# Fishing for ethics: unpacking food ethics discourse using the case of an online sustainable seafood guide

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## KEY WORDS

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## ABSTRACT

Food choice has become an ethical issue. With heightened public attention on environmental and welfare issues regarding food production and consumption, people are increasingly confronted with an array of messages and guides calling for 'ethical' food choices. Inherent within these texts are moral imperatives to make food choices that take into account factors such as health, the environment, fair work conditions and animal welfare (Irvine 2013). Guides to ethical food choice, such as the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide, call people to make 'good' choices through statements such as 'choose seafood wisely' and 'the fish we choose today will directly affect the health of our oceans tomorrow'. While such guides position 'ethical choice' as a resource to achieve ethical outcomes, this thesis argues that further research is needed to investigate the notion of 'ethical choice' as a topic in its own right—what type of 'ethical choices' are people enjoined to make and how is this accomplished in diverse discourses? This study extends existing research in treating 'ethical choice' as a topic in its own right by analysing how people are enjoined to participate in the moral order of food ethics discourse and how this call is taken up and translated in specific discursive contexts.

Using the online AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide as a case study, this thesis applies an 'interaction order' approach following the work of Goffman (1983), Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1974). It unpacks the ways in which agents, acts and scenes are morally positioned within the website and attributed with certain rights and responsibilities in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. These nominated positions are further explored in two participatory websites that discuss comparatively different uptakes of the Guide—within a frame of 'critique' in an Academic Blog and within a frame of 'casual advice' in a Lifestyle Blog—and open up new contexts for understanding the moral imperative in diverse situations. In line with the interaction order approach, this thesis provides a detailed description of the discursive management of ethical conduct and the way this relates to context.

The contribution of this thesis is twofold. First it delivers substantive findings to the field of food ethics and, second, it demonstrates the methodological and theoretical significance of an interaction order approach. On a substantive level, the thesis offers a detailed analysis of the way in which people are called to recognise ethical conduct and contexts in relation to food ethics. Analysis of the websites exposes the interactional accomplishment of 'contexts' that are made relevant for achieving the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. For example, analysis shows how people are called to identify with the scene of the 'ocean' in need of 'our help' and with the identities of 'Australians', 'seafood consumers', 'marine conservationists' and 'users of the Guide'. This level of symbolic ordering is accomplished through interactional devices such as footing (Goffman 1981) and membership categorization (Sacks 1992) expressed through headings, pronouns, and images that position authors and recipients as moral subjects with certain rights and responsibilities.

In addition to the substantive findings within the field of food ethics, the second key contribution of the thesis is demonstrated by the methodological and theoretical significance of an interaction order approach and its capacity to expose the constitution of the moral orders in which people are enjoined to participate. This approach sheds light on the way in which members are morally obligated to produce and reproduce meaning through their orientation to collective symbols, identities and classifications. Thus, applying an interaction order perspective reveals how 'ethics' exists at another level beyond the formal rules of the Guide. This study also reveals the value of using online settings to provide access to the moral orders in which people are enjoined to participate. While this approach is applied to the specific case of exploring moral positionings within the Sustainable Seafood Guide and its uptake in discourses located in academic and lifestyle fields, this type of inquiry is transferrable to other research pertaining to ethical conduct by exposing how people are enjoined to participate in moral orders located in diverse fields.

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

QUT Verified Signature

Signature

Date 31/10/16

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Regulating food choice: guiding consumers to make 'good' food choices

People are called to make 'good' food choices as part of their everyday life. Food choice, however, is a complicated domain with varied and competing doctrines advising what constitutes a 'good' choice. In particular, there is a growing call for 'consumers' to take into account social and environmental impacts of food choice and make eating decisions that consider factors such as health, the environment, fair trade and animal welfare (Campbell 2015). Thus, food choice has become a moral issue where people are asked to make 'responsible' and 'informed' choices for the sake of their own personal wellbeing and that of the broader society. This emphasis on individual choice and responsibility is a key component of what has been described as a neoliberal approach to regulating food choice, and which can be seen as a persistent feature of food governance (Draper and Green 2002; Guthman 2008). While these approaches position 'ethical choice' as a resource to achieve food governance, this thesis argues that this notion of 'ethical choice' should be seen as a topic in its own right. Thus, this study extends an understanding of the contexts and practices through which these choices and responsibilities are enacted by a focus on the processes and interactions that constitute these moral orders.

In an attempt to regulate and govern food choice, various policies and campaigns prescribe food choice options through dietary guidelines (Keller and Lang 2008). For example, since the 1970s Australian dietary guidelines have instructed people on the type of food choices they should be making based on nutrient qualities of food (Duff 2005). The first national *Australian dietary guidelines* were published in 1981. This included a list of eight guidelines, based on dietary goals published in the Australian Department of Health policy document *A food and nutrition policy*, including moral imperatives such as 'choose a nutritious diet from a variety of foods' and 'avoid eating too much sugar'. The *Guidelines* are

updated every decade (National Health and Medical Research Council 1992, 2003, 2013), with the most recent published in 2013. While the wording and focus on types of foods to include or exclude has shifted during this time, there is a consistent focus within these guidelines on the need for evidence-based advice to guide people to make the right choice of food. For example, the current 2013 dietary guidelines state:

> There are many ways for Australians to choose foods that promote their health and wellbeing while reducing their risk of chronic disease. NHMRC's *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provide recommendations for healthy eating that are realistic, practical and – most importantly – based on the best available scientific evidence. (National Health and Medical Research Council 2013, iii)

Guidelines such as these are based on a 'rational individual' approach that assumes that, if given the right information, consumers will choose the 'correct' food in order to achieve individual and societal goals. As noted by Duff (2005, 151), this is based on a presumption of an 'idealised consumer of food who applies the technical rationality of nutrition science to the body in order to maximise health'. This approach places attention on individual choices to achieve societal goals, with little focus placed on the structural or cultural contexts of food choice.

Food guides not only call for choices based on nutritional factors but, since the environmental movement of the late 20th century, people have also been asked to consider 'sustainability principles' when making food choices. This has led to the publication of various sustainable food guides where consumers are called to make sustainable choices alongside healthy choices. One example, which is the focus of this thesis, is the Australian Marine Conservation Society's Sustainable Seafood Guide (AMCS Guide). This Guide calls for consumers to make sustainable seafood choices as defined in the Guide by identifying fish species as either a 'good' or 'bad' choice depending on fishing methods used or other environmental impacts associated with their production. Similar to the *Australian dietary guidelines*, the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide is based on the premise that if provided with information identifying an ethical choice,

people will accept the role of 'ethical consumer' and make the prescribed choice. Another common theme within these food guides is the use of moral imperatives to call for ethical choices. For example, the AMCS Guide calls for people to 'choose seafood wisely' and 'be part of the solution'. These moral imperatives call for food choices that take into account wider social concerns.

Such documents explicitly assume that people's choices are central to the achievement of societal goals, but little attention is placed on how contexts of choice operate to achieve these desired goals. These campaigns are based on assumed relationships between choice, conduct and context. It is assumed that food choice is a conscious and deliberate act in response to information and based on an understanding that people will make choices that benefit themselves and the broader society. In these guides, 'ethical choice' is treated as a resource to achieve ethical goals but little attention is placed on how this is to be achieved in practice. There is, therefore, a need for further exploration of the mechanisms by which these ethical goals are to be achieved in the context of practice.

This raises questions about ways to conceptualise and analyse contexts of practice in relation to food choice. Guides such as the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide rest on normative understandings of situations of choice. For example, the Guide calls for seafood choices that take into account what is good for the environment and future generations through statements such as 'The fish we choose today will affect our seas tomorrow'. In this way, 'choice' is treated as the resource by which ethical outcomes are achieved. However, limited attention is placed on the nature of ethical choice, what it means to make a choice in practice and how it is achieved in contexts identified as relevant to practice. To explore this notion of 'ethical choice' further, research within the field of food ethics has raised questions about the systematic nature of ethical choice and practice.

## 1.2 Contemporary investigations of food ethics

While this thesis is positioned within the contemporary field of scholarship on food ethics, it is worth briefly mentioning the shifting emphasis of ethics in relation to food (Coveney 2006; Zwart 2000). In earlier times, ethical issues relating to food were understood in terms of consumption practices and maintaining personal virtues through the inclusion or avoidance of certain food groups (Coff 2006). For example, in the Hebrew Bible, Leviticus (11: 9–12) describes the type of animals that can and cannot be consumed based on physical characteristics of the animal. Regarding seafood, it states that only animals which have fins and scales can be eaten:

> … all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water … They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination.

While religious considerations are still a significant aspect of 'ethical' food-choosing practices for many people, further concerns are raised in the study of food ethics in contemporary approaches when considering issues across the whole food chain, such as environmental and social impacts associated with food production, distribution and consumption. This current study is located within these contemporary concerns of 'food ethics' and the consideration of 'ethical' principles across the food chain.

Contemporary studies of 'food ethics' emerged as an academic discipline within the field of applied ethics in the late 1990s (Mepham 1996, 2012) and have made important contributions to the study of ethical food choice. This field makes 'ethical choice' the topic of study and investigates the way in which ethical choices are weighed up in settings of practice. As will be discussed further in the following chapter, there are two key emphases within the field of food ethics. The first emphasis, within the philosophical field of applied ethics, considers the nature of ethical dilemmas and decision-making processes in addressing ethical issues. For example, thought experiments may be used to consider the impacts of particular farming practices on animal welfare (Singer and Mason 2006). The

second emphasis applies a hermeneutic understanding to look at the way in which choice is interpreted in everyday settings. This is evident in the work of Christian Coff (2006), who looks at how food may be interpreted in everyday contexts, such as in preparing a family meal. Each of these key emphases brings attention to the way in which 'ethical choice' is accomplished in particular settings; however, further questions remain about the way contexts are invoked and made relevant to ethical choice.

### *1.2.1 Philosophical approaches to understanding food ethics*

Within the philosophical domain, researchers have attempted to understand food choice in relation to 'ethical dilemmas' in the production, distribution and consumption of food. Rather than treat ethical choice as a taken-for-granted resource to reach desired outcomes as discussed in media campaigns mentioned above, these studies make ethical conduct the topic of study and seek to provide guidance on factors to consider when weighing up ethical choices. Research within the field of 'food ethics' focuses on motivations for ethical conduct in terms of philosophical theories relating to rights, duties or obligations towards making 'good' and 'ethical' choices. This work can be classified within three philosophical approaches—deontological, utilitarian, or virtue ethics—and focuses on how ethical conduct can be achieved through applying rules or principles to guide decision-making (Barnett, Cafaro and Newholm 2005). These approaches look at the way in which ethical decisions can be arrived at through careful consideration of the various principles and stakeholders involved.

Scholarship within the disciplinary field of food ethics has provided important frameworks for thinking about ethical food choice and the type of considerations to weigh up when making choices. Commonly, philosophical approaches locate 'ethical choice' as a thought experiment in generic settings of practice rather than place choice in the context of everyday settings of practice. An emergent field that bridges philosophy and social sciences focuses on hermeneutic

approaches to food ethics in order to bring context and possibilities of practice into the discussion.

### *1.2.2 Hermeneutic approaches to food ethics*

Approaches based in hermeneutics attempt to understand the way people interpret the ethical dilemmas that have been described philosophically. Researchers such as Coff (2006) point to the importance of identifying the 'conditions of possibility' of the moral and normative decisions required of people. In *The taste for ethics*, Coff (2006, 23) extends Ricoeur's understanding of ethics to food and states that food ethics is 'the vision of the good life with and for others in fair food production practices'. A key condition of ethical choice is the capacity to imagine and act according to the needs of others. The 'Other' may refer to other humans, the environment or animals. With the case of sustainable seafood choice, consideration of the Other may involve taking into account future generations, oceans and fish. Yet, as examples from research have shown, taking into account the needs of the Other in practice is not straightforward.

Moral dimensions of food choice are open to interpretation with shifts in meanings and contexts. Coff (2012) raises this question of interpretation through the example of providing king prawns for dinner. He describes how the supplier of the dinner may provide king prawns as a gesture of kindness and as a sign of a tasty meal. However, the receiver may interpret the prawns as a sign of environmental degradation and exploitation of workers. These shifting values placed on the prawns result in different interpretations of ethics and illustrate the interpretive and context relatedness of food choice. Coff (2012) notes these varied interpretations point to different concepts of time and space—the supplier of the food referring to the present time of the dinner, while the receiver of the food considers a distant time and place of the food's production. It can also be argued that each considers different interpretations of the Other and the 'trace' of the production history. The supplier of the meal considers the Other to be the receiver of the food, while the receiver considers the prawns and the

environment as the Other. This example illustrates the role of interpretation of the symbolic aspects of food in everyday food-choosing practices. However, further research is needed to investigate how these everyday interpretive practices are related to normative and cultural forces within these practices. This thesis thus builds on this work and investigates the interpretive and normative contexts of food ethics discourse.

### *1.2.3 Self-regulation of conduct*

Another approach for understanding how ethical food choice is enacted at the level of practice is provided through applying a Foucaultian understanding of ethics as 'the relationship you ought to have with yourself' (Foucault 1984). For Foucault (1986), ethics concerns the way individuals are expected to constitute themselves as moral subjects of their own actions through regulation of their conduct and 'care for the self'. This involves aligning their actions with the moral positions made available to them through discourses. Looking at how this applies to food ethics, a series of recent studies have drawn on Foucault's work to investigate how food discourse intersects with other discourses and positions people as moral subjects (Coveney 2006, Schneider and Davis 2010). In *Food morals and meaning*, John Coveney (2006) discusses the way people have been positioned historically through nutrition discourse, and he illustrates how this intersects with other discourses, such as parenting or the wholefood movement. These discourses 'govern at-a-distance' through binding subjects to the language of the discourse (Coveney 2006; Rose and Miller 2010). These diverse discourses can create contradictory moral obligations or what Miller calls 'ethical incompleteness' (1994, xii), which leads to a continual self-problematisation of ethical considerations (Coveney 2006, 165). As Coveney explains, moral subjects are 'constantly matching their expectations in the world with the moral choices or categories made available through expert discourse' (Coveney 2006, 165). In this way, discourses about food and health play a role in the self-regulation of everyday life by setting a benchmark for the type of conduct to measure oneself against.

To explore moral positionings within nutrition discourse, Schneider and Davis (2010) show how magazine articles problematise food choice and position the reader to 'self-improve' and align with healthy eating choices. Comparing magazine articles from 1951 to 2006, they illustrate the changing focus from 'health improvement' and caring for others to 'disease prevention' and caring for the self. For example, the discourse of nutrition presented within advertisements in 1951 defines ideas of what it means to be a 'good' mother or housewife by providing nutritious meals for the family. In later editions, a code of conduct is presented where people are called to be 'empowered' and make informed choices for their own health. This work highlights the way in which normative expectations guide 'food choice' and call people to align their actions with certain ways of life presented within the discourse as 'healthy food consumers' (Schneider and Davis 2010, 300). Such work illustrates how cultural norms come to be positioned within discourse and how this discourse calls for the self-problematisation of conduct.

These key approaches to understanding food ethics as outlined above, all offer important understandings of food choice regulation and draw attention to the normative and interpretive dimensions of practice. This thesis builds on these contributions by drawing these approaches together to see how people are positioned at both the normative level of regulation and the interpretation of this in settings of practice. The Internet provides a setting with which to explore, in detail, how people have been called to regulate their conduct by looking at the ways in which moral positionings are accomplished within food ethics discourse and how these positionings are interpreted and translated in other discourses. The following sections will outline how the case study of an online Sustainable Seafood Guide will enable an investigation of the normative and interpretive dimensions of practice in the context of food choice regulation.

## 1.3 Calls for sustainable seafood consumption: investigating ethical constructs of fish

In order to investigate the way in which people have been enjoined to participate in food ethics discourse, this thesis focuses on the specific policy issue of consuming 'sustainable seafood' as expressed in the online Sustainable Seafood Guide hosted by the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS). This focus enables an exploration of how people become morally positioned as ethical agents and how they respond to these positions in two participatory websites that discuss the Guide in discourses located in diverse fields – an academic field and lifestyle field. Fishing opens up a range of ethical questions, from fish sentience (Beckoff 2007) and the moral status of fish (Bovenkerk and Meijboom 2012) to the environmental impacts of fishing practices (Black 2008) and health implications of fish consumption (Costa et al. 2016). While each of these aspects of ethics would be worthy of further study, this thesis focuses on the policy issue of consuming 'sustainable seafood' as expressed in the AMCS Guide. This is a topical issue that allows for the study of a diverse set of relationships surrounding notions of ethical food choice and varied contexts of practice.

Fish has become a global food item that is produced and consumed across many countries, cultures, and classes (Skladany 2008). In recent years, as the worldwide consumption of fish has increased (Verbeke et al. 2007), global attention has been placed on the impacts of overfishing and depletion of certain fish species (Hebert 2010). This has led to a growing interest in the concept of 'sustainable seafood' as a response to the problem of overfishing. According to the Australian Marine Conservation Society, sustainable seafood is considered to be fish that is caught with 'minimal impact upon fish populations or the wider marine environment.' (AMCS 2012). However, there is some contention and debate around the classification of 'sustainable seafood'. This is evident, for example, in the case of the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) 'blue label' certification for sustainable wild fisheries endorsed by the World Wildlife Fund but not endorsed by other environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, because of the inclusion of some depleted fisheries (Lang, Barling and Caraher 2009). As this demonstrates, the policy issue of 'sustainable seafood' involves a complex

network of relations among varied agents including both human and nonhuman. This includes technology (e.g. aquaculture farms, fishing poles and lines), labels (e.g. the MSC blue label that signifies how fish were farmed) and sustainable seafood guidelines that classify fish types (e.g. the AMCS Guide). This study explores both the human and nonhuman actants[1] involved in constructing moral positions surrounding 'sustainable seafood' as a case of food ethics discourse.

In addition, from a cultural perspective, examining the rules and rituals involved in fish consumption across time and societies provides an example of the symbolic classifications of food. In many cultural and religious groups, fish are classified as separate from land-dwelling animals and are involved in different rules of consumption. For Roman Catholics, fish can be eaten on days of abstinence while the consumption of meat from land-dwelling animals is prohibited. Indeed, even in secularised societies the consumption of fish has become a sacred ritual during Easter and Christmas. In contemporary society, fish consumption is understood in both sacred and profane terms across diverse fields. From an animal ethics perspective, the consumption of fish is taboo for vegetarians and vegans due to fish welfare considerations. However, some people identify as 'pescetarian' and continue to eat fish while excluding other animals from their diet. From a health perspective, certain species of fish are associated with high levels of mercury and considered a threat to human health (Verdouw et al. 2011) while other species are associated with health benefits due to high levels of omega-3 fatty acids (Grieger et al. 2013). Relevant to this study, from an environmental perspective, some species are taboo based on association with 'overfishing' or the fishing methods used and the effects on marine life, while other fish species are given the label of 'sustainable seafood' and considered an 'ethical choice'. Fish thus provides a rich case by which to study the normative and interpretive dimensions of food ethics.

[1] The term 'actant' is borrowed from actor-network theory (Akrich and Latour 1992) to refer to both human and nonhuman entities that have the ability to make things happen (see Cerulo 2009, 534)

## 1.4 Case study overview: online Sustainable Seafood Guide

This thesis takes up the challenge of investigating the normative and interpretive contexts of ethical food choice. As introduced above, in order to look at how people are enjoined to make ethical food choices, a case study of the online AMCS Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide is used to investigate how the online Guide frames 'ethical choice' and conduct and exposes the processes involved in guiding actants within the website. The AMCS Guide calls for people to 'choose seafood wisely' and 'make a difference' through their choices. In this Guide, fish are classified using a traffic-light symbol as either a 'better' (green), 'think twice' (orange) or 'say no' (red) choice (see Figure 1.1). This classification is based on environmental considerations including levels of fish stock and the production methods used.

Figure 1.1 **AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide search box**

This Sustainable Seafood Guide is situated within a larger website hosted by the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS). The AMCS is a non-profit charity that was founded in 1965 by a group of marine scientists in Queensland with the aim of protecting the ocean and marine wildlife. During this time the organisation has been involved in various marine conservation projects in Australia including campaigning for marine parks and reserves, wetland conservation and promoting sustainable seafood. In 2004 the AMCS launched Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide. This guide was originally available as a hard-copy printed version and later released as an online guide in 2010. It was made available on mobile devices as an iPhone app in 2011 and android app in 2014. Thus, at the time of this analysis, the online AMCS Guide was available via the website (www.sustainableseafood.org.au) and as an iPhone app. Being affiliated with the AMCS website, people are enjoined to

interpret the Guide within the context of 'marine conservation' as presented within the website.

The AMCS Guide is not only present within this primary website source but is taken up and discussed within other online blogs, forums and websites. To investigate how the Guide is taken up by those called to action within the Guide, this study will show how the AMCS Guide is discussed within two participatory blog websites and interpreted and repurposed in different ways—in the frame of 'critique' in an Academic Blog and the frame of 'casual advice' in a Lifestyle Blog. These two participatory websites were selected because they represent different epistemic communities and nominate diverse contexts of use. The Academic Blog article is written by two marine researchers and it discusses the Guide in the context of use in a supermarket where information on the Guide conflicts with other guides. The Lifestyle Blog article is written by a celebrity television presenter and discusses the Guide in the context of casual advice. Data was collected from the initial blog articles and the comments sections of both sites.

Analysis of these participatory websites allows for an exploration of the diverse ways in which people repurpose the Guide and describe their own conduct in relation to the contexts nominated in the Guide and additional contexts nominated in the blogs. This analysis will show how the moral injunction to make ethical choice is discussed in different settings and given context within these sites. Thus, this demonstrates how 'ethical choice' is guided through these online sites and enables reflection on the role of 'context' in these practices.

### *1.4.1 Internet: resource for ethical choice*

This thesis places particular focus on the role of the Internet as a resource in enjoining people to make choices. Much of our contemporary public life is organised and debated through the media (Happer and Philo 2013). With the development of Web 2.0 and social media sites, especially over the last decade, the Internet is becoming a growing space for information seeking and

information sharing. The ubiquitous nature of the Internet—available on computers, tablets and smart phones—has made access to online sites part of our everyday world (Lupton 2014). People share and seek information on a range of 'ethical' topics, with various websites, blogs and discussion forums providing advice on what choices we should be making in our daily lives. Within the context of 'food ethics', the Internet is a place for various types of interactions from sharing recipes, offering health advice, drawing awareness to ethical issues such as animal welfare and providing guides for consumption.

As people are increasingly asked to take responsibility for their own health (Schneider and Davis 2010), the Internet provides a means for self-regulation through enabling access to information from a variety of sources. The Internet is thus seen as another source of authority for making food choices beyond government regulation. For example, the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission's (2009) report *A healthy future for all Australians* states that 'Health is one of the most important issues for Australians, and it is an issue upon which people often turn to government for leadership' (2009, 45). Yet this document also recognises the role of communications technology and the Internet 'arm[ing] us with more information and [enabling] us to demand more choice as consumers', which makes people 'less likely to accept the decisions being made on our behalf and more likely to exercise our right to choose an alternative' (2009, 47). Therefore, the Internet can be seen as offering another source of information and authority that can be used by self-governing individuals to make decisions about their own health and the health of society. The ways in which the Internet provides a platform for guiding ethical consumption choices will be further investigated within this thesis.

The case study of the online AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide and its uptake in two participatory blogs is twofold. First, it enables a detailed investigation of the language and interactional mechanisms used to orient to a moral order and call certain users to action and, in turn, how those nominated take up this call in discourses located in diverse fields. Second, as an online guide, it enables an investigation of the role of the Internet in prescribing information on ethical

choices for food consumption and how this information is taken up and passed through various sites. This provides for the analysis of various layers of 'contexts' that are called on within the sites and makes a contribution to the field of food ethics by bringing substantive focus to the Internet as a resource in moral choices.

## 1.5 Aims of the study and research questions

This thesis offers a timely contribution to the field of food ethics. With increasing attention placed on the environmental, social and welfare impacts of food production and consumption (Carolan 2014; Singer and Mason 2006), it is imperative to understand the ways in which people are enjoined to make food choices. This thesis seeks to understand this process through examining the moral positioning in food ethics discourse and how these positions are relayed and repurposed through other dominant discourses. Focusing on the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide as a case study this thesis looks at how people are called to make ethical choices and how this message is taken up in diverse fields through the study of an Academic Blog and Lifestyle Blog. This thesis is grounded in a sociological framework and employs theories and methods of the 'interaction order' to examine the moral positions oriented to in these diverse discourses. In line with the above review, this thesis addresses questions raised but not fully explored concerning the mechanisms of food choice regulation and, in particular, the role of context and conduct in food choice practices.

This thesis is motivated by four central aims. The first aim is to investigate the discourse of the AMCS Guide to reveal how the moral order of food ethics is constructed and oriented to through the Guide, exposing relationships between conduct and contexts of practice. Second, the thesis aims to examine the normative and interpretive dimensions of practice through looking at the role of norms in regulating conduct and at the interpretive mechanisms for achieving moral ordering within the interaction order of online encounters. Third, the

thesis aims to explore the role of humans and nonhumans positioned as moral subjects within food ethics discourse. Finally, an overarching aim of the thesis is to perform an 'epistemological break' from preconceived relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' to see how these relationships are accomplished through situated contexts of practice.

To achieve these aims, this thesis is guided by the following research questions:

- In what ways does the online Sustainable Seafood Guide frame 'ethical choice' and conduct?

- In what ways do the moral positions nominated in the Sustainable Seafood Guide get taken up and translated in discourses located in diverse fields?

It is important to make clear that this thesis is not setting out to investigate how the Sustainable Seafood Guide is *responded to* or *used* in specific contexts of people's everyday practices. Rather, the thesis takes a step back and asks how the cultural world in which everyday practices are enacted comes to be given meaning and how 'contexts' are invoked as relevant by members of the interaction. Before we can understand how everyday choices and practices may operate in specific contexts there is a need to expose the constitution of this cultural world and the cultural codes that underlie these practices. To the social actor, this cultural world may appear as the way things 'just are' but this thesis demonstrates how this cultural backdrop is produced and reproduced through members' interactions. This is investigated through an exploration of the way ethical discourse, in the form of the Sustainable Seafood Guide, morally positions people and how these positions are taken up and reframed in other divergent discourses – namely, within academic and lifestyle discourse.

## 1.6 Ethnomethodological approach: exploring the 'interaction order' of online seafood guide and blogs

In order to investigate the normative and interpretive dimensions of ethical practices encountered online, this study adopts an ethnomethodological approach that captures the interactional methods used by members in producing moral orders through the interactional settings of the websites. This approach recognises the moral work involved in producing and orienting to this order. In particular, it will draw attention to the 'interaction order' of the online encounters as a discrete level of social ordering that requires constitutive achievement and mutual commitment (Rawls 1989). As will be explained in Chapter 3, this level of ordering can be understood through the work of Goffman's (1959, 1981) elaboration of the self, Garfinkel's (1967) focus on mutual definitions of the situation and Sacks' (1992) work on shared features of talk and membership categorization. Through this interaction order approach, relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts' nominated as relevant through situated encounters of online settings will be explored. In addition, both human and nonhuman actants are shown to play a role in nominating and responding to situations for moral action in the Guide and blogs. Thus the approach adopted in this thesis also remains sensitive to the material relations involved in ethical encounters (Latour 2005).

Through adopting this approach, this thesis departs from relying on preconceived understandings of relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' and turns the focus to the way in which ethics is accomplished in situated practice. This follows Durkheim's (1982[1907]) warning against the application of 'spontaneous sociology' whereby socially produced notions or 'prenotions' are treated as taken-for-granted 'facts' in sociological investigations. This can lead the investigator to the deceptive understanding that these 'facts' and relationships are self-evident or natural and can hide underlying assumptions in the study. In *The craft of sociology*, Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (1991) call for an 'epistemological break' from familiar concepts through the practice of 'epistemological vigilance' in order to remain aware of

the tacit application of concepts and to 'break the relationships that are most apparent because most familiar, in order to bring out the new system of relations among the elements' (Bourdieu et al. 1991, 14). An ethnomethodological approach assists with this endeavour by paying attention to the way in which understandings of 'ethics' and 'contexts' are oriented to and produced by members within situated contexts of practice.

The underlying purpose of this thesis is not to attempt to analyse or judge the 'rightness' of particular practices or choices. Such a line of questioning falls within the same spontaneous sociological stance of measuring practices based on the predefined ideas of right and wrong that I am departing from. Rather, this thesis asks how certain practices and agents become enrolled within 'food ethics' discourse and taken up in diverse discourses. Breaking from *a priori* understandings of ethics contributes new knowledge to the substantive issue of food ethics in practice, as well as to the deeper theoretical issue of how ethics is conceptualised in the research process.

## 1.7 Thesis outline

This thesis comprises eight chapters. This first chapter has introduced the research problem and shown how people have been called to make 'ethical' food choices. Attempts to regulate food choice have relied on guides and information campaigns that call on people to make prescribed food choices for their own wellbeing and for the benefit of society. The Internet is increasingly used as a platform for providing information to be used by self-governing individuals in order to make 'responsible' and 'informed' choices. Yet questions remain about how 'ethical choice' is achieved in practice. Scholarship within the field of food ethics draws attention to the salience of 'context' in understanding ethical choice at both the normative and interpretive levels. To explore this further, an ethnomethodological approach will be used to investigate the interaction order of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide and uptake of the Guide in participatory blogs. Rather than rely on predetermined understandings of relationships

between ‘ethical conduct’ and ‘context’, this thesis investigates how various ‘contexts’ are oriented to by members of the interaction.

Chapter 2 reviews the contribution that diverse scholarship has made to understanding the program theory inherent in food choice regulation. This chapter first outlines the substantive field of ethical consumption and shows how the ‘ethical consumer’ has been called as a key agent of ‘choice’. It then reviews the contributions made within the disciplinary field of food ethics. Philosophical and hermeneutic approaches focus on how ‘ethical choice’ is weighed up and interpreted in generic settings of practice in which ‘context’ becomes an important feature. An overview will then be provided of how studies from a cultural sociology perspective raise awareness of the symbolic forces inherent in food choice practices. Each of these diverse contributions provides important insights into understanding different aspects of food choice regulation. However, it remains to be understood how people come to be enjoined as moral subjects within food ethics discourse and how they take up these moral positions. This thesis sets out to fill these identified gaps by investigating the mechanisms and processes involved in morally positioning actants within the discourse of the Sustainable Seafood Guide and identifying how these moral positions are taken up in diverse discourses presented in two pre-established participatory blogs: an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog.

Following on from this, Chapter 3 then sets out the conceptual framework suitable for capturing the normative and interpretive ‘contexts’ oriented to within the online settings. In doing so, this chapter provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the moral order. It first outlines a social understanding of ‘ethics’ based on the work of Durkheim that brings attention to the role of collective symbols and classifications in providing moral ordering of conduct. Following this, it then shows how the socially embedded understandings of ethical conduct are played out in settings of practice. This draws on three theorists of the ‘interaction order’—Goffman, Garfinkel and Sacks—who each focus on different aspects of how the social is achieved in *situations* of practice. Finally, this chapter outlines a theoretical framework that

takes into account both human and nonhuman agencies, such as 'fish' and 'websites', which form part of the ethical context. The conceptual framework outlined in this chapter provides a theoretical grounding for understanding domains of 'ethical conduct' in relation to situated contexts of practice.

Chapter 4 presents the logic of inquiry and research design used to investigate ethical conduct within situated contexts of practice in the online sites. Building on from the conceptual framework, the study is sensitised to notice instances of moral work within the interaction order and human–nonhuman interactions. For example, the study makes 'analytically noticeable' within the interaction participant roles and alignments, sequential organisation, membership categorization and nonhuman agencies. An abductive logic of inquiry is discussed that involves layers of interpretation based on members' lay understandings and researchers' inferences. The Internet is then identified as providing a rich source of 'naturally occurring' data in order to explore the interaction order. The chapter then outlines the methods of data collection, selection and analysis. A theoretical sampling approach is used to select utterances within the AMCS Guide and blogs that illuminate the normative order and explicate the methods used for positioning actants within food ethics discourse. Data collection and analysis is guided by ethnomethodological principles, including membership categorization analysis, to explicate the ways in which the AMCS Guide is translated through different online contexts and exposes relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice'.

In response to the first research question, Chapter 5 investigates how actants are positioned within the moral order of the Sustainable Seafood Guide. In particular, it looks at how the Guide enjoins people to 'be informed'. Analysis shows how the Guide is positioned within the symbolic frame of 'marine conservation' through the interpretive setting of the website. This is evident in the header that acts like a pre-sequence to the interaction and uses images of pristine marine life and captions that call for protection of the ocean; for example, 'our choices affect our oceans'. The chapter then looks at how 'recipients' and 'authors' of the website are morally positioned within this frame

space through the sequential organisation of the site and devices such as topic nomination and pronouns. Identity work is a key moral feature of the interaction order of the site. The final section of Chapter 5 looks at how recipients of the site are called to align with the identities of 'seafood consumer', 'Australian' and 'user of the site'. These identities are category-bound to actions both within the scene of the website and scenes external to the site. For example, the website calls people to align with the identity of 'seafood consumer' who is category-bound to 'need information' provided in the AMCS Guide in order to 'choose seafood wisely'. Through this process, the Guide is positioned within the website as an authoritative tool for achieving 'ethical choice'.

In response to the second research question, Chapter 6 then looks at how those who are called to 'be informed' in the Sustainable Seafood Guide take up and translate these positions and how they describe their own conduct in diverse discourses. Analysing two divergent participatory websites—an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog—exposes different 'contexts' and orientations to the Guide. Through recipient design of both sites and epistemic claims of authority, the authors of the blog article translate the Guide within a frame of 'critique' in the Academic Blog and within a frame of 'casual advice' within the Lifestyle Blog. This is then taken up within the comments section, where authority and epistemic claims are further negotiated. Through the interactions within the site, additional understandings of 'ethics' and 'contexts of practice' are accomplished.

Chapter 7 brings these findings together in a discussion of the interactional accomplishment of producing 'contexts' in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely', as oriented to in the Guide and participatory blogs. The blogs orient to the same agents, acts and scenes nominated in the Guide yet introduce additional scenes of use. The chapter then illustrates how both the Guide and blogs orient to two analytically discrete levels of ordering: the symbolic level of the encounter and the machinery of interactional devices. The symbolic level can be understood through the process of identification and recognition. This process relies on nominating a variety of contexts relevant to moral choices, such as calls to 'protect our oceans' and identify as 'Australians'

who ‘love the ocean’ and ‘love seafood’. The interactional mechanisms to accomplish this symbolic level of understanding include elements of the occasioned corpus, assigning actions to members and negotiating moral accountability through epistemic ordering. This process highlights the complex mechanisms involved in enjoining actants within the moral order of food ethics discourse.

The final chapter, Chapter 8, concludes the thesis through a summary of three key contributions made by this study. This chapter first discusses the contribution made to the substantive field of food ethics. It then provides an overview of the theoretical implications for understanding ethics as situationally accomplished within the interaction order of the website. The third contribution is the methodological significance of investigating online sites using an interaction order approach. In conclusion, the chapter outlines the strengths and limitations of this approach and suggests areas for future research.

# CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING FOOD ETHICS IN CONTEXT

## 2.1 Overview of chapter

As discussed in the previous chapter, with increasing calls for people to make 'ethical' food choices in response to environmental, health and welfare concerns, this study has identified a need to further investigate how people are enjoined to participate in food ethics discourse. The previous chapter has situated this study in the broader context of food choice regulation that places emphasis on presumed relationships between conduct and context. Taking this issue forward, this chapter reviews research that is relevant to understanding food choice regulation and locates the specific gaps in knowledge that the thesis will address.

The AMCS Guide has been selected as a case study for exploring the issue of food choice regulation. The specific program logic of the AMCS Guide, described in Table 2.1 below, illustrates a particular question of regulation raised through such guides; namely, these guides are built on the assumption that interventions involving 'information provision' will lead to the mechanism of 'being informed' and the outcome of making prescribed food choices. However, it remains to be understood how these mechanisms of 'being informed' operate. This goes directly to questions regarding relationships between conduct and context.

Table 2.1 **Guide to regulate food choice and identified gap**

| | INTERVENTIONS > | MECHANISMS > | OUTCOME | *GAP REMAINING ?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMCS Guide** | Information Provision | 'Being Informed' | Making Prescribed Food Choices | *YET/ How does this work?* |

Thus, the critical question that arises out of this logic and forms the central focus of this chapter pertains to the assumptions around this mechanism of 'being informed' and of relationships with conduct. Aspects of this problematic have

been explored across a number of areas within the field of food ethics. Within this chapter, four key areas are reviewed:

1. the substantive field of ethical consumption
2. philosophical approaches within applied ethics
3. hermeneutic understandings of everyday interpretations
4. cultural approaches to understanding food choice

Each of these fields contributes new understandings to the issue of food choice regulation and exposes different relationships between conduct and context, yet gaps still remain in the particular knowledge generated by these approaches. In reviewing each of these fields, the table above will be revisited throughout this chapter to show additional understandings contributed through this literature. This in turn will point to the gaps remaining that will be addressed in this study.

This chapter is organised in two parts. The first section of this chapter reviews scholarship addressing issues of food choice regulation and maps out the current field of food ethics and studies of food practices. The chapter begins with an examination of the substantive issue of 'ethical consumption' and how the 'ethical consumer' has been called as a key agent of 'choice' in ethical consumption discourse. This field of study defines relationships between information approaches and characteristics of consumers making ethical choices. For example, the 'ethical consumer' is positioned as making 'informed' choices through responding to information campaigns and labels (Irvine 2013). While these approaches help define conditions surrounding notions of food choice, they share common assumptions in the treatment of 'ethical choice' as a predefined concept and resource to achieve desired outcomes in the study. To further understand 'ethical conduct' as a topic in its own right, the second section then turns to an overview of the field of food ethics, focusing particularly on philosophical and hermeneutic perspectives. These approaches focus on how 'ethical choice' is weighed up and interpreted in generic settings of practice and raise questions about the 'context' of ethical choice. Finally, the fourth section

turns to look at cultural dimensions of food choice and how food choice practices are embedded within cultural and symbolic processes. While these diverse fields of study contribute further insight into understanding notions of ethical choice and highlight relationships between conduct and context, what remains to be understood are the processes and mechanisms through which conduct and context are achieved in practice. This forms the central focus of this thesis.

The second part of this chapter then discusses the approach this study will take to investigate how people are enjoined to participate in food ethics discourse. It will first explain how this study shifts focus from preconceived understandings of relationships between ethical conduct and context to instead see how these relationships are accomplished in locally produced settings. An ethnomethodological approach is outlined that provides the 'missing detail' of the topic under investigation through investigating how social members produce meaning through situated occasions of interaction. This chapter then concludes by outlining the research questions that are identified through the chapter in response to the identified gaps in the way conduct and context are understood in current responses to food ethics.

## 2.2 Ethical consumption discourse: questioning the logic of ethical choice

The first section of this chapter will review current scholarship on 'food ethics' within the substantive field of ethical consumption. The field of 'ethical consumption' has received increasing attention as an area of study since the late 20th century (Newholme and Shaw 2007), covering a range of disciplines including sociology, geography and material culture. Studies of 'ethical consumption' are motivated to address gaps between broader principles that guide consumption, such as sustainability principles, and how this relates to consumption practices. This section will focus on four key themes that emerge within these studies in the treatment of 'ethical choice'. First, it will outline how the 'ethical consumer' is identified as a key agent called to make 'ethical choices'

and to actively respond to information campaigns. Following this, attention will be placed on the way in which food becomes imbued with moral qualities of 'good' and 'bad' and plays a key role as an object of ethical choice. Third, an overview of information approaches used to encourage ethical consumption will be provided that encourage 'good' food choices. Finally, this opens up questions about relational aspects of food and the role of labels and social structures in producing food choice outcomes. To this end, a set of studies has looked at how food is embedded within material culture and the broader 'ethical complex'.

### *2.2.1 Enjoining the 'ethical consumer' to make choices*

Since the late 20th century, there has been growing research interest in investigating the 'ethics' of food systems and consumption practices (Mepham 2012). This has culminated in a substantive field of study known as 'ethical consumption'. Within this field of study, the 'ethical consumer' has emerged as a key agent responsible for making 'ethical choices' for their own sake and for the sake of broader social concerns. Three key themes emerge within the literature in terms of relationships between 'ethical consumers' and 'choice'. First, ethical consumers are assumed to make 'informed' rational choices based on broader social concerns (e.g. balancing principles of sustainability). Second, ethical consumers are called to be 'responsible' by self-managing their consumption practices and making 'good' choices. Third, ethical consumers are defined as a fixed identity who acts predictably within predefined settings. Each of these themes will be discussed in turn.

It is assumed that 'ethical consumers' will make 'informed' choices that take into account broader social goals. For example, the 'ethical consumer' is called to make 'ethical choices' based on health, the environment, animal welfare, human rights and labour working conditions (Bostrom and Klintman 2009; Dobson 2003; Dowler 2008; Tallontire, Rentsendorj and Blowfield 2001; Wilkins 2005). In this way, ethical choice becomes associated with care for 'distant others' such as the environment, animals and future generations (Barnett et al. 2005).

Distance is also presented as an obstacle to knowing about food and, therefore, the ethical consumer is called to be 'informed' about the production history of food (Coff 2006). An 'informed' ethical consumer is constructed as one who knows where food is from and makes rational decisions based on calculated information. This is discussed further below in relation to information campaigns.

The second theme is in the treatment of the 'ethical consumer' as making 'responsible' choices by self-managing their consumption choices and being actively engaged in making 'good' food choices. Consumption choices are shown as a way to actively express and govern the 'self' (Barnett, Cafaro and Newholm 2005). Draper and Green (2002) use examples of food safety policy in the United Kingdom to show the changing construct from 'passive public' in need of protection to 'consumers' requiring information to make the 'right' choice and 'active citizens' who exercise their rights and responsibilities to shape policy. This creates an active 'consumer-citizen' who is obliged to actively 'self-govern' (Draper and Green 2002; Johnston 2008). In this way, notions of 'good' consumption choices are bound with notions of 'good' citizenship. In the context of food choice, Wilkins (2005) describes the 'ethical consumer' as a 'food citizen' who is expected to 'engag[e] in food-related behaviours that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system.' (Wilkins 2005, 269). Thus, through making 'ethical choices' for the sake of collective social goals the 'ethical consumer' is shown to be demonstrating oneself as a 'responsible' citizen.

A final assumption to emerge within the literature is in the treatment of the 'ethical consumer' as a definable, static concept. There have been attempts to define characteristics of 'ethical consumers' in terms of sociodemographic variables and structural patterns. For example, reporting on the literature, Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) define characteristics of the 'ethical consumer' as well-informed, above-average educated, middle-aged with a higher income and a prestigious occupation. These studies construct the 'ethical consumer' as belonging to a unified, homogenous group faced with the same situations, rights

and responsibilities. Within these studies, notions of the 'ethical consumer' is constructed within the 'research world' and removed from everyday experiences. Treating 'ethical consumers' as a unified group faced with the same ability and willingness to be 'ethical' fails to recognise the multiple fields occupied by these groups and the effect this has on the realisation of this choice in practice.

In line with literature on the consumer-citizen, this thesis follows Miller's (2001) recommendation to avoid *a priori* assumptions around people's participation as 'ethical consumers' but rather to open up the question of the way texts call for particular identities in consumption and whether texts allow for identities to be refused. Miller poses an ethnomethodological question and asks if cultures allow people to refuse membership of their collective identities? To understand this, there is a need to first see how people are called to participate in ethical discourses and how they describe their own conduct in response to this call, as is the central focus of this thesis.

### *2.2.2 Inscribing food as a 'good' or 'bad' choice*

A second key theme identified within 'ethical consumption' literature is in the way food has become inscribed with an ethical value as a 'good' or 'bad' choice (Coveney 2006). In order to make 'ethical choices', consumers are called to choose the 'right' food. A moral order exists within the literature in which certain choices are constructed as 'good', or 'ethical', food choices. In the context of sustainability and environmental ethics, food that is 'good' is associated with local consumption, reduced food miles and small supply chains (Carolan 2006; DeLind 2006), fair trade and ethical treatment of workers (Adams and Raisborough 2008) and organic farming and less-intensive farming practices (Lockie and Halpin 2005; Padel and Foster 2005). Thus, values associated with 'good food choice' lie beyond nutrition and taste to include broad and at times conflicting principles (Connell, Smithers and Joseph 2008). Further

understanding of the symbolic nature of food is provided in cultural studies of food as discussed in Section 2.4 below.

