be answered via a larger-n study, adding cases which differ in terms of context, in order to determine whether the use of imagery generally is effective in activist's pursuit of the protection of animal rights.

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Appendix

Questions about the state of affairs before the images

Why did you want to help the fur animals in Norway?

How did you work to raise awareness before you used imagery in order to raise awareness about the fur industry?

What was the degree of public awareness (support, funding) and the condition and the state of affairs prior to the images from the fur farms went public?

What were the reasons that you wanted to use imagery from the farms?

Was awareness growing at that time?

Why did you want to show the public the images from the fur farms in Norway?

How and why the use of imagery was implemented as a strategy

How did using images as strategy emerge and how was the process?

How was the process of gaining the pictures and film?

How did you release the images?

What happen when the pictures were released in the media?

How did you use these images to raise awareness and mobilize?

What was the strategy after the pictures were released?

How did the politicians respond?

How did you mobilize the politicians?

Did you cooperate with animal rights/welfare organisations and how?

Did you change strategies during this process?

Questions to understand the effects of these images

What were the effects and the outcomes of publicizing the images?

How do you think these images and videos changed perspective in the public?

What do you believe were the main effects of releasing the pictures?

How do you think these images changed awareness about the cause, among the public and politicians?

Was there some particular images/videos that were more effective than others?

What do you believe are the most effective with using these images?

Do you have documents/data that can show the effects and change the images had on the public?

How do you think these images helped get the legislation for the ban?

Would you do anything different?

Is there something in the strategy that you believe to be ineffective?

How did the different animal rights/animal welfare organisations use your images?

* did you cooperate with them?

* Were they apart of the strategy?

What do you think we can learn from this process to become more effective in political change for other animals in the future?

Are there anything you would like to add?

Was there a question you missed?

Do you have any questions?