### *2.2.3 Information and food labeling to encourage 'ethical choice'*

The third key theme identified in the field of 'ethical consumption' is the use of information campaigns to encourage 'ethical choice'. Ethical consumers are called to self-govern their consumption practices by being 'responsible' and 'informed' and responding to, or seeking out, information about where food has come from. Information campaigns are presented as a key resource to enable 'ethical consumers' to make 'ethical choices' as informed consumers and responsible citizens. This is presented alongside notions that consumers are disconnected from their food and need information in order to make informed decisions (Hepting, Jaffe and Maciag 2014). Information about the food's history is presented as the 'missing link', with the assumption that ethical choice will follow. As Irvine (2013, 146) states 'motivated moral agents who wish to act on their ethical preferences and achieve particular outcomes in the public sphere require information.' Statements such as this from Irvine (2013) are indicative of the way in which ethical choice is considered the direct and causal result of information provision.

This rational individual model has led to top-down information campaigns to connect notions of food production to food consumption. Food labelling has emerged as a means of 'information provision' and is considered an important feature of food ethics (Kjærnes 2012; Zwart 2000). The practice of labelling food emerged in the late 19th century to indicate calories and enable knowledge of food content (Zwart 2000). Today, large amounts of information presented on food labels alert consumers to potential 'moral contaminants' through the identification of content and origin of food, the production method used and the presence of any animal products. Yet labels are not just about what information is contained on the label but also relate to broader practices that surround the label. As Freidberg (2004) notes, much information that gives organic and fair

trade labels their meaning and value come from popular media, not from formal education. Thus, labels need to be understood within this broader 'ethical complex'.

Information campaigns are based on the assumption that, instructed with information on the 'right' choice through labels and moral injunctions, consumers will make the prescribed choice. This presents the view of consumers as rational decision-makers who 'perceive needs, gather information, set this within their attitudes and their perception of the social context and develop behavioural intentions' (Newholm and Shaw 2007, 256). Inherent in such approaches is the understanding that choice and behaviour is the direct outcome of attitude and information. Within such behaviour-change campaigns, it is believed that behaviour is the outcome of weighing up various factors and selecting the choice that best aligns with an attitude to the issue under question. Taking the attitude–behaviour approach, information campaigns believe that a consumer who 'cares for the environment' and is instructed on how their actions can be 'ethical' will choose their actions accordingly. However, the connection between attitude, information, behaviour and choice has long been critiqued (Bray, Johns and Kilburn 2011, Manning 2006).

Despite the assumption that 'ethical consumers' will make food choices in line with information campaigns and calls to 'care for the environment', studies have shown how these principles are not necessarily integrated in practice. Not all consumers make choices based on care about the environment, and even consumers who do identify as 'green' or 'reflexive' do not necessarily translate their attitudes into practice (Newholm and Shaw 2007). Reviewing the literature, Bostrom and Klintman (2009) present a picture of the typical concerned consumer as reflective, uncertain and ambivalent. While some research indicates that 'increasingly, people look to buy food in line with ethical values which take into account how the food has been produced and at what cost to producers, animals and to the natural environment' (Dowler 2008, 766), other studies have shown 'ethical consumption' is not necessarily practiced due to competing discourses and practices in everyday life (Terragni et al. 2009). For

example, Germov and William's (2008) study of the slow food movement highlights how participants express willingness to be 'ethical consumers' but find it difficult to sustain in practice.

Other factors identified for attitudes not translating into ethical consumption behaviour have been cited as contradictory and confusing moral imperatives within ethical consumption discourse (De Pelsmacker et al. 2005). An example is the purchase of 'local' versus 'fair trade' products (Morgan 2010). Within the field of environmental ethics, the ethical consumer is called to buy local products to limit the environmental impacts associated with 'food miles' (Seyfang 2007). However, within social justice campaigns, ethical consumers are called to consider worker conditions and buy fair trade products that may not be from local sources (Morgan 2010). This can lead to mixed messages about ethical choices. Another source of contradictory information, identified by Johnston (2008), relates to the disconnect between information on labels and availability of products in the shop. These factors raise the question about the role of 'information' and 'ethical choice' in practice and point to the need for the placement of ethics within broader practices.

Differences between attitude and action have also been explored through looking at notions of identity construction. Coff (2006) highlights that this attitudinal inconsistency is not due to a deliberate exaggeration or misleading by consumers but is related to the 'narrative identity' expressed by consumers and their taste for an ethical identity expressed through their vision of the 'good life', but not necessarily practiced in their 'real life' (Coff 2006, 5). For example, many people would say they opposed animal cruelty yet would not necessarily avoid a particular food product if animal welfare were at stake. Avoiding animal cruelty is a vision of the 'good life' that may not be considered in their everyday practice.

### *2.2.4 Ethical complex of food choice: recognising human and nonhuman agents*

Recent studies note how ethical consumption is not just about unified 'consumers' acting in isolation but is about other stakeholders and institutional settings that make up an 'ethical complex' (Freidberg 2004). This includes stakeholders such as producers, suppliers, retailers and non-governmental organisations (Higgins 2006; Lockie 2006; Lockie and Kitto 2000), as well as rules and standards of practice (Popke 2006) and labelling and media (Hepting, Jaffe and Maciag 2014). Ethical consumers are part of a broader ethical complex in which various agents play a role in constructing the ethical situation. Lockie (2009) looks at how specific expressions of 'food citizenship' in relation to organic food are enabled and constrained by the marketing, pricing and distribution of foods and food standards. Lockie (2009) draws on the work of Miller and Rose (1997) who integrate Latour's (1987) notion of 'action at-a-distance' with Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality to show how nonhuman objects such as advertising, pricing, labels, education, standards and guidelines can be used as techniques to 'mobilise people as consumers of particular products'. Applying these understandings to the study of 'ethical consumption' shows how multiple agents, both human and nonhuman, are involved in constituting 'ethics'.

### *2.2.5 Section summary: contributions from the field of ethical consumption*

The substantive field of 'ethical consumption' defines relationships surrounding 'ethical choice' by defining characteristics of 'choice' agents and approaches that are causally related to notions of 'good' food choice. Returning to the table introduced above, scholarship within the field of ethical consumption can be seen to contribute another layer of understanding of ethical food choice by describing characteristics associated with *interventions* (e.g. types of information

campaigns), *mechanisms* (e.g. characteristics of ethical consumers) and *outcomes* (e.g. defining 'good' food choice outcomes). This is displayed in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 **Substantive contributions to understanding ethical food choice**

| | INTERVENTIONS > | MECHANISMS > | OUTCOMES | *GAP REMAINING ?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMCS**<br><br>**Guide** | Information Provision | 'Being Informed' | Making Prescribed Food Choices | *YET/ How does this work?* |
| **SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH (ethical consumption)** | *what*<br>Define info approaches (e.g. role of labels) | *who*<br>Define characteristics of 'choosers' (e.g. socio-demographics of 'ethical consumer') | *what*<br>Define type of food choice as 'good' (e.g. local, organic) | *YET/ How is choice made in practice?* |

While this field of study provides insights into factors around ethical consumption and choice, there is a tendency within these studies to treat 'ethical choice' as a *resource* in achieving ethical outcomes. Within the above approaches, ethical choice is treated as a predefined concept, while motivating or causal factors are researched around this concept of choice. For example, 'ethical choice' is considered the outcome of the 'informed consumer' or 'active citizen' making 'informed' and 'responsible' choices based on available information in predefined settings. In doing so, the concept of 'ethical conduct' becomes a 'black box' in the investigation, with a focus on the 'environment around the phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself' (Silverman 2006, 390). Questions remain in understanding how 'ethical choice' is embedded in practice.

To address this gap, the chapter will now turn to the disciplinary field of food ethics within the branch of applied ethics, in which the notion of 'ethical conduct' is the topic of inquiry. In line with the overarching goal of this thesis, the following section will provide an overview of 'food ethics' as a field of study that addresses issues of ethical conduct as a central focus. The following examination

of philosophical and hermeneutic approaches will more precisely identify the gaps to understanding ethical conduct in practice.

## 2.3 Contemporary studies of 'food ethics'

While the 'ethics' of food has been of concern since antiquity (Coveney 2006; Zwart 2000), it is only since the 1990s that the concept of 'food ethics' has received consideration as a consolidated academic discipline (Mepham 2012). In current scholarship, food ethics involves the study of processes across the whole food chain from production to consumption, and the impacts of those processes on humans, animals and the environment. As a result, a range of topics is investigated under the umbrella term 'food ethics'. Recent contributions have come from diverse fields, including biotechnology (Hansson 2013), policy and public health (Resnik 2015), animal welfare (Lusk 2011), ecotourism (Fennell and Markwell 2015), food service management (Barkley 2012), agro-food research (Thompson 2015) and cultural perceptions of food (DeLind 2006). Despite the diverse emphases, a common thread runs through contemporary studies of food ethics. These studies all focus on identifying relationships between moral conduct with reference to particular contexts while offering responses to ethical concerns raised within the current food system. The following review highlights the way in which these relationships have been explored across the studies.

A review of the diverse approaches to studying food ethics reveals two common themes in their understanding of moral conduct. First, moral conduct and ethical dilemmas are understood with reference to the particular settings in which they are embedded. To weigh up ethical principles and outcomes of a particular action, certain philosophical approaches use thought experiments to place issues of conduct in particular, imagined settings. For example, thought experiments might be used to weigh up whether GM technology should be used to address issues of food security if it can feed a greater number of starving people but has impacts on the local environment (Thompson 2015). Other approaches, such as those within the field of hermeneutics, have sought to shift the focus to dilemmas

that occur in actual settings of practice. A key example in this approach is provided by Christian Coff (2006, 2012) who draws attention to meanings and interpretations of food items in everyday settings. A steak, he explains, may be seen as a sign of care when served for dinner but may be considered a sign of animal cruelty when confronted in the supermarket. Other social science disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology and geography, have sought to apply their own concepts and methods to describe food ethics dilemmas in varied cultural and material settings. For example, the anthropologist Daniel Miller (1998) has focused on how consumption practices can be seen as a material expression of 'love' and illustrates the way in which moral conduct is embedded in the materiality of broader consumption practices.

The second common focus inherent within studies of food ethics is the identification of and response to practical dilemmas in the field of food production, distribution and consumption. Implicitly or explicitly, the methods employed across the various sub-fields have a benchmark in their capacity to contribute to understanding problems associated with food practices. The following Table 2.3, based on Coff (2010, 36), identifies four key areas investigated under the topic of food ethics. These areas include food security, nutritional research and technology, food safety and production practices within the food chain.

Table 2.3 **Key areas of food ethics (adapted from Coff 2010, 36)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Food Security** | Just and fair food supply of food to human beings |
| **Food Safety** | Food should not endanger the health of consumers due to the presence of pathogens or pollution in the food |
| **Nutritional Research and Technology** | Developments in functional foods and health food and food-related diseases such as obesity, cardio-vascular diseases and cancer |
| **Production Practices and Conditions in Food Chain** | Ethical questions about animal welfare, the environment, sustainability, working conditions, the use of bio and nano technology, research ethics, production history of food |

Responses to these dilemmas range from methodologies that focus on interpretations of food items in everyday settings (Coff 2012, Roe 2006), risk communication strategies (Modin and Hansson 2011), technological innovation (Lowe, Phillipson and Lee 2008) and government regulation and food policy (Coveney 2010). Through these approaches, a diverse list of stakeholders is identified, including consumers, producers, farmers, health practitioners, government regulators, global organisations and technological developers. The chapter will now outline the theoretical frameworks to understanding moral conduct inherent in these studies.

### *2.3.1 Theoretical frameworks: understanding ethics and morals*

Before proceeding, it is important to take some time to describe what is understood by the concepts of 'ethics' and 'morals' both within the field of philosophy and how this is taken up in this thesis. While these terms are often used interchangeably within studies, they have different degrees of focus and emphasis. Within philosophy, ethics is broadly defined as the study of principles and justifications to determine 'right' or 'moral' conduct in particular circumstances. This is distinguished from 'morals', which are seen as the normative beliefs and values practiced by specific social groups. Thus, moral conduct is nestled within ethics as the broader study of conduct. Within the field of ethics, varied theoretical approaches examine issues of conduct. On the broadest theoretical level, there is a distinction between normative ethics focusing on ethical theories to determine right and wrong conduct and meta-ethics, which deals with the nature and meaning of moral facts. The distribution of ethical domains is outlined in the following figure (see Timmons 2002, 19).

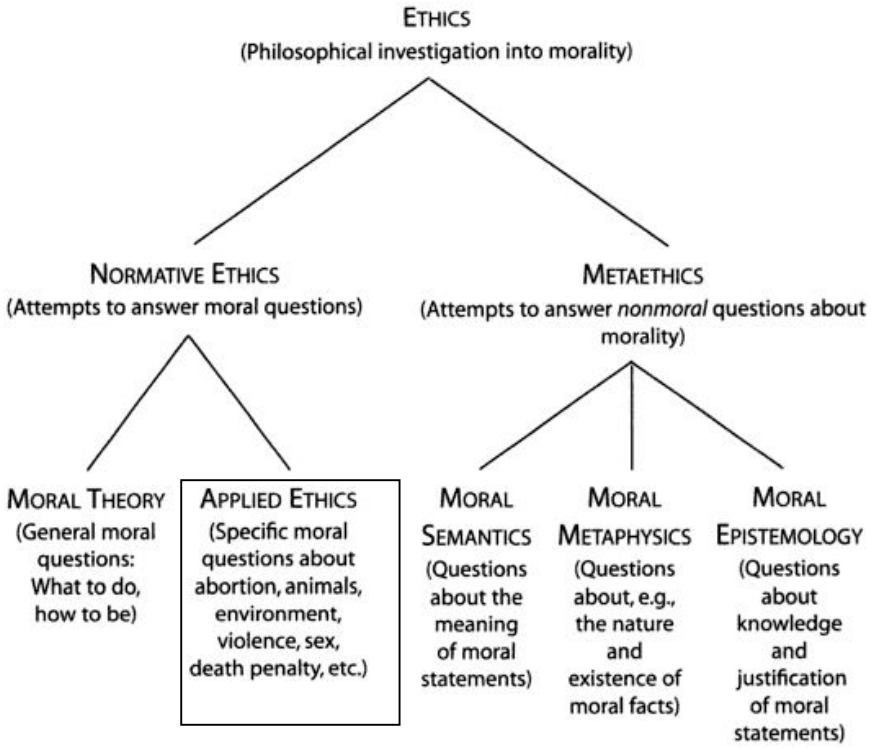


Figure 2.1 **Main divisions of ethics (from Timmons 2002, 19)**

As indicated in the figure above, the field of 'food ethics' generally resides within a sub-branch of normative ethics known as applied ethics (Kaplan 2009; Mepham 2012). Applied ethics builds upon ethical theories such as utilitarian, deontological or virtue theories to respond to particular *practical* dilemmas identified in the food system (e.g. animal welfare, environmental degradation, health) and proposes a morally justifiable course of action. Therefore, turning ethical attention to dilemmas inherent in food systems not only raises questions about the *kind of practices* deemed to be 'right' or 'moral' in certain contexts (such as avoiding meat consumption if animals have been treated cruelly), but attention is also placed on *the way in which* moral conduct is deliberated over and decided upon (such as weighing up animal welfare and workers' labour costs).

Varied approaches to the study of food ethics are underpinned by different emphases on ethical principles and relationships between conduct and context that are implicit within diverse domains of study. This is evident in the many

definitions of food ethics. For example, food ethics from a hermeneutic perspective is defined as 'the vision of the good life with and for others in fair food production practices' (Coff 2006, xi), with an emphasis on relations between self and other. An alternative definition sees food ethics as a guide or business tool, as described in Early's (2002) understanding that 'Food ethics should provide guidance on the moral worth of industrial and commercial ambitions … and, as such, it ought to be regarded as an essential scientific and business tool.' (Early 2002, 341). However, regardless of the diverse application of ethical principles, what is common between these approaches is the focus on uncovering relationships between moral conduct in particular settings of practice.

### *2.3.2 Philosophical approaches: deliberating notions of food ethics*

As discussed above, different understandings of food ethics are underpinned by specific philosophical theories that adopt diverse assumptions about relationships between ethical conduct within particular contexts. This section outlines the main ethical theories– utilitarian, deontological and virtue ethics – and their implications for understanding contexts of food practices and motivations for moral conduct. Within the literature on ethical theories, much attention has been placed on debating the values of each approach (Anthony 2011, Barnett, Cafaro and Newholm 2005, Timmons 2002). However, the purpose of this section is not to engage in a philosophical debate about which approach to take, but rather, this review seeks to highlight the way each approach has bought into view different contexts for understanding moral conduct. First, a description of the approach will be provided followed by illustrations of how this has been applied to food ethics and the implications for understanding ethical conduct.

The two dominant ethical theories inherent in the field of food ethics focus on either consequentialist utilitarian theories that privilege *good outcomes* or non-consequentialist deontological theories that privilege *rights and duties* (Barnett,

Cafaro and Newholm 2005; Korthals 2008; Mepham 2000). Each of these approaches focuses on the rational calculation of ethical conduct, yet they each emphasise different ways to determine ethical conduct, either through weighing up consequences of actions or identifying principles to guide action.

Studies adopting a *consequentialist or utilitarian* view of ethics concentrate on 'wellbeing' as a motivator for action and focus on weighing up consequences of actions to maximise the collective good. This approach can also involve cost-benefit analysis to assess the advantages and disadvantages of a particular proposal. In the context of food ethics, for example, this approach may consider the consequences of killing a particular animal for food in terms of the collective harm and good that will result from this action. Peter Singer (1995, 2006) provides a key contribution to a consequentialist argument. In *The ethics of what we eat* (2006), Singer and Mason discuss ethical considerations in terms of avoiding harm to other sentient creatures and raise questions about the moral status granted to animals in ethical decision-making. This approach is premised on the idea that ethical conduct can be calculated through thought experiments in which imagined contexts of action are envisioned to see how certain actions may affect those involved.

The second dominant ethical theory is the *deontological* approach, which defines moral conduct in relation to rights and duties of moral subjects. This approach, also known as a non-consequentialist or principled approach, emphasises principles and obligations to respect rights of others in the assessment of ethical conduct. With a basis in Kantian philosophy, the goal of this approach is to make ethical decisions that could consistently be applied to others in the same situation. This follows Kant's categorical imperative: 'Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law' (G 4:421 cited in Johnson 2014). Ethical conduct within this approach is instructed through rules to guide behaviour based on principles of rights and duties, such as autonomy and justice (Rawls 1972). For example, the Sustainable Seafood Guide uses imperatives such as 'choose seafood wisely' and 'be part of the solution' to encourage ethical seafood choices. Guides and tools

are developed to assist the individual decision-maker in making an 'ethical choice'.

Within the field of food ethics, a key example of a decision-making tool that encompasses both deontological and utilitarian theories is provided by Ben Mepham's (1996; 2012) ethical matrix, which focuses on the principles of wellbeing, autonomy and justice for key groups including producers, consumers, treated organisms (animals) and biota (wildlife). This matrix is displayed in Table 2.4 below (Mepham 2012, 324).

Table 2.4 **Generic ethical matrix for an unspecified animal production system (Mepham 2012, 324)**

| **Respect for:** | **WELLBEING** | **AUTONOMY** | **FAIRNESS** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Farmers** | 1<br>Satisfactory income and work | 2<br>Managerial freedom | 3<br>Fair trade laws |
| **Traders and Retailers** | 4<br>Satisfactory income and work | 5<br>Managerial freedom | 6<br>Fair trade laws |
| **Consumers** | 7<br>Adequate supply safe and acceptable food | 8<br>Informed choice | 9<br>Access affordable food |
| **Animals (farmed or used in research)** | 10<br>Welfare | 11<br>Behavioural freedom | 12<br>Intrinsic value |
| **Wildlife** | 13<br>Conservation | 14<br>Biodiversity | 15<br>Sustainability |

Mepham (2012) proposes this matrix to consider the ethical implications for key stakeholders involved in a hypothetical animal production system. This matrix can be modified to suit the particular ethical situation one faces. The purpose of the matrix is to assist in ethical decision-making by considering how ethical principles might be applied to relevant groups that will be affected by the decision. Mepham uses the thought experiment of how injecting the hormone bovine somatotropin (bST) into dairy cows might be weighed up using this model. This example might respect the principles labelled 1–6 in the table, yet not cells 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. Thus, the outcome of the decision would depend on

how the principles are weighted. While such tools help identify the various stakeholders involved in ethical decisions, issues have been raised about the absence of the social context in which these decisions are to occur (Korthals and Thompson 2008).

A critique of these dominant approaches to ethical decision making has been directed towards the treatment of conduct as a rationally calculated action based on either knowledge of impacts of actions or the application of universal rules and principles to guide conduct. Barnett et al. (2005) summarises these approaches as

> presenting models of ethical conduct that are highly abstract and inflexible – they seem not to leave room for the complexities and ambivalences of ethical decision-making, and in turn, they therefore present a highly abstracted model of the ways in which people are implicated and involved in their actions. (Barnett et al. 2005, 13)

Many ethical consumption campaigns and policies with a basis in these theories follow information-deficit models with the assumption that providing consumers with information about impacts of actions or prescribing moral imperatives will lead to prescribed actions (Anthony 2012). However, such approaches do not focus on the social context in which food choice is embedded.

As a departure from cost-benefit or rights-based views of ethical conduct, a third philosophical approach applied to study food ethics, known as *virtue ethics*, looks at social factors in ethical consumption relating to living a good life. Virtue ethics is described as an 'agent-based ethics' (Oakley and Cocking 2001 in Fawkes 2012) because it does not rely on external rules to prescribe ethical behaviour but instead focuses on personal character. This approach focuses on social context and human solidarity in encouraging people to live a good life (Korthlas and Thompson 2008). Researchers who follow this approach, such as Barnett et al. (2005), propose the use of virtue ethics as an appropriate response to consider the social networks involved in ethical consumption. The endorsement of virtue ethics sees consumption as an act of caring for others and desire for fairness in order to strive for a good moral character. Central to this idea is that

the desire to be 'good' is what motivates ethical conduct and virtue ethics is often tied up with notions of good citizenship and looks at motives for action based on 'the right thing to do.' (Anthony 2012). Thus, this view focuses on motivations around constructing a moral self, rather than on universal ascriptions of the action itself. While this approach does ascribe universal virtues such as care, wisdom, temperance and justice, it sees these as being carried out in specific social settings.

In relation to food ethics, this virtue ethics approach connects food choice to virtues of the self. For example, wanting to avoid genetically-modified foods may not be about care for 'the environment' but may be about care for 'the family' by providing a 'healthy' meal and showing oneself to be a 'good parent'. Such a view aligns with Foucault's (1986) understanding of ethics as 'caring for the self', in which practical choices are related to personal conduct. Applying Foucault's philosophy to the study of food, John Coveney (2006) in his book *Food, morals and meaning*, demonstrates how systems of thought around food centre around concerns for the self and social expectations. For example, nutrition discourse provides a 'daily conscience through a mode of living – a *dietetics* – which reminds individuals how to behave in regard to the rules of healthy living.' (Coveney 2006, 52). Thus, food choice within this approach can be seen in relation to performing a socially acceptable self.

Also recognising the social significance of food ethics, Korthals (2008) provides an understanding of how food is embedded in social and cultural systems by drawing attention to the cultural meanings of food that influence ethical rules and principles. He calls for a 'deliberative' or communicative approach to food ethics to investigate the application of ethical principles in their socio-cultural context. This approach focuses not just on the individual decision-maker but on the collective implication of decisions, and it involves consultation between stakeholders. Korthals and Thompson (2008, 52) see that 'free choice is shaped within a context, dependent on meanings, practices and public forums'. Thus, under this approach, ethical decision-making regarding food choice can be seen within the social context in which food receives meaning.

Approaches that study food within the domain of virtue ethics help illuminate the social factors of ethical conduct relating to concerns for the self and for living a good life, yet they rely on the understanding that people are motivated by a sense of personal will to 'do the right thing'. This approach replaces the motives of 'rights' or 'obligations' with 'caring' and 'moral character'. Ethical conduct is understood as that which contributes to personal or community values (Hursthouse 2006 cited in Anthony 2011). Thus, these normative ethical approaches can be seen to share the same underlying treatment of 'ethics' as orienting to do 'good', yet questions still remain about how this orientation towards 'good' conduct is accomplished in actual everyday practices.

### *2.3.3 Section summary: contributions from the field of applied ethics*

The main theoretical approaches applied within food ethics outlined above look at ethical conduct as being motivated by fulfilling rights and duties, calculating benefits and costs or striving for a virtuous self. The following Table 2.5 returns to the central problem identified in this thesis concerning the understanding of the program theory guiding food choice regulation and outlines the contribution made by philosophical approaches to this understanding.

Table 2.5 **Philosophical contributions to understanding ethical food choice**

| | INTERVENTIONS > | MECHANISMS > | OUTCOMES | *GAP REMAINING* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMCS Guide** | Information Provision | 'Being Informed' | Making Prescribed Food Choices | *YET/ How does this work?* |
| **SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH (ethical consumption)** | *what* Define info approaches (e.g. role of labels) | *who* Define traits of 'choosers' (e.g socio-demographic) | *what* Define type of food choice as 'good' (e.g. local) | *YET/ How is choice made in practice?* |
| **PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH (applied ethics)** | | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *YET/ How is choice made in actual settings of practice?* |

Philosophical approaches identify the way in which ethical choice is weighed up in hypothetical settings of practice by thought experiments and deliberations of ethical decisions. However, while valuable contributions have been made by these approaches, gaps remain in understanding how ethical choice is conducted in *actual* settings. To further understand how ethical choice is conducted in actual contexts of practice, the chapter now turns to look at contributions from the field of hermeneutics.

### *2.3.4 Hermeneutic approach: recognising other through trace of food*

The abovementioned philosophical approaches to food ethics concentrate on principles, obligations and rights, but less focus is placed on the application of these ethical principles in everyday settings. Moving beyond an idea of ethics as a thought experiment or response to rules, principles or virtues, recent scholars have followed a hermeneutic approach to see how 'food ethics' is interpreted and understood in practice. This approach draws attention to the 'whole human being' rather than to 'just our brains' (Fawkes 2012, 127) and involves an understanding of self through relations to the other. It is through recognising others and being recognised by others that individuals become aware of themselves. A hermeneutic investigation looks at 'understanding through interpretation' (Fawkes 2012). Following a hermeneutic approach recognises various possibilities of interpretation and meaning and brings attention to the interpretation of this meaning through interactions between self and other.

Christian Coff (2006, 2010) has made significant contribution to applying a hermeneutic perspective to the field of food ethics, primarily outlined in *The taste for ethics: an ethic of food consumption*. Drawing on the work of French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, Coff (2006) positions ethics as recognition of the trace of the Other. Applied to food ethics, food represents the trace of the production history. Following this approach, Coff (2006) sees food ethics as achievable through knowledge of the production history that remains represented through the trace in the food item. The food item represents the

past that is no longer present but 'having been there'. For Levinas, the trace of the past can be seen in the *face* of the Other. Yet in the case of food, the trace of the production history is not necessarily visible in the 'face' of the end product of food (Coff 2006, 105). This requires knowledge of the production history that is represented in food's trace.

The production history of food can be understood and interpreted as a narrative. Coff (2006) describes food's trace as narrative using Ricouer's (1984) concept of mimesis expressed in *Time and narrative,* which involves three processes: pre-figuring, configuring and refiguring. Mimesis I involves pre-figuration and pre-understanding of social life. In this way, as Kemp explains, 'We only find meaning in the narrative because we are already familiar with the meanings that are given in the everyday world we live in, where we realise what it means that someone acts, sets goals, uses means, enjoys success or suffers defeat, etc.' (cited in Coff 2006, 130). The second process of mimesis is understanding the 'action' of the narrative as being 'necessary and reasonable'. This involves understanding the sequencing of the narrative, including the events, characters and circumstances. The final process, Mimesis III, involves understanding action in a timeframe that crosses chronological and existential time and is appropriated to our own experience. The narrative moves us and we emphasise with the characters. As Coff explains,

> Consumers inscribe themselves in a specific time-relation to the production story. The glimpsed experience means that the production exists not only in a chronological time but also in existential, experienced, time. (Coff 2006, 136)

Through understanding food ethics in this way, attention is drawn to understanding the production history of food as it relates to experience.

Applying this to the trace of food involves understanding the production history and how this links to the consumer's own life stories. It is thus a coming together of two narratives, understanding the other (production history) and the self (consumer) through the trace of the food. This can be further understood using the philosophy of recognition outlined by Honneth (cited in Coff 2006, 193). Self-

awareness is formed in the presence of the Other and thus identity occurs through these intersubjective relations. Honneth (1995) elaborates this understanding of narrative further by suggesting that recognition and identity formation involves three spheres of social interaction: the private (love of family and self: self-confidence), the legal (rights: self-respect) and the communal (shared value orientation: self-esteem). This calls for a hermeneutic understanding of food ethics as involving both *trace of the Other* through the production history and *identity work* through recognition of the self and other. It thus brings attention to everyday practices in which recognition and identity work occurs and opens up the 'horizon of possibilities' in which food is interpreted in practice.

Food as trace only reveals its meaning if there is already some knowledge or experience of production history. Thus, the trace can be seen as a latent sign because not everyone can or will interpret the trace of the production history of food. Coff (2006) draws on semiotics to see how the trace is recognised and interpreted. As he explains, 'In a sense the trace is like a symbol; it does not immediately reveal its hidden meaning, but can be deciphered through prior knowledge. If the receiver has no knowledge of the symbol's meaning, it is literally meaningless for that person.' (Coff 2006, 141). Coff (2012) proposes a model of food ethics based on interpretations of suppliers and receivers of food in which it can enter and leave the domain of 'food ethics' any time, as the interpretation shifts. As his example of serving king prawns for dinner demonstrates, shifts in interpretation can result through recognising different aspects of the trace of food. The supplier of the meal may see the prawns as a tasty meal while the recipient may interpret the prawns as a sign of environmental degradation and exploitation of workers. Thus, interpretations of food ethics can depend on understandings of the production history of food and recognition of self and other. This approach, therefore, draws attention to the everyday settings of recognition and interpretation to understand food ethics.

### *2.3.5 Section summary: contributions from the field of hermeneutics*

As illustrated in the above section, a hermeneutic approach opens up an understanding of food ethics in settings of practice in which interpretations and meanings are negotiated based on recognition of the Other and trace of the production history of food. Through this process of recognition and identity work the self is also recognised. Table 2.6 below indicates the contributions provided from the field of hermeneutics to help understand the program theory of food choice regulation. This approach helps illuminate the ways in which food choice are interpreted in practice, and opens up an understanding of the multiple levels of interpretation that can result. In this way, attention is drawn to the *context* of interpretation in everyday settings of practice and the importance of symbolic aspects of food, self and other in this process of interpretation.

Table 2.6 **Hermeneutic contributions to understanding ethical food choice**

| | INTERVENTIONS > MECHANISMS > OUTCOMES | | | *GAP REMAINING ?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMCS Guide** | Information Provision | 'Being Informed' | Making Prescribed Food Choices | *YET/ How does this work?* |
| **SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH (ethical consumption)** | *what* Define info approaches (e.g. role of labels) | *who* Define characteristics of 'choosers' (e.g. socio-demographics) | *what* Define type of food choice as 'good' (e.g. local, organic) | *YET/ How is choice made in practice?* ↙ |
| **PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH (applied ethics)** | | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *YET/ How is choice made in actual settings of practice?* ↙ |
| **HERMENEUTIC APPROACH (semiotic)** | | *how* interpret choice | *how* interpret everyday practices | *YET/ How is practice responding to norms?* |

However, while attention is brought to the level of interpretation and symbolism of food, further understanding is needed regarding the way in which food practices are inscribed with symbolic meaning through normative and cultural understandings. This fourth section of this chapter now turns to the contribution made to this field through the work of social scientific approaches to food practices that highlight the cultural and symbolic aspects of food choice.

## 2.4 Cultural dimensions of food choice

A deeper understanding of how everyday food practices are embedded within cultural and normative contexts is provided by social scientific studies of food. Work from the fields of sociology, anthropology and geography explore food practices in relation to broader contexts and social factors such as gender, race, economics and environment. For example, food sociology draws attention to 'the myriad socio-cultural, political, economic, and philosophical factors that influence our food habits – what we eat, when we eat, how we eat and why we eat.' (Germov and Williams 2005, 5). Difference in food choice practices have been related to gender distinctions (Kemmer 2000; Mennell, Murcott and van Otterloo 1992), health and diet (Vogel and Mol 2014) and status, identity and distinction (de Solier 2013; Fischler 1998; Ikeda 2005). Work from this field shows how food choices can be understood in terms of broader social systems.

A key contribution in understanding differentiation in food preference is provided by Bourdieu (1984) in his work *Distinction*, where he links consumption choices and 'tastes' to a person's habitus. In this work he shows how certain class groups use food consumption as a symbolic way of differentiating themselves from others. Speaking about consumption more broadly, Bourdieu (1984, 232) explains:

> Choosing according to one's tastes is a matter of identifying goods that are objectively attuned to one's position and which 'go together' because they are situated in roughly the equivalent positions in their respective spaces, be they films or plays, cartoons or novels, clothes or furniture; this choice is

> assisted by institutions—shops, theatres … newspapers, magazines—which are themselves defined by their position in a field and which are chosen on the same principles.

Thus, in this sense, the social agent orients to action according to an implicit 'practical logic' or sense of their position within the field they occupy.

Further understanding of how food is understood in common with others through symbolic and cultural patterns is provided by the field of anthropology. Of particular importance is the work of Mary Douglas that looks at relationships between food and society and demonstrates how food is more than 'feed' (Fardon 2002, 130). Douglas (1972, 1984) describes food as an expressive system of social communication and shows how the intimate setting of a family meal is embedded within a public moral order that reflects the relationships within the family as well as society. Drawing on the work of Durkheim, she illustrates how food can be understood through cultural definitions and classifications of sacred and profane shared among social groups. Looking at how animals become classified as fit or unfit for consumption illustrates how this is not based on nutrient properties of the animal, but rather on shared cultural understandings associated with food. For example, the consumption of pig flesh is considered taboo in Jewish and Islamic food systems, as is the consumption of horse or dog in many Western countries (Douglas 1984). These symbolic classifications are important organising principles of daily life, including food practices. This work calls attention to the social context of everyday practices to see the way in which food choice is embedded with cultural and symbolic meaning.

This work has been taken up within the field of cultural sociology to explore how food choice is embedded within social systems through cultural symbols and social regulation. Food is described as a 'symbolically charged' and significant topic for a cultural sociological investigation (Back, Bennet and Edles 2012). This will be elaborated on further in the following chapter, but for the purpose of this review, it is important to note the way a cultural sociological approach provides an understanding of how food practices are culturally embedded in everyday

discourses. For example, Johnston et al. (2011) look at the cultural repertoire and symbolic boundaries across different social groups in their understanding of ethical eating and show how these groups describe their ethical eating through their class and cultural membership. A cultural sociological approach sheds light on the 'unconscious cultural structures that regulate society' (Alexander 2003, 1) and which form the 'cultural backdrop' in which notions of 'food choice' and 'ethics' are embedded. In doing so, it brings focus to the cultural forces that guide symbolic relationships with food.

### *2.4.1 Section summary: contributions from the field of cultural dimensions of food choice*

Understanding the cultural and symbolic processes in which food choice is embedded provides another layer of understanding food choice regulation, as indicated in Table 2.7. It brings attention to the importance of recognising the normative dimensions in constructing meanings and relationships with food in everyday practices. Yet, further research is needed to understand the way in which people are enjoined to follow norms that call for certain 'ethical' relationships with food and how these norms are taken up and applied in diverse fields.

Having reviewed varied approaches to understanding food choice regulation, where does this leave our understanding of the processes involved in regulating desired food choice? Table 2.7 summarises the contributions and remaining gaps identified from the fields of ethical consumption, philosophy, hermeneutics and cultural studies of food practice. Each approach reviewed above has exposed certain aspects relevant to understanding 'ethical choice', with varying emphases on settings of 'context' in which choice is understood. For example, in the substantive field of ethical consumption, ethical choice is understood in response to information campaigns. Philosophical approaches, in the field of applied ethics, focus on ethical choice in imagined settings of practice while hermeneutic approaches look at how conduct is interpreted in actual settings of practice.

Finally, cultural approaches look at how food practices are embedded within symbolic and normative contexts.

Table 2.7 **Cultural dimension of ethical food choice and identified gaps**

| INTERVENTIONS > MECHANISMS > OUTCOMES | | | | *GAP REMAINING ?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMCS Guide** | Information Provision | 'Being Informed' | Making Prescribed Food Choices | *YET/ How does this work?* |
| **SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH (ethical consumption)** | *what* Define info approaches (e.g. role of labels) | *who* Define choice makers (e.g. socio-demographics) | *what* Define type of food choice as 'good' (e.g. local, organic) | *YET/ How is choice made in practice?* |
| **PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH (applied ethics)** | | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *YET/ How is choice made in actual settings of practice?* |
| **HERMENEUTIC APPROACH** | | *how* interpret choice | *how* interpret everyday practices | *YET/ How is practice responding to norms?* |
| **CULTURAL APPROACH** | | | *how. what* symbolic meaning | *YET/ How are people enjoined to participate in moral order?* |

However, what remains missing from these approaches is an analysis of the *mechanisms and processes* through which people become enjoined to play a part in the moral order of food ethics discourses. How is this moral order understood and how do people come to be positioned within this moral order? The final section below outlines the approach suited to study the remaining gaps identified.

## 2.5 Shifting focus: uncovering the 'missing whatness' of food choice regulation

As the above review highlights, the diverse approaches to investigating issues around food ethics address a broad range of concerns both substantively and theoretically and each draw attention to a particular aspect relevant to understanding food choice regulation. However, what remains to be understood are the processes by which people become enjoined to participate in, and respond to, food ethics discourse. This thesis seeks to shift the focus from studies that rely on preconceived understandings of relationships between 'ethical choice' and 'context' and instead look at the way in which these relationships exist in locally produced settings. Rather than focus on causal factors as a first move of research, Silverman (2006, 391) suggests that 'one's initial move should be to give close attention to how participants locally produce contexts for their interaction.' This thesis contributes to an understanding of the locally produced contexts of ethics through investigating the way in which 'ethical conduct' is accomplished as a situated practice within an online sustainable seafood guide and how the guide is then repurposed within other participatory websites. In undertaking this study, this thesis will provide the 'missing whatness' of current understandings of ethical food choice by unpacking relationships between ethical conduct and contexts of practice.

### *2.5.1 Indexicality of ethical choice: identifying 'ethics' as a local accomplishment*

Looking at the multiple ways in which food ethics is studied and conceptualised in literature to date illustrates the indexical nature of ethics, where the understanding and meaning of ethics within food studies is not a pre-existing concept that exists beyond the point of the literature but rather accomplishes its meaning in and through the text and its application within the study. This occurs across both theoretical and substantive levels. For example, on a substantive level, the notion of 'organic food' as an 'ethical choice' can take on different constructs within studies. While many studies present 'organic food' as a 'good

choice' (Seyang 2007), other studies construct organic food as elitist and as associated with affluent urban consumers (Alkon 2008). Thus, this shows how ethics is not a concept that 'exists' beyond the literature. However, it is often treated as a pre-existing category within studies of food ethics and applied in what Sacks calls an 'unanalytical' way (Sacks 1992). This thesis departs from relying on preconceived notions of 'ethical conduct' and 'context' and turns the focus to the way in which ethics is accomplished in practice.

### *2.5.2 Ethnomethodological approach: providing a lens to investigate the 'missing detail' of ethical food choice*

This thesis asks a different type of question than previously asked within food ethics and ethical consumption literature in order to provide the 'missing detail' of the topic under investigation. This thesis seeks to investigate the processes and mechanisms involved in positioning people as moral subjects within food ethics discourse. An ethnomethodological approach is suitable for studying the local accomplishment of phenomena and making that accomplishment the topic of study. Unlike the conventional sociological or lay approach that uses common-sense knowledge of 'social facts' as resources in which to generate findings, ethnomethodology focuses on how such common-sense 'facts' are accomplished through interactions, treating this as the topic of investigation (Silverman 1985). As Hester and Francis (2007, 6) explain, ethnomethodology is 'interested in the work that has to be done to make the activity in question available or recognisable as that activity in the first place.' This involves taking an analytic step back and looking in detail at how the activity of 'ethical choice' is produced through situated practice.

An ethnomethodological approach investigates how social members produce meaning through situated occasions of interaction. Harold Garfinkel (1967) established this approach to depart from 'formal analytic' studies in which the topic under investigation loses its situated meaning and becomes an 'escaped phenomenon'. In such studies, relationships are developed between concepts in the 'research world' away from the everyday practical understandings of social

members. Instead, ethnomethodology recognises social action as a 'practical accomplishment' of social members and makes members' methods to achieve this social order the topic of investigation.

By paying analytic attention to how meaning is produced through interactions, reveals the processes through which social order and meaning are understood. Such an approach avoids relying on predefined relationships between concepts but instead sees how these 'hang together' in naturally occurring contexts. As Jayyusi (1984) explains:

> The investigation of the mundane practices of everyday life in their in situ production avoids treating these 'areas' as reified domains of practice and interest. It is *in* these practices and *through* them that boundaries, interfaces, specificities, commonalities, differences, etc. are drawn, produced, invoked and displayed. (Jayyusi 1984, 8)

Within this study, the situated production of 'ethical choice' within the website of the AMCS Guide and two participatory blogs will be investigated to see how meaning is constituted through interactions within the online spaces.

Through this investigation, this thesis will depart from relying on *a priori* understandings of 'ethical choice' and 'context' to, instead, seeing how notions of 'ethical conduct' are interactionally accomplished in practice. This point of departure will require a break from prenotions of 'ethical choice' in order to see a new system of relations in the processes through which ideas of 'ethics' are constituted. In conducting this research, this study will break from abstract notions of 'ethical choice' on two levels; first, on a substantive level, by looking at how practices associated with integrating principles of ethics in food-related choices are described in the context of everyday practices. Second, on a deeper level, this investigation involves an 'epistemological break' from common-sense understandings of 'ethics' as a static concept by problematising assumptions surrounding ethics as applied in research. In doing so, this thesis will follow the insights of Durkheim by looking at common-sense assumptions in analytic detail. This approach is explained further in the following chapter.

## 2.6 Chapter conclusion

This second chapter has provided a review of diverse scholarship addressing issues of food ethics and, in doing so, has identified current knowledge and gaps in understanding food choice regulation that can be addressed through an ethnomethodological approach. The first section of this chapter discussed literature within four key domains, with each area identifying particular instances of conduct and context relevant for understanding food ethics. It began with a review of the substantive field of ethical consumption and showed how the 'ethical consumer' has been called as a key agent of choice and asked to respond to information campaigns in order to select 'good' food options. Within this field of study, conduct is understood in terms of the rational consideration of information in predefined settings. While this field helps us understand factors associated with making food choice, questions still remain about relationships between information and conduct that enables 'ethical choice' in practice.

In response to this, the second area reviewed in this chapter looked at philosophical approaches in the field of applied ethics. This field focused on ethical conduct in terms of thought experiments in imagined contexts. For example, Mepham (2012) developed a matrix that enables ethical problems to be weighed up based on principles of wellbeing, autonomy and fairness. Although these approaches help us understand how choice is weighed up, it remains to be understood how this plays out in actual settings.

Following this, the third section looked at hermeneutic approaches to see how conduct is interpreted in settings of practice. This opened up an understanding of the multiple levels of interpretation that can result and provided a rich understanding of the interpretive side of conduct (Coff 2010). However, further understanding is still needed regarding the way in which food practices respond to normative and cultural considerations.

Thus, the final section looked at the normative and symbolic contexts of food choice within cultural sociological and anthropological approaches. This drew

attention, for example, to sacred and profane classifications that play a role in food practices (Douglas 1984). Questions still remain, however, about how we become enjoined to participate and respond to this normative level. Thus, reviewing this literature led to the identification of the need for an approach that is sensitive to both the normative and interpretive dimensions of practice.

The second part of this chapter then outlined an ethnomethodological approach that provides the necessary lens with which to investigate this problem and raises questions about the 'whatness' of regulatory mechanisms. This approach focuses on the interactional processes that underpin food choice regulation and position people as moral subjects within food ethics discourse. In the specific case study of the AMCS Guide, this involves an exploration of the conduct and contexts salient to governing the Guide.

This forms the specific rationale for the research questions that guide this thesis:

- In what ways does the online Sustainable Seafood Guide frame 'ethical choice' and conduct? *Specifically, how does the Sustainable Seafood Guide enjoin and position people to 'be informed'?*
- In what ways do the moral positions nominated in the Sustainable Seafood Guide get taken up and translated in discourses located in diverse fields? *Specifically, how do different groups describe their own conduct and context in relation to 'being informed'?*

These research questions are designed to guide an exploration of the nature of the practices and contexts that constitute food choice regulation. Following on from this, the next chapter outlines a theoretical framework suited to capturing conduct in context at the level of the interaction order.

# CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISING THE SOCIAL BASIS OF ETHICS

## 3.1 Overview of chapter

As discussed in the previous chapter, fundamental questions have been raised in relation to food choice regulation and implied relationships between conduct and context. Specifically, it was argued that the program theory inherent in food consumption guides, such as the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide, is premised on relationships between 'being informed' and desired food choice outcomes. This is based on neoliberal understandings of the importance of individual choice and responsibility, yet there is little understanding of how such mechanisms actually operate in contexts of practice. While diverse scholarship within the field of food ethics has highlighted certain aspects of conduct and context relevant for understanding food choice, there remains a gap in understanding both the normative and interpretive dimensions of practice. Therefore, two central questions have been raised that seek to bring scholarship into line with mechanisms involved in producing desired food choice outcomes. The first question seeks to identify what processes are inherent in guides to enjoin and position people to 'be informed'. Following this, the second question addresses how those called to 'be informed' describe their own conduct and practices.

To address these questions, this chapter focuses on conceptual frameworks that sensitise the study to capture the relationships entailed in these domains of food choice regulation and practice; i.e. enjoining people to 'be informed' and responses to these injunctions as represented in two participatory blogs. Specifically, it reviews sociological theories that locate the importance of norms in regulating conduct along with interaction order approaches that focus on the centrality of 'the situation' in constructions of—and responses to—moral accountability. Through exploring these theoretical understandings of conduct in the broader domain of social life and within the situated contexts of practice, this chapter provides the foundation for a methodological and empirical approach to

investigate ethical practices in relation to the specific case of 'choosing seafood wisely'.

This chapter is organised in three parts, with each section illuminating a key aspect of the socially embedded nature of ethics. First, the chapter outlines a cultural sociological approach with a basis in the work of Emile Durkheim. This section provides a background to theoretical and empirical work that explicitly focuses on normative aspects of conduct as a central organising principle of social life and the central role of collective symbols and representations in this organisation. Following on from this, the chapter then turns to an issue that is a key focus of this study, how socially embedded dynamics of ethical conduct are played out in settings of practice. Here, the chapter provides an account of the way theorists of the interaction order, Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel, bring the broader concerns of Durkheimian sociology to a focus on the *situation* as crucial in negotiations of ethical conduct. This entails an examination of the role of 'context' in situations where people are called to make and respond to ethical choices. In the third section, the chapter responds to the substantive focus of this study that involves not only humans but also nonhuman actants such as 'fish' and 'websites' as platforms for the context in which ethical choice is enjoined and responded to. Thus, this chapter argues that the theoretical framework needs to take into account approaches that are sensitive to both human and nonhuman agencies, such as that found in the work of Bruno Latour's actor network theory. Together, the approaches outlined in this chapter provide the conceptual tools necessary to investigate the multiple domains of ethics as socially embedded and enacted through situated contexts of practice.

## 3.2 Cultural sociological approaches: social basis of normative ordering of conduct

To understand the cultural forces inherent within food ethics discourse, this thesis draws on the foundational work of Durkheim and more recent applications of his work within the field of cultural sociology. This section first

provides a background to Durkheim's theoretical and empirical work that demonstrates the need to understand social ordering as embedded in collective representations. Whether he is studying Aboriginal Australian communities in *The elementary forms of religious life* (1995[1912]), or the emergent dynamics of life in industrial societies such as *Professional ethics and civic morals* (1992), Durkheim's work illustrates the power of collectively recognised symbols in enjoining people to certain practices and maintaining regularity in social order. This section then examines the way these broad emphases and principles have been applied, for example, within the anthropology of food practice in the work of Mary Douglas and in Jeffrey Alexander's contemporary application that looks at the power of collective understandings in discourses which call for moral stances.

Durkheim provides a theoretical foundation for conceptualising conduct in terms of a commitment to an imagined social world and collective conscience that binds people together (1984[1893]). This commitment to a collective conscience is through the notion of solidarity. As Durkheim outlines in the *Division of labour in society* (1984[1893]), shifts in the organisation of society lead to a shift in the type of solidarity binding groups together. In traditional societies with little differentiation, mechanical solidarity binds groups together through a commitment to common goals and shared beliefs. This can be seen through a shared religion or spiritual belief that establishes a shared moral order which becomes internalised as individual action. In these societies, Durkheim shows 'the sphere of action' of religion extends beyond the domain of the divine into the social organisation of life (1984[1893], 142). Yet in modern industrial societies, a complex and specialised division of labour leads to differentiated and fragmented structures in which groups are no longer bound by shared beliefs but by a functionary dependence on each other through what Durkheim describes as organic solidarity. In modern societies, there remains a quest for solidarity and shared commitment to collective goals; however, rather than shared spiritual beliefs, people are bound by a shared sense of belonging to society.

Durkheim's approach to morality is distinctive for his insistence on the centrality of the social. Prior to his work, the moral was considered as residing within the individual. Durkheim departed from the common understandings of ethics at the time, which focused on ethics as an individual and personal condition, to instead open up an understanding of ethics at the societal level. In *Professional ethics and civic morals* (1992), Durkheim claims that morality and moral force is 'something that goes beyond the individual and to the interests of the group he belongs to' (1992, 24). Durkheim does not exclude or disregard the role of the individual (indeed, the individual plays a significant role in Durkheim's work as highlighted by Stedman Jones 2001 and Durkheim 2005[1914]), yet emphasis is placed on how individual moral actions can only be understood through the social and collective. As Tiryakian (2000, 68) explains, this is seen through Durkheim's statement that 'Man is only man through civilisation' (2005[1914], 35). In this, 'civilisation' refers to entrance into a normative social system. We can only understand individual social action through society and the classifications and collective understandings we use to explain and make sense of the social world. Thus, to understand moral thoughts and actions there is a need to look to the social.

Taking this idea further, Durkheim expresses how moral consciousness is established through conceptual consciousness that has its basis in society's collective representations. Moral thoughts and actions are understood and measured through society. As Callegaro (2012, 472) explains in his elaboration of Durkheim's work,

> The person, as an individual capable of thinking and acting through concepts, presupposes the existence and the access to the impersonal normative representations of society.

For Durkheim, recognising the role that normative representations play in forming the backdrop upon which moral thoughts and actions are expressed calls for a study that is sensitive to the ways in which these moral categories are represented through shared classification processes.

### *3.2.1 Social ordering through classifications of sacred and profane*

The social embeddedness of moral consciousness is understood in symbolic classifications expressed through shared language. Durkheim explains this relation between the moral and social through symbolic classifications of sacred and profane. In *The elementary forms of religious life* (1995[1912]), Durkheim shows how classifications of sacred and profane are essential classifications in organising social life. Using ethnographic data collected by anthropologists observing Aboriginal Australian tribes, Durkheim shows how ideas of the sacred and profane that form the basis of religious and totemic practices also form the basis of everyday social life. What is valued by society, whether a person, object or idea, is held as sacred and kept apart from the profane and mundane through rituals that uphold it. Rituals play a key role in providing normative structures for the collective engagement with the sacred.

The analysis in Durkheim's *Elementary forms of religious life* continues to be seen as highly relevant in understanding the moral and ethical foundations of contemporary social life (Lemert 2003). In particular, Jeffrey Alexander (1988, 2003) and scholars within the field of cultural sociology (Back, Bennett and Edles 2012; Lynch 2012a, 2012b) show how collective representations of the sacred and profane operate as cultural codes in modern society. As Alexander (2008, 787) explains, symbols of the sacred and profane continue to structure modern life 'providing the moral glue that informs collective rituals and sustains social solidarity'. Empirical examples have been used to illustrate this across quite diverse fields from the American Watergate event (Alexander 2003) to looking at how the institutional abuse of children became culturally entrenched in Irish Industrial Schools (Lynch 2012b). Studies of the 'sacred' illustrate how the sacred is not necessarily equated with 'good' but with what is collectively valued by groups of people within societies. Symbolic classifications of the sacred can be seen to shift over time and take on varied forms within our complex society.

Recent work has shown how the media has become a 'site for the rehearsal, reproduction and contestation of the sacred' (Lynch 2012b, 99). For example,

looking at media representations of the 2005 London bombings, Lynch (2012b) shows how different understandings of the sacred were played out from the perspectives of the 'bombers' and the 'victims'. Thus, an analysis of media representations of the sacred can provide insight into the symbolic representation that binds people together and sets them aside from others. A neo-Durkheimian understanding of the sacred within cultural sociology performs important conceptual work as it 'provide[s] an horizon of meaning in which social actors engage their social and material worlds, and that renders possible and meaningful particular kinds of emotional performance'. (Lynch 2012b, 42). It is therefore necessary to understand how the sacred acts as a constitutive force in modern social life. This study looks at the Internet as a site for positioning symbolic representations of the sacred in calls for ethical conduct in relation to food choice.

### *3.2.2 Food classifications as collective representations*

Relevant to the interest of this study, Mary Douglas is a notable anthropologist who builds on Durkheimian principles that recognise the role of classifications and symbolism in producing social order, and she applies this to the field of food practices. Through her work, Douglas shows how food classifications and consumption practices reveal broader social and collective patterns. For example, in *Deciphering a meal* (1972), Douglas explains how the ordered pattern in which food is served is shaped by and reinforces cultural patterns. For example, the type of meal, whether it is a family breakfast or dinner party, provides a frame for the type of social interactions permissible. It can be seen that 'the rules which hedge off and order one kind of social interaction are reflected in the rules which control the internal ordering of the meal itself' (Douglas 1972, 66). Thus, Douglas sees 'food as a system of social communication' and shows how a 'system of relationships within the family' is expressed through food. In this way, she shows how the moral order that applies to the public domain also applies to the most intimate settings including the local neighbourhood and the family. Thus, Douglas shows how the same distinctions,

rituals and symbols integrate the family, the city and the polity and it is within these symbols that food consumption carries meaning.

In line with Durkheim, a significant aspect of Douglas' work focuses on classification schemes. Classifications of nature and of food are products of social structures. Fischler (1988) quotes an example by Mary Douglas to explain how people apply classifications to divide the universe into what is 'food' and what is not:

> In Western cultures, insects are not food; nor, to take another example cited by Mary Douglas (1979) is the fox. Why are insects and foxes not regarded as edible? Probably not for nutritional reasons. The proteins of either are of as good quality as those of veal or beef … The classification of species that is applied here is apparently based on other criteria, perhaps 'arbitrary' ones in the sense in which a code is arbitrary. (Fischler 1988, 285)

In earlier times, food was classified alongside religious laws and expressed in terms of the sacred and profane. As Douglas outlines in *Purity and danger* (2013[1966], 58) in her explanation of dietary rules,

> … the dietary laws would have been like signs which at every turn inspired meditation on the oneness, purity and completeness of God. By rules of avoidance holiness was given a physical expression in every encounter with the animal kingdom and at every meal. Observance of the dietary rules would thus have been a meaningful part of the great liturgical act of recognition and worship, which culminated in the sacrifice in the Temple.

As relevant to this study, the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus make reference to fish consumption, stating, 'But anything in the seas or the rivers that has not fins and scales … They shall remain an abomination to you; of their flesh you shall not eat' … '(Leviticus 11:10–11 in Douglas 2003, 43). By avoiding these 'unclean' animals that 'swarm' or 'crawl' in the sea, such as eels or lobsters, people could show their oneness with the holy. These examples illustrate how food classifications adhere to symbolic representations of sacred and profane.

In contemporary society, while religion does not play as strong of a role in the regulation of food consumption, food is still imbued with the sacred and profane. Douglas and Nicod (1974) show how English working class meal-structure follows similar patterns to sacred classification of animals among the Israelites and reflect events in the social world (Fardon 2002). In modern society, as this study shows, classifications of sacred and profane food items can be seen through discourses and guides on sustainability, nutrition and ethics. For example, the AMCS Guide, as discussed in this study, enjoins people to be a part of the collective group of 'Australians' that holds 'sustainable seafood' as sacred.

This first section has outlined how a Durkheimian understanding of classifications of collective symbols and moral ordering in society helps us conceptualise the socially embedded nature of ethical conduct. The more recent application of Durkheim's work within the field of cultural sociology shows the sacred continues to be a relevant classification scheme used to make sense of modern society. Applying these sensibilities to an understanding of food practices, Douglas shows how food systems and classifications illuminate broader cultural patterns, drawing attention to the need to recognise the social in understandings of food ethics discourse. This chapter now turns to an elaboration of work within the interaction order approach that outlines how the social and moral ordering is accomplished within situations of practice.

## 3.3 Interaction order approaches: drawing attention to situations of moral conduct

The level of the interaction order is an analytically distinct level of social and moral ordering that is worthy of study in its own right. Providing a contribution to a theoretical understanding of the interaction order as a social order with distinctive characteristics, Anne Warfield Rawls (1989, 2009) highlights how the theories grouped together as 'interaction order approaches' are based on the view that 'interactions are not mini-institutions' (1989, 149), and thus the processes of maintaining social order at the interactional level are not reducible

to the notion of social order governed by formal rules and pre-given roles in institutional orders. Order within interactions requires constitutive achievement and mutual commitment that responds to the contingencies of the moment. In this respect, while there are some very important continuities in interaction order approaches with key concepts from cultural sociology, the interaction order approach also encompasses a range of discrete concepts and theories that are suited to focusing on social practices as situated activity.

To understand this ordering, Rawls (1989) groups together the work of Erving Goffman, Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks as significant interaction order theorists each contributing insights into the ways in which social life is performed in situations of practice. These theorists remain sympathetic to the broader concerns of cultural sociology and the role of norms and symbolic classifications in maintaining moral order, yet shift their focus to show how this is achieved in situated contexts of practice. Each of these theorists focuses on different aspects of the interaction order and highlights particular moral work required to maintain this order through interactional contexts. For Goffman (1971, 1983b), focus is placed on the moral requirements of maintaining the social 'self' through settings of interaction. Taking a different emphasis, Garfinkel (1967) concentrates on how locally produced order is mutually achieved by participants maintaining similar definitions of the situation. While Sacks (1974, 1992), who was a student of Goffman yet followed theoretical insights of Garfinkel, draws attention to the ways in which mutual meaning is achieved through features of talk, such as turn-taking, in order to maintain a locally produced order of interaction. Weaving these three separate positions together, as Rawls (1989) demonstrates, creates a coherent theoretical position from which to analyse the interaction order as a distinct moral ordering.

This section outlines the contribution of Goffman, Garfinkel and Sacks to provide a theoretical understanding of the interaction order. First, the section will outline Goffman's work, which illuminates the way in which the 'self' is ritualistically maintained through the interaction order. Achieving this social self is described in terms of performance and footing in which participants align

their actions and utterances relevant to the interaction. Following on from this, a review of Garfinkel's contribution through the research program of ethnomethodology is provided, focusing on the methods used by social actors to maintain a mutual 'common-sense' understanding of the setting through their actions. From this, Sacks pays particular attention to the features and devices used in talk-in-interaction in which classifications and mutual meaning is achieved. The focus on Sacks' work in this chapter will concentrate on his broad theoretical contribution to understanding the interaction order, while further elaboration of the specific methodological application of his work will be provided in the following chapter.

### *3.3.1 Goffman's theoretical contribution: maintaining the sacred self through the interaction order*

Durkheimian approaches draw attention to the social constraint that normative regulations and collective representations place on ordering social action, yet as outlined above, another source of moral ordering is evident through the interaction order (Goffman 1983b). Goffman's work on the interaction order is described by Rawls (1987, 145) as 'adding the second volume to what Durkheim began'. Drawing on Durkheim's work, Goffman shows how the interaction order is organised around maintaining the sacred 'self' through commitment to a shared set of expectations. In *Interaction ritual* (Goffman 1967, 95) he explains that the self has taken the form of the sacred in the secular world:

> Many gods have been done away with, but the individual himself stubbornly remains as a deity of considerable importance. He walks with some dignity and is the recipient of many little offerings ... Because of their status relative to his, some persons will find him contaminating while others will find they contaminate him, in either case finding that they must treat him with ritual care. (Goffman 1967, 95)

In this work, Goffman identifies a sacredness in maintaining the 'self' that must be ensured through the interaction order.

The interaction order can be seen as a ritual order because it involves a shared commitment to displaying the 'self' and maintaining order through situated encounters. Therefore, 'one's face', according to Goffman (1967, 19) 'is a sacred thing, and the expressive order required to sustain it therefore is a ritual one'. Participants of an interaction strive to maintain one's face and that of others' to ensure the ritual order of the interaction. In this way, the 'self' acts as a form of social constraint that requires moral work through situations of interaction to maintain the interaction order. This is achieved through participants operating within a 'working consensus' (Goffman 1959, 10) in order to show a 'normal appearance' (Goffman 1971, 238) of social order at the level of interaction. If the 'working consensus' is violated then the interaction collapses:

> Individuals collapse as units of minimal ceremonial substance and others learn that what had been taken for granted as ultimate entities are really held together by rules that can be broken with some kind of impunity (Goffman 1967, 94).

All situations of interaction, therefore, require a continual achievement and commitment to maintaining the interaction order *sui generis* (see Rawls 1987).

The interaction order is disconnected from the order of institutions and they remain only vaguely connected through a 'loose coupling' (Goffman 1983b, 11). Goffman's frequently used example to illustrate this point is the 'queuing arrangement' in which a 'queue' is organised to maintain a sense of order interactionally, regardless of social roles or statuses of participants. Yet, this order is not completely removed from the structural setting in which it occurs. For example, a queue in a supermarket may hold stronger interactional obligations than a queue at a family barbecue. Goffman explains this difference through a commitment to maintaining the social self in the interactional context (e.g. as a family member or stranger at a supermarket) rather than a commitment to the institutional setting *per se.*

### *Moral commitment to performing the social self: framing devices, participation roles and footing*

In his later work, Goffman (1978, 1981) moves to explore approaches that enable systematic analyses of the interaction order dynamics that he conceptualised. As discussed above, for Goffman a central feature of the interaction order involves a 'working consensus' and shared agreement about the appropriate forms of participation in the interaction. Goffman concentrates on how this level of implicit agreement is achieved through the 'performance' of the social self that requires constant work and verification through interactions. This performance demonstrates a respect for maintaining the social order of the interaction and can therefore be seen as performing moral work. The performance of the self operates within two interactional frameworks: *system requirements* with specific interactional demands such as turn-taking systems (this is taken up further in the work of Sacks as discussed below) and *ritual requirements* that refer to appropriate norms of conduct in specific settings (Goffman 1981). These frameworks demonstrate how utterances not only fit within the current setting but within the broader interactional context in which they occur.

In *Forms of Talk* (1981), Goffman opens up understandings of 'participation roles' and 'production formats'. He looks at how utterances are produced and received through the notion of 'footing', in which 'a change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance' (Goffman 1981, 128). For example, Goffman shows how the role of 'speaker' can involve different kinds of alignments to the utterance as author, animator or principal. Different production formats and participation roles are afforded different rights of participation. This is described as 'frame space' (Goffman 1981, 230). To speak acceptably is to stay within the frame space. Interactional frames can shift during the course of an interaction and require awareness of what frame is being oriented to in order to maintain the order of interaction.

Thus, participants constantly attune and re-attune their frames according to contingencies of the moment.

Another feature of footings within talk is the ability for participants to demonstrate their understanding of the shared social world beyond the current setting. Goffman describes this through the notion of 'embedding' as the 'linguistic ability to speak of events at any remove in time and space from the situated present' (Goffman 1981, 3). Adopting the position of a figure as a character in a scene, for example in the utterance 'I saw Sally at that restaurant', shows how the shared cultural world beyond the current interactional setting can be alluded to. Thus, maintaining the interaction order involves shared presuppositions and knowledge of the social world.

Goffman also describes this reliance on this shared knowledge of the social world in maintaining the interaction order in terms of *Felicity's condition* (1983a). Felicity's condition refers to '… any arrangement which leads us to judge an individual's verbal acts to be not a manifestation of strangeness' (1983a, 27). The utterance makes sense in the interactional context through a shared knowledge of the social world. This is the world of background expectancies and collective symbolic representations as highlighted by Durkheim and taken up in the cultural sociological approaches outlined above. There is not only a reliance on knowing this shared world but also a moral obligation to ensure 'common-sense' is made through interactions:

> Whenever we come into contact with another through the mail, over the telephone, in face-to-face talk, or even merely through immediate co-presence, we find ourselves with one central obligation: to render our behaviour understandable relevant to what the other can come to perceive is going on. Whatever else, our activity must be addressed to the other's mind, that is, to the other's capacity to read our words and actions for evidence of our feelings, thoughts and intent. This confines what we say and do, but it also allows us to bring to bear all of the world to which the other can catch allusions. (Goffman 1983a, 51)

The ways in which this shared intelligibility is achieved is taken up further in the work of Garfinkel and Sacks outlined in the section below.

### *Application of Goffman's contribution to this study*

Following Goffman's logic, commitments to orders of interaction require moral work to continuously maintain and verify social selves within the interaction. Thus, examining the interaction order opens up another level of understanding ethics that is often ignored in sociological and philosophical studies of ethics. Goffman distinguishes this level of ethics as the 'etiquette' of everyday interactions that involves a distinct order separate to the ethics of formal institutional rules (Bovone 1993, 26). The interaction order has its own rules and moral ordering governing conduct that may allude to the collective and normative domain but is played out within the context of interaction. Thus, applying this understanding of ethics to the research problem posed in this thesis will help illuminate the ways in which people come to be positioned within the AMCS Guide at the interactional level. The Guide is scripted as a quasi-conversation and not only invokes normative ethical demands but also positions people in relation to these demands through the interaction order of the Guide. This chapter now turns to the work of Garfinkel and Sacks to provide further understanding of the moral obligations involved in achieving mutual meaning through locally produced interactional settings.

## *3.3.2 Garfinkel's theoretical contribution: accomplishing mutual meaning and shared definitions of the situation*

Garfinkel was establishing his theoretical position on social order around the same time as Goffman in the mid-twentieth century, yet each comes to the problem of order from different vantage points and focuses on unique moral constraints. While Goffman looks at the workings of the interaction order through the performance of the self, Garfinkel is interested in exploring the moral commitment required by social actors to produce and maintain a shared

sense of meaning through their actions. With this focus, Garfinkel (1967) developed the research program of Ethnomethodology as the study of the meaning-making methods used by social actors (ethno-methods) in producing recognisable social orders. For Garfinkel, all social orders, including institutional and interactional orders, are made possible through social actors achieving a shared sense of meaning through their actions and acting on the circumstances of this 'common-sense'. This shared meaning-making is seen as a 'primordial feature of the social world' (Heritage 2001, 49). The methods used by social actors to make sense in everyday mundane interactions are the same methods used in the accomplishment of social and scientific 'facts', as Garfinkel and colleagues illustrate in the study of discovering an optical pulsar (Garfinkel, Lynch and Livingston 1981). Following this understanding of how meaning is produced at the level of the interaction order also has implications for the sociological treatment of research problems, as will be discussed further in the following methodology chapter.

Garfinkel's view of social order brings attention to both the normative and cognitive aspects of conduct as they are enacted in settings of practice. This view of social order can be seen as building on, and departing from, the work of Talcott Parsons' (1968) normative theory that focuses on social action as responding to internalised 'moral rules' in predefined settings and Alfred Schutz' (1964[1932]) interpretive phenomenology that focuses on subjective experience in idealised settings in the absence of moral regulations. Each of these departures will now be discussed in terms of their significance for the development of Garfinkel's theory of social order and the program of ethnomethodology.

Parsons' (1968) *The structure of social action* is acknowledged by Garfinkel (1988) and Alexander (1988) as bringing sociological attention to the way the social, as theorised by Durkheim, is played out in the field of 'ordinary action' to highlight 'the real production and accountability of immortal, ordinary society' (Garfinkel 1988, 104). However, the way in which 'ordinary action' and 'immortal society' are analysed and understood in relation to social orders

differs significantly between Parsons and Garfinkel. For Parsons (1968), social order is made possible through the compliance with norms that become internalised as 'moral rules' and played out through predefined roles. According to this view, for example, the choice of certain food items may be causally associated with certain sociodemographic groups such as 'female' or 'urban-dweller' and their 'need disposition' in defined settings. This led to studies that focus on defining characteristics of people in relation to social action, and in doing so separates analytic categories from concrete activities to ensure the measurement of 'objective' variables. In this view the concrete activities of everyday life are seen as 'random' and 'disorderly' actions that need to be controlled for.

Garfinkel, who was a doctoral student of Parsons, departs from this conception of social order with the view that people are not 'cultural dopes' who follow norms imposed as external constraints without exercising judgment. For Garfinkel, norms do not play a direct causal role on social action but are 'reflexively constitutive of the activities and unfolding circumstances to which they are applied' (Heritage 1984, 109). Thus, Garfinkel places greater emphasis on concrete activities in specific settings and their local accomplishment as the focal point for an analysis of social order. Rather than seeing everyday life as disorderly, Garfinkel reveals the orderly methods used to produce and maintain a world-known-in-common.

These different emphases on social order have implications for the way in which research problems are analysed. As Rawls explains, in her Introduction to *Ethnomethodology's program* (Garfinkel and Rawls 2002), the formal analytic approach led by Parsons investigates *characteristics of populations* who control the scenes while the ethnomethodological approach led by Garfinkel focuses on the *scene* itself. Summarising Garfinkel's position, Rawls states that 'any population coming on a particular scene could only recognisably reproduce it by recognisably producing just those *practices* that identify it as a scene of a particular sort.' (Garfinkel and Rawls 2002, 24 emphasis added). Thus, for

Garfinkel, the 'immortal society' does not exist in characteristics of populations but in characteristics of practices (Garfinkel and Rawls 2002).

Informing Garfinkel's emphasis on the interpretive dimension of practice was Alfred Schutz (1967[1932]) and his phenomenological approach. For Schutz, social life is made possible through social actors sharing background assumptions about how the world is perceived and communicated to others through linguistic forms. This approach draws attention to the shared understandings that enable the world of background assumptions to be understood and taken for granted. While this work forms a basis for the way in which Garfinkel develops his understanding of the cognitive aspect of conduct and shared experience, he sees there is more to social action than just subjective experience. Schutz' approach focuses on common-sense judgements in the absence of recognising moral forces at play in producing social orders (Heritage 1984). Garfinkel is interested in how subjective experience is achieved in specific settings that also have normative requirements on action.

In order to show the intersection of the normative and interpretative in constituting social orders, Garfinkel (1967) performed a series of breaching experiments as tutorial exercises with his students. Through these 'breaching experiments', Garfinkel demonstrates the moral commitment required to achieve a shared definition of the situation. In these experiments, the experimenter was asked to depart from everyday expectations and question the taken-for-granted. For example, in one exercise they were asked to depart from the rule of 'reciprocal perspectives' (as outlined by Schutz) by seeking clarification on a 'commonplace remark' made by the subject who was a close friend of the experimenter. The subject usually met these breaches of the 'perceivedly normal' situation of 'sensible plain talk' with moral indignation, with responses such as 'What's the matter with you? You know what I mean!' (Garfinkel 1963, 221 in Heritage 1984, 80). The subjects saw this as a break in 'trust' that the experimenter did not provide the necessary understanding to make recognisable sense of the situation (Heritage 1984). This demonstrates

there is a 'trust' of a 'person's compliance with the expectancies of the attitude of daily life as a morality' (Garfinkel 1967, 50).

The breaching experiments reveal that moral indignation is felt towards the breaking of the 'common-sense' understanding of the situation, not in the 'rule' itself. As Garfinkel (1963, 198) suggests, 'perhaps it is the threat to the normative order of events as such that is the critical variable in invoking indignation and not the breach of the 'sacredness' of the rules'' (in Heritage 1984, 83). Yet the normative rules still operate on one level as a reference point for interpreting the action. These experiments show how the moral interacts with the interpretive domain of understanding within specific settings of practice. This underpins all settings of practice from the mundane to the institutional in which culturally meaningful objects and actions are produced and recognised (Heritage 2008, 302).

The practical work required to maintain the shared definition of the situation is moral work. Understanding the moral order as a practical, local accomplishment, Garfinkel says:

> A society's members encounter and know the moral order as a perceivedly normal course of action – familiar scenes of everyday affairs, the world of daily life known in common with others and with others taken for granted. (Garfinkel 1967, 35)

Focusing on the methods used by people to actively produce a shared understanding of their situation draws analytic attention to the *details of situated practices* in which this 'common-sense' knowledge is practically accomplished. Thus, to understand the moral order there is a need to look at what members *themselves* orient to by focusing on the *details of interactions* within settings of practice. These details cannot be described *a priori* but are discovered through the systematic exploration of the methods used to produce order through interactions.

In revealing the moral and cognitive dimensions required in achieving mutual intelligibility in settings of practice, Garfinkel raises two fundamental ideas about

the notion of 'context'. First, 'reflexivity' or 'reflexive accountability' refers to the way social activity renews the context in which it is produced. Second, indexicality refers to the words (e.g. here, this, you), which rely on the context of the talk to define their meaning. This requires an understanding of the setting of the context in which they are used. The work of Wittgenstein (1953) in ordinary language philosophy is also fundamental in raising questions about how language receives its meaning through understanding its use in context (Rawls 2011). Within interactions, there is no 'time-out' from interpreting and producing meaningful action and being held accountable for maintaining this social order at the level of interaction. Similarly, as Goffman's work shows how the self has to be continually maintained to ensure the interaction order, Garfinkel shows that the setting of practices also require continual achievement to ensure mutual intelligibility.

To describe the reflexive process in which an event and its background are understood in relation to each other, Garfinkel (1967) borrows Mannheim's concept of the Documentary Method of Interpretation. This method focuses on how the 'background understanding' of a situation is employed as an interpretative framework to make sense of the situation. This is a fundamental method used in producing and recognising shared meaning. Through this reciprocal process, particulars within the setting are treated as 'documenting' or referring to an underlying pattern or theme, which in turn elaborates the sense of those particulars within the setting (Heritage 1984). Therefore, this process highlights how events are understood in context.

### *Application of Garfinkel's contribution to this study: how positionings in the AMCS Guide are repurposed in own settings of practice*

Garfinkel and the research program of ethnomethodology draws attention to the moral commitment involved in producing and recognising shared definitions of the situation through methods of common-sense reasoning. This opens up another level of understanding the practical reasoning involved in achieving a moral order within the AMCS Guide and how this is recognised and responded to

through the blogs. The normative rules expressed in the Guide (through moral imperatives such as 'choose seafood wisely') and ascribed to certain groups of people (such as 'Australians' and 'seafood consumers' and 'you') are *produced* to be understood in a certain way through meaning-making methods employed in the website. While this moral ordering provides one level of understanding, there is also the matter of how this is *recognised* and interpreted by those called to action. The participatory blogs enable a way to look at how those called to respond to the Guide describe their own conduct and contexts. Following Garfinkel enables us to see the details of practices in which mutual meaning is produced and recognised in the context of the Guide and blogs. The next section looks at how Sacks has built on the work of Garfinkel and Goffman to identify the specific features of talk that enable mutual intelligibility to be achieved in and through interactions.

### *3.3.3 Sacks' theoretical contribution: producing order through talk-in-interaction*

Harvey Sacks, drawing on the work of both Goffman and Garfinkel, brings further theoretical insight into understanding the interaction order as a moral order. In the spirit of Goffman, he focuses on the normative organisation of talk-in-interaction as a domain of inquiry in its own right, organised around obligations and rights of speakers and hearers. Following Garfinkel and the work of ethnomethodology, he examines in detail the methods used by social actors to produce and recognise mutual meaning through their talk. To investigate the detailed workings of the interaction order, he uses audio-taped conversations as 'naturally occurring data' to analyse the organisation of this 'simplest social system' (Sacks 1992). As Heritage (2001) explains, analysing conversations can illuminate the simultaneous accomplishment of action, meaning, context management and intersubjectivity of the social actors.

Through close analysis of the interaction order inherent within conversations, Sacks is able to show the 'machinery' of interaction and how this is accomplished

through the methods used by actors in achieving locally produced settings. This further emphasises the normative and interpretive aspects of conduct introduced by Garfinkel. Along with his colleagues Gail Jefferson and Emanuel Schegloff, Sacks develops this field of study into the research programs of Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorization Analysis. This section will discuss three key theoretical developments of this work that illustrate the moral work in producing orderliness in talk: sequential organisation of interaction, context-relevant utterances and membership categorization. Further explanation of how these features are specifically applied as analytic tools will be provided in the following chapter.

### *Sequential organisation of interaction*

A key moral feature of the mutual intelligibility of talk is observable through the sequential organisation of interaction. Talk is designed to position the speaker and recipients with rights and obligations to recognise the utterance and provide relevant 'next' utterances. This is organised around turn-taking systems, preference organisation and openings and closings (Sacks 1992; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). For example, if an utterance is heard as a question the social actor must ascertain if they are the recipient of the question and if they are held accountable for producing a response. In producing a 'relevant' response as a 'next' action it reinforces an understanding of the prior action. Producing an inappropriate next turn, such as interrupting or not answering a designated question, can be seen as a breach in the normative ordering of the talk-in-interaction. One of Sacks' most important contributions to the philosophy of language is that the meaning of utterances is constructed through 'sequence relevancies' (Rawls 1989, 160). This commitment to a sequential order of relevancies is distinct from the commitment to the social structure or institutional order (Rawls 1989). Constant moral work is required by participants to achieve and maintain meaning through the sequential ordering of interaction.

Features of talk, such as turn-taking systems, also demonstrate the relevance of 'context' to the interaction. Sacks et al. (1974) describe these features of talk as both context-free and context-sensitive. Turn-taking systems are 'context-free' through the use of resources common to all conversations. It is shown that systems of turn-taking remain consistent across various languages and social groups (Enfield and Stivers 2007). Yet features of talk are also 'context-sensitive' because it is through specific utterances and use of indexicals that meaning is achieved. Both features of context are needed to produce orderliness and mutual intelligibility through the interaction. As Sacks et al. (1974) explain:

> It is the context-free structure which defines how and where context-sensitivity can be displayed; the particularities of context are exhibited in systematically organised ways and places, and those are shaped by the context-free organisation (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 699).

Thus, interactional settings are to be understood in terms of both their local production and orientation to normative features.

### *Membership categorization*

Another key moral feature identified by Sacks for producing mutual intelligibility is through the use of membership categories and association of these categories with 'category-bound activities'. An important use of category-bound activities is their ability to help 'select identifications' and provide normative understanding of expected behaviour. To select identificatory categories, Sacks explains, '… is to determine if there is a category-bound activity of that sort, and if that person is a member of that category, then use that category to identify them.' (Sacks 1992, 588). Recognising how activities are category-bound by members to particular categories produces understandings of moral norms and assessment of expected behaviour. A member can be 'praised' or 'degraded' by associating their activity with an 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' category from that device or by not demonstrating an expected category-bound activity (Watson 1978). Methods used by social actors in producing adequate descriptions of membership categorization and associated agencies, display a moral commitment to the

interaction order as well as cultural knowledge of how these descriptions are used to morally account for social action.

Descriptive accounts and use of category-bound activities provide a way of understanding the moral organisation of interactions and broader social systems of classifications. As Jayyusi explains:

> The practices, in which our category concepts are embedded and used, and the knowledge bound up with them, are ones in which description and appraisal, the conceptual, moral and practical are reflexively and irremediably bound up with, and embedded in, each other. Intelligibility is constituted in practico-moral terms. (Jayyusi 1984, 241)

Thus, relationships between the conceptual, moral and practical on display in social interactions can provide a basis for understanding social action.

### *Application of Sacks' contribution to this study: understanding sequential ordering and membership categorization in the AMCS Guide and blogs*

Following Sacks' theoretical contributions through conversation analysis and Membership Categorization Analysis draws attention to the moral features of talk-in-interaction in achieving mutual intelligibility. Specifically, this provides an understanding of the way in which the AMCS Guide and blogs achieve their meaning through the sequential ordering of the sites and use of categorization procedures in organising classifications of not only people but also nature and objects and their associated agencies through category-bound activities. The setting of the Internet provides 'naturally occurring material' with which to explore these descriptions and categorizations and see the way in which the features of the 'online talk' are context-sensitive and context-renewing.

## 3.4 Ethics of the encounter: examining the role of 'context' in situations

The theoretical work described above draws attention to interactional situations as encounters for 'ethical' conduct. For Goffman, the encounter is 'ethical'

through the moral work required to maintain the sacred self and align with appropriate footings that demonstrate knowledge of the current setting and broader cultural context. Another aspect of the 'ethical' encounter is emphasised in the work of Garfinkel and Sacks, who draw attention to the moral work required in order to produce mutual intelligibility and orderliness of the interaction. With this as a theoretical basis, a field of study of the encounter as a moral domain is opened up.

Describing Goffman's work on encounters, Dingwall (1980, 155) states that 'encounters possess their own system of relevances which exclude a variety of matters and include others which form part of the local resources of the encounter.' An examination of the interaction order of the encounter is thus sensitive to the 'context' of utterances in relation to other utterances and to the wider social context in which it is produced. Each of the key interaction order theorists described above highlight certain aspects of 'context' that are relevant to understanding the moral order of the encounter. Goffman draws attention to how footings align to the broader context of the encounter that are considered relevant to the situation. Garfinkel identifies the way that an utterance reflexively accounts for context through renewing the context in which it is produced and also indexically depends on the context in achieving meaning within the interaction. Following on from this, Sacks also focuses on the indexical nature of utterances that are 'context-sensitive' to the situation in which they are produced but also 'context-free' through universally applicable features of talk that orient to maintaining order within interactions. This study explores the relationships between context and conduct through an examination of encounters where people are called to make and respond to ethical choices.

The online Sustainable Seafood Guide and blogs described in this case study present unique considerations for the way in which interactions within these settings can be understood as 'moral' encounters. These online encounters may best be described by Dingwall's (1980) concept of an 'orchestrated encounter'. Dingwall proposes the term 'orchestrated encounter' to describe encounters in which 'one party has the ultimate right to determine when the other party or

parties may speak and receive attention and what they may speak about.' (1980, 156). Such encounters are more formal than mundane conversations but are not as formal as institutional encounters such as in courtrooms which are bound by strict procedural rules, what Atkinson and Drew (1979) describe as pre-allocated encounters. The analysis to follow will show the way in which the websites of the AMCS Guide and two participatory blogs propose an 'orchestrator' of the encounter and position actors with certain participation rights. The sites are oriented to as *moral* encounters through features such as sequential organisation, openings and turn-taking systems. The sites themselves and agents nominated in the sites such as 'fish' and 'oceans' also create a spatio-temporal context of the encounter that needs analytic consideration.

Within the field of geography, Owain Jones (2000) describes an 'ethics of encounter' to draw attention to the ethics of *all* situated encounters and to open up new spaces in which ethics can be located. Following Levinas, he focuses on ethics as human encounters with the Other, yet extends this view to include animals as Other and to examine the various spaces they inhabit as spaces for ethical encounters. He describes how the treatment of animals in one situation or space may be deemed unethical in another situation (such as the treatment of animals in factory farms compared with domestic houses) and how the same species of animals can be treated differently in international legislation (such as the extermination policy of the wolf in Western Europe but not in the Balkans). Another spatial consideration highlighted by Jones is the way animals can become 'faceless' when talked about in the collective, quoting Bauman (1993, 115): 'when the Other dissolves in the Many the first to dissolve is the Face'. This work draws attention to the role of 'geographic context' and following Lynn (1998), he recognises that 'all human activity, including moral conflict, occurs at *sites* embedded in *situations*, making geographic context a constitutive element of all ethical problems.' (Lynn 1998, 282).

Jones (2000) builds on Lynn's (1998) work by including the 'ignored geographies' that are often considered beyond human ethical imagination, such as the ocean and the treatment of fish (2000, 286). Water contains spaces that

are 'markedly alien to the 'airy' spaces that we humans inhabit' and 'many of the lives lived there are ethically invisible to us' (Jones 2000, 284). Even when 'ethics' of seafood is discussed, it is often not in terms of the ethical treatment of fish. Jones describes how the overfishing debate within the European Union is constructed in terms of factors such as economics, stock depletion or territorial rights, with little attention placed on ethical dimensions of fishing:

> Big-game fishing, shark-hunting and fishing more generally are still devoid of any widespread ethical consideration. This, when compared to the concern for some land-based human-animal relations, shows just how distant from our ethical vision are these other beings living in this profoundly other form of space. (Jones 2000, 285)

He cites the factory farming of salmon as another example that generally avoids the 'ethical gaze'. Factory farmed salmon are kept in cages and denied their natural lifecycle that see them travel great distances. While salmon may not be given ethical consideration, people will go to great lengths to save a beached whale or prevent the hunting of dolphins. These examples all illustrate the role of geographic context and temporal-spatial features that are demonstrated in different 'ethics of encounter' between human and animal relations. The approach that Jones (2000) sets out through considering the ethics of the encounter with the Other broadens the focus to recognise all encounters as ethical, and the role of both human and nonhuman actors. Yet the focus still remains on 'ethical treatment' as a judgement or absent outcome of the encounter. My study focuses instead on how the situated *doing* of the encounter is an ethical accomplishment at the level of interaction and the role that both human and nonhuman agencies bring to the encounter.

The work of the interaction order theorists outlined above can help us examine how the situation of the 'encounter' is made sense of both in the management of the interaction and the understanding of the social world beyond the interaction. Interactions within the online encounters in this study also raise questions about the role of nonhuman actants such as websites, fish and fishing practices as part of the ethical context. This chapter now turns to look at the role of nonhuman actors within encounters.

## 3.5 Material understanding: recognising nonhuman actants as part of situated ethical context

This final section outlines an approach that is sensitive to capturing the role of both human and nonhuman agencies in providing contexts for ethical conduct. As Jones' (2000) work highlights above, the ethics of the encounter involves a complex set of relationships between human and nonhuman actants. Social action is not just performed by people interacting among other people in a 'social vacuum', but occurs within physical and temporal space involving both human and nonhuman agencies. This section will first outline an understanding of the 'social site' as described by Schatzki (2002) that draws attention to the human and nonhuman actants that make up this site. The chapter will then turn to an elaboration of the theoretical work of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon in actor-network theory to highlight the agencies of human and nonhuman actants that can be discovered by 'following the actors' as they enrol others in the interaction.

Following Schatzki's (2002) study of the 'social site', social life can be seen as a 'mesh of practices and arrangements' of people, artifacts, organisms and things. These arrangements include the layout of the physical space, material objects, and nature, which form part of, and are transformed through, the social field. A 'site ontology' approach recognises the situated context in which social life is co-constituted by people and objects without defining these as a 'social' or 'natural' force but rather sees how these are made through situated encounters (Meehan and Rice 2011). According to Schatzki (2000), humans, artifacts and nature prefigure one another's activity. For example, the social site of 'cooking a family meal' involves not only interactions among family members but also interactions with the physical features of the location and use of materials, including food. All of these activities together constitute the social site. Considering the whole social site raises questions about the agency of both human and nonhumans involved in interactions, which is further explained in the relational work of Bruno Latour (2005) and actor-network theory.

## 3.6 Understanding human and nonhuman interactions: actor-network theory and sociomaterial agency

Conceptualising the human and nonhuman actants involved in arrangements can be achieved using relational theories, particularly the work of Latour's (2005) actor-network theory (ANT). This approach brings nonhuman objects and entities into focus through looking at how both human and nonhumans are involved in social action. According to this approach, social action is only possible through 'an intense activity of enrolling, convincing, and enlisting' a range of people and things (Latour 1986, 273). Actor-network theory conceptualises objects in terms of their relationships with others and resists *a priori* assumptions about agency of humans and nonhumans. In doing so, this understanding rejects 'singular' notions of human agency and instead conceptualises agency as an emergent and variable outcome of relationships within networks (Callon and Law 1997). Agency is attributed not only to humans but also nonhuman objects, such as signs, advertising and technology. In the case of 'sustainable fish', this can involve the role of labels that identify where fish were farmed, online websites that provide information and the fish themselves, as will be explored in this study.

Although not commonly acknowledged, Latour's work can be seen as compatible with ethnomethodological studies of practice (Lindemann 2011) through adding another focus to the way in which situated contexts can be achieved through both the work of humans and nonhumans. Lindemann (2011) makes the case that Latour can be considered a follower of Durkheim, even going so far as describing the work of Latour as 'an ethnomethodologically informed student of Durkheim takes to the laboratory' (2011, 99). Indeed, in line with ethnomethodologically, actor-network theory calls for a detailed analysis of the practices of all actors, including nonhuman actors, exercising agency through the process of 'fact-making' and achieving sense through their actions. In a conversation with Katti (2006), Latour describes his fundamental interest in 'truth-making activities' and especially how scientific facts are made to seem 'true'. Thus, the interest for Latour is not whether something is real or

constructed but rather, 'Is it constructed well enough to become an autonomous fact?' (Latour 1999, 274). This involves 'making visible the *process* of fabrication' (Katti and Latour 2006, 98, emphasis added). Latour's work demonstrates that if something is described as an actant then it must be an actant. Therefore, attention is placed on the process through which things come to be positioned within practices.

### *3.6.1 Bringing fish in: agencies of fish*

Bringing attention to the agencies of both human and nonhumans involved in situated encounters regarding 'sustainable seafood' can bring focus to the often overlooked agencies of 'fish' in debates on overfishing (Jones 2000). Fish can be seen to exercise agency within interactions and not necessarily in the way expected. For example, a key study undertaken by Callon (1986) looks at the way researchers attempt to 'enrol' scallops in a research project, yet the response of the scallops does not conform to the expected 'script' they have been assigned. The action of the scallops are then translated into research papers by the researchers, and if the scallops' actions are accepted by the broader scientific community, the researchers will themselves be enrolled and accept their alignment as 'researchers'. Through this study, Callon draws attention to the network of relations and ordering between the 'fishermen', the 'scallops', the 'scientific community' and their emerging agencies through the interaction. He uses this study to develop his method of a 'sociology of translation' to show how scripts are responded to and taken up in practice. This approach will be discussed further in the following chapter.

In bringing fish into focus, Probyn (2014) also casts a feminist eye over fishing practices to show the role that women have played in fishing. Following fish through space and time reveals the often hidden role of women, as Probyn (2014, 598) explains 'we cannot understand the tuna that appears on our plate… without taking into account how the fish brings with it a historical and spatial geography of production and consumption, in which women have been central

players.' Thus, following fish sheds lights on other human and nonhuman actants that may not always be brought into view.

Other studies within the field of human–animal relations that have looked specifically at agencies of fish have often focused on the sport of fishing (Bear and Eden 2011, Franklin 2011). For example, Bear and Eden (2011) study recreational anglers and how they engage with fish across different spaces and times by attempting to 'think like a fish'. Another study by Franklin (2011) shows how trout demonstrated their agencies through responding to their new environments in postcolonial Australia. These studies illuminate the agencies that can be exhibited by fish. Yet, as Philo and Wilbert (2000) point out, an essential understanding of the ANT approach does not assume that agency is a static thing always held constant by the actors, but emerges through performance of different material relations. In order to locate the agencies of those involved in the interaction it is necessary to look in detail at the situated practices within the context of the interaction.

### *3.6.2 Follow the actors: exploring the 'ethical context' of food choice*

Central to actor-network theory is an understanding of the concept of 'social' in terms of associations and connections rather than the depiction of 'social' as a separate domain distinct from non-social ones such as natural, material and biological. In describing the role of the 'social' in actor-network theory, Latour explains:

> ... social is not the name of any one link in a chain, nor even that of the chain, but it is that of the chaining itself. A laboratory discovery, a piece of technology, a work of art, indeed a living being such as Michel Callon's famous scallops, are not social in the first meaning of the word, but they are social in the second one, whenever they deeply modify (or translate) what they are tied to. (Latour 2010, 76–77)

Therefore, this approach calls for a detailed analysis of the processes or 'chaining' involved in enjoining and mobilising actors within the interaction.

To investigate the process of mobilising actors to action, actor-network theory involves 'following the actors'—both human and nonhuman—as they enrol others in networks (Latour 1987, 2005). The process of following the actor involves paying attention to the associations that are produced and oriented to by the actors to '... learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together ...' (Latour 2005, 12). Therefore, in the case of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide explored in this study, attention is placed on how the actors, including the Guide and those positioned within the Guide, describe their practices and make sense of the practices ascribed to them.

This study explores the role of both human and nonhuman actors in positionings of 'food ethics' discourse within the online seafood guide and how this is taken up and translated in participatory blogs. This study makes central the situated role of 'contexts' in achieving understandings of ethics. In this way, this study remains aware of the relational aspect of ethics in what Whatmore (2002) describes as a 'more than human world'. As Castree (2003, 10) explains:

> … the interconnections that help constitute those 'things' are complex and variable, such that if the *same* 'thing' is inserted into *different* relational contexts aspects of its material nature *alter* correspondingly. ... the relationally constituted, and situationally variable, members of any ethical constituency cannot be ontologically fixed once and for all (see Whatmore 2002). Future ethical arguments will therefore have to be acutely sensitive to the contingent material specificities of the constituents under consideration.

This study responds to this call for an approach that is sensitive to the contexts of practice, through a detailed study of the situated practices in which the online Sustainable Seafood Guide is produced and positions both human and nonhuman actants in aligning with the moral order of the site and how this, in turn, is interpreted in participatory blogs. This approach remains open to capturing the agencies of human and nonhuman actants in producing and maintaining the moral order of the interaction.

## 3.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has provided a theoretical framework to sensitise this study to explore the ways in which ethical conduct is socially embedded and performed through situated encounters. First, with a basis in the work of Emile Durkheim, the chapter showed how moral ordering can be understood in relation to social norms expressed through collective symbols and classifications of sacred and profane. Following this, it was shown how this normative order is played out through settings of practice and made sense of through the interaction order as described by Goffman's elaboration of the self, Garfinkel's focus on mutual definitions of the situation and Sacks' work on shared features of talk and membership categorization. This has demonstrated the mutual commitment required to maintaining a moral order at the level of interaction. Focusing on situations as crucial in the negotiation of ethical conduct brought attention to the 'ethics of the encounter' and the need to focus on situated contexts of practice to understand ethical conduct. In this study, the situated encounters of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide and participatory blogs are understood as 'social sites' in which both human and nonhuman agencies become emergent through the interactions. The final section of this chapter has outlined actor-network theory as an approach suited to capture both human and nonhuman agencies that are manifest within interactions.

The conceptual framework outlined in this chapter has set a theoretical basis for opening up an understanding of 'ethics' through situated contexts of practice. Specifically, this will enable an investigation of the processes involved in enjoining actors through the online Sustainable Seafood Guide and participatory blogs. The following chapter will show the way in which this will be operationalised through a research design and methodology that is suited to exploring relationships between ethics and context within situated encounters in online settings.

# CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY – CAPTURING 'ETHICAL CONDUCT' AND 'CONTEXT'

## 4.1 Overview of chapter

Following the theoretical foundation provided in the previous chapter, this chapter will outline the logic of inquiry and research design suited to investigate ethical conduct within situated contexts of practice. This research design is sensitised to notice the moral work required at the level of the interaction order and also the agencies of human and nonhuman actants as central to providing contexts in which ethics is performed. The case study of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide and the uptake of this Guide in two participatory blogs provides the settings for 'ethical encounters' by which to explore relationships between ethical conduct and contexts of practice.

This chapter is organised in three parts. First, it will provide an overview of the way in which relationships between ethics and context are made 'analytically noticeable' and problematised at both the level of the interaction order and human–nonhuman relations. For example, looking for instances of Goffman's (1981) concept of 'footing' in the AMCS Guide shows how actants are positioned as speakers and recipients within the moral order of the Guide. Second, the chapter elaborates on the way in which theory is built within this study through an abductive logic of interpretation. The final section describes the methods of data collection, selection and analysis. The online AMCS Guide is selected to illuminate instances where social actors have been guided to make 'ethical choices' and follow the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' and how this Guide is repurposed through local settings of use in participatory blogging websites. This enables an investigation of how 'ethics' is accomplished in the situated contexts of institutional and local settings. Data collection and analysis is guided by ethnomethodological principles to explicate the ways in which the AMCS Guide is translated through different online contexts and expose relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice'.

## 4.2 Problematising and locating relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context'

With a central motivation to investigate the moral order of food ethics discourse, this study seeks to identify the relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' in situated practices of online guides and participatory websites. To investigate the moral order inherent in food ethics discourse, the previous chapter identified an interaction order approach, including a focus on material relations, as providing a theoretical understanding of the interactional encounters in which 'ethics' can be located. This section outlines the methodological significance of this approach as it applies to the online interactional settings of the AMCS Guide and participatory blogs. These online encounters provide a 'naturally occurring' setting in which to explore the workings of the moral order in detail as produced and oriented to by members of the interaction.

Rather than rely on *a priori* prescriptions of the way in which relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts' will operate and unfold, this study uses the theoretical insights provided by the interaction order approach to guide the study to look for instances in which concepts of 'ethics' and 'context' may be located and interactionally accomplished. Such an approach follows Blumer's (1954) understanding of 'sensitising concepts' as opposed to 'definitive concepts' that are defined in terms of set attributes prior to the study. For example, relying on definitive concepts may define an 'ethical consumer' as someone who makes certain 'ethical choices' (e.g. buying organic food) in specific 'contexts' such as supermarkets—and sets out to test these relationships through the study. As Blumer (1954, 8) explains, definitive concepts 'provide prescriptions of what to see' while sensitising concepts 'merely suggest directions along which to look'. This approach recognises that concepts receive their meaning and understanding through the context of their use and cannot be understood definitively outside of this context. Following this understanding, this study is guided by the interaction order approach that sensitises the study to look for

instances in which 'ethics' is interactionally accomplished through situated encounters of members of the interaction.

This section outlines the way in which the theoretical insights from the interaction order and material relations approach sensitises the study to look for relationships relevant to capturing instances of 'ethical conduct'. Four key 'moral features' are identified as 'analytically noticeable' in order to explore these relationships. First, it will be shown how Goffman's (1981) understanding of participation roles and footing demonstrates the moral work involved in maintaining the social self through interactions. Second, the study is sensitised to focus on the mutual meaning achieved through orienting to the sequential order of the site as outlined in the work of Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1992). Following on from this, Membership Categorization Analysis will be discussed as another key moral feature of the interaction. Finally, this section will look at the material relations within ethical encounters and the way in which nonhuman actants such as websites, fish and oceans play a role in accomplishing situations of ethics within locally produced settings.

### *4.2.1 Sensitising the study to notice participation roles and alignments*

As discussed in the previous chapter, Goffman (1981) draws attention to the moral work required in maintaining social selves through aligning with appropriate participation roles and footings within the interaction. Noticing 'speaker' and 'recipient' roles within the AMCS Guide and blogs illuminates the moral work involved in recognising and being accountable to responding to these roles. For example, the AMCS Guide positions utterances within the site to align with the speaker role of 'author' and 'animator' and is hearable as an 'authority' of information on 'choosing seafood wisely' while the 'recipient' is positioned as the 'seafood consumer' who is identified as the key figure in 'need of information'. These relationships are then problematised through observing how the roles identified in the Guide are oriented to and taken up within specific interactional settings of two participatory blogs. This illuminates the moral work

involved in positioning actants within the AMCS Guide and how these positions are repurposed within the participatory blogs.

### *4.2.2 Sensitising the study to notice sequential organisation of interaction*

The work established by Garfinkel (1967) within the approach of ethnomethodology draws attention to the moral obligation for members to achieve mutual meaning through interactional settings. Taking this further, Sacks illustrated that a key method for achieving common-sense within interactions is through 'sequence relevancies' in which utterances are understood within the sequential order of the interaction and demonstrated through turn-taking systems. This has implications for the way in which topics are introduced and oriented to within the interaction and the moral commitment required to stay 'on topic'. Being aware of the sequential ordering within the interactional setting of the AMCS Guide and blogs, for example through openings and closing and nominating next turns, shows the way in which topics associated with the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' are oriented to both *within* the sites and *between* the sites.

### *4.2.3 Sensitising the study to notice membership categorizations*

A second key moral feature identified by Sacks (1992) in achieving moral order within the interaction is through membership categorization work, in which a shared understanding of the social world is displayed and oriented to. The use of membership categorizations also performs moral work through attributing certain activities to categorial identities. Being aware of these categorization procedures used in the AMCS Guide and the uptake of these in the blogs can reveal the way in which actants are morally bound to certain actions. For example, the category of 'seafood consumer' produced within the AMCS Guide is bound to be in need of 'information'. This is further oriented to within the blogs, yet made problematic through locating the ways in which members, who self-

identify as ‘seafood consumers’ in particular settings of practice, receive ‘information’. Locating uses of membership categorization devices illuminates the ways in which moral orders are produced and maintained within the interactional settings of the sites.

### *4.2.4 Sensitising the study to notice nonhuman agencies*

Finally, the theoretical position outlined within Latour (2005) and Callon’s (1986) work in actor-network theory and the sociology of translation draws attention to the agencies of both human and nonhuman actants in producing situations for ethical encounters. For example, the AMCS Guide relies on nonhuman actants within the website, such as images and links that guide the user to interact with the site in particular ways. The agencies of the nonhuman actants nominated within the site, such as fish, fishing methods and oceans also play a role in producing situations for ethics to be recognised and performed within the interaction.

## 4.3 Abductive logic of inquiry: role of theory and interpretation

The approach taken within this study to interrogate relationships between ‘ethical conduct’ and ‘contexts of practice’ is based on an abductive logic of inquiry. The notion of abduction has a foundation in the work of Aristotle but was developed into a theory of inference in the late 19th century through the philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce (Svennevig 1997, Givón 2005). This approach involves layers of interpretation based on members’ lay understandings and researchers’ inferences. Three key layers are identified within this approach. First, observations of patterns are established through an inductive understanding of the way in which members produce and orient to ‘ethical conduct’ through their interactions. This involves identifying the interpretive methods used by members to construct understandings of ‘ethical conduct’ and ‘contexts’ made relevant by members within the interaction order of the AMCS Guide and two participatory blogs.

From these patterns observed in the interaction order of the sites, analytic concepts are developed to represent these patterns. This second layer of interpretation relies on my interpretations as a researcher. For example, within the AMCS Guide, patterns in the use of the pronoun 'you' to position recipients as active participants within the talk may be identified according to Sacks' understanding of indexicals. Although the data is derived from members' interactions, the process of selecting patterns in the data is based on the researcher's interpretation of what is considered relevant for analysis. This process of making inferences from the data moves the observations away from the world of the members and into the world of the researcher. Thus, it is not a purely inductive endeavour removed from researcher's involvement. As Svennevig (1997, 4) notes, 'Any inference which involves contextual judgements of relevance and significance has an abductive element.' From these patterns, the researcher develops theories of explanation.

A third layer of interpretation involves the use of inferences to explain these patterns in a generalised sense that draws on other theories and concepts. Using the same example provided above, the use of the pronouns may be explained in terms of alignments based on epistemic rights and claims to 'territories of knowledge' (Pomerantz 1984b). Returning to the data to see other cases where this does or does not occur can test this further. Thus, in order to build and test theories, this approach involves moving back and forth between lay understandings and researcher interpretations. Empirical observations need an abductive 'leap of faith' to make statements about the way the patterns observed in the data relate to theories of explanation (Svennevig 1997). As Givón (1989, 321) states 'data not defined by theory is empty, and theory not driven by data is blind' (cited in Svennevig 1997, 6). It is therefore necessary to allow for an approach that uses empirical cases to illustrate features of the social world.

Looking specifically at approaches taken to study spoken interaction, Svennevig (1997) notes how these studies of spoken interaction are usually described in terms of an *inductive* logic. Yet, close examination of how these studies are conducted in practice, reveals that an *abductive* approach is followed. For

example, Svennevig uses a description of Sacks' (1984) approach in which an inductive logic is proposed where the researcher is called to remove any preconceived considerations of what the data may find prior to the study. As Sacks (1984, 27 in Svennevig 1997) states, 'When we start out with a piece of data, the question of what we are going to end up with, what kind of findings it will give, should not be a consideration. We sit down with a piece of data, make a bunch of observations, and see where they will go'. Yet, despite this apparently inductive approach, Svennevig reveals how the researcher is guided by set of 'puzzling facts' in looking at the data in the first place. Using the Sacks et al. 1974 paper as an example, Svennevig describes how this was based on a 'puzzle' raised by a normative understanding of turn-taking systems concerning what *should* be oriented to within the interaction, even when this was not observed to be the case. Svennevig (1997, 9) describes that, 'These norms are formulated *partly* on the basis of observed regularities in conversation, but just as much on the basis of what happens in 'deviant cases'. In this way, the account seems to involve an abductory, and not an inductive methodology.' An abductive approach is considered appropriate for my study of the way in which relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice' are interacationally accomplished through the online sites. This draws on both a normative and interpretive understanding of action.

### *4.3.1 Procedural consequentiality: uncovering contexts relevant to members*

Following an abductive approach avoids relying on *a priori* descriptions and definitions of concepts and relationships between ethical conduct and contexts of practice. Rather than assume what 'ethical' relationships will transpire within particular contexts, it looks to the way in which these relationships are produced and oriented to by members through their interactions. This approach remains sensitive to the 'contexts' made relevant by members, rather than predefined as relevant by the researcher. This can be seen to follow the methodological principle of 'procedural consequentiality' as outlined by Schegloff (1991). One of

the key aims of this approach is to show how context is made *consequentially relevant* by members as they invoke and orient to contexts through their practices. Describing this approach, Potter (1998) states that many potentially correct 'contexts' can be described but only the context oriented to by members as relevant in situations is what matters analytically. The researcher's task is to 'take the relevance-to-the-parties as the warrant for relevance-for-the-analyst' (Arminen 2000, 447). This can be analysed further by a comparative approach between what Schegloff (1991) calls 'sequences of that sort' in order to see if the patterns are generic to interactions or to particular social structures (Arminen 2000). In line with this approach, this study looks at the similarities and differences between the Guide and two discrete groups to see what might be generic to responding to Guides and what positions might be more context specific.

These features of context can be explored through close adherence to members' interactions and how members orient to the broader social context within their interactions. This can be understood using Zimmerman and Pollner's (1970) notion of 'occasioned corpus' that involves the interactional accomplishment of context within the setting while displaying an understanding of the cultural backdrop. As Zimmerman and Pollner (1970, 99) explain:

> The occasioned corpus is thus conceived to consist in members' methods of exhibiting the connectedness, objectivity, orderliness and relevance of the features of any particular setting as features in, of and linked with a more encompassing, ongoing setting, typically referred to as 'the society'. The work of the occasioned corpus is the work of displaying the society 'in back of' the various situated appearances constituent of everyday, located scenes.

Thus, this draws attention to the interactional elements that members orient to within the setting. The occasioned corpus does not stand prior to the interaction, but is made relevant in the interaction of members. The chapter now turns to the research design used to capture instances of ethical conduct and contexts oriented to as procedurally relevant by members within situated contexts of practice.

## 4.4 Research design: data selection, collection and analysis

This section outlines the development of a research design suited to investigate relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' oriented to by members in interactional settings. It will first describe the methods of data selection, including the use of online settings and the use of a theoretical sampling approach to select cases that expose varied orientations to 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts'. It then provides an overview of the data collection strategies used to collect instances within the case study sites that best illuminate the theoretical questions relating to 'ethical conduct' as a guided activity and calls for people to 'be informed' and make 'wise choices'. Finally, the chapter will describe the procedures used for data analysis, focusing on how the interaction order can be analysed using an ethnomethodologically inspired approach based on principles of conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis. The final section will then point to the use of script analysis to further investigate the role of human and nonhuman agencies in constructing and orienting to ethical encounters.

## 4.5 Online sites: source of 'naturally occurring' data to explore 'ethical' relationships within the interaction order

An interaction order approach recognises the salience of situated contexts in producing meaning and performing moral work. Thus, in order to explore relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts' oriented to by members within the interaction order this study accesses interactional settings available on the Internet. The Internet provides a setting by which to explore the interactions of members, with this study examining the specific ethical encounters in an online Sustainable Seafood Guide and participatory blogs. This section outlines the main methodological significance of using online sources for this study. First, it outlines how the 'virtual' space enables a study of the interaction order as a setting for 'real' interactions. Second, it outlines the use of online sources as 'naturally occurring' data. Third, it shows how the online space

allows a process that 'follows the actor', including nonhuman actants. Finally, it points to interactional features of the online spaces.

### *4.5.1 Virtual as real: Internet as a site for exploring interaction order*

Online settings provide a rich source of data for exploring the interaction order. In our current media society, many of our everyday interactions are performed in online settings. As Knorr Cetina (2009, 63) notes, '… a substantial and increasing proportion of everyday life is spent not in the physical co-presence of other/s but in virtual spaces.' She describes the interactions that occur within these virtual spaces as 'synthetic situations' that require a specific kind of response system from parties who need not be physically present but are still accountable to respond. Although the theoretical insights of the interaction order developed by Goffman (1959, 1983) were predominantly based on co-present and physical encounters, this study looks at how the interaction order operates within online environments. Pinch (2010) outlines a handful of studies that have applied Goffman's work to the study of interactions within new media, including mobile phones (Ling 2008) and the Internet (Miller 1995; Cheung 2000). However, Pinch emphasises that online interaction is not a 'special' form of interaction simply because it involves technologically mediated interaction. He warns that some analysts separate the 'virtual' world from the 'real' world, yet this fails to recognise that all interaction is materially mediated. He gives the example of Goffman's (1972) study of children on the merry-go-round as being mediated by the 'technology' of the merry-go-round. Thus, while interactions in online settings can be seen to be mediated by the online setting, these sites are still bound by an orientation towards producing and maintaining a social order both *within* the site and referring to the broader normative context *beyond* the site. Actants within the online interaction, including elements of the website itself, orient to producing and maintaining a moral order, and it is this moral work that this study is interested in exploring.

Therefore, this study recognises the 'virtual' is not in opposition to the 'real' but is an extension of the 'real' (Shields 2003). Analysing discourses and moral orders within online settings can illuminate wider social practices. As Jayyusi (1991) explains with regards to media texts in general:

> For the ethnomethodologist, the media text is a locus of a set of practices and understandings that are features of the routine organisation of social life, so that when we explicate a media text, we are explicating, in part, the intelligibility and organisation of a set of practical activities, co-located and inscribed in specific ways within a particular text. The intelligibility of the text partakes of the logic and intelligibility of an array of other practical activities. The analysis of a media text can thus investigatively draw on and illuminate a wide range of social organisational concerns, activities, domains of knowledge and communicative practices.' (Jayyusi 1991, 167)

As described by Jayyusi, following an ethnomethodological logic, a detailed analysis of the moral order oriented to by members within online discourse on 'food ethics' can provide insight into the normative understandings and practices that give meaning to social life.

One notable study that has explored the moral work involved in producing understandings of 'food identities' through online discussion forums has been undertaken by Sneijder and te Molder (2009). In this work, online discussion forums are used to show how vegan identities are 'normalised' by members constructing accounts of food practices as 'easy' and 'ordinary'. The authors compare this to findings from a previous study (Sneijder and te Molder 2006) showing how people construct a 'gourmet' identity by situating their food choice as not 'ordinary'. These results highlight how identities around 'food choice' are constituted and made observable in online interactions through orienting to shared normative understandings of food practices. Online settings, therefore, can be seen to provide a rich source of data with which to explore the situated moral work involved in producing and maintaining a moral order that references broader contexts of practices.

### *4.5.2 Naturally occurring data: Internet as a site for exploring naturally occurring interactions*

In order to investigate the moral order oriented to in food ethics discourse, this study uses online sites as a source of 'naturally occurring' data to explore phenomena in their own contexts. An ethnomethodological approach advocates the use of 'naturally occurring materials of interaction' as data (Heritage 2001) in order to provide an in depth analysis of the practical organisation of social life (Jayyusi 1991). Naturally occurring data is sourced from situations that occur without the researcher's intervention in its production. Accessing naturally occurring data avoids the researcher's reliance on *a priori* assumptions of the relationships between concepts to instead see how these relationships are produced by members in situated occasions. Documentary sources available on the Internet, such as in online guides and discussion forums, provide a rich yet underutilised source of data that enables a detailed investigation of the moral work involved in orienting to and maintaining social order and explicating the sense-making methods used by members in producing order within interactional settings. These online sources provide access to utterances in the text and also show how these utterances relate to and constitute their settings.

Within this study, online sites are used as a source of 'naturally occurring data' to illuminate relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' as oriented to by members of the interaction. In particular, the case study of the Sustainable Seafood Guide provides an opportunity to study how 'guiding' practices are oriented to through the Guide's website and through the repurposing of the Guide in participatory blogs. Before looking at how the Guide may be taken up by specific groups or used in specific contexts, it is first necessary to investigate how 'guiding' is accomplished and how relationships between conduct and context are understood by members.

### *4.5.3 Follow the actor: tracing the movement of human and nonhuman actants through online space*

Another key methodological feature of using online sites to investigate the interaction order is that it allows a process to 'follow the actor' and trace actors' multiple associations and translations (Latour 2005). This enables an investigation of the network of relations, involving both human and nonhuman actants (e.g. guide, website, fish) as they are oriented to within the interaction order. For example, this study follows how the online AMCS Guide is translated within the institutional setting of the Guide's website and through participatory websites. This process also involves paying close attention to the 'idiosyncratic terms offered by the actors' (Latour 2005, 45) and does not treat these terms as *a priori* facts but rather as emerging within the context of the actors' interactions.

### *4.5.4 Interactional features of online space*

This study brings attention to the interactional features of online settings. Interactions within online settings do not have the same visual cues as face-to-face interactions yet make use of different types of paralinguistic cues, such as headings, images and placement of utterances within the spatial design of the website. Hine (2000), in her analysis of websites reporting a famous murder case, looked at the use of visual and textual elements to present a certain hearing of the case. Thus, paying attention to visual aspects of the data such as use of pictures, colours, page layout and website design (Garcia et al. 2009) shows how the setting is a constituent feature in the notion of 'ethics' produced. Yet while the setting can be seen as guiding the interaction, it does not exist in a deterministic way.

The chapter now turns to an elaboration of the sampling approach used to select online cases that best illuminate the theoretical questions of the interaction order raised in this study. This theoretical sampling approach captures the way

in which the moral order of food ethics discourse has been constructed and understood in situated contexts of practice as observed in online settings. In particular, the case study enables an investigation of the relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts' oriented to by members within the Sustainable Seafood Guide and participatory websites.

## 4.6 Data Selection: theoretical sampling from online sources to explore relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice'

This section outlines the process of data selection adopted within this study. It first discusses the theoretical sampling approach guiding the case study selection. Cases were selected that enabled investigation of an online guide to ethical consumption in order to see how people were positioned within the moral order of the guide and to explore relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice'. The chapter then turns to a discussion of the emerging research problem within this study that looked at 'ethics' as a guided activity. The third section then looks at the case selection of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide to explore moral positions within an 'official' guide to 'ethical consumption'. Then, in order to explore the way these positions were taken up in diverse discourses, this chapter outlines how two comparative participatory blogs were selected that discuss the uptake of the Guide and other contexts that members oriented to as relevant contexts for ethical conduct.

### *4.6.1 Theoretical sampling: adopting a systemic case study approach*

This first section outlines how a theoretical sampling approach was used to guide the case study selection and development. In line with a systemic case study approach, cases were selected based on their representativeness of the theoretical research problem under investigation. A theoretical sampling approach involves selecting cases that are 'particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs' (Eisenhardt and

Graebner 2007, 27). This approach involves three key features outlined by Silverman (2010), and depicted in relation to this study in Table 4.1 below. The first feature relates to the process of case selection that involves 'selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position … and most importantly the explanation or account which you are developing.' (Mason 1996, 93–94 cited in Silverman 2010, 144). In this study, cases were selected that illuminated the relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice' in food ethics discourse at the normative level (within an online sustainable seafood guide) and how this is repurposed in diverse discourses (within comparatively different participatory blogs). These cases also enabled an investigation of the diverse set of actants called to play a role in the moral order of the guide, including both human and nonhuman actants such as the websites, oceans and fish (see Table 4.1).

Secondly, as outlined in Table 4.1, a theoretical sampling approach calls for cases to be selected that are deviant or opposing in order to test relationships and theories under investigation. Thus, cases were selected that were opposed in terms of the type of 'institutional' settings (official guide vs participatory blogs) as well as the diverse uptake of the Guide in diverse discourses (Academic Blog vs Lifestyle Blog). The final feature of theoretical sampling outlined in Table 4.1 relates to the ongoing process of data selection in line with new theories and typologies that emerge. For example, findings locating the role of 'identity' and 'epistemic authority' guided additional selection of cases to explore these issues further.

Table 4.1 **Theoretical sampling approach guiding case study selection**

| **Selecting Cases** | **Application to this Study** |
|---|---|
| Relevant to theoretical position | Relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice' as observable through the interaction order.<br><br>Showing how guides enjoin and position people and how these positionings are taken up in diverse discourses<br><br>Look at both human and nonhuman agencies in maintaining ethical encounters |
| Deviant or opposing cases | 1– selecting an 'official' guide to explore the positionings within the moral order of a guide<br><br>2 – selecting participatory blogs that allow discussions of guide-in-use<br><br>3 – selecting participatory blogs that take up the 'Guide' in diverse ways:<br>Academic Blog as opposed to Lifestyle Blog |
| Ongoing data selection process | Specific cases were selected that exposed notions of 'identity' and 'epistemic authority' |

In this study, a case study approach was considered a suitable research design for the following reasons:

- allows investigation of rich, empirical descriptions of phenomena under investigation to create theoretical constructs (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007) and identify concepts, typologies and logics of doing 'ethics' and 'guiding' practices

- focuses attention on the systematic properties of cases (Yin 1994) showing elements and relationships between 'guides' and 'practice' and how cases are guided to recognise 'ethical choice'
- compares variations in agency in different contexts (McMurray, Pace and Scott 2004)
- utilises a theoretical sampling approach (Silverman 2010) as outlined above

### *4.6.2 Emerging research problem: exploring 'ethics' as a guided activity*

The research problem of 'ethics' as a guided activity emerged through the data selection process. Originally, this thesis set out with the broad goal of exploring relationships between policy discourse and practice within the overarching context of 'food ethics'. The issue of overfishing was selected as the specific instance of 'food ethics' due to its contested nature being debated among various stakeholders, its currency as a policy issue and its prolific presence online in policies, media reports and discussion forums. Discussion of overfishing included issues of marine parks, the super trawler debate and sustainable seafood labelling. During 2012, two major supermarkets in Australia, Woolworths and Coles, introduced 'sustainable seafood' labelling for fresh fish and selected packaged fish (Hargreaves 2012). A range of guides were also developed to encourage consumers to make 'ethical' choices of fish, including the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide, the Greenpeace Seafood Redlist and Canned Tuna Guide and the Good Fish Bad Fish website. These labels and guides launched the notion of 'sustainable seafood' within mainstream discussions and debates.

In reviewing online sustainable seafood guides it became apparent that people were being *guided* to identify as 'ethical consumers' and to make 'informed choices' as directed through the guides. Ethical consumption came to be seen as a guided activity and this opened up questions about relationships between 'guiding' and 'uptake' of ethical choices. This led the study to look in closer detail at how official guides enjoined people to make 'ethical choices' and how these

guides were then discussed in various contexts of use through participatory websites. Analysis of the participatory websites revealed further guiding practices used to call recipients to align with the Guide in certain ways through enjoining people to participate within specific epistemic communities. Thus, the study became interested in this process of guiding people to be enjoined to participate within the moral orders oriented to within these websites. The section below will outline the case study and data selection process that enabled this investigation.

### *4.6.3 Selecting the case of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide within diverse discourses*

In order to investigate how people are positioned within the moral order of food ethics discourse the homepage of the online AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide was selected as a case of an 'official guide' to ethical consumption. This Guide was selected because it was a widely disseminated Guide which expressed clear calls to 'choose seafood wisely' and enabled an investigation of the guiding practices and process by which people were enjoined to 'be informed' and participate in food ethics discourse. Investigating relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' within the Sustainable Seafood Guide answered the first research question – *in what ways does the online Sustainable Seafood Guide frame 'ethical choice' and conduct and what processes are involved in enjoining people to 'be informed'?*

Following this, participatory blogging websites were selected to analyse how the Sustainable Seafood Guide was appropriated and applied in different discourses. In selecting participatory websites for analysis, sites were selected that linked to the Guide and discussed the Guide in different contexts. Two diverse groups were selected that repurposed the Guide in different ways – one within the frame of 'academic critique' and the other as 'lifestyle advice'. It became clear through the analysis of these participatory websites that additional contexts were invoked by each group to *guide* people to see the Guide in certain ways. Analysis of these sites answers the second research question – *in what ways do*

*the moral positions nominated in the Sustainable Seafood Guide get taken up and translated in discourses located in diverse fields and how do different groups describe their conduct and context in relation to the call to 'be informed'?*

Together, these three comparative case sites selected for analysis illuminate relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'context' and allow an investigation of the ways in which ethics is oriented to as a 'guided' activity. The basis of the comparison across the three cases operated on two main levels. First, the website of the AMCS Guide was selected as a reference to explore moral positions within an 'official guide' to ethical consumption. These positions were then compared with the uptake of the Guide in two participatory blogs to identify how diverse groups repurposed the Guide in their own settings of practice. Having identified the similarities and differences in the uptake of the Guide and orientation to ethical conduct and context between the Guide and participatory blogs, the second level of comparison involved comparing the two participatory blogs with each other. This comparison showed how moral positions were taken up by specific epistemic groups—an academic and lifestyle group—and identified the commonalities and differences in how these groups were guided to recognise contexts of practice relevant for ethical conduct. The following Figure 4.1 summarises the process used to select the cases.

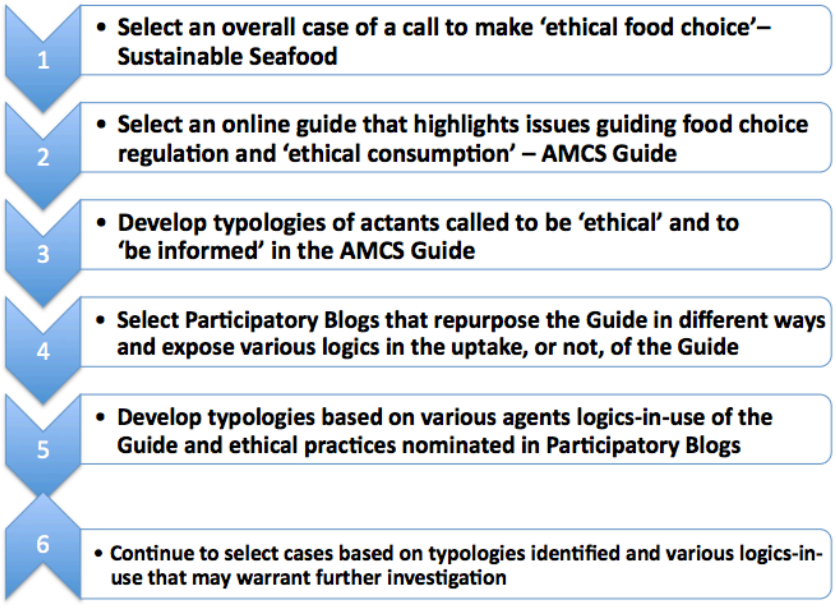


Figure 4.1 **Data selection process**

Having outlined the process of data selection, the chapter will now describe the data collection process within the case study sites.

## 4.7 Data Collection: Sources and Principles

This section outlines the sources and principles that guided the data collection process within the case study sites. Data were collected as evidence of guiding practices and author and recipient positioning within the interpretive setting of the website, including images, headings, lexical choice and pronouns. Identity work emerged as a key feature within the site that called the recipient to not only recognise scenes of 'ethical choice' but to situate their own actions within these scenes. Thus, attention was placed on instances in which identity work was performed through the use of pronouns and footing, following the work of the interaction order theorist outlined above.

### *4.7.1 Official guide: Australian Marine Conservation Society Sustainable Seafood Guide*

The AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide is presented as an official guide to 'ethical consumption' and calls certain actants to make 'wise seafood choices' by following the information provided in the guide. The Guide classifies fish species as either a Better Choice (green), Think Twice (orange) or Say No (red) based on sustainability classifications related to issues such as bycatch and fish stock depletion. The Guide was first developed in 2004 as a printable pocket guide and released in 2010 as an online guide and an iPhone app. The online AMCS Guide consists of web pages organised under four tabs: Home; About the Guide; Seafood Listings; and Useful Info. For the purpose of this analysis, data was collected from the homepage of this website because it best illuminates ways in which the AMCS Guide is introduced as a 'guide' that calls recipients to make 'wise seafood choices' and exposes various guiding practices that direct the recipient to orient to the site and recognise landscapes of 'ethical choice'.

Data were collected from the homepage of the AMCS Guide in the form of text and elements of the website that exposed instances of guiding actants to participate in the moral order of the Guide. The homepage presents 'the AMCS Guide' within a normative framework where 'ethical choice' is called for the sake of caring for healthy oceans and future generations. Data looked at how this was achieved through the identity work and positioning practices, such as pronouns and footings, that was observable through the sequential organisation of the site. For example, the pronoun 'you' is used to position the recipient of the site as a 'seafood consumer' responsible for making 'wise seafood choices'. This is evident in the first heading 'Your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely'. Therefore, instances were collected that showed the way in which identity work formed a central feature of the moral work within the site. To see how this normative level of 'ethical choice' was taken up within diverse discourses, two comparatively different participatory websites were selected as outlined below.

### *4.7.2 Conflicting uptake of Guide within participatory websites: Academic Blog and Lifestyle Blog*

Articles were selected from two divergent participatory websites identified as an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog, which both linked to the AMCS Guide and repurposed the Guide in different ways. These divergent cases enabled further investigation of how 'ethical conduct' as a guided activity was taken up in discourses located in diverse fields by the actants called to make 'ethical choices' within the homepage of the AMCS Guide. For example, the 'authority' of the Guide was critiqued within the Academic Blog while the Lifestyle Blog subscribed to the authority of the Guide. These two diverse case studies were chosen in order to show differences and similarities in the display of 'ethical conduct' and nominated 'context of practice'.

The participatory blog articles selected for analysis were identified as an 'Academic Blog' and 'Lifestyle Blog' as this reflected the different epistemic

communities represented by each blog. The Academic Blog article appeared on *The Conversation* website. For the purpose of this analysis, *The Conversation* website has been classified as an 'Academic Blog' as it shares similar features to a blogging site through the presence of an article followed by a comments section open to the public. While there is no universal definition of what constitutes a blog (Garden 2011), it is recognised that blogs can take various forms from self-published personal diaries to multi-authored platforms for 'citizen journalists' to discuss news and current events and invite interactive readership through links and comments (Domingo and Heinonen 2008; Garden 2011). *The Conversation* is a participatory website that takes the form of an 'Academic Blog' and news site that is specifically authored by academics and researchers who offer 'informed commentary and debate on the issues affecting our world' and provide an 'inviting space to focus on intelligent discussions'. The second participatory blog selected for analysis is defined as a 'Lifestyle Blog' that takes the form of a personal single-authored blog written by a celebrity author who offers advice on lifestyle issues. Further description of the articles selected for analysis from these sites is provided in Section 4.7.2 below.

Each participatory blog selected for analysis featured similar layout features, with headers, headings and an opinion article with links to other websites, followed by comments where users of the site could respond to the article. However, different recipients were targeted through the lexical choice and recipient design of each site. In this way, each site was seen to represent different epistemic communities. The article selected for analysis from the Academic Blog was written by two marine researchers under the heading '*Conflicting sustainable seafood guides confuse consumers'* and discussed the Guide in the context of use in a supermarket where information on the Guide conflicts with other guides. Through this, the Guide is discussed in terms of critique. The Lifestyle Blog article was written by a celebrity author and television presenter[2] and it discussed the Guide in the context of advice under the heading '*Tuna, salmon or mahi mahi: which fish should you be eating now?*'

[2] This Lifestyle Blog is named using the author's full name, but for privacy reasons a pseudonym, *Anna Taylor*, is used within this analysis.

Both the initial article and the comments section for each site provided data. Data were collected in the form of text utterances within each site that highlighted how the AMCS Guide was repurposed, for example, through claims to epistemic authority to assess the Guide—this included stories and accounts discussing the Guide-in-use in different scenes of action and through the use of pronouns and headings to position authors and recipients. The comments section provided a way to see how the repurposed Guide and other practices nominated as 'ethical' were re-inscribed through responses to the blog article. Within the comments section, utterances were collected that highlighted the agreement or disagreement with epistemic claims made in the blog article and showed how the Guide and other moral work was negotiated within the interaction.

Collecting data from public online sites poses unique ethical considerations in how to treat the data within the research context. Although the data obtained from these sites was discussed openly in public websites, following the recommendation of Rodham and Gavin (2006) pseudonyms were used to 'protect the anonymity of those whose words are being quoted and of the site concerned' (2006, 96). Thus, pseudonyms were used for the authors of the articles as well as the contributors in the comments section. Concealing the names of the contributors helps to maintain privacy and distinguish the data used for the analytic purpose within this study from the original purpose of the website and its intended audience.

Having provided an overview of the methods of data collection within the homepage of the AMCS Guide and the Academic and Lifestyle Blogs, the chapter will now outline the methods of data analysis that were used to explicate the moral work oriented to by members within the interaction order of these three case study sites.

## 4.8 Data analysis: explaining methods used by members to orient to 'ethical conduct' within the interaction order of the sites

This final section outlines the process of data analysis that was used to investigate and explain the relationships between 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice' within the case study sites. Analysis follows an ethnomethodologically inspired approach that looks at the interaction order of the AMCS Guide and participatory blogs to see how 'ethical encounters' are constituted within the interactions of humans and nonhumans within each online setting. This section will discuss three key approaches to data analysis to investigate the methods used by members to produce and orient to the interaction order of the case study sites. First, it will explain how principles of Conversation Analysis will be used to investigate the sequential ordering of the site. Second, Membership Categorization Analysis will be used to analyse the moral work involved in orienting to identity work and attributing category-bound activities. Finally, Script Analysis will be used to investigate the agencies of both human and nonhuman agents in constituting the ethical encounter.

### *4.8.1 Conversation analysis: sequential organisation and turn-taking systems*

Conversation Analysis (CA) adopts a specific interest in the common-sense methods used by members to produce order in and through their talk-in-interaction (Pomerantz and Fehr 1997). In this study it was applied to the case study sites to show how agents make sense of 'ethical choice' in both the normative order of the official guide and practices described within the participatory blogs. Under the lead of Harvey Sacks (1992) and developed by Emanuel Schegloff (1972, 1991), particular principles that guide the 'sequential organisation' of talk were identified, including turn-taking, adjacency pairs and preference organisation. One of the fundamental features of talk-in-interaction is members' orientation to turn-taking organisation. There is a general expectation in interactions for one person to speak at a time, which is accomplished through

monitoring and understanding a current speaker's turn and possibilities for transitions to another speaker. Turn-taking also plays a role in the development and negotiation of topics with each turn at speech seen to achieve some move towards topic development (Gibson, Hall and Callery 2006). Thus, paying attention to the turn-taking systems within the case study sites illuminates the way in which topics are developed and information is introduced and oriented to within the sites.

The data within the Guide and blogs can be seen as quasi-conversational and understood in terms of an asynchronous interaction (Adkins and Nasarczyk 2009). Although there are no co-present respondents, the text works as utterances within the sites and are delivered as if there are recipients to the utterances. It is important to note that the data chapters make use of conversation analytic principles such as 'sequential organisation' and 'turn-taking' and the notion of 'utterance' to analyse what is happening in the online interactions. This does not assume that these online 'texts' work in the same way as naturally occurring conversations but rather these concepts are used analytically to capture the way interactions in the online settings maintain order which clearly adapts the ordering of conversation interaction to the online environment. Clear examples of these principles in the analysis include the development of 'topics' which have a sequential ordering and the way utterances are clearly tied to previous utterance in the case of assessments. To provide a specific example, headings are used to call for certain responses and introduce topics. This can be seen in the AMCS Guide that uses three key headings within the homepage: 'Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide' as a main heading and under this, two subheadings: 'Your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely' and 'The fish we choose today will directly affect the health of our oceans tomorrow'. Using principles of Conversation Analysis, these headings were analysed in terms of their sequential organisation and topic development. Focus was also placed on the use of pronouns to position recipients to identify and align with collective identities and play a role within the moral order of the site. This identity work was further analysed using Membership Categorization outlined below.

### *4.8.2 Membership categorization analysis: moral identity work and category-bound activities*

Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) shares an interest in analysing the 'sense-making' methods used by members in producing talk-in-interaction (Silverman 1998). Developed by Sacks (1974), MCA focuses on identifying the categorization devices members employ in their accomplishment of descriptions and associated category-bound activities 'heard' attached to these devices. This performs important moral work within the interaction, and members can be degraded or praised through the use of category-bound activities.

A 'membership categorization device' (MCD) apparatus is defined by Sacks as a collection of membership categories which can be used '… by the use of some rules of application, for the pairing of at least a population member and a categorization device member.' (Sacks 1974, 219). This is best illustrated using the example provided by Sacks (1974) from a child's story: 'The baby cried. The mummy picked it up'. Through recognising the MCD and relevant rules of application in this story allows it to be 'heard' as saying 'the mother picked up her baby because her baby was crying'. Applying the consistency rule enables the category of 'baby' and category of 'mother' to be heard as being from the same device collection of 'family' rather than hearing the baby as being from another device collection such as 'stage of life'. The duplicative organisation rule allows categories to be heard as a team belonging to a single unit; in this case, the mother and baby belong to the same family unit. Recognising baby and mother as a standardised relational pair relates these two categories as pairs with particular rights and obligations. It is the 'obligation' for a mother to care for her baby and is rightly heard that the mother would pick up her crying baby. Finally, category-bound activities (CBA) allow activities to be 'tied' to categories from particular device collections. In this instance, it is the baby as a member from the 'stage of life' device that is bound to the activity of 'crying'. Therefore, applying these rules allows 'The baby cried. The mummy picked it up' to be heard in a way that makes sense to members.

An important use of category-bound activities is their ability to help 'select identifications' and expected behaviour. Sacks explains how identificatory categories are selected by determining, '…if there is a category-bound activity of that sort, and if that person is a member of that category, then use that category to identify them.' (Sacks 1992, 588). By selecting a possibly correct category not bound to the category-bound activity as a means of identification can cause confusion in the meaning-making process. For example, if the 'mummy' in the above example was described instead as belonging to the category 'woman' or 'lawyer' or 'daughter', it would not immediately make sense and would require further information. This story illustrates how identities are not to be considered as externally produced but rather are revealed through the use of category-bound activities in the situated interaction and may fluidly shift within the interaction.

Members of an interaction 'trust' in 'mutual commitment' (Garfinkel 1963) that the category work orients to this 'natural attitude of everyday life' (Jayyusi 1991). Therefore, we can understand the 'natural attitude' or moral order oriented to by members of an interaction by looking at how categories have been applied within an interaction. For example, the Guide calls on the collective identity of the 'Australian' who is category-bound to 'love the ocean' and 'love eating seafood'. By associating the collective identity of the 'Australian' with these category-bound activities makes it difficult to oppose this categorization, and this places a moral obligation on the recipient to 'love the ocean' and protect the ocean through making 'wise seafood choices'.

Recognising how activities are category-bound by members to particular categories and identities also allows for an investigation of moral norms and the assessment of expected behaviour. A member can be 'praised' or 'degraded' by associating their activity with an 'inappropriate' category from that device or by not demonstrating an expected category-bound activity. As Watson explains,

> Category-bound entitlements, obligations, knowledge, etc., can … give us a picture or profile of a given state of events. If an incumbent of a given category does not claim particular entitlements, does not enact

> category-bound obligations, or does not display category-bound knowledge, then these matters may be claimed as noticeably absent and as specifically accountable. (Watson 1978, 106-107).

Other categorial identities may be used to explain or defend certain activities (Sacks 1992). Therefore, understanding the common-sense methods members in the case studies use to make sense of 'ethical choice' through the use of category-bound activities and related categorial identities can provide insight into ways 'ethical conduct' is interactionally accomplished in 'contexts of practices' of various agents.

Pronouns are an important feature of membership categorization. Indexical terms (such as I / you / we / our) require 'tying rules' to understand their contextual referent and are used by the hearer to determine whom the speaker is referring to (Sacks 1992). Pronominal forms such as 'you' can perform different tactical functions in how they address the recipient (Yates and Hiles 2010). Paying analytic attention to the use of pronouns can reveal the moral identity work within the interactions.

### *4.8.3 Principles of script analysis: locating human and nonhuman actants in translating the guide through the sites*

This final section outlines how data analysis was guided by principles of script analysis to highlight how the AMCS Guide passes through a process of translation through different online contexts and the role of nonhuman agencies in this process. Script analysis is a method developed by Akrich (1992) in the context of technology design studies to show how artifacts are taken up in use and the role of both human and nonhuman actants in this process. This method involves four steps: inscription, prescription, subscription and re-inscription.

The first step, description or inscription, describes the setting and what the various actors in the settings are doing to one another. The Guide can be understood as the script or 'instruction manual' for 'ethical choice'. Within the AMCS website are built-in assumptions about how 'ethical consumers' will

interpret and use the Guide as a source of authority in making 'wise seafood choices'. Following this is the process of prescription and affordances of the AMCS Guide and what it allows or forbids from the actors (both human and nonhuman). This is understood within the interpretive setting of the website. The third step then looks at the reaction of the anticipated actants to what is prescribed to them through either accepting (subscription) or rejecting (de-inscription) the script. The two blogs selected for analysis within this study show how the script of the AMCS Guide as a source of authority is either subscribed to or de-inscribed through the blog articles. The final process is re-inscription to see how the actors take up and re-inscribe the script. The comments within each blog allow further investigation of how the Guide and constructs of 'ethical conduct' within the Guide and blog articles are oriented to and re-inscribed through members' interactions.

## 4.9 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology and research design adopted to investigate relationships between 'ethical conduct' and situated contexts of practice. The chapter began with an overview of the way the case selection and data were sensitised to look for moments of 'ethical conduct' in line with the theoretical contributions of the interaction order approach and material understanding outlined in the conceptual framework chapter. This involved sensitising the study to make certain features 'analytically noticeable' such as participant roles and alignments, sequential organisation, membership categorization and nonhuman agencies. Following this, the chapter provided an explanation of the abductive logic of inquiry guiding this study and the role of members' and the researcher's interpretations and inferences in this process. The Internet is then identified as providing a rich source of 'naturally occurring' data in which to explore the interaction order and 'ethical encounters'. The final section of this chapter has described the research design and procedures of data selection, collection and analysis. A theoretical sampling approach was used to select the AMCS Guide in order to explore the normative order of an online guide to 'ethical consumption' and to explicate the methods used for positioning

actants within food ethics discourse. The analysis of this process will form the focus of the next chapter. Following that, the second data chapter will look at how the moral positioning and 'authority' produced within the AMCS Guide are taken up in two divergent participatory websites—an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog—that repurpose the Guide in different ways and expose diverse orientations to 'ethical conduct' and 'contexts of practice'.

# CHAPTER 5: MORAL ORDER OF THE AMCS SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD GUIDE

## 5.1 Overview of chapter

Having established in the previous chapter an approach suited to explore the normative and interpretive dimensions of practice in response to food choice regulations, this thesis now turns to an empirical investigation of these relationships within the case of the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide. The AMCS Guide is presented as an 'official guide' to ethical consumption and calls certain actants to 'be informed' and make 'ethical choices' as prescribed in the guide. This chapter examines the moral order oriented to within the homepage of the AMCS Guide and exposes how people are positioned as moral subjects within the Guide and ascribed with certain rights and responsibilities. This chapter is in response to the first research question – *in what ways does the online Sustainable Seafood Guide frame 'ethical choice' and conduct? Specifically, how does the Sustainable Seafood Guide enjoin and position people to 'be informed'?*

Building on the theoretical foundation described in Chapter 3, this chapter will draw on the interaction order theories outlined by Goffman, Garfinkel and Sacks to identify the layers of context relevant to understanding the moral ordering within the website. Analysis reveals how notions of 'ethical choice' and 'context' are interactionally accomplished within the interpretive settings of the website; for example, through identity work that positions recipients to play a role in 'protecting our oceans' and 'choosing seafood wisely'. Looking at how actants are morally positioned within the interpretive setting of the website reveals 'ethics' as both a *frame* and a *process* through which meaning is constituted within the moral order of the homepage. In so doing, analysis shows how the moral order within the site is constituted through normative and interpretive practices.

This chapter is organised in three parts, with each section focusing on an analytical aspect of 'context' made relevant for understanding 'ethical choice' within the website. First, it will be shown how the 'Guide' is situated within the overarching frame of 'marine conservation'. Analysis in this section will draw on the documentary method of interpretation to reveal how features of the website constitute an understanding of 'marine conservation'. This is illustrated through looking at the symbolic classifications within the header images that orient to a normative understanding of 'ethical choice' in relation to 'marine conservation'. The header acts like a pre-sequence to the interaction order of the website.

The second section will then look at the devices and features employed within the website to position 'recipients' and 'authors' within the frame space of the site. This is accomplished indexically through the interpretive setting of the website, including the sequential organisation of the site and use of headings and pronouns to call for certain alignments to the frame of 'marine conservation' and 'choosing seafood wisely'.

Following on from this analysis, the third section will look in greater detail at the identity work used to call key identities to action within the site—'seafood consumer', 'Australian' and 'user of the guide'. Recipients are called to recognise 'ethical choice' within specific scenes of action, such as the 'ocean'. Analysis reveals how identities are ascribed with certain category-bound activities in relation to the contexts nominated, such as the 'Australian' category-bound to 'love eating seafood' and 'love the ocean'. This analysis will reveal how 'contexts' relevant for making ethical choices are oriented to within the site and how the AMCS Guide is positioned as an essential tool for aligning with the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. This demonstrates how 'ethics' is located through the guiding practices and identity work that infers who should use the Guide and why it should be used. This operates on levels of granularity (Schegloff 2000) where 'ethical choice' is located both within a broader 'panned-out' scene (e.g. the ocean, Australia) and 'zoomed-in' at the level of individual action (e.g. using the Guide). Analysis highlights the inferential work required in doing 'ethics' through recognising 'contexts' of ethical choice. The final section will

describe how certain identities and groups are 'noticeably absent' from the moral order within the site.

## 5.2 Positioning the AMCS Guide within the frame of 'marine conservation'

The AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide is positioned within a normative ethical framework where 'ethical choice' is called for the sake of caring for 'healthy oceans' and 'future generations'. This section will expose the symbolic classification systems inherent within the homepage that situate the AMCS Guide within the frame of 'marine conservation'. The AMCS Guide is understood within the interpretive setting of the website through guiding practices, including the sequential organisation of the site and interpretive work involved in recognising moments for 'ethical choice' and calls to 'be informed' within the website. Although the homepage of the AMCS Guide is viewable as a single linear page, breaking it down analytically shows how different components work towards constituting the moral order of the site and guide an understanding of 'ethical choice' within the site. The homepage of the AMCS Guide is made up of various component parts including images, text, headings, a YouTube video and clickable links to other web pages. These parts form the interpretive setting of the website that both makes and gives sense to the website while forming the context in which certain identities are constituted to play a role in the moral order produced within the site. This can be further understood through the documentary method of interpretation outlined below.

### *5.2.1 Documentary method of interpretation: uncovering the interpretive framework within the website*

The interpretive context of the website can be understood through Garfinkel's elaboration of the documentary method of interpretation. As Garfinkel (1967) explains, the documentary method of interpretation focuses on how the 'background understanding' of a situation is employed as an interpretative

framework to make sense of the situation. Through this reciprocal process, particulars within the setting are treated as 'documenting' or referring to an underlying pattern or theme, which in turn elaborates the sense of those particulars within the setting (Heritage 1984). Thus, an object or action is understood in terms of the 'underlying pattern' of the documentary evidence and 'what is known' about the underlying pattern that emerges through the interaction. The context of the site is thus seen as emergent, with 'the Guide' itself an ongoing accomplishment within the site. As demonstrated in Weider's (1974) study of the 'convict code', to understand an action or utterance as 'telling the code' involves an ongoing process where 'pieces' of the code at a point in time enable interpretation of subsequent talk to be heard as the code. The code, therefore, could not be understood as a stable element external to the interaction but as an 'occasioned corpus' constituted within the interaction (Zimmerman and Pollner 1970).

### *5.2.2 The Guide: providing one 'piece' of the code*

The 'Guide' that classifies fish as a 'good' or 'bad' choice can be understood as one piece of the 'code' of ethical choice within the site. Although the entire website is described as 'Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide', the actual Guide that classifies fish in terms of sustainability is first encountered as a search box at the top of the homepage below the header; see Image 1.

*Image 1* ***Search box for sustainable seafood***

The Guide consists of three search fields that allow fish to be searched for based on *seafood name* (user types in name), *classification* (with drop-down box options for better choice; think twice; say no) and *seafood source* (with drop-

down box options for canned (imported); farmed; wild; imported (farmed); imported (wild)). These classifications work to identify fish as either 'good' or 'bad' choices and suggest a moral order in the choice of fish. Moral work is further evident in the 'traffic light' symbols and colours used to distinguish the fish as either better (green fish symbol), think (orange fish symbol) and no (red fish symbol). These classifications position fish choice as sacred, in which the choice of fish exists on a scale of 'good' and 'bad'. This Guide also provides a glimpse of the 'trace' of the fish's production history.

However, ethical conduct cannot be understood through this Guide alone. This is merely one 'piece' within the broader interpretive framework of the website. Thus, 'doing the guide', and 'doing ethics', involves more than simply entering details into the search box. Rather, understandings of 'ethics' and 'contexts of action' can be seen to follow Latour's (1993) emphasis on understanding agency in terms of 'becoming' within the site rather than confined to 'being' an element external to the site. The emergent or 'becoming' nature of what is entailed in 'doing ethics' is accomplished through recognising the Guide within the frame space of the website.

Within the homepage, little explanation is given about *how* to 'use' the AMCS Guide to make ethical choices. Rather, the Guide is framed within the website through images and utterances that position the Guide in relation to 'choosing seafood wisely' and infer *who* should be using the Guide and *why* it should be used. Thus, making sense of the Guide is an ongoing accomplishment within the website, which relies on interpretive work and guiding practices within the site. To illustrate the guiding work involved in positioning and recognising the symbolic classifications within the site, the analysis will now focus on how visual images within the header guide the recipient to see contexts for 'ethical choice' within the normative ethical framework of 'marine conservation'.

### *5.2.3 Header images: guiding recipients to see 'contexts' for ethical choice*

A key interpretive and guiding feature of the setting of the website is the visual imagery in the header at the top of the site that guides the recipient to align with the moral order of 'marine conservation' within the website. Within the 'header' of the website, a series of 8 images flashes across the top of the screen, with each image staying on screen for 5 seconds before cross-fading to the next image. These images can be grouped into three symbolic categories. The first is the category of 'pristine marine life'. Images in this category include oceans, fish, dolphins and turtles in their 'natural environment' without human contact. These images show pristine oceans and marine life alongside captions such as 'the fish we choose today will affect our seas tomorrow' (Figure 5.1) and 'choose seafood wisely' (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1 **Header image and caption: 'the fish we choose today will affect our seas tomorrow'**

Figure 5.2 **Header image and caption: 'choose seafood wisely'**

The second category is that of 'responsible community members'. This features an image showing a group of six people outdoors, holding plastic bags and taking part in what appears to be rubbish removal, alongside the caption 'making a difference' (see Figure 5.3 below). Partaking in the activity of rubbish removal presents these people as 'responsible community members'. The third category,

'the solution', contains the image of the 'print-version' of the Sustainable Seafood Guide. The placement of the images presents the categories of 'responsible community members' and the 'seafood guide' alongside the images of 'pristine marine life' and infers that these category devices belong to the same collection of 'marine conservation'.

Figure 5.3 **Header image and caption: 'making a difference'**

The header images and captions involve guiding work on two levels: first, through the understanding of the captions alongside the images, and following from this, how these are seen as a constituent part of the entire website. Both the image and caption mutually and reflexively constitute each other and, in turn, provide a setting for the entire site to be read (Jayyusi 1993). As Figure 5.2 above shows, the image of a turtle alongside the caption 'choose seafood wisely' instructs the recipient to see 'seafood choice' as having an effect on turtles. Taken on its own, this caption may not make sense because 'turtle' is not seen to belong to the category of 'seafood'. Yet within the context of 'marine conservation', it is seen to represent 'marine wildlife' and a 'by-catch' of certain fishing practices. This understanding is accomplished within the context of the website, and in turn accomplishes the setting of the website. Thus, interpreting the images is a reflexive achievement within the website.

Jayyusi (1993) explains how common-sense understandings of an image or scene rely on intersubjectively given understandings of 'morally articulable courses of action' (1993, 13). In this way, vision is seen as a moral order. Scenes are intelligible from within the moral order. Within this website, to be 'scenically intelligible', the recipient is required to see how the images and message to 'choose seafood wisely' fits within the moral order of 'marine conservation'. This is understood within the sequential organisation of the site.

### *5.2.4 Header working like a pre-sequence: temporal understanding of 'ethics' within the site*

Applying understandings of the documentary method of interpretation to the homepage of the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide shows how features of the website that point to an underlying pattern of 'ethics' are understood through the sequential organisation of the site as a 'temporally situated accomplishment' of the setting. Within the homepage, ethical choice comes to be seen in relation to 'marine conservation' and 'seafood consumption', which in turn packages 'the Guide' within this setting. As discussed above, this is evident in the header of the website, which uses visual images and captions to locate occasions of choice in relation to 'marine conservation'. This also highlights the indexical and reflexive achievement of ethics within this site.

In explaining the documentary method, Heritage (1984) summarises two central features in which, first, objects are understood *temporally* through a succession of appearances and, second, this process is pervasive, with no 'time-out' from this method of understanding. This holds for the perception of physical objects (e.g. 'this Guide') as well as social objects (e.g. 'seafood consumer'). Thus, the sequential organisation of the website is an important feature of the interpretive framework used to make sense of 'ethics' and 'the Guide' within the site. Temporally located at the top of the homepage, the header works to situate the whole site within the overarching frame of 'marine conservation' and through the captions works to enjoin the 'user of the site' with a stake in preserving these spaces and playing a part in this moral order.

Therefore, the header works like a 'pre-sequence' to the interaction and orients the participants to the type of reading and response expected within the site. In this case, oceans are to be valued, marine life is to be conserved and seafood choices are to be wise. Yet details of these activities have yet to be elaborated. Images and slogans within the header can be seen as a constituent part or 'piece' of the setting, enabling further interpretation of utterances within the site. In Goffman's (1986) terms, the header can be seen as the 'directional track' that is

not part of the 'main line' of the interaction but that sets the scene and binds the interaction. Located at the top of the site, the header sets the scene for how the recipient is expected to identify and respond to the site where 'wise seafood choices' are seen alongside 'marine conservation'. Thus, before getting to the 'main line' of the website, the participants have already been 'instructed' to see 'seafood consumption' within the frame of 'marine conservation'.

The images within the header provide a consistent reference point for interpreting the website and point to a recurrent underlying pattern referred to within the site. In Jayyusi's words there is a 'retrospective-prospective' understanding of events where

> particulars we do see provide for the account we can construct of them, and the account we construct provides the sense of the particulars, just as what we see as a first provides prospectively for the sense of what we see next and what we see next retrospectively reconstitutes the sense of what it was that we saw before. (Jayyusi 1993, 16).

Understandings of 'ethical choice' within the website are constituted through accomplishing this reflexive 'retrospective-prospective' work within the site. Thus, the header images and caption illustrate how guiding work within the site enable 'ethical choice' and the Guide to be seen.

Considering that the website, as a media site, is designed for the 'practical purpose' (Jayyusi 1993) of promoting the Australian Marine Conservation Society's Sustainable Seafood Guide, it may not seem surprising that the 'opening' of the site performs the work of situating 'seafood choice' alongside 'marine conservation' within the moral order of the site. Had other images of 'seafood' been used, such as fishing methods, fishmongers or seafood served on plates, this would have led to a different identification other than 'marine conservation' and a different reading of the site. The chapter now turns to an analysis of the features employed within the website to position 'recipients' and 'authors' within the frame space of the site.

## 5.3 Positioning recipients to align with the moral order of the website

Having illustrated, in the previous section, the symbolic framing of 'marine conservation' within the homepage of the AMCS Guide, this section now focuses on interactional devices used to position recipients and authors as active constituents called to play a part in the moral order oriented to within the website. A particular institutional setting is accomplished through the author and recipient identities constituted within the website. Authors are constituted as having knowledge of the state of the oceans and how to make 'wise seafood choices', while recipients are called to 'be informed' through the use of the Guide. Looking at the lexical choice shows how utterance are 'targeted' to recipients of the site as 'seafood consumers', 'marine conservationists', 'Australians' and 'users of the site'. Through the accounts provided on the website, recipients are guided to see the frame of 'marine conservation' and the Guide as a tool for making 'wise seafood choices'. This 'instructed seeing' of the site is explained by Jayyusi (2007) in her analysis of media accounts:

> In 'reading' a media account we are instructed, through the account, in the ways we are to understand, see and know other places as well as persons and histories, and particular events and their rubric. In this we are implicitly also 'instructed' to orient to media texts as reports on an objective world, and moreover, objective or accurate reports on such a world. (Jayyusi, 2007)

The AMCS Guide works in a similar way to call recipients to 'see' ethical choice according to the categories and descriptions used within the site.

In order to investigate how actants are positioned as 'recipients' and 'authors' within the moral order of the website, the following analysis focuses on the interactional devices used to position actants to play a role within the moral order of the site. This section will focus on three key devices used to morally position 'recipients' of the website, including 1) lexical choice illustrated in the header captions, 2) topic nomination and pursuit evident in the headings and 3) footings through the use of pronouns in the main text of the website. Examples of these devices are sequentially organised within the site and illustrate how these

moral positions are accomplished within the sequential ordering of the site. Following the focus on recipient positionings, the chapter then looks at how authors are positioned. The moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' by 'using the Guide' is animated by 'celebrity' authors through a YouTube video with a celebrity chef and an endorsement by a novelist. Examples to demonstrate these moral positionings within this analysis are sequentially selected from the website to reveal how moral positionings and identity work is sequentially developed and understood within the site.

### *5.3.1 Lexical choice within header captions: guiding the recipient to action*

A closer analysis of the lexical choice within the header captions reveals how recipients are called to identify with 'ethical choice' in three main ways; first, through the use of *pronouns* that locate 'choice' within *causal statements*. As the following figures show, stating 'we choose' (Figure 5.4) and 'our choices' (Figure 5.5), the recipients are called to recognise their own choices as part of this collective 'choice' that has an effect on 'our' oceans. Describing oceans with the pronoun 'our' makes the oceans hearable as belonging to 'us' and therefore attributes a sense of responsibility to care for the state of oceans. This situates the recipient to see their choices as having a stake in the health of oceans and positions the recipient within the moral order of the site.

Figure 5.4 **Header image and caption: 'the fish we choose today will affect our seas tomorrow'**

Figure 5.5 **Header image and caption: 'our choices affect our oceans'**

If read temporally, at this point of the interaction it may not be clear *who* is included in the 'we' category, only that it is a collective category to which 'fish choosers' belong, and thus it is assumed the recipient of the site is someone who chooses fish.

The second way in which the statements are used to position the recipient as an active participant in the scene is through the use of *commands or directives*, as shown in Extract 5.1 and Figure 6 below.

Extract 5.1

Help support healthy oceans

Be part of the solution

Choose seafood wisely

Figure 5.6 **Header image and caption: 'be part of the solution'**

Although no pronouns are used, the recipient is heard to be the addressee or recipient of these commands and is called to support this moral order. The alternative of not supporting these commands is to be heard to be part of the 'problem' and to make 'unwise choices'. Therefore, the reader is guided to identify with these commands [i.e. to be part of the moral order]. However, only partial information is provided here. The recipient is not told *how* to 'be a part of

the solution' or *how* to 'help support healthy oceans'. This information is provided further within the website.

A final method for positioning the recipient within the header captions is through action statements, as seen in Extract 5.2 and Figure 7. This further positions the recipient to align with the moral order of the site.

Extract 5.2

Turning the tide together

Making a difference

Figure 5.7 **Header image and caption: 'turning the tide together'**

Similarly to the commands, these statements do not include pronouns but are heard to be enjoining the recipient to support these actions. These connections or actions are left as partial reports that recipients are called to identify with, while further explanation is elaborated on within the site. These captions work to position the recipient as an active participant in the scene and subsequent moral order of the site. Through these captions and associated images, the recipient is called to not only see themselves as part of the statements but also as part of the moral order of 'marine conservation'. The scenes and images are intelligible from within the moral order and set the scene for how the site is to be 'read'. They guide the recipient to see themselves as playing a part in making 'ethical choices' for marine conservation.

### *5.3.2 Topic nomination and pursuit: orienting to the topic talk to 'choose seafood wisely'*

Recipients are also guided to see contexts for 'ethical choice' through the topic nomination within the site. The overarching 'topic talk' within the site is the moral injunction to 'choose seafood wisely' through use of the Guide. Topics are introduced within the sequential organisation of the website through the use of headings and text that guide the reader. In the website, the sequential ordering is similar to a news report where the talk is addressed in a public space to recipients who are 'removed' both spatially and temporally from the interaction, yet whose presence is constructed as a constituent feature of the interaction.

Extract 5.3 below shows how the introductory text is organised under three headings that introduce the topics of 'seafood guide' and 'making wise choices'. These headings act as further guiding practices through identity work, where the activities 'hinted at' in the header are elaborated and the recipient is further implicated within these activities.

Extract 5.3 **Headings nominating topic of AMCS Guide and wise seafood choice**

**Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide**

**Your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely.**

Welcome to Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide Online - the first online sustainability guide for seafood consumers in Australia. It was developed in response to growing public concern about overfishing and its impact on our oceans and their wildlife. It is designed to help you make informed seafood choices and play a part in swelling the tide for sustainable seafood in Australia.

**The fish we choose today will directly affect the health of our oceans tomorrow.**

Overfishing, destructive fishing gear and poor aquaculture practices impact significantly on our seas, marine wildlife and habitats. An incredible 80% of the world's fish stocks are now over-exploited or fished right up to their limit. Once considered inexhaustible, our oceans are now in a state of global crisis, and they need our help.

As consumers we can and do make a difference through the choices we make. By choosing sustainable seafood we take a step towards a future with healthy oceans by helping drive change in the way our fish and shellfish are caught or farmed. We can all help make our seafood sustainable.

In Extract 5.3, headings are recognisable as such through the use of different font colour and size. The first heading at the top of the page, ' Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide' is seen as a main heading through the use of a larger font and different colour (red) to the other text. This heading works to position the Guide

geographically and identify the intended audience as 'Australians'. The two subheadings are in a slightly smaller font to the main heading and in a blue text colour. The first subheading is directed towards the recipient through the pronoun 'your' to introduce the Guide as 'Your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely'. The second subheading emphasises consequences of choice of fish with the heading, 'The fish we choose today will directly affect the health of our oceans tomorrow.'

Each of these headings provides an opportunity for identity work for the recipient and acts as a 'news announcement' or 'topic marker' for the interaction (Button and Casey 1985), with an elaboration provided under each heading. Button and Casey (1985) describe three characteristics of news announcements in which the announcer is seen to have firsthand knowledge of the issue being discussed; the announcer assumes the recipient has some knowledge of the setting, and the announcement is produced as partial reports or 'headlines'. Similar features can be observed in the case of the website, with the headings working as signposts within the website and presenting newsworthy topics of 'seafood guide', 'your independent tool', 'choosing seafood wisely' and 'health of our oceans'. However, only a partial report is provided through the headings with further elaboration provided within the text, as discussed below.

### *5.3.3 Footing in relation to topic talk: positioning 'you' and 'we' to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'*

Attention now turns to the way in which recipients are called to align to the moral order within the introductory text (Extract 5.3). The text positions recipients to take a particular 'footing' within the interaction order of the website. This is evident through the use of pronouns, particularly 'you' and 'we', which position the recipient within the interaction and call for alignment with certain categorial identities. Pronominal forms such as 'you' can perform different tactical functions in how they address the recipient (Yates and Hiles, 2010). The use of 'you' can be used in the singular or plural, as Sacks describes: ... … 'you' at least includes the one you're speaking to, and on their option or on

your intention, insofar as they coincide, it can refer to anybody else or to some category which includes anybody else.' (Sacks 1992, 163). Shifts between 'you' and 'we' are used to realign the recipient with different membership categories and responsibilities.

Pronouns are used to position recipients within the headings. In this first subheading (Extract 5.4) the 'your' is a possessive 'you' and it addresses the user of the tool who 'chooses seafood wisely'. Thus, an affiliation between the 'user of the Guide' and 'seafood choice' is constructed through the use of the word 'your' (Sacks 1992, 182).

Extract 5.4

```
1  Your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely
```

The use of a possessive 'your' positions the user of the tool with a sense of ownership of the tool and of making 'wise seafood choices'. This pronoun positions the recipient within the moral order of the site in which 'wise seafood choices' are linked to the use of the tool. This points to the indexical nature of the utterance for an understanding of 'you' and the tool.

The first sentence of the main text following this heading specifies that the Guide is 'for seafood consumers in Australia' (Extract 5.5, line 2–3) and allows the previous 'you' to be heard as 'seafood consumers' who are geographically located in Australia.

Extract 5.5

```
1  Welcome to Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide Online
2  the first online sustainability guide for seafood
3  consumers in Australia.
```

The final sentence of this paragraph further positions 'you' in relation to the Guide, as shown in Extract 5.6. In the final sentence of the paragraph, the role of the Guide is described as 'to help you make informed seafood choices' and 'play a part in swelling the tide for sustainable seafood in Australia'. Here 'you' is used

to refer to 'seafood consumer' and thereby creates a new category of '*informed* seafood consumer' through the use of the Guide. Both the 'Guide' and 'seafood consumer' are presented in a co-dependent relationship in order to make 'wise choices'.

Extract 5.6

```
1  It is designed to help you make informed seafood choices
2  and play a part in swelling the tide for sustainable
3  seafood in Australia.
```

This utterance also places 'the Guide' as a response to the moral imperatives in the pre-sequence header; with the Guide described as 'designed to help you make informed seafood choices' in line 1 (in response to 'choose seafood wisely' in the header), 'play a part' in line 2 (in response to 'be part of the solution' in the header) and 'swelling the tide for sustainable seafood in Australia' in line 2-3 (in response to 'turning the tide together' in the header). This further positions the recipient as playing an active role in making 'wise choices' through using the Guide.

The second subheading (Extract 5.7) shows a pronominal shift from 'you' to 'we'. This positions the user of the site as part of a shared membership category of 'seafood consumers' and faced with a shared problem. This second subheading is the same as one slogan used in the header and one which continues to be referenced throughout the site.

Extract 5.7

```
1 The fish we choose today will directly affect the
2 health of our oceans tomorrow
```

In Extract 5.7, 'we' is heard to be referring to the collective category of 'seafood consumers' and includes both the speaker and recipient as belonging to this category. 'We' as 'seafood consumer' is category-bound to 'choose fish' and in this way is positioned as an active participant in the moral order responsible for 'the health of our oceans tomorrow'. Having already suggested the need to

protect and value oceans in the header of the site, the recipient is morally enjoined to make their choices align with the 'health of oceans'. In doing so, this also aligns with the frame of 'marine conservation' established within the site.

### *5.3.4 An aside: shifting footing, asking for support of AMCS*

Shifts in footing are accomplished through pronoun shifts, as shown above, as well as placement within the spatial design of the website. For example, the sections described above are situated within the 'main space' of the site and orient to the 'main task' of the site—to promote the role of the Guide in fulfilling the moral injunction to 'choose seafood wisely'. A shift in footing occurs within the side panel of the website, with information provided within this space relating to the organisational identity of the Australian Marine Conservation Society, as the following extract under the heading 'Donate' shows.

Extract 5.8

```
1    As a charity we rely on public support to defend our
2    seas
```

The 'we' in this statement is heard to refer to the organisational identity of the 'Australian Marine Conservation Society' as a 'charity'. This produces a different referent to the 'we' referred to in the main text where 'we' is described as 'consumers'. This shift in footing between the main text (we as consumers) and the side panel text (we as AMCS organisation) is seen as an aside to the main task but still hearable as relevant within the moral order of 'marine conservation' and protecting the ocean. Actions called to support the AMCS are also shown as a way to 'protect oceans', as the following Extract 5.9 reveals. This appears under the heading to 'sign up'.

Extract 5.9

```
1    Sign up here today to get our email updates and help
2    save our ocean wildlife
```

This statement positions the action to sign up for emails from the AMCS as a way to 'save our ocean wildlife' and makes the support for the AMCS hearable as an 'ethical choice' within the moral order of the site. To orient within the website relies on an understanding of the identity work and interactional requirements within the site through shifts in pronoun and frame space occupied within the site. Pronouns perform guiding work by positioning both recipients and authors as aligned to the utterances in certain ways. In addition to these relationships of recipiency another key aspect of the guiding work performed by the website is how the Guide manages *authorship* to animate the message discussed above. The following section analyses a key aspect of this guiding work through the identity of 'celebrity' in animating this message and guiding recipients to recognise contexts for 'choosing seafood wisely'.

## 5.4 Author roles: animating the message through celebrity

To conceptualise the positioning of speakers in the interaction it is useful to draw on Goffman's (1981) elaboration of the 'production format' of speech and speaker roles of author, principal and animator. As Goffman outlines, the author is the source of the words, while the animator is the speaker of the words and the principal is the position established by the words. While the main author of the website is heard as the AMCS, the message is also animated by two celebrities—a celebrity chef and a novelist. The identity of 'celebrity' is used to give authority to the message and popularise the use of the Guide.

In line with scholarship from the field of media studies that draws attention to the role of celebrity in influencing media discourses (Littler 2014), this section identifies the way authorship of the website is managed through the identity of celebrity. This is consistent with research that has identified 'celebrities' as important actors in animating environmental messages (Boykoff and Goodman 2009). The focus of the analysis below unpacks how this identity of 'celebrity' is oriented to within the Guide to animate the moral imperative to 'choose seafood

wisely' as well as position recipients to align with the identities established within the introductory texts above.

### *5.4.1 Celebrity chef: introducing Guide as iPhone app*

Following the introductory paragraphs, a shift in footing and authoring of the message to 'choose sustainable seafood' is provided through the display of a YouTube video featuring an Australian 'celebrity chef' Guy Grossi. This video builds on previous category associations of 'seafood consumer' and 'marine conservation' and introduces new associations involving the Guide in the form of an iPhone app. A full transcript of the interaction is provided below in Extract 5.10. (Note for transcript: G is Guy Grossi; T is Text. Double brackets describe action on screen. MID is mid-shot and CU is close-up.)

Extract 5.10

```
            ((in commercial kitchen, Guy walking towards
            camera, holding tray of seafood, music in
            background))
1     G:    I love cooking with seafood (0.2) and Australians
2           love it too. (0.5) They eat loads of it.
            ((putting down seafood tray on bench, MID seafood
            tray))
3           But the ocean is
            ((MID Guy face talking to camera))
4                           not an endless resource.
5           If you are going to have a seafood feast (0.5)
            ((CU Guy face talking to camera))
6           make it sustainable.
            ((back track in kitchen))
7           And the easiest way to find out what's good and
8           what's not (1.5)
            ((open pantry))
9           is this.
            ((take iPhone out of oven, point to it PING audio))
            ((CU iPhone with guide showing on iPhone screen))
10          The sustainable seafood guide.
            ((select 'Better Choice' icon on iPhone screen,
            BING audio. Scroll up screen showing results, TAP
            audio. Select 'Mackerel' fish species, BING audio))
11          The sustainable seafood guide is free to download,
```

```
          ((MID Guy talking to camera, holding phone in one
          hand, gesturing emphasis with other hand))
12        it's easy to use and it's got all the information
13        you need (0.3) to make a better choice.
          ((black screen, showing AMCS logo and website)):
14   T:   www.marineconversation.org.au ((swipe off screen))
          ((in blue text across screen, THUMP audio as
          word appears)):
15        DOWNLOAD, from iTunes ((swipe off))
                ((in blue text across screen)):
16        search for 'Sustainable Seafood Guide'
          ((iPhone image appears on screen with PING audio))
17        iPhone image showing app on screen
                                  ((blue text disappears,
          leaves iPhone image on black screen))
18    G:  The fish you choose today (0.5) affects the health
19        of our oceans tomorrow.
          ((iPhone image fades off screen to black))
```

Having the message animated by a 'celebrity chef' works to make the Guide seem important and worthy of attention. The 'celebrity chef' assumes an authoritative role of 'information provider' while the recipient is enjoined to take on the role of recipient of this 'new' information. The authoritative position of the chef is established in the heading of the video that states: 'Guy Grossi introduces Australia's first sustainable seafood free iPhone app'. This heading identifies the chef as 'Guy Grossi' and treats this as a 'recognisable person reference' (Sacks and Schegloff 1979) by assuming the recipient is able to identify the referent without additional explanation about his name (Stivers et al. 2007). A sense of authority is attributed to 'Guy Grossi' through his identified role of 'introducing' the iPhone app. It also positions the iPhone app as an object worthy of 'introduction' and assumes the recipient does not already know about the app. Within the interaction, the 'Guide' as an iPhone app is presented as a necessary tool to 'choose seafood wisely'.

The identity of the author as 'chef' is attributed through visual cues such as his appearance as a chef in chef's uniform and talking from within a commercial kitchen. Appearing as a chef enables the utterances to be heard with a greater sense of authority and epistemic right to know about 'seafood' than had he appeared as a home cook. Placing the chef in a commercial kitchen, instead of a

household kitchen or another location, gives the chef and the app a sense of 'authority' and 'legitimacy' in being associated with the category of 'professional chef'. In addition, being a recognisable 'celebrity chef' works to popularise the message and provide a sense of trust. The setting of the commercial kitchen also situates the iPhone app within the everyday space of the kitchen. This can be seen, for example, when the chef takes the iPhone from the kitchen pantry (line 6-7) and in doing so locates the app as part of the everyday practice of being in a commercial kitchen. Therefore, having the YouTube video set in a commercial kitchen and featuring a 'celebrity chef' constitutes the moral setting in which the Guide comes to be understood as an important tool for 'making wise choices'.

The setting of the YouTube video also allows elements of face-to-face interaction to be incorporated (such as gaze) as well as additional features that are possible through the video (such as close-ups to emphasise certain points). The chef directs his gaze to the camera, and thus to the viewer, which makes his utterance hearably addressed to the viewer of the site. Thus, when the pronoun 'you' is used, such as in line 6, 'If you are going to have a seafood feast, make it sustainable' the viewer is heard as the recipient of this message and called to be a part of this moral order. Close-ups are also used to emphasise certain points. This can be seen in line 5 when a close-up is used while the chef utters, 'make it sustainable'.

The message presented by the celebrity chef orients to the same moral order established previously in the site instructing consumers to 'choose seafood wisely' yet realigns the message through shifts in category-bound associations of 'seafood' (to be cooked/eaten) and 'the Guide' (as iPhone app, easy and convenient). The form taken by the Guide emerges within the site. Up until this point, the Guide has been packaged as essential for making wise choices for the 'health of the ocean' and 'marine conservation'. Within this YouTube video there is a shift with the Guide now presented as an iPhone app packaged as 'free' and 'easy' to make wise choices. The Guide becomes associated, not just with the act of 'making wise choices' but also with the category of 'convenience'. These categories strengthen the moral order of the site in which the activity of being an

'informed seafood consumer' is not only good for the oceans but also easy to achieve with the use of the iPhone app. The iPhone app is thus constructed as a key actant in the interaction. Thus, the Guide becomes a material object not only contained within the scene of the website but within other forms external to the site. This provides a context for the guide-in-use; however, while set within the stylised commercial kitchen of the celebrity chef, it still remains to be shown how the Guide is used in everyday practice. This is discussed further in Section 5.5.1 below.

### *5.4.2 Novelist: concluding endorsement*

Another 'celebrity' is used to animate the message at the end of the main text of the homepage, with endorsement of the Guide provided by a well-known Australian novelist who is also an AMCS Patron. The message is shown to be a quote from the novelist through the use of quotation marks and an image of the novelist next to the text. Following the quote, there is reference to the author's name followed by the descriptors 'Australia Author' and 'AMCS Patron' (line 9). Unlike the chef who was able to rely on the visual image of the chef's uniform to provide recognition for his 'celebrity' status, the novelist requires these additional descriptors in the text to show 'in what capacity' the name is to be recognised (Schegloff 1972). Through identifying the author in this way, strengthens the 'authority' of the message in advising recipients to use the Guide to make 'informed choices'. The statement is heard as an 'endorsement' of the Guide and summarises the moral order and key moral identities previously established within the homepage, as shown in Extract 5.11.

Extract 5.11: Tim Winton's endorsement

```
1    "The Australian Marine Conservation Society has
2    prepared this excellent guide for the many Australians
3    who love seafood but also love their oceans. This is a
4    resource for people who want to do the right thing by
5    the seas that sustain us. Buying seafood is always an
6    exciting challenge, but it's not enough to simply buy
7    what is fresh. If we want to keep eating fish we'll
```

```
8     have to learn to buy what is sustainable."
9     Tim Winton, Australian Author, AMCS Patron
```

The opening sentence praises the Guide (and the Australian Marine Conservation Society) and describes it as an 'excellent Guide' for 'Australians who love seafood but also love their oceans' (line 3). The word 'but' recognises the conflicting categorial identities of 'seafood consumers' who are bound to 'love (to eat) seafood' and 'marine conservationists' who 'love (to protect) oceans'. The Guide allows these categorial identities to coexist through enabling 'wise seafood choices'. The closing of the endorsement orients to the moral order connecting current choices to future outcomes with the utterance, 'If we want to keep eating fish we'll have to learn to buy what is sustainable.' (line 8–9). This utterance ties back to the heading and statement in the video that connected current choices to the future health of the ocean. However, here, rather than 'health of the ocean' being the future outcome, availability of fish for consumption is the future outcome. This relates back to the hearing of 'seafood consumers' as category-bound to 'buy' and 'eat' fish as referred to in the YouTube video. Also, the use of the word 'learn' in this utterance assumes that this action of 'buying what is sustainable' is something that 'we' (as consumers) currently do not know and therefore need to 'learn' this information. 'Seafood consumers' are category-bound to 'need information about buying sustainable fish' in order to be 'informed seafood consumers'. This ties back to the initial description at the top of the site that describes the Guide as 'An easy one-stop guide to choosing your seafood wisely ...'. The use of 'celebrity' to animate the message gives a sense of authority to the author of this message to advise the recipient to 'use the Guide' in order to 'choose seafood wisely'.

### *5.4.3 Summary: guiding mechanisms of recipiency and authorship*

The previous sections, have outlined the ways in which relationships of recipiency and authorship are oriented to within the Guide, including examples of the way the message is animated through the mechanism of 'celebrity'. It has

been shown how an authoritative identity is accomplished within this homepage with the authors of the site (the AMCS, the chef and the novelist) seen to have knowledge of the state of the oceans, fish stocks and human impacts. Assuming an authoritative, institutional voice, the site guides recipients to see the required course of action to 'help the oceans', which 'you' as the user of the site and 'informed seafood consumer' are expected to put into action. The website invites people to 'choose seafood wisely' through morally enjoining recipients to 'make informed choices' and through presenting the Guide (either online, iPhone app or printed version) as the means by which an 'informed choice' can be achieved. The website is set up as a one-sided interaction where information is provided by authors to the recipients. Recipients are morally positioned within the author's statements through utterances such as the celebrity chef stating, 'The fish you choose today affects the health of our oceans tomorrow' and the celebrity novelist describing the Guide with the statement, 'This is a resource for people who want to do the right thing by the seas that sustain us'. Such statements are set up with expectations of preferred responses by recipients to agree to the information and respond in a certain way.

The analysis has thus far demonstrated how the website creates a context for guiding identity work within the site that relies on a normative morality associated with the everyday activity of sense-making within the site. This identity work is accomplished sequentially within the site. This can be understood as successive 'doings' (Goffman 1986), with recipients called to align to the site through this interpretive work. The online site lends itself to a certain reading of 'ethical choice' through the sequential organisation of the site and interactional devices such as topic nomination, headings and use of pronouns to morally position the recipients and authors. As revealed above, authors and recipients are built around inferences relating to the identities of 'seafood consumers', 'Australians', 'marine conservationists' and 'users of the site'. These identities are produced as an ongoing accomplishment of members interpreting and responding to the setting. The following analysis will explore these key identities in greater detail to see how they are mobilised to act in certain scenes of ethical choice.

## 5.5 Identities called to mobilise 'ethical choice' within specific act-scenes

Within the homepage of the AMCS Guide, moral work is accomplished alongside identity work that constructs 'ethical choice' within specific 'contexts'. Identity work is evident as an aspect of guiding work used within the website in which recipients are called to recognise their own actions in relation to 'ethical contexts' nominated in the site. Thus, recipients are not only called to recognise scenes of choice but are enjoined to be active participants in these scenes. Three key identities are called within the site to be agents of 'ethical choice'—the 'seafood consumer', 'Australian' and 'users of the site'.

Analysis will now look in greater detail at how these identities are called to action within particular act-scenes to show how recipients are positioned as active constituents, not only through the moral injunction to 'choose sustainable seafood', but also in the interactional requirements of being a competent 'user of the site'. The 'user of the site' is called to make choices in the 'here and now' through the use of the site, while the 'seafood consumer' is also called to act 'now', but in a scene external to the website through using the Guide to make ethical choices for the ocean. This operates on levels of granularity (Schegloff 2000) where 'ethical choice' is located both within a broader 'panned-out' scene (e.g. the ocean) and 'zoomed-in' at the level of individual action (e.g. using the Guide). Yet while the 'user of the Guide' is called to help make 'wise choices' and care for the distant ocean, the actual in-practice use of the Guide is absent from a scene where this act will take place.

Burke's (1989) dramaturgical approach can assist in this analysis to see how 'act-scenes' are produced through the utterances and features of the website. This section highlights the various scenes of action oriented to within the website. The scene is understood as 'the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred' (Burke 1989, 139) and contains the act and the agents. As Burke (1989, 3) describes,

> the nature of the scene may be conveyed primarily by the suggestions built into the lines of the verbal action itself … or it may be conveyed by non-linguistic properties as with the materials of naturalistic stage-sets.

The homepage of the AMCS Guide is made up of the interactional scene *of* the website—where the 'user of the site' is called to make choices to move within this scene, for example, by clicking on links and scrolling through the website. There are also scenes enacted *within* the website that are described in the utterances and accounts. For example, within the website the 'ocean' is constituted as a scene of action that is affected by the 'choices' made by 'seafood consumers'. The analysis in this section explores the various scenes in which the three key identities of 'seafood consumer', 'Australian' and 'user of the site' are mobilised to action. Analysis also reveals how each of these act-scenes operates with their own 'timing' or 'timespace' (Thrift 1996). Recipients are positioned as playing an active role within these scenes and called to action within the timespace of each scene.

### *5.5.1 Seafood consumer: learning to make wise choices now for the ocean*

A key categorial identity produced within the homepage is the 'seafood consumer', who is called to make ethical choices now to benefit the ocean. Readers are ascribed this identity in the opening paragraph of the homepage where the online Guide is described as being created 'for seafood consumers in Australia.' This is heard alongside the first subheading that states 'your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely'. As explained above, recipients are positioned as this category through the pronoun 'you', which positions the recipient as a 'seafood consumer' and intended user of the Guide. The categorial identity of 'seafood consumer' is category-bound to make 'choices' that impact on oceans. As the following Extract 5.12 illustrates, choices made by consumers are connected to the health of the ocean and the process in which fish are caught (line 6-9).

Extract 5.12

```
1  An incredible 80% of the world's fish stocks are now
2  over-exploited or fished right up to their limit. Once
3  considered inexhaustible, our oceans are now in a state
4  of global crisis and they need our help.

5  As consumers we can and do make a difference through the
6  choices we make. By choosing sustainable seafood we take
7  a step towards a future with healthy oceans by helping
8  drive change in the way our fish and shellfish are caught
9  or farmed.
```

As the above extract shows, it is stated that oceans can be healthy in the future if 'seafood consumers' make the 'right choice'. This positions oceans and 'seafood consumers' within a timespace where the health of oceans now and in the future are seen to be the direct outcome of seafood consumers' current actions. Consumer choices are seen to directly impact on the ocean through influencing the fishing method used and how 'our fish and shellfish are caught and farmed' (line 7). The producer or fisher who catches or farms the fish is not mentioned as a change agent—yet it is implied their actions are the result of consumer choices. It is thus the 'seafood consumer' who is located as the 'driver of change' who can determine the health of the oceans through making 'right choices'.

Therefore, the 'ocean' is constructed as the 'scene' where the effects of overfishing and consumer choice are experienced. The 'scene' of the ocean is created through the use of statistics that describe the ocean and fish stock as 'now in a state of global crisis and they need our help' (line 2–3). This is in contrast with images of pristine marine life showed previously in the header that identified a shared value for the health of the ocean. There is trust that this information is seen as 'true' (Garfinkel 1988).

The moral order oriented to here indicates a 'right' choice based on its effect on the ocean. By the act of 'choosing sustainable seafood', it suggests that 'we take a step towards a future with healthy oceans' (lines 6–7). Thus, effects of choices are 'panned out' to the level of distant oceans while the act of choosing is 'zoomed-in' to seafood consumers choosing sustainable seafood. This is also evident in the following Extract 5.13, which is commonly used throughout the

site in variations in the header of the website alongside an image of fish in the ocean, as well as in the subheading, in the YouTube video and in the endorsement at the bottom of the homepage.

Extract 5.13

```
1  The fish we choose today effects the health of
2  our ocean tomorrow
```

As evident in this extract, the scene of 'choice' and act of 'choice' operate on various levels of granularity (Schegloff 2000). The act of 'choosing seafood' is 'zoomed-in' to an individual level of using the Guide, while the effects of this choice are experienced at the panned-out level of the ocean. As the above Extract 5.13 illustrates, 'choice' is established across spatial and temporal divides and can be understood within a timespace where current choices 'today' made by 'seafood consumers' are seen to impact on 'distant' oceans both now and in the future. This moral order of 'ethical choice' having an impact on 'distant others' has become a feature of food ethics discourse where connecting food choice with an effect on 'future generations' and 'distant others' frequently forms the focus of 'food ethics' and 'sustainable consumption' studies (Connell, Smithers and Joseph 2008).

While seafood consumers are called to 'choose sustainable seafood', they are also category-bound to 'need help' in knowing what is 'sustainable seafood'. The Guide is presented as the way to help 'seafood consumers' make 'wise choices'. The 'use of the Guide' is presented as a source of authority that enables 'wise choices'. The Guide is presented as the 'solution' to the 'lack of information' category-bound to 'seafood consumers' by providing a way to 'know' what is 'sustainable seafood' and make the 'right' choice. Returning to Extract 5.10 from the celebrity chef's YouTube video, it can be seen how the 'seafood consumers' are bound to use the Guide to be an 'informed seafood consumer'.

Extract 5.10

```
                ((in commercial kitchen, Guy walking towards
                camera, holding tray of seafood, music in
                background))
1       G:      I love cooking with seafood (0.2) and Australians
2               love it too. (0.5) They eat loads of it.
                ((putting down seafood tray on bench, MID seafood
                tray))
3               But the ocean is
                ((MID Guy face talking to camera))
4                               not an endless resource.
5               If you are going to have a seafood feast (0.5)
                ((CU Guy face talking to camera))
6               make it sustainable.
                ((back track in kitchen))
7               And the easiest way to find out what's good and
8               what's not (1.5)
                ((open pantry))
9               is this.
                ((take iPhone out of oven, point to it PING audio))
                ((CU iPhone with guide showing on iPhone screen))
10              The sustainable seafood guide.
                ((select 'Better Choice' icon on iPhone screen,
                BING audio. Scroll up screen showing results, TAP
                audio. Select 'Mackerel' fish species, BING audio))
11              The sustainable seafood guide is free to download,
                ((MID Guy talking to camera, holding phone in one
                hand, gesturing emphasis with other hand))
12              it's easy to use and it's got all the information
13              you need (0.3) to make a better choice.
                ((black screen, showing AMCS logo and website)):
14      T:      www.marineconversation.org.au ((swipe off screen))
                ((in blue text across screen, THUMP audio as
                word appears)):
15              DOWNLOAD, from iTunes ((swipe off))
                      ((in blue text across screen)):
16              search for 'Sustainable Seafood Guide'
                ((iPhone image appears on screen with PING audio))
17              iPhone image showing app on screen
                                        ((blue text disappears,
                leaves iPhone image on black screen))
18       G:     The fish you choose today (0.5) affects the health
19              of our oceans tomorrow.
                ((iPhone image fades off screen to black))
```

As illustrated in the above extract, the 'use of the Guide' is shown as necessary to be an informed 'seafood consumer', yet what is absent from this description is the *scene* in which the act of 'using the Guide' in an everyday practical sense is to occur. While the Guide is shown within the space of a commercial kitchen within the video, it is not shown or discussed within an everyday practical use in the

context of 'choosing seafood'. Thus, the act of 'using the Guide' is displaced from a scene of use. The Guide is constructed as a prop within these scenes for agents to make 'wise choices' but does not occupy a scene in use. This raises questions about 'context' for use assumed within such guides but not elaborated. These relationships between the Guide and contexts of use will be further explored in the following data chapter.

### *5.5.2 Australians: love seafood and love oceans*

Another overarching identity called to make ethical choices within the site is the category of 'Australian'. The category of Australian is category-bound to both 'love seafood' and 'love oceans'. As shown in opening of the YouTube video (Extract 5.14), the 'seafood consumer' is heard to belong to the geographic category of 'Australians' and category-bound to the activity of 'eat loads of seafood' (line 2).

Extract 5.14

```
1  I love cooking with seafood and Australians love it
2  too. They eat loads of it.
```

With this opening, 'Australians' are category-bound to eat 'loads of seafood' with the term 'loads' working as an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) and normalising the act of eating seafood[3]. The category of 'Australians who eat loads of seafood' threatens the category of 'marine conservation' previously introduced in the site. This is shown with the next sentence, 'But the ocean is not an endless resource' (Extract 10, line 3–4). The use of 'but' indicates a problem with the category that all 'Australians' have just been associated with and the category of 'marine conservation'. A solution to this problem is presented in line 4–5 with an if-then formulation 'if you are going to have a seafood feast, make it

[3] The use of the word 'they' (Extract 5.14, line 2) is interesting because the chef distinguishes himself from the category of 'Australians who eat seafood' even though it's assumed he belongs to this category. Yet by using the word 'they' he remains to be heard talking from the category of 'chef' (who is category-bound to cook seafood, rather than eat it). In this way, he continues to speak with an authoritative voice as a chef.

sustainable'. This activity allows the category of 'Australians who eat loads of seafood' that may be seen to contribute to the 'overfishing problem' to be morally acceptable if the seafood consumed is 'sustainable seafood'.

The category of 'Australians' is also used in the endorsement by the celebrity author. As the following Extract 5.15 shows, the 'choices' bound to 'Australians' include 'love of ocean' and 'doing the right thing by the sea'. As discussed above, this creates a conflicting category for 'seafood consumers' and 'marine conservationists', which is resolved through the use of the Guide.

Extract 5.15

```
1     The Australian Marine Conservation Society has
2     prepared this excellent guide for the many Australians
3     who love seafood but also love their oceans. This is a
4     resource for people who want to do the right thing by
5     the seas that sustain us.
```

The category-bound activity of 'Australians who love to eat seafood' and the 'marine conservationists' who 'love their oceans' are reconciled within the site through use of the Guide and 'choice of sustainable seafood'. Thus, another timespace is constituted within the site where the panned-out category of 'Australia' is a scene for 'eating loads of seafood', while the act of making 'wise choices' occurs through the zeroed-in use of the Guide.

### *5.5.3 User of the site: making choices within scene of website*

The 'seafood consumer' who is enjoined to make 'ethical choices' for the benefit of 'oceans' operates within an overarching moral order that is constituted and made sense of through interactions within the website. A different type of 'ethics' is called for by the 'user of the site' to make moment-to-moment choices to interact within the site. Within the homepage, the reader as recipient is called to be an active 'user of the site' through reading, scrolling, typing and clicking on certain elements within the site. Choices to interact as a 'user of the site' are within institutional constraints of the website. The site calls for certain choices to

be made and only permits certain actions by allowing only some elements to be clicked on. If these are clicked on, the site responds with a 'next turn' by displaying a new page or performing an action such as playing a video. The site calls for certain actions through the use of directives and visual cues in the site, as discussed below. Describing these shows how interaction within the site is a continual negotiation of permissible turns for the user and the site.

### *Visual cues*

Visual cues are used to call for actions from the user of the site. For example, the homepage depicts a screen shot image of the YouTube video featuring an Australian celebrity chef in a commercial kitchen holding an iPhone (see Figure 8), with a play symbol on the image.

Figure 5.8 **Guy Grossi YouTube video**

To play the video, the reader of the site must click on the play button on the centre of the screen. This button acts as an 'invitation' to commence the interaction. Thus, by playing the video the reader accepts the 'invitation' provided by the button and in doing so aligns to the recipient category of 'user of the site'. This interaction relies on the mutual coordination of the 'user of the website' and the prompts provided by the website that direct the type of interaction that can occur. Thus, the website itself is the scene in which the 'user of the site' is called to act.

### *Directives*

Directives are also used to call for certain choices to be made within the scene of the website. As shown in Extract 5.16, a list of directives calls for the action of downloading the app from iTunes.

Extract 5.16

```
1    You can find the app in iTunes here or search for
2    Sustainable Seafood Guide and download the updated app
3    for FREE today!

4    Many thanks to the developers WSP Digital and designer
5    Catfish Creative for bringing the app to life.

6    Download the app on iTunes here!

7    Scan the QR code below with your iPhone to get the
8    app!
```

Although all these directives are asking for the same outcome (to download the app) and linking to the same page on iTunes, these directives are presented as different 'choices' for accessing the iPhone app. There are varied ways to make the 'right choice' by selecting the app. These directives include 'You can find the app on iTunes here' (line 1) or 'search for Sustainable Seafood Guide' (line 1–2) or 'download the updated app for FREE today!' (line 2–3) or 'Scan the QR code below with your iPhone to get the app!' (line 7–8). The use of exclamation marks (lines 2, 6 and 8) work to give these directives a sense of urgency in downloading this app.

Through the use of directives, the site further positions itself as an 'authority' to give directions to the reader. Directives have been shown to display a hierarchal relationship. Directives also indicate possible next 'turns' by the user to select the text. In Extract 5.16 above, the non-bold and blue coloured text can be clicked on in the site. This relies on the reader recognising and responding appropriately to the visual cues and to the indexical use of the word 'here' (line 1, 6) that denotes a clickable link.

A conjoint material relationship between users of the site and the Guide is part of this moral order. Agency is located through the interaction of the user and technology. Words such as 'find' and 'search' and 'download' and 'scan' imply a level of agency required on the part of the reader, but this agency cannot be exercised in isolation from the technology they are using—the iPhone app cannot be 'found' without a computer or an iPhone. Thus, there is an implied agency of the website (and technology) within this interaction.

There is also a timespace constituted through these directives calling for action now. The scene of the website is where the act or choice occurs. These directives feature indexical time expressions such as 'today' (Extract 5.17, line 2; Extract 5.18, line 1) and call for the 'user of the site' to make these choices in the 'here and now' by responding to the link, such as in the following extracts:

Extract 5.17

```
1  Help spread the message and good work of the Australian
2  Marine Conservation Society. Become a Sea Guardian today!
```

Extract 5.18

```
1  Sign up here today to get our email updates and help save
2  our ocean wildlife.
```

The understanding of 'today' in these directives to the 'user of the site' operates on a different (more immediate) timing than the 'today' directed towards the 'seafood consumer', as evident in the following Extract 5.19.

Extract 5.19

```
1   The fish we choose today will directly affect the
2   health of our oceans tomorrow.
```

Thus, both interactional identities (user of the site) and symbolic identities ('seafood consumer', 'Australian') are enjoined to understand their position in relation to making 'ethical choices' within the site and mobilised to action within various scenes. This analysis has illuminated how these act-scenes and their timespaces are produced within the interaction order of the website.

## 5.6 Noticeably absent from moral order of the site

The moral order oriented to within the homepage makes the activities of 'use of the Guide' and 'buying sustainable fish' hearable as the way to make an 'ethical choice'. Within the endorsement, the Guide is described as a 'resource for people who want to do the right thing by the seas that sustain us' (Extract 5.15 above). This assumes that 'people who want to do the right thing by the seas' will 'use the Guide'. People who do not 'use the Guide' are thus heard to be excluded from this category of 'ethical consumer' and are noticeably absent from the moral order of the site. Also absent from the ascribed moral order of the site are people, such as vegetarians or vegans, who do not consume fish at all for 'ethical' reasons. The Guide is built around the idea of 'wise choice' meaning 'choosing sustainable seafood' as indicated through this Guide and excludes those who choose *not* to eat seafood or use other means of determining the 'sustainability' or 'ethics' of fishing. On a broader level, being positioned within the frame of individual 'consumer choice', the Guide also excludes the role of the government, legislation and fisheries as playing a role in the moral order of the site.

## 5.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has analysed methods used in positioning actants as moral subjects within the homepage of the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide. This analysis has shown how notions of 'ethical choice' are not simply located in the 'formal Guide' that classifies fish according to certain sustainability labels but ethics is constituted through the *guiding practices* within the interpretive setting of the website. The chapter first showed how the Guide and 'ethical choice' were positioned within the frame of 'marine conservation'. This was evident in the header of the website that acted like a pre-sequence to the interaction order of the site. Through images of pristine marine settings and captions relating fish choice to the health of the oceans, the website constituted an overarching frame of 'marine conservation' in which to see the Guide.

The chapter then looked at how 'recipients' and 'authors' were called to align with the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. This was accomplished through the sequential organisation of the site and devices such as headers, topic nomination and pronouns, which morally position recipients and authors to play a role in the moral order of the website. Thus, interactional features within the website play a role in constituting understandings of 'ethical choice' by guiding the recipient to recognise contexts for 'ethical choice' in relation to 'marine conservation' and 'seafood consumption'. Part of this interpretive setting involves identity work that calls recipients of the site to align with identities of 'seafood consumer' and 'user of the site' in order to make 'ethical choices' both within the scene of the website and within scenes external to the site. The AMCS Guide is positioned through the site as a source of authority, while the recipients are category-bound to align with identities in need of information provided by the Guide in order to 'choose seafood wisely'. However, absent from this homepage is how the AMCS Guide is to be used in practical, everyday settings. The following chapter builds on from this analysis and looks at how the Guide is relayed through other online contexts and discussed in use. Two participatory websites will be analysed to see how people repurpose the Guide and nominate new contexts of practice.

# CHAPTER 6: REFRAMING THE AMCS GUIDE IN PARTICIPATORY WEBSITES

## 6.1 Overview of chapter

As the previous chapter has revealed, the homepage of the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide is built around the assumption that recipients will self-select as 'users of the Guide' and orient to the same moral order oriented to within the AMCS website. For example, recipients of the website were called to align with the identity of 'seafood consumer' who needs information presented in the AMCS Guide in order to 'choose seafood wisely'. It is therefore assumed the Guide will be accepted as a source of authority for 'choosing seafood wisely'. Following on from the analysis in the previous chapter, the current chapter investigates how the moral positioning and authority produced within the AMCS Guide is taken up and repurposed within two divergent blogging websites—an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog. Looking at the diverse 'contexts of practice' produced within these blogs exposes other ethical considerations. This chapter is in response to the second research question – *in what ways do the moral positions nominated in the Sustainable Seafood Guide get taken up and translated in discourses located in diverse fields? Specifically, how do different groups describe their own conduct and context in relation to the call to 'be informed'?*

Investigating how the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide is translated through these diverse online settings provides an opportunity to study how the 'Guide' and 'ethical choice' is constituted within situated contexts of online interactions. Drawing on Goffman's (1981, 1986) notion of frame and footing and Sacks' (1992) work on Membership Categorization, this analysis will show how the AMCS Guide is taken up and repurposed within different epistemic communities. Attention is drawn to the epistemic ordering within each site, in order to see how 'people continually position themselves with respect to the epistemic order: what they know relative to others, what they are entitled to know, and what they

are entitled to describe or communicate.' (Heritage 2008, 309). In examining how authority and epistemic claims to evaluate and assess the AMCS Guide are taken up through these two different online contexts, it is shown how the 'Guide' is given meaning through the interaction order of each site along with new contexts of practice oriented to within the blogs.

This chapter is organised in four parts. The first section describes the settings and layout of each blog. Both blogs share similar layout features and comprise an initial blog article, written by a sole author on the Lifestyle Blog and by two researchers on the Academic Blog, followed by a comments section that is open for 'public' responses. Having introduced each blog setting, the second section of the chapter then reveals how the opening blog post acts as a 'first turn' and positions the author with epistemic claims to evaluate and assess the AMCS Guide. The authors align with identities associated with epistemic rights to assess the Guide and position the Guide within the frame space constituted within each blog article and nominate new scenes of use. The Guide is understood within the frame of 'critique' in the Academic Blog and 'casual advice' in the Lifestyle Blog. The third section then shows how the closing of the blog article nominates the next turn and invites certain responses. The final section of the chapter then examines new 'contexts of practice' nominated in the comments section. Through the interactions within the comments section of the blogs, the respondents accept and negotiate assessments of the Guide and constitute other ways of doing 'ethics' that do not involve the Guide.

## 6.2 Blog setting: uptake of the AMCS Guide in two participatory websites

This first section describes the setting of each blog and introduces how the Guide is positioned within each blog article selected for analysis. Two participatory blogging websites were selected with divergent orientations to the AMCS Guide. These particular websites were chosen because they repurpose the Guide in diverse ways within the interactional context of each site. The first blog article

appears on an Academic Blog authored by two marine researchers. The second blog article to be analysed appears on a Lifestyle Blog authored by a food-book author and media personality. This section describes the layout features of each website to set the scene for the analysis to follow.

### *6.2.1 Introducing the Academic Blog and first article: 'conflicting sustainable seafood guides confuse consumers'*

The first article to be analysed appears on a news and opinion website called *The Conversation*, referred to in this analysis as the Academic Blog. This website is written by academics and researchers who post articles on topics that are then responded to by the members, i.e. visitors to the website who have 'signed up'. Members are usually academics and researchers. Launched in March 2011, the site takes the form of a news site, with articles published under categories including: Business + Economy; Environment + Energy; Health + Medicine; Politics + Society; and Science + Technology. These appear within the header at the top of the page and show how the blog articles are classified (see Figure 6.1).

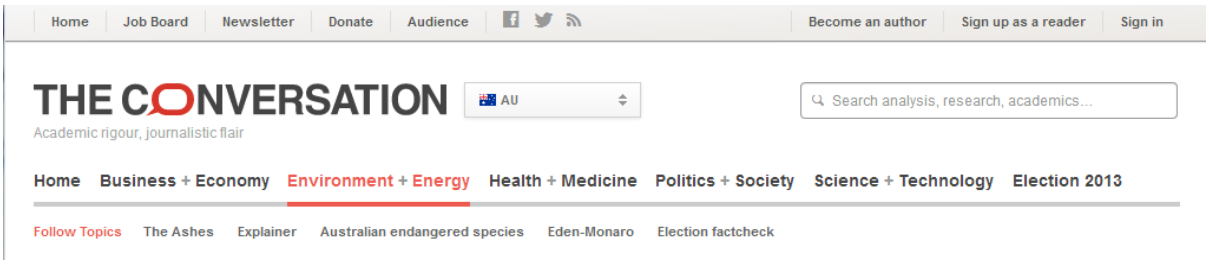


Figure 6.1 **Academic Blog header: *The Conversation***

This participatory website is positioned as an 'academic' blog through features of the site. Under the heading, *The Conversation*, is a 'tagline' that flashes between three slogans, stating: Academic rigour, journalistic flair; Latest ideas and research; From the curious to the serious. These slogans work to position the website as an 'academic' media outlet for the 'latest ideas and research'. The title

itself, '*The Conversation*' implies a level of discussion and debate that is expected within the site.

This chapter will look specifically at the article that discusses the use of the AMCS Guide under the heading *'Conflicting sustainable seafood guides confuse consumers',* posted by two marine researchers from an Australian university. This article was posted on 19 October 2012. Under the article are 37 comments contributed between October and November 2012. At the time of analysis, the exact date and time of the comments were not provided, only a broad date description, such as '5 months ago'.

An image of the authors of the article and their affiliation appear on the left panel of the web page. Both authors of this post are marine scientists. The first author is a 'Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Conservation Biology' at an Australian university, while the second author is described as a 'Researcher, Marine Spatial Ecology Lab' at the same university. The images of each author feature 'marine' elements: the ocean is behind the first author while the second author is snorkelling. Clicking on the author's image or details opens a new page with a more detailed profile of the author, their articles and their recent activity. These position descriptions and images work to establish an epistemic status for the authors as having knowledge of the state of the ocean and fisheries. A copy of the blog article is provided in Appendix B and the comments are listed in Appendix C.

### *6.2.2 Introducing the Lifestyle Blog and second article: 'tuna, salmon or mahi mahi: which fish should you be eating now?'*

The second blog article to be analysed discusses the Guide in a different way. Unlike the Academic Blog, the second blog website is a single-authored personal blog written by a media personality, who is an author of recipe books and a former host of a TV cooking show. The blog is named using the author's full name. For the sake of anonymity, this analysis will refer to the blog as the Lifestyle Blog and the author will be discussed using the pseudonym Anna

Taylor. This blog focuses on the author's interests and her advice on a range of healthy eating and lifestyle issues.

The blog is positioned as a personal 'lifestyle' blog through features of the website. Information about the author is listed under the 'about me' section on the side panel of the blog or can be accessed by clicking 'about me' in the header. The header features an image of the author and a list of topics covered in the blog including 'my simple home' and 'recipes'. The tagline of the blog states, 'This blog makes life better, sweeter' and positions itself as a source of advice on lifestyle issues. Along the side panel of the blog are links titled 'subscribe to my newsletter' or 'you can buy my books here'. Naming the blog with the author's name and using personal pronouns 'me' and 'my' within the topic headings, situates this blog as a personal blog and makes the author heard as the source of authority on the blog. In this way the author becomes the source of authority of the content posted on her blog, even when summarising information from other sources, as will be discussed further below.

This chapter focuses on the blog post about the AMCS Guide under the heading '*Tuna, salmon or mahi mahi: which fish should you be eating now?*' The author posted this article on 21 June 2011. As with the Academic Blog, comments are listed under the article in chronological order, with 50 comments made between 21 June 2011 and 7 September 2013 (at the time of analysis, further comments may have been included after this date because the comments field was not closed). Unlike the Academic Blog where members have to be 'signed in' to post a comment, on the Lifestyle Blog any user of the website can post a comment by entering details in the 'leave a comment' box at the bottom of the page. A copy of the blog article is provided in Appendix D and the comments are listed in Appendix E.

Having provided an overview of the setting of each site, the chapter now turns to look in greater detail at the way in which the authors position themselves and the Guide within the blog articles. The following analysis will outline three ways in which the blog article works to produce new contexts for understanding the Guide and 'ethical conduct'. First, it will show how the blog article works as an

'opening sequence' that positions the Guide within a particular frame space. Second, it will illustrate how the Guide is made assessable within the blog article by the author who aligns with certain identities and associated epistemic rights to assess the Guide. Finally, the closing of the blog article poses questions and statements that suggest new contexts for ethics to be discussed in the comments section. Thus, this analysis will illustrate the interactional accomplishment of ethics and conduct within the situated context of each site.

## 6.3 Frame space and recipient design within the opening sequence of each blog article

This section will reveal how the opening of each blog post establishes a frame space with which to interpret the Guide. Both blogs share common layout features, such as the use of headings, images, blog posts and sequential responses, yet the way the message is delivered produces different hearings of the AMCS Guide within each site. Each site constitutes a particular frame space in which a certain type of talk is made relevant within each site. Thus, each blog cannot simply be seen as a generic 'online context' that exists external to the interaction, but rather it is through the interactions within the site that the context of each blog is established. Each blog is an interactional space comprised of different elements all playing a part in constituting the institutional setting of the site and positioning of actants. Looking at the recipient design of each blog post shows how the AMCS Guide is reframed in relation to the intended audience of each site. The Academic Blog frames the Guide on the basis of 'critique' while the Lifestyle Blog frames the Guide on the basis of 'lifestyle advice'.

The opening sequence of each article produces ways of seeing the Guide through headings, images and lexical choice within each site. As has been shown with synchronous interaction, opening exchanges map out the interactional space in which participants negotiate their positions and introduce the topic (Hutchby 1999). For example, Hutchby (1999) shows how the opening utterance of talkback radio interviews is where frames and positions for the interaction are

established. In a similar way, the opening sequence of each blog, seen through the headings, images and opening paragraphs, nominates the topic and positions the participants and the AMCS Guide within certain scenes of action. Headings of each blog work like news announcements that introduce a topic for discussion. Like a news announcement, the information is presented as a partial report of something, with the suggestion that more information about that topic will follow (Button and Casey 1985). This section will now show how the Guide and the author of each blog article are positioned in the heading and opening sequence of each blog post, starting with the Academic Blog and then comparing the Lifestyle Blog.

### *6.3.1 Academic Blog's opening sequence: positioning the AMCS Guide and author*

The article examined on the Academic Blog appears under the heading 'Conflicting sustainable seafood guides confuse consumers' and nominates the topic to be about 'sustainable seafood guides'. In this heading, 'sustainable seafood guides' are positioned as category-bound to be 'conflicting' and something that can 'confuse consumers', unlike on the AMCS website where the Guide is seen as an authoritative source that 'helps consumers'. Consumers are heard as being 'confused', not because of lack of information but because of the 'conflicting guides'. Having introduced the topic of 'sustainable seafood guides' within the heading, when the AMCS Guide is introduced within the article it is heard in association with the category-bound activity of being 'conflicting' and 'confusing'.

The heading not only introduces the topic, but also positions the article and the author within an 'academic' frame space. For example, the choice of the word 'consumers' in this heading rather than 'me' or 'you' establishes the author with an 'objective' positioning. In this way, the heading is heard to be addressing the recipient through the 'fact' of the statement rather addressing them *directly* as 'consumers' (as would be the case if 'you' or 'us' were used here). Making this a statement also establishes a sense of authority from the author.

As shown in Extract 6.1, the first paragraph under the heading introduces the scene of the supermarket or local 'fisho' (line 1) as the location where 'choice' of seafood occurs and where the difficulty for 'consumers' to make an 'informed choice' happens. Sustainable seafood campaigns are suggested as a way to help consumers make more informed choices.

Extract 6.1

```
1    Whether at the supermarket or the local fisho, most
2    people find it difficult to know what seafood is
3    sustainable. To help consumers make more informed
4    choices, conservation organisations have been busy
5    with sustainable seafood campaigns.
```

In this opening paragraph, 'seafood consumers' are constituted as being in 'need of information', thus orienting to the same category-bound activity used in the AMCS Guide homepage.

The AMCS Guide is introduced in the second paragraph. The text 'sustainable seafood guide' appears in a blue underlined hyperlink (line 3), a different colour to the paragraph text. Clicking on this link takes the user to the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide website. As shown in Extract 6.2, the Guide is described as 'comprehensive' and designed for the purpose of 'choosing seafood wisely'.

Extract 6.2

```
1    In Australia, the Australian Marine Conservation
2    Society (AMCS) recently released a
3    comprehensive Sustainable Seafood Guide, including a
4    free smart phone application, to choosing seafood
5    wisely. They label each type of seafood as "better",
6    "think", or "no".
```

Thus, within the opening sequence of this blog entry, the authors orient to similar identities and category-bound activities used in the AMCS homepage; for example, describing the Guide as a way to 'choose seafood wisely'. However, in the following paragraph, other guides and labels are also discussed including the use of sustainable seafood labels at Coles. This sets the scene for multiple guides and the potential for them to be 'conflicting'. This is discussed further in Section

6.4.2 below. The analysis now will now look at how the Guide is positioned in the opening of the Lifestyle Blog.

### *6.3.2 Lifestyle Blog's opening sequence: positioning the AMCS Guide and author*

The heading of the Lifestyle Blog article nominates the topic of 'wise fish choice' through asking a rhetorical question, 'Tuna, salmon or mahi mahi: which fish should you be eating now?' Through the use of the pronoun 'you' and 'should' the heading introduces a moral obligation associated with 'fish choice' directed to 'you' as a 'seafood consumer'. The word 'now' places 'ethical choice' in a similar temporal order oriented to within the homepage of the AMCS Guide. The question in this heading is heard as a rhetorical question with an expectation the answer will be provided in the text.

The first paragraph provides further context for understanding 'fish choice' and positions the author and recipients within the frame space of the site. Under the heading the article is introduced with the following announcement:

Extract 6.3

```
1  This is a quick post, just to alert you to a resource for
2  buying fish because I think many of us feel in the dark
3  as to which are best to buy and why.
```

Introducing the article as a 'quick post, just to alert you to a resource for buying fish' (line 1-2) the author demonstrates this as 'news' to the recipient, 'you', who 'buys fish'—thus, the 'you' is heard as a 'seafood consumer'. Like in the AMCS website and Academic Blog, 'seafood consumers' are category-bound to 'need information'. The reason for needing the resource is provided by stating 'many of us feel in the dark' about the 'best fish to buy and why' (line 3). By using the indexical 'us' as being category-bound to 'feel in the dark' also places the author in the same category of 'information-needing consumers'. In this way, the author

self-selects to the same moral positioning in the Guide – as a 'seafood consumer' who is category-bound to 'need information'.

At this point in the first paragraph, the word 'best' has not been discussed in terms of sustainability. The ambiguity of this term provides the reader freedom to interpret the term 'best' in a number of ways; for example, 'best' may refer to 'best to eat' for taste or may refer to the 'best value' or price. It is not until the second paragraph when the AMCS Guide is introduced that 'best' is heard in relation to the 'sustainability guide' (see Extract 6.4).

Extract 6.4

```
1    The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) have
2    developed the first online sustainability guide for
3    seafood consumers in Australia.
```

Like in the Academic Blog, a different colour (red) is used to indicate a hyperlink to the online AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide. This is underlined when the cursor is placed above it, also indicating that it is a link. Clicking on the link opens up the Guide. These opening sequences of each blog position the Guide as a tool for 'choosing seafood wisely' and orient to a similar moral order established in the AMCS homepage.

### *6.3.3 Section summary: positioning the Guide in opening sequence*

This section has looked at how the headings and opening sequences within both blog articles situates the AMCS Guide as being a 'resource' for 'seafood consumers' who 'need information', thus orienting to the same positioning within the Guide. In the Academic Blog, the Guide is introduced as one of many guides with the potential to be confusing for 'seafood consumers', while on the Lifestyle Blog it is introduced as a useful resource for helping 'us' buy fish. Thus, at this point in the interaction, the moral order oriented to within each site aligns with that produced within the AMCS Guide homepage based on the assumption that 'seafood choice' is difficult and 'consumers' are in need of information to make the right choice. Yet within each site the Guide emerges as an object of

assessment and comes to be assessed in different ways, as discussed in the following section.

## 6.4 Making the Guide 'assessable' in blog article: author aligning with epistemic rights and offering first position assessment of the Guide

This section discusses how the Guide is made 'assessable' within each blog article through the author aligning with identities that are attributed with epistemic rights to assess. Assessments are tied up with rights to assess the state of events through participation in, or knowledge of, the event being assessed (Pomerantz 1984a). This can be demonstrated through association with identities and firsthand experience to show common access to the assessable. Heritage (2013) and Heritage and Raymond (2005) also discuss how rights to perform evaluative assessments are managed through the sequential organisation of talk. In analyses of the way these occur in naturally occurring talk there is a distinction made between first and second position assessments where 'first position assessments' are associated with primary rights to make an assessment and establish a 'representational field' for second assessments. The 'second position assessments' position themselves in relation to the first assessment through agreement, disagreement or adjustment (Heritage 2002). Therefore, providing assessments of the Guide reveals epistemic work by the author in claiming authority to make these assessments.

In the blog article assessments of the Guide are performed as 'first position assessments'. Because the blog article appears first, before the comments, it carries epistemic rights through this first position and 'implies a claim of primary epistemic and/or moral rights to assess that state.' (Heritage and Raymond 2005). The blog authors not only use their 'first position' to establish epistemic rights to assess the Guide but also use first-person accounts, institutional identities and formulations to claim knowledge rights to assess the Guide. This section first investigates how the Guide is made assessable within the Academic Blog through alignments with the identities of 'seafood consumer' and

'marine conservationist' via pronominal shifts and first-person stories. The chapter then analyses the Lifestyle Blog and reveals how the Guide is formulated to be associated with 'casual advice' from the author of this blog.

### *6.4.1 Academic Blog: making the Guide assessable through shifting positions to claim knowledge of Guide*

Within the Academic Blog article, the author displays authority to assess the AMCS Guide through shifting between the position of a 'seafood consumer' and a 'marine conservationist' and establishes epistemic rights through aligning with these identities. As Heritage and Raymond (2005) has argued, following Goffman, the claiming of epistemic rights can be linked to aspects of social identity, in particular the level of authority they may have in relation to what is being assessed. The author of the Academic Blog article shifts from an 'objective' third person position to a first-person story in order to display firsthand experience of use of the Guide and to establish an epistemic right to such knowledge of the guide-in-use. Use of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'my' show how the AMCS Guide is taken and adopted in use by the author, who assumes the role of 'seafood consumer' as shown in Extract 6.5.

Extract 6.5

```
1  Armed with my AMCS application, I recently went to Coles
2  to buy some sustainable seafood. Coles clearly labels
3  their seafood, indicating which is "a better choice for
4  sustainable seafood".
```

In this first-person story shown in Extract 6.5, the author self-selects as a 'seafood consumer' and 'user of the iPhone app' and orients to the same identities called to action in the AMCS homepage. The author locates herself within the scene of a supermarket to perform the act of 'buying sustainable seafood'. This provides a scene for the guide-in-use that was absent from the AMCS homepage.

Aligning with the identity of 'seafood consumer' using the Guide at Coles, the author demonstrates her first-hand experience to offer an assessment of the

guide-in-use. She describes the 'inconsistencies' between the AMCS Guide and the Coles sustainable seafood guidelines that she is faced with at the supermarket (see Extract 6.6).

Extract 6.6

```
1    I was struck by some inconsistencies between the
2    AMCS and Coles sustainable seafood guidelines.
3    Tasmanian Atlantic Salmon and farmed Rainbow Trout,
4    for example, are labelled as "a better choice" at
5    Coles but categorised as a "no" by the AMCS seafood
6    guide. In fact, I was sure it was a simple mistake
7    made by the Coles employee and asked if they
8    mislabelled the seafood. Unfortunately, the labels
9    were correct.
```

These inconsistencies go against the established moral order that 'informed choice' occurs through consumers' use of the Guide. The report of this event as extraordinary is shown in lines 6–9 with the formulation, 'In fact, I was sure it was a simple mistake made by the Coles employee and asked if they mislabelled the seafood. Unfortunately, the labels were correct.' This follows Jefferson's 'At first I thought X, then I realised Y' sequence where a reported first thought that turns out to be a wrong first thought is used to show the 'in-principal correctness of the ordinary alternative' (2004, 140). The author demonstrates that she had an expectation that the two guides should have provided consistent information. The inconsistent information shows a rupture in the trust placed in guides as 'information sources' enabling 'ethical choices'. Thus, exposing the inconsistencies in information through describing her first-hand experience of the guide-in-use, the author raises the complexity of the notion of 'information' and 'ethical choice' through this account.

Following this first person story, the author shifts footing from a 'consumer' in a supermarket to align with a professional identity of 'marine conservationist' to show authority and knowledge as an 'expert'. To reframe her position, the author shifts from a first-person story to third person assessments as a way to transition from her personal story as an 'information-needing consumer' back to the identity of an 'author' and 'marine conservationist'. Extract 6.7 shows how this transition is made.

Extract 6.7

```
1     Would you trust a politician or a doctor if they
2     provided inconsistent information? It's unlikely.
3     Marine conservationists cannot expect the general
4     public to trust us if we provide inconsistent
5     information.

6     We suggest that this inconsistent information may
7     contribute to a type of seafood stewardship crisis,
8     one that the ocean cannot afford to battle.
9     Consistent guidelines are essential if we want
10    consumers to take sustainable seafood and marine
11    conservation seriously.
```

Through the use of the pronoun 'us' in line 4, the author switches from the category of 'information-needing consumer' to 'marine conservationist'. This realignment with the expert category of 'marine conservationist' enables the author to claim rights to different types of knowledge—the 'consumer' and 'user of the Guide' has the right to knowledge about the guide-in-use and 'marine conservationist' has a category-bound right to knowledge of 'protecting oceans'.

Aligning with the identity of 'marine conservationist' the author also makes evident a personal stake to her own membership category through the provision of 'inconsistent information'. The use of a rhetorical question, 'Would you trust a politician or a doctor if they provided inconsistent information?' (line 1–2) introduces the notion of 'trust' in 'experts' when there is 'inconsistent information'. This is followed by an assessment, in lines 3-5, that 'marine conservationists cannot expect the general public to trust us if we provide inconsistent information'. Therefore, 'inconsistent information' is seen as a breach to this category-bound activity of 'expert' as 'information provider'. The inconsistent information in the Guide is not only seen to affect the category of 'informed seafood consumer' but also her professional category of 'marine conservationist'. Speaking with the authority of a 'marine conservationist' the author concludes in line 9-11 with an assessment about the importance of 'consistent guidelines' as 'essential if we want consumers to take sustainable seafood and marine conservation seriously'. Through aligning with the professional identity of 'marine conservationist' the author displays authority to critique the Guide as an 'information provider' for consumers.

As demonstrated above, within this blog article the author shifts from the identity of 'consumer' to 'marine conservationist' in order to display different epistemic access to assess aspects of the Guide. Aligning with of the identity of 'user of the Guide' the author claims an epistemic right to assess the 'guide-in-use' from firsthand experience and as a 'marine conservationist' offers a critique of the concept of guides as providing 'consistent information'. Through positioning herself in this way, the author reframes the Guide from 'tool to inform consumers' (as presented within the AMCS Guide homepage) to 'conflicting and inconsistent information' provided by multiple guides in use. Thus, rather than simply providing 'information' to make an 'ethical choice', the blog discusses the need for 'consistent information' as the way to accomplish ethical choice.

Assessments provided of the Guide within the Academic Blog adds a complexity to relationships between 'the Guide' and 'being informed' as presented within the AMCS Guide as the means to achieve 'ethical choice'. Through showing the guide-in-use as conflicting with other guides opens up the question about the 'fact' and 'trust' of 'information' presented within guides. In the AMCS homepage, the Guide was presented as 'fact' yet within this Academic Blog it is presented as one of many guides and the source of 'conflicting information'. This creates an epistemic field for guides to be discussed in the 'frame of critique' within the blog. The analysis now turns to look at how the Guide was taken up and assessed within the Lifestyle Blog.

### *6.4.2 Lifestyle Blog: formulations to make the Guide assessable as 'casual advice'*

This section looks at how the author of the Lifestyle Blog, in contrast to the Academic Blog discussed above, made the Guide assessable through formulating the Guide within a frame of 'casual advice'. On the Lifestyle Blog, the AMCS Guide is presented as a 'tool to inform consumers'. This blog orients to the same moral order within the AMCS website where the Guide is seen as a source of authority that enables 'ethical consumers' to make the 'right choice'. Text from the AMCS

homepage is used directly within the opening of this blog. However, appearing on the Lifestyle Blog, the authority of the 'advice' to use the Guide comes to be associated with the author of the blog. This is achieved through offering assessments and repacking the information presented in the blog in a 'casual' style through dot points and summaries as discussed in the analysis below.

As shown in Extract 6.8, the AMCS Guide is introduced on the blog through a direct quote from the homepage of the AMCS Guide (line 1–8), followed by a formulation of the classification system.

Extract 6.8

```
1    The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) have
2    developed the first online sustainability guide for
3    seafood consumers in Australia. It was developed in
4    response to growing public concern about overfishing
5    and its impact on our oceans and their wildlife, and
6    is designed to help you make informed seafood choices
7    and play a part in swelling the tide for sustainable
8    seafood in Australia.

9    The guide lists fish according to 'better' option,
10   'think twice', or 'no'- which basically means don't
11   eat it if you have a conscience.
```

A formulation is included after the author describes the fish classification system, where she describes the 'no' category as 'which basically means don't eat it if you have a conscience' (line 10–11). Adding this formulation after the explanation of the Guide not only emphasises the moral work of using the Guide ('if you have a conscience') but also positions the Guide within the author's terms and makes the interpretation of the Guide sound like advice from the author. Formulations are used to make a claim on a previous state of knowledge in order to reinterpret the previous information. Through the use of the utterance 'which basically means' (line10), the author realigns the information in the Guide as a 'basic' summary'. This aligns with the framing of her post as a 'quick post' introduced in the opening. While the categorization of 'no' provided by the Guide was likely to be self-explanatory for the recipient, offering an interpretation of this works to summarise the information of the Guide and reinforce the moral work of making fish selections based on 'having a conscience'.

The author of the Lifestyle Blog acts as the 'animator' (Goffman 1981) of the information in the Guide and makes the information within the Guide hearable within the context of 'casual lifestyle advice'. As the following Extract 6.9 demonstrates, the AMCS Guide is repurposed as 'information to share casually'. In this Extract the author introduces 'facts' about overfishing and sustainable seafood taken from the AMCS website and presents this by saying 'Here's some bullet-pointed things to share at the pub tonight'. The temporal marker of 'tonight' is used to show the immediacy and relevance of the information. This orients to a similar 'timespace' constituted within the AMCS Guide website, where seafood consumers were called to act 'today'.

Extract 6.9

> Here's some bullet-pointed things to share at the pub tonight:
>
> - One research team assessing the relative sustainability of the top seafood producing nations ranked Australia 31st out of the 53 nations considered. We still have a long way to go.
> - When you're shopping for seafood, ask if the fish is a deep sea, slow-growing or long-lived species. Deep sea species are generally slow-growing and long-lived. This makes them particularly vulnerable to fishing pressure, and they take longer to recover from impacts on their populations. Give these species a break.
> - The 'dolphin friendly' logos evident on most canned fish, particularly tuna, are not a measure of sustainability. While dolphin friendly seafood is caught in ways that minimise the number of dolphins killed, they may still catch threatened species such as sharks or turtles. The 'dolphin friendly' logo also does not give any indication of overfishing. Although some companies try to do the right thing, there is no independent regulation of the use of dolphin friendly labels.

Through this utterance, the author instructs the recipients on the 'type' of situation the Guide can be used. The scene for use of this Guide *as* 'information to share' is 'the pub'. Placing the use of the Guide in the scene of 'the pub' aligns with the 'casual' style oriented to within this blog and places the Guide as information to share socially. This addresses the recipients of the blog as people

who like to use 'ethical consumption' as a 'talking point' in social scenes. The information presented in these dot points is not about the use of 'the Guide' but about other information from the AMCS website concerning sustainable fishing and buying fish in general and introduces new contexts for 'being informed'.

Another way the Lifestyle Blog is heard within a frame of 'advice-giving' is through the lexical choice and framing of recipients in the blog. The use of the pronoun 'you' can be heard to address the recipient as needing information and the author as having the epistemic right to provide the information, as shown in the following Extract 6.10.

Extract 6.10

```
1   You can also buy a guide for $9.95 here. Keep it
2   with you and shop with a clear conscience
```

As the preceding two extracts demonstrate, recipients of the Lifestyle Blog include not only 'seafood consumers' within the scene of shopping (Extract 6.10) but also those who like to share information about 'ethical consumption' in social scenes (Extract 6.9). The Guide is positioned as a resource to offer information to these type of recipients; thus the 'ethical consumer' can be seen to extend beyond the point of 'buying fish' or 'eating fish' (as discussed in the AMCS website) to include these other scenes of action.

Further scenes of action are oriented to with a shift at the conclusion of the article to apply 'advice-giving' to 'cooking and eating sustainable fish'. This scene of cooking has no reference to the use of the Guide, but rather advice is about fish cooking techniques. The author quotes Mark Bittman, a celebrity chef from the New York Times—by describing him as 'from the New York Times' the author of the blog gives authority to his words, as shown in Extract 6.11.

Extract 6.11

```
1     Mark Bittman from the New York Times says he
2     only eats white fillet. He shares some tips on
3     cooking and eating sustainable fish here.
4     I've pulled out some top tips for you:
```

The author links to his 'tips on cooking and eating sustainable fish here' (lines 2-3) and lists some of these tips—using the first person pronoun to explain 'I've pulled out some top tips for you' (line 4). Through this, the author maintains the position of 'advice-giver'. This is followed by three bullet points with some tips on cooking. The use of bullet points and a summary of the information not only aligns with the frame of 'advice-giving' but also aligns with the 'quick post' and 'casual' style used throughout the post. Within this article the author formulates the AMCS Guide within the frame of 'casual advice' and introduces other aspects of 'fish buying' and 'fish cooking' tips beyond the Guide.

### *6.4.3 Section Summary: making the Guide assessable*

This section has illustrated how the Guide has been taken up and reframed within the Academic Blog and Lifestyle Blog through the authors of the opening of each blog post offering assessments of the Guide in various contexts of use. Within the Academic Blog, the author makes the Guide assessable through aligning with the identity of 'seafood consumer' who is 'using the Guide' in order to try and 'choose seafood wisely'. Through her first-person story of the guide-in-use she makes problematic the relationship between 'the Guide' and 'choosing seafood wisely' in the context of shopping and conflicting information. Aligning with the professional identity of 'marine researcher' the author then calls for the need for 'consistent information'. Through this blog article, the Guide is discussed within the frame of 'critique' and new contexts for being ethical involve the provision of 'consistent information'. Within the Lifestyle Blog, the Guide is repurposed in the context of 'casual advice'. The moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' is not only something to be achieved while shopping but is also discussed in terms of 'information to share casually with friends' and 'cooking'. Thus, within each blog article, the Guide is made assessable and new contexts for 'choosing seafood wisely' are introduced. The chapter will now look at how each opening post is closed and calls for a next-turn response.

## 6.5 Closing of each blog article and recipient 'next-turn' selection

The chapter now turns to look at how the 'closing' of each of the blog articles nominates a certain type of response about the Guide. Closing sequences of each blog end the 'first turn' of the author and invite a certain type of response in the comments section. In their analysis of closing sequences within phone calls, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) explain how not only the conversation is closed but also the occasion. In the blogs, this involves closing the 'article' and the first turn of the author and opening up a new occasion of interaction through responses in the comments section. The closing sequence, therefore, not only closes the turn of the author but also invites certain types of responses in the comments.
The Academic Blog concludes with an assessment that links back to the heading and offers a resolution to the problem in the opening statement about conflicting guides (see Extract 6.12).

Extract 6.12

```
1    Given consistent guidelines and clear labels,
2    consumers have the power to improve the state of the
3    ocean by choosing sustainable seafood.
```

Concluding with this assessment, the authors position the Guide in the context of 'clear labels' and 'consistent guidelines'. Appearing as the last sentence of the post, recipients are called to reply with an opinion on this statement about 'consumers' and the role of 'consistent guidelines'.

A more direct next speaker selection is used in the closing sequence of the Lifestyle Blog, in which the author nominates the type of next speaker she would like to have contribute to the site. The author concludes with an invitation for 'eco-oriented nutritionists' (Extract 6.13, line 1) to share on the blog and provide their thoughts. She also opens it up to 'Anyone else' who has 'fish-buying tips' (line 2–3). This closing sequence appears in italics to distinguish this text from the main text. The author's closing shifts from a focus on the use of the AMCS Guide to focus on 'fish-buying tips' in general.

Extract 6.13

```
1     I know a lot of eco-orientated nutritionists share on
2     this blog…what are your thoughts? Anyone else got
3     fish-buying tips?
```

These closing utterances in each blog act as a way to call a certain response as the next turn and invite the conversation to keep going. The Academic Blog calls for responses about the 'consistency of information' in guides, while the Lifestyle Blog calls for 'fish-buying tips'. These requests for next speaker positions create different ways in which the AMCS Guide and 'choosing seafood wisely' is discussed within the comments section of each blog. This will be illustrated in the following section below.

Thus far, this analysis has shown how the AMCS Guide is taken up and positioned within each blog article that creates an epistemic field for the Guide to be discussed. Within each blog, the Guide becomes repurposed as either an object of 'critique' in the Academic Blog or 'casual lifestyle advice' in the Lifestyle Blog and occupies a place within different scenes within each site. The chapter now turns to look at the comments section of each blog to see how the repurposed Guide is responded to and how new contexts of practice are nominated.

## 6.6 Comments section: negotiating epistemic claims and assessments

The following sections analyse how the AMCS Guide that has been assessed and reframed in the blog article is taken up within the comments section of each site and how the respondents accept and negotiate assessments of the Guide and new contexts for ethical conduct. Unlike the homepage of the AMCS Guide that permits the 'user of the site' to only respond by clicking on links, the blog as a participatory website enables the 'user of the site' to respond by posting comments on the site. This provides another level of comparative analysis to see how the authority of the author of the blog article and the repurposed Guide itself is taken up in these settings. Being a participatory website allows an investigation of how recipients respond to claims of 'ethics' and 'authority' and

negotiate these claims through their responses. This enables further exploration of the interpretive and interactional work involved in accomplishing 'ethics' in diverse contexts of practice. The 'doing of ethics' is a practical accomplishment within situated occasions of interaction, as the blog article and responses demonstrate.

As shown in the analysis above, the author of the blog article claims epistemic authority to assess the Guide through their 'first turn' in the blog and through aligning with identities with rights to make assessments of the Guide. The blog article can be seen as an extended 'first turn' in which utterances are expressed to an intended audience. In terms of sequential organisation, the responses to the blog can be understood as a 'second part' response to the announcement or assessments in the blog article as well as to the prior responses in the comments section. The comments within each site operate as quasi-conversational interactions that maintain a certain order of response as if responding in synchronous interaction. This will be explored further below.

Within the responses in the comments section, participants negotiate epistemic rights and access to knowledge of the Guide (and sustainability classifications of fish) and in some cases offer an additional reframing of the Guide. Negotiations of these epistemic rights to make assessments are observable through agreements or disagreements of the assessments offered and alignment with identities that have epistemic rights to assess. Management of agreements and disagreements also demonstrates the management of the 'self' and 'face' in relation to rights and responsibilities to claim knowledge. As Pomerantz (1984b) explains, particular 'territories of knowledge' have their own access rights to assess certain states of affairs, including knowledge from firsthand experience, knowledge about own relations and knowledge about something that has been personally witnessed. Heritage (2013) discusses how the negotiations or 'seesaw' of knowledge possessing (K+) and knowledge requiring (K-) epistemic positions are a major driver of conversational sequences in synchronous interactions. This is evident in the comments sections of the blogs, where

comments are seen as a negotiation of knowledge requests and knowledge claims about the utterances presented.

In line with this work on epistemic claims, the following sections will investigate the way in which the repurposed Guide is discussed within the comments section of each blog and how this is accomplished through a negotiation of epistemic claims to assess the Guide. First, it will show how comments within the Academic Blog orient to the 'guide as critique' through the respondent aligning with identities with epistemic rights to make assessments. This involves negotiating assessments of the Guide and orienting to new contexts for understanding ethics as being a 'good researcher' and providing 'reliable information'. The chapter will then look at the comments section within the Lifestyle Blog. It will discuss how the responses orient to understandings of the 'guide as advice' and shifts contexts for understanding 'choosing seafood wisely' as 'good to taste' and 'good for health'. Following on from this, the analysis focuses on how new 'rules' and practices of 'ethics' emerge through the talk-in-interaction of the participatory websites.

## 6.7 Academic Blog Comments: responding to the 'guide as critique'

Within the Academic Blog, the Guide is reframed within the article through a frame of critique that questions the Guide as an 'authority' and 'information source' for making ethical choices. In the blog article, the author aligns with identities of 'consumer' using the AMCS Guide in a supermarket, and of 'marine conservationist' to make assessments about the 'conflicting information' in multiple guides and the need for consistent information. Having raised the topic of the need for consistent information and seafood labelling, this topic is continued within the comments section. This section will first look at how epistemic claims are negotiated within the comments section of the Academic Blog and then at how new contexts and understandings of 'ethics' are 'talked into being'.

### *6.7.1 Epistemic claims to assess the AMCS Guide in the Academic Blog*

Within the Academic Blog, negotiations of epistemic claims to make assessments of the Guide are particularly evident when one respondent, Neil Jones[4], enters the conversation. Neil identifies himself as 'an independent researcher who developed the AMCS Guide' (see Extract 6.14, line 2-3). Through this identification, he claims a superior right to know the AMCS Guide and classification system used to identity fish as sustainable.

Extract 6.14

```
1     Agreed, All power to Coles, even though as an
2     independent researcher I development the "rival" AMCS
3     guide's classifications.

4     So the consumer get's a bit confused with different
5     guides. It doesn't matter too much at this stage, in
6     the early development of fish guides, if we do have a
7     bit of a difference between them. At least we have
8     some guides now!

9     Differences do and will mainly turn on the weight
10    given to ecosystem affects and bycatch issues, rather
11    than whether a species is overfished or subject to
12    overfishing, which is well documented.
```

In this reply, Neil orients to the topic of 'inconsistent information' that was established in the blog article, but dismisses this as being a 'problem' and instead shifts the focus to the classification systems used, of which he claims epistemic right to know through his identity of 'researcher who developed the guide' (line 2). Through aligning with this identity and placing guides in the temporal location of 'early development of fish guides' (line 6), he works to protect the status of the Guide and his expert identity of 'researcher of the guide'.

Throughout the comments, Neil speaks with authority over other respondents' assessments. His comments form assessments of other respondents' comments and defend the classification system of the AMCS Guide. Often his responses

[4] Names of respondents have been changed to pseudonyms to maintain anonymity within this analysis

begin with agreement or disagreement with other respondents directly using their name, followed by an explanation of the classification process used in the Guide. See examples of his assessments in the Extract 6.15-6.17 below:

Extract 6.15

Grace,

All very well. However (…)

In the AMCS Guide over 130 species are classified and imports and canned products are covered too. Classification of Imports are just as important as the status of locally-caught fish.

Extract 6.16

Richard,

The status of fish stocks managed by the Commonwealth (…) is already available (…) So it seems what you intend publishing is not new but a compilation of existing assessments (…)

Moreover, I doubt whether the fish guide produced by the Fisheries Development Corporation will have the same level of independence in the eyes of the consumer as the AMCS Guide which was put out for tender, undertaken by an independent researcher and peer reviewed.

Extract 6.17

Jason, a very, very good point.

Labelling is the key to providing the consumer with reliable information. Let's take a simple example. 'Flake', very popular in fish and chips is actually shark.

Shark is listed as 'say no' in the AMCS Guide for very good reasons. (….)

The fish guides aren't so helpful where there is lack of labelling or labeling is missing.

In these Extracts, Neil demonstrates a claimed right to assess the classification system of the AMCS Guide (and other guides) based on his identity of 'researcher who developed the Guide'. Through these assessments he upgrades his

assessments from second assessments to first assessment through his firsthand knowledge of the process of classifying the Guide (Heritage and Raymond 2005). However, while claiming knowledge of the classification system of the Guide, he does not display knowledge of the guide-in-use. Thus, knowledge of the Guide as classification process (i.e. which fish are sustainable and why) operates on a separate logic to 'use' of the Guide. Shifting epistemic status to claim rights to assess the classification process of the Guide, a new 'ethics' emerges within the interaction in relation to 'doing research'.

Epistemic rights to assess the Guide are negotiated through aligning with particular identities within the talk. Neil maintains his identity as 'researcher of the Guide' while the author of the blog article, Alison Nash, shifts identities to offer different epistemic claims, as the following Extracts reveal. Extract 6.18 shows how Neil addresses the author of the blog article directly, explaining his knowledge of the classification system used within the Guide.

Extract 6.18

```
1    Alison,

2    I undertook the research and classified fish in the
3    AMCS Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide.
4    All fish species are highly researched with every
5    available relevant reference having been consulted to
6    arrive at a classification. (…)

7    The differences in recommendations of the AMCS Guide
8    and that of Coles' stem from the weight given to
9    environmental problems of raising carnivorous fish in
10   cages, over large areas in pristine inshore waters.
11   The Guide takes an ecosystem approach.
```

Epistemic rights are claimed through the pronoun 'I'. Through the use of 'I', Neil identifies himself as an authority of the Guide through aligning with the identity of 'researcher who undertook the research and classified fish' (line 2) and claiming firsthand knowledge of the research process used to classify the Guide. He aligns with this identity before explaining the research process behind the classification system and reasons for differences between guides. Discussing differences between the guides orients to 'Guide as conflicting' constituted within the blog article but defends this difference through the process of

classification used. Thus, this constitutes a new context for 'ethics' to be discussed that is not in the Guide itself but through the classification system used, as discussed further in the following section 6.7.2.

The author of the blog maintains her epistemic right to assess the AMCS Guide and to be an authority on the use of the Guide as shown in her reply:

Extract 6.19

```
1     Yes, Neil, one of the great things about the AMCS
2     guide is that the criteria for categorising seafood
3     are transparent. This is in contrast to the Coles/WWF
4     sustainable seafood program. After failing to find any
5     information online about how Coles/WWF decide which
6     seafood is sustainable, I contacted Coles via their
7     online customer service form. Coles responded via
8     email but they were unable to provide me with written
9     criteria of even a list of which seafood they classify
10    as 'sustainable' – I was told no such list exists.
```

In Extract 6.19, Alison first replies with an agreement to Neil's explanation—'Yes Neil'—while she maintains her epistemic right to 'know' about the Guide and its classification process as being 'transparent', rather than describing this as a new state of knowledge. In lines 4–10, by using a first-person story drawing on her personal experience of trying to find out Coles' classification system, Alison demonstrates her right to know about these classification systems through her knowledge based on personal experience. As shown in Extract 6.20, she concludes with a statement about 'transparency', shifting back to the focus on the need for 'consumers' to have information in order to make 'wise choices'.

Extract 6.20

```
1     Although this is great they use these criteria, it
2     should be made publically available to consumers.
3     Transparency is absolutely essential to making any
4     environmental decision.
```

Throughout the comments section, the notion of 'ethics' shifts from being about use of the Guide as a resource for 'ethical consumers' to being about classification processes and being an 'ethical researcher' and 'good academic'. These shifting understandings of ethics within the Academic Blog are discussed further below.

### *6.7.2 Ethics as providing 'reliable information' and being a 'good' researcher*

This section will now discuss the shifting understandings of 'ethics' in relation to new contexts nominated within the comments section of the Academic Blog. Specific mention of 'ethical choice' through the use of the AMCS Guide is hardly taken up in the comments section but rather the focus shifts to the process of classification and being a 'good' researcher. Thus, the notion of 'doing ethics' shifts from being about the 'use of the Guide' to being about the process of providing 'reliable information' as a 'good' researcher. The moral order of providing 'reliable information' within the context of the Academic Blog is called into question throughout the responses. In particular, Neil's epistemic authority is challenged by respondents who question where he obtained his source of information, as the following Extract 6.21 shows:

Extract 6.21

> Neil, when did you do the review for the AMCS? I would appreciate a copy of the references you used. Likewise the list of experts that reviewed the material…
>
> …From my understanding the FRCD are one of the only
>
> organisations that have undertaken a review of antibiotic use and based on this I think you are making very uninformed comment.

Neil replies to this with a list of references used. Authority is thus seen not to rest with Neil but with the 'source of information' he used to produce the classification through links to research papers. These are used as direct evidence of the 'truth' claims in the Guide. Later, another respondent questions one of his references as being based on 'flawed research':

Extract 6.22

```
1     Hello Neil Jones, could you explain the relevance of
2     the first research article listed in your references
3     for classifications. Specifically the Ford Meyers
4     paper of 2008. You are aware that it is largely based
5     on mathematical models subsequently proven to be false
6     and misleading. Also you are certainly aware that
7     there are no wild salmonids in Australian waters.

8     What gives?

9     regards
10    John Clarke
```

This shows how information and references are viewed within a frame of 'critique' within this Academic Blog. It is in this context that the AMCS Guide is discussed and debated and new forms of 'ethics' emerge regarding the production of 'reliable information'. This can be understood in the context of the Academic Blog, where 'information' and 'references' are seen as essential for 'good' research and for being a 'good' academic. Thus, throughout the interaction within the comments of the Academic Blog notions of doing 'ethics' shifts from being about the use of the Guide to being about doing 'good research' and providing 'reliable information'.

The chapter now turns to look at how the repurposed Guide is described and discussed in the comments section of the Lifestyle Blog and identifies additional contexts for ethics that are nominated within this site.

## 6.8 Lifestyle Blog Comments: responding to the 'Guide as advice'

The post on the Lifestyle Blog describes the AMCS Guide as a useful resource to allow consumers to know what fish is 'sustainable'. The Guide is shown within a frame of 'advice-giving' within this post, with the author presenting how information in the Guide can be shared casually with others and how the Guide can lead to 'informed choices'. The author's closing comments call for responses from 'eco-oriented nutritionists' or 'anyone else' with 'fish-buying tips'. Within

this frame of 'advice-giving', many responses can be seen as requests for advice or giving advice in relation to what fish are considered 'good' to eat or to cook with. Thus, throughout the responses 'ethics' shifts from being about the use of the Guide to being about 'good cooking' and 'eating fish'.

Of the 50 comments, only two focus specifically on the AMCS Guide. These comments, as shown in the Extracts 6.23–6.24 below, orient to the same moral order of 'advice-giving' in the blog article and refer to the Guide as an 'information source' for 'seafood consumers needing information' to make an 'ethical choice':

Extract 6.23

```
Kate to Rebecca:
1     According to the guide it is OK to eat Australian
2     Salmon (wild). I've never seen it though...but
3     perhaps it's just not labelled as such.
```

Extract 6.24

```
hummingbee says:
1     Does anybody have any information about trout? It
2     is my favourite fish and we eat it regularly.

Shannon Reply:
1     http://www.sustainableseafood.org.au/Sustainable-
      Seafood- Guide.asp?Keyword=Seafood+name&active
      page id=702&FirstLetter=T&ClassificationID=&Provena
      nceID=

2     Seems to be no good unfortunately ☹
```

In Extract 6.24, a link to the AMCS Guide is provided in response to a request about 'information' on a type of fish. The word 'seems' following the link, positions the respondent Shannon as an animator of the message rather than source of the message and excuses them from taking responsibility for the information provided. In these Extracts above, the AMCS Guide is used as a 'source of authority' for 'seafood consumers needing information'. Thus, these Extracts orient to the same moral order as discussed in the Guide. The section

will now look at additional contexts for understanding ethics that were nominated in the comments section of the Lifestyle Blog.

### *6.8.1 Shifts in ethics as 'good to taste' and 'good for health'*

Within the Lifestyle Blog, most comments focus on fish-buying tips and advice on what fish are sustainable. These comments discuss the complexity of making a 'good choice' of seafood in terms of taste verse sustainability. Certain categories of fish previously classified in terms of 'taste' and 'health' come to be seen in terms of sustainability, and this can cause conflicting classifications with fish previously considered 'good to eat'. The following extract shows how conflicts can occur when classifying fish in terms the 'right' choice for sustainability as well as of 'taste' or 'health':

Extract 6.25

```
1     I really wish I liked sardines, because they are
2     so good for you – and, as you say, a safer option.
3     But the whole hairy tiny salty fish thing just
4     weirds me out too much. Maybe its an acquired taste.
```

In the above extract, the respondent expresses a desire to 'like sardines' in line 1 —which had previously been classified as an 'ethical choice' and 'good' in terms of sustainability. Yet she describes these as being 'bad' for taste, the speaker ends the utterance with 'maybe its an acquired taste' (line 4). Adding 'maybe' is seen to soften the 'disalignment' with sardines being classified as 'good' for sustainability by suggesting they are 'bad' for taste but being open to have this assessment rejected. Two replies agree with this comment that they don't like the taste of sardines. The author of the blog article, Anna Taylor, replies by offering advice for a recipe:

Extract 6.26

```
   Anna Taylor Reply:
1     Have you guys tried fresh sardine fillets? Not from a
2     tin? Not hairy at all. Grill them and sprinkle with a
3     bit of chilli, lemon and parsley and have on toast.
4     Quite different to the tinned ones.
```

Through this reply Anna offers advice for a different way to eat sardines in which both taste and sustainability can be aligned as 'good'.

Further contexts are nominated in the comments section through the respondent aligning with professional identities to claim epistemic rights about the 'health' of fish species. As shown in the Academic Blog, a key way respondents claim epistemic rights to provide advice about the 'sustainability' of fish is through aligning with 'professional identities'. For example, Russell describes himself as 'a marine science graduate and a proud participant in Australia's seafood industry' before discussing the healthy state of Australian fisheries and management of orange roughy and so on. Also, Mitsu states she 'can confirm from a nutritionist friend who recently researched this area that all salmon available in Sydney is farmed …'. She then discusses which fish are good choices from a health and mercury perspective. This demonstrates how professional identities are used to position people with rights to assess and know about making 'informed choices'.

## 6.9 Constituting alternative views of 'guides' to 'ethical consumption'

The final section of this chapter looks at how alternative 'guides' and 'rules' are established through the interactions within the blog sites. The talk-in-interaction within the comments section of both blogs constitutes new 'guides' for ethical consumption that do not involve the AMCS Guide. As the following Extracts show, new 'rules' are discussed:

Extract 6.27

```
1    I prefer quick, simple rules of thumb as opposed to
2    buying guides like Seafood Watch because most
3    consumers find them confusing or troublesome. My
4    rules of thumb (developed for US but probably just
5    as useful in OZ) are:

6    1. Always look for and ask for locally caught

7    2. Prioritize buying domestically caught

8    3. Say no to shark

9    4. Eat top predators sparingly (including tuna,
10   swordfish, mahi,halibut, lobster, snapper, grouper)

11   5. Only eat shrimp or salmon if it is domestically
12   caught or farmed, or if you know something about
13   the farm its from

14   6. Any bivalves are good choices from all sources
15   (except China, and some foreign scallop dredging
16   practices)
```

Extract 6.28

```
1 My rule is not to eat anything with eyeballs... fish
2 included!
```

Extract 6.27 from the Academic Blog discusses a preference for 'my rules of thumb' (lines 3-4) rather than guides because 'most consumers find them confusing' (line 2-3). This aligns to the frame of 'critique' oriented to within the Academic Blog. Extract 6.28 from the Lifestyle Blog orients to a personal 'my rule' (line 1) that involves not consuming fish at all. This departs from the moral order established in the blog article, where 'ethics' is about choosing 'sustainable fish' yet is still presented in a 'casual' way in line with the frame of the blog. The idea of not consuming fish is also discussed in the Academic Blog as shown in Extract 6.29. In this extract, 'guides' are constituted as a 'feel good gesture' (line 4) that make little difference, with the only way to care about the ocean is to not eat fish:

Extract 6.29

```
1    Anything is sustainable if hardly anybody does it
2    and the ocean problem is that hardly anybody gives
```

```
3     a toss and providing guides for the people who do
4     is just a feel good gesture of no consequences
5     because the bulk of fish used in Australia will
6     continue to be imported while demand so massively
7     exceeds supply… (States fish are an unnecessary
8     food and refers to another The Conversation
9     article about the myth of needing 'fish oil' as
10    being one of the reasons fish demand is so high.) …
11    If you care about the oceans, then just don't eat
12    fish. Without falls in total demand, a few people
13    being selective is neither here nor there.
```

In this extract, the notion that 'if you care about the oceans, then just don't eat fish' (line 11-12) can be heard as a break from the maxim constituted within the AMCS Guide and blog articles that describes the consumption of 'sustainable fish' as the way to be 'ethical'. This break offers an alternative view to ethics yet still within the frame of 'critique of Guide' established within the article. The authors of the blog articles do not respond to these alternative uptakes or guides for 'ethical consumption'.

## 6.10 Chapter conclusion

Looking at how the AMCS Guide has been translated within these two participatory websites—an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog—this chapter has shown how the interactions within each blog and comments have constituted different understandings of the Guide within each site. Through the recipient design of each site (including features of topic nomination and sequential organisation) and epistemic claims of authority, the authors of the blog article translate the Guide within a frame of 'critique' in the Academic Blog and within a frame of 'advice' within the Lifestyle Blog. The authority is passed from the Guide to the author of the blog in claiming knowledge of the Guide. This is then taken up within the comments section where authority and epistemic claims are negotiated to repurpose the Guide in further ways. Through this interaction, additional 'contexts' of use are oriented to, which open up further understandings of the how 'ethics' is accomplished.

Thus, this analysis has shown how 'the Guide' does not exist to be followed in a uniform, abstract way as assumed within the AMCS Guide website that links 'choosing seafood wisely' to 'use of the Guide' in unproblematic ways. Rather, the Guide is used for various purposes in different scenes including the supermarket, where it is seen as providing conflicting information alongside other guides (Academic Blog) or at the pub as information sharing with friends (Lifestyle Blog). Demonstrating the complexity surrounding the application of the guide-in-use through these diverse participatory websites shows how guides to ethical consumption involve more than following a 'guide' but also other interpretive work that surrounds the doing of 'ethics' in practice.

The following chapter synthesises the findings presented in these two data chapters and outlines the ways in which the insights presented respond to the research questions posed in Chapter 2 and contribute to a greater understanding of relationships between conduct and context.

# CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION – COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

## 7.1 Overview of chapter

The previous data chapters have exposed the interactional processes through which the AMCS Guide positions people in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' and how those nominated took up these positionings in the context of their own practices as described in two participatory blogs. This study has enabled an investigation of the moral order of food ethics discourse and highlighted relationships between ethical conduct and situated contexts of practice. As analysis revealed in Chapter 5, the moral order of the AMSC Guide is interactionally accomplished within the interpretive setting of the website through footing and identity work to align agents with rights and responsibilities in relation to the moral imperative. These alignments are further investigated in Chapter 6, which investigates how those called to 'be informed' in the Guide nominate comparatively different uptakes of the Guide—within a frame of 'critique' in the Academic Blog and within a frame of 'casual advice' in the Lifestyle Blog. While the analysis thus far has revealed the frames and processes oriented to within each case study site to achieve this moral ordering, this chapter seeks to bring these cases together through a discussion that illustrates methods for accomplishing understandings of 'ethical conduct' and 'context' within the interaction order of the websites.

This chapter first returns to the initial problem that motivated this study. The study was framed within the field of food ethics and the need for a study that was sensitive to capturing notions of 'context' as oriented to by members as a situated practice. The chapter then provides a comparative overview of the three case study sites by focusing on the way in which the Guide and the blogs are all organised around the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. This involves an overview of the way the key agents, acts and scenes nominated in the Guide are taken up in the blogs as a common reference point. Analysis shows how the

blogs are premised on a pre-existing identification of the Guide and its nominated 'users' yet builds on this through the alignment with additional agents, acts and scenes of use.

The chapter then turns to explore the interactional work involved in orienting to contexts relating to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' within the Guide and blogs. In particular, the chapter will focus on how this is achieved within two analytically discrete levels of ordering to accomplish this shared meaning: the symbolic order of the encounter and the machinery of interactional devices. The chapter outlines how the symbolic level of ordering can be understood through the process of identification and recognition that draws attention to the way in which the attributes of the setting are oriented to. Following this, the discussion then turns to an analysis of the interactional mechanisms used in producing the moral framework within the Guide and how this is taken up in the context of the two blogs.

## 7.2 Food ethics: uncovering relationships between ethical conduct and contexts of practice

Reviewing scholarly work within the field of food ethics, Chapter 2 identified the common focus running through the various emphases that different scholars embraced. Whether the focus lies in 'thought experiments' (Singer and Mason 2006) or interpretations of everyday choices (Coff 2012) the possibility of the study of food ethics rests on the capacity of people to participate in a shared *context* in which moral imperatives are seen to apply. In seeking to bring scholarship closer to an understanding of ethical practices, scholars such as those from the hermeneutic tradition have moved to an approach that goes beyond abstract thought experiments to questions of meanings and conduct that people employ where food ethics is at stake. Within this problematic such scholars foreground the guiding principle of 'context' and its relationship to conduct.

This thesis makes a contribution to analysing the salience of broad moral imperatives in 'contexts' where people enact choices relevant to food ethics. In particular, it builds on the problems of 'context' in this analysis as exposed in hermeneutic interpretive understandings of practice (Coff 2012). As Chapter 2 outlined, hermeneutic studies have pointed to the complex schemes of interpretation that are central to understanding the ways in which food ethics come to be enacted in settings of practice. However, it remains to bring into analysis the situated way in which interpretations are manifest in settings of food choice. This study therefore sought to fill this gap through adopting an interaction order approach to investigate the levels of context that were oriented to by members in situated 'ethical encounters'.

The interaction order approach was invoked in order to analyse the dynamic process through which settings are continuously interpreted by participants and moral positions are asserted. Further, it was an approach that promised to open up the question of different aspects and layers of context that come to be invoked and negotiated in these settings. As Peter Burke's (2002) critique argues, the concept of 'context' requires a refinement of what layers of 'context' are salient in understanding practices. In the field of food ethics, for example, there is a need to understand global moral imperatives, national frameworks and consumer guidelines along with the responses of individuals and groups to these imperatives. This study thus utilised the interaction order approach to explore the relationship between conduct and context, which systematically analyses the machinery through which people relate to and select various levels of the moral environment in the context of interaction regarding the seafood guide.

## 7.3 Comparative overview of case study sites: orienting to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of the accomplishment of contexts within the interaction order of the sites, this section outlines the way the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' travels from the Guide through nominating

agents, acts and scenes that are then taken up in the blogs, along with additional scenes of action. This illustrates how configurations between these domains that share similar orientations yet different divisions of labour are attributed to the agents. Following this section, the chapter will then turn to look at the practices used to achieve mutual understanding of these common attributes of the setting.

Within the Guide, four key agents are nominated to play a role in enacting the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. These key agents, including the 'seafood consumer', 'Australian', 'marine conservationist' and 'user of the site', are each assigned a particular stake in the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. These agents are also oriented to within the opening article of each blog. An overview of the key alignments between the agents and the acts and scenes associated with these agents in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' are outlined in Table 7.1 below.

This section focuses in particular on the way in which the agent of 'seafood consumer' is aligned with the act of 'making choices' that 'impact on the seas' and is in 'need of information' in order to 'make wise choices'. The information in the Guide is presented as the way in which 'wise choices' can be achieved. Thus, these agents and acts form a central understanding of the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' and are further oriented to within the blogs. However, alignments between these agents and acts shift between the Guide and blogs.

Within the blogs, the 'seafood consumer' remains category-bound to make choices that impact on oceans and 'needs information' in order to make 'wise choices'. This alignment is illustrated in the opening of the Academic Blog, with the statement:

> Whether at the supermarket or the local fisho, most people find it difficult to know what seafood is sustainable. To help consumers make more informed choices, conservation organisations have been busy with sustainable seafood campaigns.

Yet, while the Guide and blogs share an orientation to the same identities and their category-bound activities, the alignment of the author and recipient to these activities differ between the Guide and the blogs.

**Table 7.1** Key agents within the Guide and blogs

| | AMCS GUIDE | ACADEMIC BLOG | LIFESTYLE BLOG |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SEAFOOD CONSUMERS** | Need Information<br><br>Choose Seafood<br><br>Choices affect Oceans<br><br>Make Informed Choices (use Guide)<br><br>Consumers can make a difference through choices | Need Information<br><br>Choose Seafood<br><br>Choices affect Oceans<br><br>Make Informed choices (question information)<br><br>Consumers can make a difference through choices | Need Information<br><br>Choose Seafood<br><br>Choices affect Oceans<br><br>Make informed choices (use the Guide) |
| **AUSTRALIANS** | Australians love seafood and love the ocean<br><br>Australians as the target of the Guide | Australians love seafood<br><br>Australians as the target of the Guide<br><br>Australia as locality for conservation organisations<br><br>Legal needs in Australia (labelling) | Australians as the target of the Guide<br><br>Australia needs to improve sustainability |
| **MARINE CONSERVATION-IST** | Concern about the ocean and health of marine life and fish stocks | Concern about the ocean and health of marine life and fish stocks<br><br>Professional category of 'marine conservationist' who should provide consistent information so they can be trusted by consumers | Public concern about overfishing and impact on our oceans<br><br>Know what species you're eating and don't eat deep sea, slow-growing, long-lived species |
| **USER OF SITE** | Click links<br>Follow directives<br>Download app<br>Type 'seafood'<br>Click on text box | Click links (need to know visual cue of underlined link) | Click links (need to know visual cue of underlined link) |

A different author alignment is evident between the Guide and the blogs. Within the Guide, information is positioned to be for recipients who identify as 'seafood consumers' and are category-bound to 'need information'. The author of the Guide does not personally identify with this group as indicated through the use of the pronoun 'your' when referring to the Guide. For example, the Guide is described as 'your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely'. A different author alignment to the membership category of 'seafood consumer' is evident in the blogs. Within the blogs, the authors self-select to be included in the category of 'seafood consumers' who are category-bound to 'need information'. This is illustrated in the opening of the Lifestyle Blog through the use of the term 'us' in which the author self-selects as being a 'seafood consumer' in need of information:

> This is a quick post, just to alert you to a resource for buying fish because I think many of us feel in the dark as to which are best to buy and why.

These positionings within the blogs form the basis for alignments to using the Guide in specific 'contexts of practice' including the 'conflicting information at supermarkets' or 'sharing information casually with friends'. Describing the guide-in-use, the blogs introduce additional contexts for 'choosing seafood wisely' in addition to those oriented to within the Guide.

Investigating how alignments to the category of 'seafood consumer' travels between the Guide and blog also demonstrate a sequential ordering between the Guide and blogs in which the identities called on in the Guide are oriented to in the blog. However, there is a different division of labour within each site that is evident through the way the author and recipients align to these identities and their category-bound activities.

The chapter now turns to explore in detail how common attributes of the setting are accomplished within each case study site across two analytically discrete levels of the interaction order—the symbolic level of the encounter and the interactional devices used by members to achieve this.

## 7.4 Exposing the interaction order: symbolic order and accomplishment of this order through interactional devices

This section will illustrate the contribution to understanding how 'contexts' are oriented to within the interaction order of situated encounters across the case study sites. To illustrate this level of moral ordering within the interaction order, two analytically discrete levels of ordering are exposed—the symbolic level of the encounter and the mutual achievement of this common understanding through the machinery of interactional devices. Before analysing the detailed interactional accomplishment of order, there is a need to investigate the order that precedes this level through the order of interactions at the symbolic level. Referencing Goffman (1976), Dingwall (1980) explains that we cannot understand this broader order by merely looking at the order of isolated utterances in terms of their structure as speech exchange systems:

> This is but one part of a complex of resources which may be invoked to generate 'good order'. By this, I am thinking of the degree to which any encounter involves the parties in demonstrating their own, and checking each other's, ability to 'see' the world in a particular way, the cultural competence which embraces interactional competence. In using the idea of 'goodness' I mean to imply that such competence is morally or, if you prefer politically enforceable, such that failure to display or recognise it may be sanctionable. This achievement may depend both on an appropriate referential manipulation of the material context and on the ability to invoke presumed-to-be-shared past social experiences or knowledge. (Dingwall 1980, 153)

Therefore, to provide a complete understanding of the 'contexts' relevant to the 'ethical encounters' oriented to within the Guide and blogs, there is a need to recognise the workings of both the broader symbolic level (requiring 'cultural competence' to 'see' the world in a particular way) and the interactional devices and machinery used to produce and understand this order (involving 'interactional competence' to achieve mutual intelligibility). These two analytically discrete levels can be seen as 'complementary' to each other through

exposing different aspects of the interaction order of situated encounters (Dingwall 1980, 154). The following diagram illustrates these two levels of ordering.

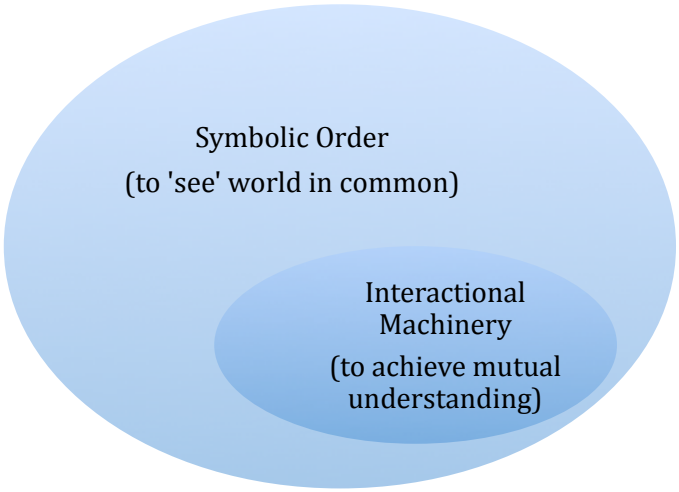


Figure 7.1 **Two analytically discrete levels of the interaction order**

Analysis of both the symbolic level and the interactional machinery level can be understood through exposing particular aspects of the interaction order, as outlined in the conceptual framework (Chapter 3) and methodology (Chapter 4). Understanding the symbolic and ritual elements of the interaction order involves following Goffman's (1981) understanding of commitments to the social self as demonstrated through participation roles and alignments to these positions within appropriate frame spaces. The utterances on the websites can be further understood in terms of Goffman's notion of 'dramatic scriptings' (Ytreberg 2002). Goffman (1986) describes media sites as providing 'a mock-up of everyday life, a put-together script of unscripted social doings, and thus are a source of broad hints concerning the structure of this domain' (Goffman 1986, 53). This chapter describes this level of symbolic ordering through the process of identification outlined by Kenneth Burke (1969) and further developed through Paul Ricoeur's (2005) *Course of recognition*. This highlights how the attributes of the encounter and expected roles of participation are recognised in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. The level of the interactional machinery can be understood through exposing the methods used in producing this shared meaning such as the work developed by Sacks (1992) on sequential

ordering, turn-taking and Membership Categorization Analysis. The following section will outline these two domains of ordering as they are made relevant to understanding relationships to 'ethical conduct' and 'context' within the case study sites.

To demonstrate the working of each of these levels of ordering, Dingwall (1980) devised the term 'orchestrated encounter' to describe a particular speech exchange system and to show how this system is embedded in a broader symbolic encounter. An orchestrated encounter is organised around one party, the orchestrator, having the right to determine when the other parties may have their turn to speak and what topics they may speak about. This type of encounter is considered to be an 'intermediate' point between mundane conversation and formal pre-allocation and is described as a 'role-centred' rather than a rule-centred form of encounter (Dingwall 1980). Dingwall is interested in how these participation rights are maintained and oriented to. Using the example of a health tutorial, Dingwall (1980) looks at how participation roles of 'tutors' and 'students' are ascribed with certain attributes and participation rights that are observable across the level of the encounter as expressed through the work of Goffman (1972, 1981) and demonstrated through the level of interactional accomplishment outlined by Sacks (1992).

The Guide and blogs can be understood in terms of a quasi-orchestrated encounter. In the context of the online settings, without a face-to-face orchestrator of the encounter, other features are used to position the orchestrator. For example, it can be seen that the author of the opening sequence of the website acts as the orchestrator by directing the type of encounter and positioning the recipients to reply in certain ways. Interactional devices used to position a type of reply can be further understood through looking at features of the sites, such as images and headings that act as topic nominators and require a cultural competence to understand the broader setting they form a part of.

## 7.5 Symbolic ordering: understanding the symbolic order through the process of identification

Attributes of the symbolic order of the encounter can be understood through the process of identification and recognition. As Dingwall explains, attributes of an encounter must be mutually identifiable in order to achieve recognition (Dingwall 1980, 170). Recipients are asked to recognise meanings of the setting of action as well as recognise identities and expectations for the social self. The work of Kenneth Burke (1969) on identification can be used to explain this process, which is seen as part of the broader Course of Recognition outlined by Ricoeur (2005) and discussed further below. This section will illustrate the process of identification by showing how agents are called to recognise and identify with the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' within the AMCS Guide and two participatory blogs.

This process of identification as explained through the notion of identification outlined by Burke (1969) provides a framework to analyse the 'interactional rhetoric', in which people are enjoined to participate as moral subjects and align their actions with the contexts nominated in the site. Burke uses the process of identification to extend an understanding of 'persuasion' (Quigley 1998). Recognising the complexity of social life and the desire for solidarity, Burke (1969, 22) states that 'identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division.' It is based on the idea that people seek to be associated with certain groups and not others to 'attain some position in the hierarchy of social relations' (Quigley 1998). This aligns with Goffman's (1983) work on maintaining the social self within the interaction order.

Three key processes of Burke's notion of identification have been highlighted, including the use of common language, association through shared values and common enemies, and identifying practices as consubstantial with others (Crable 2006; Quigley 1998). These features of identification are outlined in the following Table 7.2 and explained in terms of their applicability to identifying

contexts within the Guide and blogs, as discussed further below. Each of these elements will be discussed in terms of their applicability to the process of recognising 'contexts' or settings for ethical encounters and methods for placing oneself and others within those contexts.

Table 7.2 **Key features of the processes of identification (Burke 1969)** adapted from Crable (2006) and Quigley (1998)

| **Key Features of Identification** | **Context identified in relation to moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **In the Guide** | **In the blogs** |
| **COMMON LANGUAGE: Process of naming something according to specific properties** | AMCS Guide as authority information<br><br>Ocean in a state of global crisis<br><br>Seafood Consumer in need of information to make wise choices | Guides as providing confusing information [Academic Blog]<br><br>Guide as casual advice [Lifestyle Blog]<br><br>Ocean in a state of global crisis<br><br>Seafood Consumer in need of information to make wise choices |
| **ASSOCIATION: Process of associating with and disassociating from others, creating shared values and a common enemy** | Shared values for protecting the ocean<br><br>Seafood consumers responsible for making 'wise choices'<br><br>Header images, captions and headings that call for associations (through pronouns) | Shared value of caring for the ocean<br><br>Seafood consumers responsible for making 'wise choices'<br><br>Wise choices in terms of 'taste' and 'good research' |
| **CONSUBSTANTIALITY: End result of identifying practices with others** | | Self-select as 'seafood consumers' needing information to make 'wise choice' |

### *7.5.1 Identification through symbolic use of language: naming something according to specific properties*

One key feature of identification through rhetoric, according to Burke, is the interaction between form and content through 'the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.' (Burke 1969, 43 in Crable 2006, 17). Two levels of 'context' are established through the use of symbolic language. There is the level of the website to be recognised as a type of site through the language of the site (e.g. the Guide as an authority on information and the blogs as a site to express opinions and discuss the use of the Guide). There is also the level of the imagined context of action that is described in terms of the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'.

As illustrated in Table 7.2, the Guide uses terminology to create a common language in describing the situations and contexts around the moral imperative of 'choosing seafood wisely'. For example, the 'ocean' is identified as a key scene and described as being in a 'state of global crisis' and needing 'our' help to keep the ocean healthy in the future. This forms a rationale for making 'wise choices'. Seafood consumers are positioned as in need of information provided by the Guide to make 'wise choices'. This process of using a common language to name and interpret scenes or contexts according to certain properties is a tacit way in which people are enlisted to play a role in the moral order of the site because they are 'unable to experience the common situation in any other vocabulary' (Crable 2006, 16). This becomes the acceptable vocabulary for describing and interpreting the situation, and it is not open for debate. The AMCS Guide positions itself as an 'authority' on the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. It does not question the 'state of ocean' or the role of the Guide in making 'wise choices' but presents these as fact statements and backs them up with statistics for support. For example, statistics are used to describe the state of 'overfishing': 'An incredible 80% of the world's fish stocks are now over-exploited or fished to limit'. The information within the Guide is therefore

presented as a 'fact' that recipients of the Guide are expected to support through this common terminology.

Within the blogs, the symbolic use of language to describe the contexts for action in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' continues to orient to a description of 'oceans being in a state of global crisis' and 'seafood consumers' needing information to make wise choices. The author of the blog article sets the tone for participation within the blog by nominating settings and agents that are relevant for understanding and participating within the frame space of the site. On the Academic Blog (Appendix B), this includes describing the use of the Guide as providing 'confusing information' for 'seafood consumers' and introduces a 'new' characterisation of 'guides' that was not evident in the Guide's website. This characteristic of explaining the Guide as confusing is then taken up within the comments section of the blog. The Lifestyle Blog (Appendix D) talks about the Guide in terms of 'casual' advice to be shared, and comments within this blog take on this tone of 'advice-giving'. Each blog uses a common language to create a setting within the blog of participation and discussion by providing opinions of the Guide and its applicability to contexts of practice, such as 'buying fish at the supermarket' (Academic Blog) or 'sharing information with friends' (Lifestyle Blog). Thus, sharing symbolic use of language identifies both the setting of the website and the imagined setting of action by which 'choosing seafood wisely' is accomplished.

### *7.5.2 Identification through association: aligning with shared values and common enemies*

The second feature of identification in which the Guide and blogs call for recipients to follow the moral imperative of the site is through endorsing 'sympathy' and shared values in order to associate people to join with a common plight (Crable 2006). As indicated in Table 7.2 above, this is achieved through the symbolic use of 'healthy oceans' as a shared value that 'need our protection'. Concern for the ocean is expressed as a 'public concern', as illustrated through the statement that the Guide was 'developed in response to growing public

concern about overfishing and its impacts on our oceans and their wildlife'. Thus, recipients are called to identify and associate their practices with this 'public' concern. The use of the pronoun 'our' also positions 'oceans' as being owned in common by humankind. This is also illustrated in the header, 'The fish *we* choose today will directly affect the health of *our* oceans tomorrow'. This emphasises a common plight and calls the reader to recognise their own 'fish choices' as playing a part in the state of the ocean.

Another method for achieving identification with 'sympathetic symbols' and common interests is through the use of images of pristine marine life alongside slogans that call for action. For example, an image of a turtle alongside the slogan 'choose seafood wisely' (see Figure 7.2 below) creates a sympathy for the turtle and connects the moral imperative of 'choosing seafood wisely' with the fate of the 'innocent' turtle.

Figure 7.2 **Header image and caption 'choose seafood wisely' – associating with shared goal to protect the ocean**

Creating a shared interest in and care for the ocean, for example, is further established through nominating a common 'enemy' that threatens these values, through 'antithesis' (Quigley 1998). This is nominated in the Guide in the following statement from the second paragraph:

> Overfishing, destructive fishing gear and poor aquaculture practices impact significantly on our seas, marine wildlife and habitats.

These practices threaten the commonly shared sacred value of 'healthy oceans' that 'need our support'. Recognising shared goals and common enemies works together to provide meaning and gives context to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. People are positioned as implicit players in this

imperative, with the fish 'we choose' described as having a direct impact on 'our oceans'. To make 'unwise' choices is heard as contributing to this antithesis of 'overfishing' and goes against the moral order of the site.

Within the blogs, shared values are also established through the symbolic use of the 'ocean' and 'our need' to 'protect the ocean'. This shared value is described through identifying 'public concern' for the health of the ocean and the need to make 'wise choices' as also illustrated in the Guide. The 'fish choices' made by 'seafood consumers' are shown to have a direct impact on the health of the ocean. This makes the common enemy 'bad choices', which contribute to poor health of the ocean. For example, the Academic Blog states:

> Globally, the health of our oceans is rapidly declining and is due, in part, to the consumption of seafood.

Again, the pronoun 'our' is used to identify oceans as owned in common by humankind.

Additional contexts are also oriented to within the blogs, which creates further shared values associated with 'wise choice'. For example, on the Lifestyle Blog, the shared values of 'cooking' and 'taste' are demonstrated through tips on how to cook fish. This is further oriented to in the comments. The Academic Blog introduced association with 'researchers' and the shared value of providing 'reliable information' with the common enemy identified as the provision of confusing or unsubstantiated information. For example, it is suggested that 'inconsistent information may contribute to a type of seafood stewardship crisis, one that the ocean cannot afford to battle'.

Common within both the Guide and blogs is the identification of the shared value and 'public concern' for protecting 'our oceans' through making 'wise seafood choices'. However, within the blogs, additional shared values are also introduced, including the value of 'good taste' (as part of providing 'good advice' on the Lifestyle Blog) and 'good information' (as part of being a 'good researcher' on the Academic Blog). The next section looks at the final process of identification through the successful alignment and performance of the identifications offered.

### *7.5.3 Identification through consubstantiality: identification is achieved through accepting and performing identity*

The final feature of identification according to Burke (1969) is achieved if the actant 'appropriately' identifies their practices with the practices provided and becomes consubstantial with the identification offered. This process of identification relies on a common sense of purpose with others through achieving a correct identity performance in order to be considered a 'culturally acceptable character' (Crable, 2006). This can be illustrated through looking at how the identification of 'seafood consumer' is adopted within the blogs in alignment with the identifications offered in the Guide. For example, the authors of the blog articles self-select as 'seafood consumers' and align their practices with 'needing information' in order to 'choose seafood wisely'. Yet through identifying with other contexts of practice in 'making wise choices' (such as 'taste' and 'reliable information') complexity is introduced into this association, as explained further below.

### *7.5.4 Course of recognition: achieving mutual identification of self and other*

Burke's process of Identification can be further understood in terms of the broader process of recognition outlined by Ricoeur (2005). For Ricoeur (2005), recognition is understood as a Course of Recognition that involves three key relationships – recognition as identification, recognising oneself and mutual recognition. The section above has looked at the first process of 'identification' within Ricoeur's Course of Recognition. This involves the process of identifying or distinguishing something or someone, and it is a key precursor to understanding the nature and meaning of contexts in order to attune practices to these contexts (Adkins et al. 2012). Using Burke's understanding of identification has illustrated the way in which settings are identified and how people are placed within these settings and called to align to these settings in 'symbolically appropriate' ways.

Ricoeur's (2005) second process of the Course of Recognition is 'Recognising Oneself', and it looks at how the self is called to recognise their practices in association with the identifications offered. This involves understanding differences between self and other and assigning actions to ourselves and others. Within the Guide, for example, directives and calls to action are used to position actants to orient to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' through recognising their roles across various identities and layers of context. For example, actants are called to identify with the collective identity of 'Australians' who 'love eating seafood' and 'love the ocean'. Other key identities that recipients are called to associate with are 'marine conservationists' who will 'protect our oceans' and 'seafood consumers' who 'need information'. This illuminates the diverse range of identities and contexts that actants are called to identify with, including Australians, marine conservationists, seafood consumers and users of the site. Thus, actants are not only called to recognise themselves as 'ethical consumers' as is commonly assumed within research in ethical consumption literature. Understanding the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' involves identification across a complex layering of contexts.

These identifications are also taken up in the blogs, yet the introduction of contexts and settings of practice in which the Guide is used creates a layer of complexity for the associations in the Guide. For example, the Academic Blog describes 'seafood' as something that Australians love to eat, as illustrated in the following statement:

> Prawns are an Aussie favourite. They're also a great example of how confusing shopping for sustainable seafood can be.

This orients to the same identities in the Guide and describes 'Australians' who 'love to eat seafood' and 'seafood consumers' who 'need information'. However, introducing the context of 'shopping' illustrates how these identities can be at odds in practice.

The final process in Ricoeur's (2005) Course of Recognition is 'Mutual Recognition', which refers to the recognition of oneself by others and expresses the way in which the self is understood by others. An illustration of this process

is best provided in the comments section of the blogs where one can 'check' the way in which their alignments are received through the interactions and responses within the comments section. For example, within the Academic Blog, one respondent identifies himself as the 'researcher' who developed the content for the AMCS Guide. Having established this identity, other respondents recognise and 'test' this identity by asking for further clarification of his references used. This also occurs through recognising and operating within the frame of 'critique' within the Academic Blog and the ethics of being a 'good researcher'.

This section has shown how Ricoeur's (2005) *The course of recognition* provides an extension to Burke's process of identification and offers another level of understanding of the relationships between conduct and context within the symbolic order of interaction within the Guide and blogs.

### *7.5.5 Section summary: symbolic order illustrated through the process of identification and recognition*

Ethical encounters within the Guide and blogs orient to a symbolic level of ordering that can be understood through the process of identification and the Course of Recognition. Through this process, people are called to recognise 'contexts' for action and place themselves and others within those contexts, and thus illuminate the various 'contexts' that people are called to recognise through understanding their position in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. Identification is achieved, for example, through endorsing shared values, such as public concern for the health of the ocean, and identifying identities such as 'seafood consumers' who play a role in the health of the ocean through their 'fish choices'. The process of identification is used to make attributes of the setting recognisable. Recipients of the sites are called to see a 'common world' that relies on a level of 'cultural competence' to make sense of this world.

This section has illustrated one level of moral ordering through looking at how classifications and identifications are oriented to at the symbolic level of interaction thereby enabling a 'common' scene to be understood. Yet, there is another level of moral ordering in which these attributes and alignments are accomplished through the devices and machinery of the interaction order that allow for mutual meaning to be achieved. The chapter will now turn to explore this level in more detail.

## 7.6 Machinery of interactional devices: achievement of mutual understanding through interactional competence

Having established the symbolic order inherent with the Guides and blogs, this section now turns to the means by which this order is accomplished through the interactional devices to achieve this mutual meaning. This level of interactional ordering can be explicated through an ethnomethodological approach that focuses on the methods used by members to accomplish this shared meaning of through their situated practices. Through this work, Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1992) helped illuminate the practices required to achieve the social significance of these attributes. Describing their work, Dingwall (1980, 170) states 'attributes are not fixed properties but require recognition, formulation and ascription to achieve social significance. Hence, the relevant attributes of encounter participants must be mutually identifiable through some sort of attributing practices.' In particular, within this section, focus is placed on the use of membership categorization methods to create a shared sense of this order and 'context' relevant to the interaction. This illuminates another aspect of the moral work involved in achieving a mutual understanding of 'ethical encounters' and the interactional and moral demands placed on participation within these encounters.

### *7.6.1 Interactional devices: positioning moral subjects*

To explore the machinery of interactional devices, this section will look in closer detail at how moral membership and attributes of the setting are accomplished through the interactional devices employed within the Guide and blogs. This can be observed through the interplay of three key devices that position agents as moral subjects and call them to recognise such moral positioning. As outlined in Table 7.3 below, the first device refers to the *elements of the occasioned corpus* in which elements of the website, including images and headings are used to produce certain understandings of 'context' within the site. The second device is *assigning actions to agents*, which looks at how agents are category-bound to certain actions and self-select to take up certain positionings assigned to them through membership categorization devices and particular use of pronouns. The final device looks at *negotiation of moral accountability* and focuses on how members' rights to participate are oriented to through epistemic ordering. These key devices can be seen to align with the three dimensions of the Course of Recognition outlined by Ricoeur above—recognition as identification of the setting (elements of occasioned corpus), recognising oneself (assigning actions to agents) and mutual recognition (negotiation of moral accountability)—and provides insight into how the process of recognition is achieved interactionally. Focusing analytic attention on the interactional devices that construct this common-sense course of action can help us see the way in which these moral orderings are produced as an interactional accomplishment of members and how 'contexts' are made relevant through the sites in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'.

Table 7.3 **Key interactional devices positioning agents as moral subjects in case study sites**

| Device | Focus | Example in Case Study |
|---|---|---|
| **Elements of Occasioned Corpus** | Attributes of setting<br><br>Understanding context through elements of the website – headings, topic nomination and images | Images – marine conservation, consumption<br><br>Guide as 'official' authority - statements used in Guide to position as a source of authority of 'choosing seafood wisely'<br><br>Blogs open for discussion - questions used in blogs to open up discussion |
| **Assigning Action to Members** | Self and agencies<br><br>Category-bound activities<br><br>Pronouns to align to agencies | Pronouns to align with author roles and identities such as 'seafood consumer' |
| **Negotiating Moral Accountability Through Epistemic Ordering** | Self and Other's right to speak and respond<br><br>Setting up epistemic ordering central to participating in the moral imperative | Questions and alignment with identities to position in relation to epistemic authority to make claims |

### *7.6.2 Elements of occasioned corpus of setting features*

Examination of elements of the Occasioned Corpus of Setting Features (Zimmerman and Pollner 1970) includes paying attention to the features of the website setting attended to by participants. Discovering the practices that make up the pre-supposed 'natural' world oriented to by members enables an exploration of the interactional accomplishment of this 'common-sense' world and draws attention to the 'contexts' that are made procedurally consequential for members of the interaction. It involves attending to those 'features of socially organised activities which are particular, contingent accomplishments of the production and recognition work of the parties to the activity' (Zimmerman and Pollner 1970, 94). The occasioned corpus does not stand prior to the interaction but is made relevant through the interaction of members and the practices that

make the setting recognisable as a particular setting. This also draws attention to the human and nonhuman elements that contribute to making the moral order of the site recognisable as such. Features of the website itself play a role in the type of interaction permissible by authors and recipients through images, clickable links, headings and the sequential organisation of the site.

To illustrate the methods used in producing a type of 'ethical encounter' within each setting, this section looks at how the Guide was made recognisable as an 'official guide' within the frame of 'marine conservation' and how the two participatory blogs were produced to be recognisable as specific sites for the discussion of the 'guide as critique' or the 'guide as casual advice'.

### *AMCS Guide as 'official' guide*

Looking at the 'occasioned corpus' of the AMCS Guide reveals the interactional devices that enable the Guide to be identified as an 'official' guide to ethical consumption and position recipients as moral subjects. Features of the site including images, headers and headings are used to position the Guide as a source of 'authority' on 'marine conservation' and to call certain people, including 'seafood consumers' and 'Australians', to action. The 'authoritative' tone of the site is achieved through statements and directive that are used to call for action, such as 'Buy your Seafood Guide and carry with you all the information you need to make an informed seafood choice', rather than the use of questions inviting participation and debate about the issues. The AMCS homepage constructs the 'user' of the Guide as a 'seafood consumer' in need of information yet able to make the 'right choice' if they use the Guide. This is achieved through the use of headings that act as topic nominators and position recipients through the use of pronouns, such as: 'Your independent tool to choosing seafood wisely'.

As discussed above, contexts oriented to within the Guide include the 'ocean' and 'pristine marine life' as central scenes of action. This is set up through images in the header of 'marine wildlife', which forms the backdrop of 'marine

conservation' and through recognising the Guide as a call to action to 'choose seafood wisely' to 'protect the oceans'.

### *Participatory blogs: inviting on-topic discussion*

The 'occasioned corpus' of the blogs rely on similar features as the Guide, including images and headings, to act as topic markers and set the tone for participation within the site, yet these are used in different ways to make the sites recognisable as participatory blogs and to call on diverse contexts as settings of practice. Each site orients to different contexts of use of the Guide. For example, the Academic Blog 'critiques conflicting information' in the Guide while the Lifestyle Blog offers the Guide as 'casual advice' to share among friends. The titles of each blog act as topic markers. For example, the heading of the Academic Blog 'Conflicting sustainable seafood guides confuse consumers' sets the topic of critiquing the guides, while the Lifestyle Blog opens up for advice about purchasing types of fish through the heading, 'Tuna, salmon or mahi mahi: which fish should you be eating now?' These topics are maintained through each article and taken up within the comments section and become the way in which 'choose seafood wisely' is discussed.

The author of the blog articles offer first-person opinion and stories and also uses questions to open up points for discussion and invite participation. As demonstrated in the closing of the Lifestyle Blog, 'I know a lot of eco-oriented nutritionists share on this blog ... what are your thoughts? Anyone else got fish-buying tips?' Comments within each blog orient to the positions taken in the opening blog article through using the same categorizations such that comments in the Academic Blog debate and critique the provision of 'reliable information' and, in the Lifestyle Blog, discuss 'fish-buying' advice. Thus, the author of the blog article can be seen as the 'orchestrator' of the encounter through nominating topics and opening 'relevant' points for discussion.

As with the Guide's website, a key feature of the 'occasioned corpus' of the blogs' websites is the use of images. The Academic Blog uses 'serious' images in relation to the production and sale of fish—including fish caught in nets, fish

labels,  fish for sale at the fishmonger and an image of the AMCS Guide (see Figure 7.3). These images can be understood within the collection of 'concern about the production and purchase of seafood'.

Are any of these fish sustainable? A seafood guide might help you figure it out, but it might not...
Diarmuid Fisherman/Flickr

How do you figure out what it is they're selling? Jeremy Keith

Figure 7.3 **Images used in Academic Blog**

The image featured within the Lifestyle Blog (Figure 7.4) is presented within the 'casual' framework as demonstrated through the use of a 'fun' image of a woman holding two fish over her eyes to form a 'smiley face'.

via pinterest.com

Figure 7.4 **Image used in Lifestyle Blog**

Looking at how each site has been produced and recognised as a type of site highlights the moral work required to participate within each site in a 'relevant' way within the occasioned corpus.

### *7.6.3 Assigning action to members*

The second interactional mechanism in which members are positioned as moral subjects is through assigning action to members (see Table 7.3 above). This is achieved through a process of footing and indexicality. Goffman's work on 'footing' and notions of author, principal and animator can be used to conceptualise the positioning of speakers and recipients in the interaction. Through the process of footing, authors and recipients are positioned with participation rights that constrain the way in which they can align with the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. As discussed above, authors align in different ways to the identity of 'seafood consumer'. For example, within the Guide the author aligns as an 'authority' advising 'seafood consumers' on how to make 'wise choices' through the use of the Guide, while within the blogs authors self-select to be a 'seafood consumer' yet place this within the context of use, which opens up complexities in the use of the Guide within specific contexts of practice.

#### *AMCS Guide: positioning 'users' of the Guide*

The Guide maintains authority over the information presented through aligning with author roles and assigning action to members. While the main author of the website is heard as the AMCS, the message is also animated by a celebrity chef and a novelist. The status of 'celebrity' is used to give authority to the message and popularises the use of the Guide. The 'Guide' itself is also assigned with the action of 'informing consumers'. As discussed above, the recipients of the Guide are presented as 'Australian', 'marine conservationist' and 'seafood consumer'. These identities are assigned category-bound activities in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. For example, the 'seafood consumer' is category-bound to be in 'need of information' in order to make 'wise choices'. One method for positioning 'seafood consumers' as 'users' of the Guide is through the use of pronouns 'you' and 'your', such as in the heading 'Your independent tool to choosing seafood wisely'. The author of the Guide does not identify with the category of 'seafood consumer' in 'need of information'.

### *Participatory blogs: Self-selecting as 'users' of the Guide*

Within the blogs, authors self-select as the 'recipients' oriented to in the Guide and describe their practices in terms of the identities and category-bound activities described within the Guide—for example, as 'seafood consumers' and 'users' of the Guide. Both authors of the blogs self-select to be included in the category of 'seafood consumers' who are category-bound to 'need information'. This is achieved through the use of personal pronouns such as 'we' and 'I' and 'us', which position the authors of the blogs as part of this shared group. For example, in the Academic Blog, first-person pronouns are used by the author to self-select as a 'seafood consumer' in 'need of information'. However, the Guide does not provide the information needed in order to 'choose seafood wisely', as indicated through the following first-person story in the Academic Blog article:

> Armed with my AMCS application, I recently went to Coles to buy some sustainable seafood. I was struck by some inconsistencies between the AMCS and Coles sustainable seafood guidelines …

Through this first-person story, the author aligns with the category of 'seafood consumer' in 'need of information' yet the Guide is degraded from the category-bound activity of providing information to 'make wise choices'. Instead, it is one of many guides and provides inconsistent information. Describing the guide-in-use, the blog introduces additional contexts for 'choosing seafood wisely' with additional identities and category-bound activities that were not oriented to within the Guide and assigns further actions to members.

## *7.6.4 Negotiating moral accountability through epistemic ordering*

The third mechanism in positioning agents as moral subjects is through negotiating moral accountability through epistemic ordering, as indicated in Table 7.3 above. Epistemic ordering involves positioning others and aligning oneself with knowledge states. As Heritage explains (2008, 309) 'people continually position themselves with respect to the epistemic order: what they know relative to others, what they are entitled to know, and what they are

entitled to describe or communicate.' This focuses on how actants are given rights to speak and what topics they have the right to speak about. Within the Guide and blogs, epistemic rights are organised around the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. This is achieved through the use of pronouns to state 'territories of knowledge' (Heritage 2012). The sites are organised around positions of 'information providers' and 'information receivers' with the opening utterances acting as the 'orchestrator' of the encounter through aligning with certain identities and establishing rights to 'know' about 'choosing seafood wisely'.

### *AMCS Guide: Claiming knowledge of using the Guide to 'choose seafood wisely'*

The AMCS Guide is organised around moral accountability through the provision of information and positions information within the site as being for 'seafood consumers' in 'need of information' to make 'wise choices'. As discussed above, the use of assessments and directives position the information within the Guide as 'fact', and this is not opened up for question and debate. The ocean is category-bound to be in 'need of help' due to the impact of 'overfishing' and 'bad choices'. The choices made by 'seafood consumers' are directly linked to the state of the ocean and this forms the rationale for making 'wise' choices. One method for aligning 'choices' with 'actions' is through the use of the pronoun 'you' that positions recipients as 'information receivers'. For example, the Guide is described as 'designed to help you make informed seafood choices and play a part in swelling the tide for sustainable seafood in Australia'. The Guide positions itself as the means by which to achieve the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' and 'protect the ocean'. The is illustrated in the statement 'Buy your Seafood Guide and carry with you all the information you need to make an informed seafood choice'. Yet while the Guide claims knowledge of the state of the ocean and the means by which 'wise seafood choices' can be made, it does not describe knowledge of the 'guide-in-use'.

***Participatory blogs: claiming knowledge of the guide-in-use***

Negotiating moral accountability through epistemic ordering is also demonstrated in the participatory blogs. As with the Guide, the blogs are also organised around the notion of providing information. The authors of the blogs maintain a level of authority over the 'contexts' nominated in the blogs through nominating topics and establishing the 'frame' for discussion of the guide-in-use – either as 'critique of information' in the Academic Blog or 'casual advice' in the Lifestyle Blog. Shifts in footings and alignments with identities were used to establish epistemic rights to speak about the guide-in-use. For example, in the Academic Blog, first-person stories are used to discuss the guide-in-use at a supermarket in relation to other, conflicting information available. The author of this blog aligns with the identities of 'seafood consumer' in need of information in order to 'choose seafood wisely' and 'academic researcher' and 'marine conservationist' to provide a critique of the type of information available. Within the comments, these identifications are recognised and further oriented to by respondents directing questions to the author or making statements directed to these identities. The comments take up these identities and negotiate their own claims to knowledge through aligning with certain identities such as 'academic' or 'researcher'. These categories are also used to degrade some members—for example, aligning with the category of 'researcher' in the comments, another member questions the use of 'flawed researched' and orients to new 'contexts' of practice in which 'choosing wisely' applies.

### *7.6.5 Section summary: machinery of interactional devices*

This section has illustrated a second level of moral ordering inherent within food ethics discourse through looking at the way in which 'contexts' for 'ethical encounters' are mutually accomplished by members. Recipients of the sites are not only called to 'see' attributes of a 'common world' but are called to be active

participants in reproducing this common understanding. This section discussed three key interactional devices that exposed the way agents are positioned as moral subjects—1) the elements of the occasioned corpus, 2) assigning actions to members and 3) negotiating moral accountability. Interactional devices to accomplish this include images, headers and pronouns to position members with certain rights and responsibilities in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. Discussing the guide-in-use in the blogs opened up new contexts for this moral imperative to be realised in practice. By way of concluding, the chapter will now return to the central research problem to see where we have come in understanding the mechanisms by which ethical food choice are achieved in the 'contexts' of practice.

## 7.7 Chapter conclusion

Through exposing the interactional accomplishment of 'contexts' relevant to understanding the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' within the case study sites, this thesis has opened up understandings of layers of 'context' that are made relevant through situated practices. To gauge where this has brought us in terms of our understanding of food choice regulation, the chapter now returns to Table 7.5 introduced in Chapter 2. This table outlined the program theory governing food choice regulation policies and campaigns, such as the AMCS Guide, and identified gaps in current knowledge about how guides that rely on information provision can lead to prescribed food choice outcomes. While various approaches have contributed insights into understanding certain aspects of this problematic—such as the hermeneutic approach that draws attention to the role of interpretation in everyday practices—there remained a gap in understanding the 'contexts' in which people are enjoined to participate in the moral order of food ethics campaigns.

Table 7.5 **Guide to regulate food choice and identified gaps**

| | INTERVENTIONS > | MECHANISMS > | OUTCOMES | *GAP REMAINING?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMCS Guide** | Information Provision | 'Being Informed' | Making Prescribed Food Choices | *YET/ How does this work?* |
| **SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH (ethical consumption)** | *what* Define info approaches (e.g. role of labels) | *who* Define characteristics of 'choosers' (e.g. socio-demographics) | *what* Define type of food choice as 'good' (e.g. local, organic) | *YET/ How is choice made in practice?* |
| **PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH (applied ethics)** | | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *how* make ethical decisions (e.g. matrix tool, thought experiment) | *YET/ How is choice made in actual settings of practice?* |
| **HERMENEUTIC APPROACH** | | *how* interpret choice | *how* interpret everyday practices | *YET/ How is practice responding to norms?* |
| **CULTURAL APPROACH** | | | *how* symbolic meaning | *YET/ How are people enjoined to participate in moral order?* |
| | What remained to be understood is:<br>• how the moral order of food ethics has been constructed/understood; and<br>• how people come to be positioned within this discourse; and<br>• how this discourse has been taken up by those called to action. | | | |

In response to this problematic, this study utilised an interaction order approach to examine the 'contexts' that members orient to within the Guide and blogs. Through this approach, the study has contributed new insights into

understanding the mechanisms by which 'ethical conduct' is understood in situated 'contexts' of practice.

As discussed in this chapter, to subscribe to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' within the Guide, actants are called to recognise and respond to the interaction order of the encounter by identifying the symbolic and interactional practices required to achieve common meaning. For example, the symbolic level of ordering within the setting includes identifying the scene of the 'ocean' in need of 'our help' and identifying with the identities of 'Australians', 'seafood consumers', 'marine conservationists' and 'users of the Guide'. All of these identities are shown to be important in understanding the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'.

This level of symbolic ordering is accomplished through interactional devices used by members within the websites, such as membership categorization, which is expressed through headings, pronouns and images that position authors and recipients as moral subjects with certain rights and responsibilities. Through these devices recipients are called to recognise the setting as an 'ethical encounter' and identify their own practices and that of others in relation to the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'. New contexts of practice are also nominated and oriented to within the blogs, such as supermarkets, cooking and taste. Thus, by revealing the interactional accomplishment of diverse layers of 'contexts' relevant to understanding 'ethical conduct', this study has contributed to an understanding of food ethics by revealing the normative and interpretive dimensions involved in understanding food choice practices.

By way of concluding, the following chapter will bring these findings together and provide an overview of the key contributions provided by this study. These contributions point to the theoretical and methodological significance of this thesis while offering new insights into understandings of food ethics.

# CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

## 8.1 Overview of chapter

In our contemporary media society, people are faced with a proliferation of messages and guides that call for 'ethical' and 'informed' food choices which take into account one's own wellbeing along with broader concerns for the environment, welfare of animals, fair trade and future generations. As the early chapters of this thesis demonstrated, various scholarship has investigated issues of food choice regulation, with each contributing diverse understandings of relationships between conduct and context. For example, the field of 'ethical consumption' looks at the role of information in empowering 'ethical consumers' to make prescribed choices (Hepting, Jaffe and Maciag 2014), while hermeneutic approaches draw attention to how choice is interpreted in everyday practice (Coff 2012). From this scholarship, questions were raised about the role of conduct and context, which formed the foundation for the questions that this thesis sought to explore.

Shifting focus, this thesis investigated the processes through which actants are positioned within food ethics discourse and how they take up and respond to these positionings in diverse fields. To show where the thesis has brought us in this pursuit of understanding, this chapter provides an overview of the main contributions of this study. The contributions are threefold and can be understood in terms of theoretical, substantive and methodological significance. The first section discusses the theoretical contribution provided by exposing the interactional accomplishment of 'ethics' and moral positionings in regulatory discourse. These theoretical insights were illustrated through an investigation of the interaction order of the online AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide and two participatory blogs. Thus, the second section of this chapter describes the contribution to the substantive issue of food ethics that was provided through the analysis of this case study. Specifically, it shows how people become enjoined

to 'be informed' in guides to 'food ethics' and how those called to action nominate diverse contexts of practice. Following on from this, the third section discusses the methodological contribution and value of online sites as an avenue for exploring moral orders that people are enjoined to participate. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an overview of the implications and limitations of this study and point to areas for future research.

## 8.2 Situational accomplishment of 'ethics' and 'context'

The first key contribution of this study is towards a theoretical understanding of 'ethics' as interactionally accomplished through situated contexts of practice. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, following Durkheimian sociology draws attention to ethical conduct as socially embedded and represented through collective symbols and classifications. These normative representations form the backdrop upon which moral thoughts and actions are expressed. Durkheim (1995 [1912]) explains this relation between the moral and social through symbolic classifications of sacred and profane. This has been applied to contemporary society in the work of Mary Douglas and Cultural Sociologists that have shown how people make sense of the world in relation to collective understandings.

This thesis has provided a theoretical understanding of the cultural forces within the field of food ethics by paying attention to the ways in which this pre-constructed world has been assembled and understood and how people have been positioned within food ethics discourse. This 'seen but unnoticed' aspect of social life is often assumed to be 'natural', but breaking down the interactional devices used to accomplish moral ordering within the AMCS Guide and participatory blogs has shown how this moral order is accomplished in situations of practice. By paying analytic attention to the moral order of food ethics discourse, this thesis has illuminated the interactional processes involved in positioning and responding to this moral order. In doing so, this thesis exposed the symbolic order that people are called to participate in and the

mechanisms through which this is accomplished at the level of the interaction order.

To see how this normative order is played out through settings of practice, this thesis followed an interaction order approach. The interaction order is an analytically distinct level of social ordering that is worthy of study in its own right (Rawls 1989). Goffman distinguishes the level of 'ethics' displayed through interactions as the 'etiquette' of everyday interactions and demonstrates how this involves a distinct order separate to the ethics of formal institutional rules (Bovone 1993, 26). People are morally bound to maintain order within the interaction order of the encounter. Three key interaction order theorists were used in this thesis to highlight different moral aspects of the encounter. For example, Goffman draws attention to maintaining the social self through aligning with 'footing' and the 'frame space' of the encounter; Garfinkel focuses on achieving a mutual definition of the situation; and Sacks' work looks at specific features of talk and membership categorization. Following this approach brought attention to the 'ethics of the encounter' and an understanding of ethical conduct through situated contexts of practice.

Applying an interaction order perspective to the study of 'food ethics' in this study has shown how ethics exists at another level beyond the formal 'rules' of the Guide. The homepage of the AMCS Guide positions people in relation to normative ethical demands (e.g. calls to 'choose seafood wisely') yet achieves a mutual understanding of this symbolic order through the interactional features of the site (e.g. headings, images, membership categorizations). Within the AMCS Guide people are instructed to see a particular type of 'ethics' in relation to 'marine conservation'. The participatory blogs demonstrated how the moral order to 'choose seafood wisely' that is oriented to in the AMCS Guide continues to act as a guiding principle through discussions in the blogs. However, the Guide becomes reframed and discussed in different ways through enjoining additional scenes of use and frames of reference. Within the Academic Blog, for example, the Guide becomes positioned within a frame of 'critique' and ethics is understood in terms of 'providing consistent information'. Thus, accomplishing

understandings of 'ethics' within the situated occasions of these online settings illuminates the moral work involved in orienting to and achieving mutual meaning within the interactions. Therefore, this thesis has demonstrated how accomplishing ethics involves knowledge of both the practical and moral setting oriented to through the interaction (Jayyusi 1991) and requires both normative and interpretive understandings of ethical conduct.

On another level, this approach has also avoided the application of preconceived notions of 'ethics' and 'contexts of practice'. Rather than entering this field of study with *a priori* ideas of 'ethics' and relationships with predefined 'contexts', this study followed an ethnomethodological approach to see how 'ethics' is oriented to and produced through the situated practices of members. This looked at what 'contexts' are oriented to by members of the interaction and made 'procedurally consequential' through their practices (Schegloff 1991). This has shed light on the moral work involved in producing and maintaining understandings of 'ethics' and 'contexts'.

## 8.3 Food ethics: exploring the processes involved in informing people to make prescribed choices

Following on from the theoretical insights outlined above, this second section focuses on the substantive contribution this thesis has made to the field of food ethics and ethical consumption. As discussed in Chapter 2, food ethics is considered a problem of 'ethical choice' and people are called to make 'informed' and 'responsible' choices. To respond to this problem, scholarship within the field of ethical consumption has largely focused on defining conditions that promote or impede 'ethical choice' and has researched factors associated with achieving desired food choice outcomes. Such approaches have concentrated on the 'ethical consumer' as a key agent of choice, called to 'be informed' and respond to information campaigns instructing 'good' food choice options. This understanding of conduct underpins food guides that assume desired food choice outcomes are the result of information provision. However, within such

approaches, the mechanisms by which ethical food choice is accomplished remain 'black-boxed' with further research needed to investigate these relationships. This thesis responded to this identified gap and shifted focus from a problem of 'how to inform' consumers to make 'ethical choices' to instead look at the processes through which people are enjoined to 'be informed' within ethical consumption campaigns.

Before understanding food choice outcomes, there is a need to understand the moral order in which people are enjoined to participate. Thus, rather than locating ethics as a response to external rules or guidelines, this study investigated the ways in which 'ethics' is interactionally accomplished through situated contexts of practice. In doing so, this thesis opened up the 'black box' of ethical choice by revealing the complex processes and mechanisms involved in enjoining people to participate in the moral order of food ethics discourse.

This thesis has exposed the complex web of positionings involved in enjoining people to participate in food ethics campaigns. This includes aligning participant roles through identity work, nominating scenes for action and positioning of human and nonhumans within these contexts for action. Chapter 5 revealed the identity work used in the homepage of the AMCS Guide to guide people to align with a series of identities including 'seafood consumer', 'Australian' and 'user of the site'. These identities were category-bound to play a role in the moral order of the site. For example, the 'seafood consumer' was category-bound to 'need information' in order to 'make wise seafood choices'. The AMCS Guide was positioned as the tool required to make 'informed choices'. This was achieved through features of the website such as headers and pronouns that positioned the Guide as 'Your independent tool to choosing your seafood wisely'. Thus, understanding the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely' was achieved through the interpretive setting of the website.

The second data chapter, Chapter 6, looked at how the alignments in the Guide were taken up and translated in discourses located in diverse fields as seen in an Academic Blog and a Lifestyle Blog. These blogs made problematic the

relationships between 'information provision' and 'prescribed food choice' by describing scenes for the guide-in-use. For example, in the Academic Blog, the author describes herself as a 'seafood consumer' using the Guide at a supermarket. This aligns to the same moral ordering in the Guide; however, in practice, this led to 'conflicting information' rather than 'informed choice' in the context of multiple guides. Recognising these diverse layers of 'context' reveals that the field of food ethics is more complicated than the presumption that the 'ethical consumer' will make 'prescribed food choices' if given the 'right information'. Within the blogs, new understandings of 'ethics' are accomplished in terms of 'providing consistent information' and 'good taste'. These understandings of ethics are accomplished within the frame of each site through a process of identification. Thus, this study has contributed new insight into the substantive issue of food ethics by exposing the ways in which diverse contexts are made relevant for understandings of ethics in practice.

## 8.4 Methodological significance for investigating online sites

The third contribution provided by this thesis points to the methodological significance of investigating online sites using an interaction order approach. The Internet has become a ubiquitous aspect of our everyday lives and a source for self-regulation of conduct. This thesis has shown how online sites can be used to investigate the ways in which people are morally positioned within particular discourses. While a series of studies have analysed 'big data' available through online sources (Lupton 2014) or applied Goffman's understandings of the interaction order to look at interactions in online settings (Miller 1995), this study has shown how online settings also provide access to explore the moral orders in which we are enjoined to participate. This was illustrated using the case of the online Sustainable Seafood Guide and two participatory blogs. These sites provided 'naturally occurring' data with which to explore descriptions and categorizations used to morally position people in food ethics discourse. This thesis has also shown what happens to 'information' as it travels through online sources and is taken up within other epistemic communities.

Through looking at the interactions within different websites, this study has also opened up an understanding of the Internet as an emergent space and has avoided treating the 'online setting' as a static concept. As demonstrated in this thesis, online spaces are interactionally accomplished through a network of relations between elements, including human and nonhuman, interacting together to produce and maintain order within the site. These interactions make the online setting recognisable as a particular setting with particular interactional constraints—for example, whether the setting is recognisable as an information guide, news article, discussion forum or blog. Members' ways of interacting and designing their talk within these spaces construct the 'institutionality' of these settings. The space itself can become a constituent feature of the interactions that take place within it, as has been shown in studies of physical spaces such as lectures, medical centres and court rooms (Stimson 1986). In a similar way, the visual and spatial features of online sites can make those sites recognisable as a particular type of online setting. Actors orient to the particularities of these settings, and through these interactions, reproduce the settings.

## 8.5 Strengths, limitations and future directions

This chapter has provided an overview of the key contributions made in this study. It first looked at the theoretical implications for understanding ethics as situationally accomplished within the interaction order of the websites. Following this, it provided an overview of the contribution this study has made towards addressing the substantive problem of 'food ethics' and implications for understanding calls to 'be informed' and responses to these calls. Finally, it discussed the third contribution provided by this thesis in the methodological significance of investigating online sites using an interaction order approach.

Having outlined the key contributions of this study, this final section will discuss the strengths and limitations and provide recommendations for future research. Following others who have also been interested in exploring the inner workings

of food choice to better understand the way choice may align with environmental and ethical outcomes (e.g. Germov and Williams 2008), this thesis has contributed new insights into understanding the mechanisms of food choice regulation. Specifically, it has exposed how the online AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide positions actants to 'be informed' and how specific groups from diverse fields respond to the call to 'be informed' in the Guide and describe their own conduct and contexts in two participatory blogs.

A strength of this study lies in the in-depth analysis of the interactional accomplishment of 'conduct' and 'context' that was possible through a theoretically selected case study of the AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide and uptake of the Guide in two divergent blogs. Investigating how people are morally positioned in the AMCS Guide, this thesis has demonstrated the interactional accomplishment of 'contexts' that are made relevant in understanding the moral imperative to 'choose seafood wisely'; for example, through enjoining people to identify with the identity of 'Australian' and category-bound to 'love seafood' and 'love the ocean'. Importantly, this has shown how diverse 'contexts' are made relevant to the members of this interaction in the particular case of the AMCS Guide and its uptake in an Academic Blog and Lifestyle Blog. The specific 'contexts' made relevant for these members in the uptake of the Guide—such as being a 'good academic' or offering 'casual advice'—are specific to the groups that were theoretically selected. Thus, conclusions do not suggest that all people will consider these contexts but rather highlight that diverse contexts are made relevant for particular groups.

As discussed above, findings concerning the specific logics and processes involved around the uptake of the AMCS Guide are specific to this particular case study and not necessarily representative of broader populations who may identify as 'ethical consumers'. This limits the ability to generalise the findings empirically. However, such generalisations are not the intention of this study. Rather, this study was designed to be meaningful theoretically (Mason 1996) through constructing an approach and a sample suited to exploring the characteristics of moral ordering in online interactional contexts. Thus, while

some of the study's contribution lies in its specific findings in relation to conduct around the AMCS Guide, it has the potential to make theoretical contributions beyond this context to the broader field of food ethics and to other domains that entail regulation of conduct.

In terms of the study's theoretical contribution, future research could investigate the type of contexts made relevant for other groups and identify similarities and differences. For example, this thesis investigates 'food ethics' built around the notion of consuming 'sustainable seafood'. However, this is only one way in which 'ethics' may be conceptualised in relation to fish. Indeed, this view of food ethics is based on the idea that fish should be used for human consumption and excludes the fish themselves as sentient beings worthy of protection in their own right. These other ethical constructs of fish warrant further investigation. Further research could, for example, look at groups who do not consume fish, such as vegans, and explore how ethical food choice is constructed within these groups. As this thesis has shown, people are called to participate in ethical consumption campaigns in which particular moral orders exist. It is important to acknowledge these moral orders and expose the way in which people are enjoined to participate. This study has provided a way to illuminate these moral positions and the contexts in which people produce varying responses to moral injunctions.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: AMCS Sustainable Seafood Guide website homepage

Scan the QR code below with your iPhone to get the app!

## Tuna (Canned)

Most canned tuna is differentiated and purchased by brand, rather than tuna species. AMCS does not assess individual tuna brands or products. For more information on the sustainability of individual tuna brands and products available in Australia click through to GREENPEACE CANNED TUNA GUIDE.

GREENPEACE Canned Tuna Guide

*"The Australian Marine Conservation Society has prepared this excellent guide for the many Australians who love seafood but also love their oceans. This is a resource for people who want to do the right thing by the seas that sustain us. Buying seafood is always an exciting challenge, but it's not enough to simply buy what is fresh. If we want to keep eating fish we'll have to learn to buy what is sustainable."*
Tim Winton, Australian Author, AMCS Patron

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**Appendix B: Academic Blog article**

# Conflicting sustainable seafood guides confuse consumers

19 October 2012, 1.42pm AEST

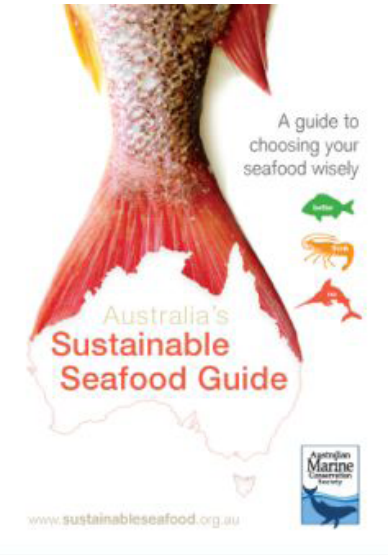
Authors: Alison Nash* & Diana Romano*
(*Pseudonyms are used to maintain author anonymity and privacy)

Are any of these fish sustainable? A seafood guide might help you figure it out, but it might not...
Diarmuid Fisherman/Flickr

Whether at the supermarket or the local fisho, most people find it difficult to know what seafood is sustainable. To help consumers make more informed choices, conservation organisations have been busy with sustainable seafood campaigns. In Australia, the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) recently released a comprehensive Sustainable Seafood Guide, including a free smart phone application, to choosing seafood wisely. They label each type of seafood as "better", "think", or "no".

The World Wildlife Fund has partnered with Coles to help the supermarket sell and label sustainable seafood.

These are both significant efforts intended to answer consumers' question: "What seafood is sustainable?"




Armed with my AMCS application, I recently went to Coles to buy some sustainable seafood. Coles clearly labels their seafood, indicating which is "a better choice for sustainable seafood".

I was struck by some inconsistencies between the AMCS and Coles sustainable seafood guidelines.Tasmanian Atlantic Salmon and farmed Rainbow Trout, for example, are labelled a “a better choice” at Coles but categorised as a “no” by the AMCS seafood guide. In fact, I was sure it was a simple mistake made by the Coles employee and asked if they mislabelled the seafood. Unfortunately, the labels were correct.

Would you trust a politician or a doctor if they provided inconsistent information? It’s unlikely. Marine conservationists cannot expect the general public to trust us if we provide inconsistent information.

We suggest that this inconsistent information may contribute to a type of seafood stewardship crisis, one that the ocean cannot afford to battle. Consistent guidelines are essential if we want consumers to take sustainable seafood and marine conservation seriously.

Perhaps Australia needs a certification program. This program could work with the marine conservation organisations and marine scientists to develop consistent and transparent criteria for labelling seafood in Australia.

The inconsistencies between two of Australia’s leading conservation organizations highlight the issue that determining what is sustainable - seafood or any food - is not always straightforward. Determining whether or not seafood is sustainable requires a great deal of information. One needs to know the species fished, the fishing gear used, the place caught or the farming method used. All of this is information that Coles and AMCS consider.

Prawns are an Aussie favourite. They’re also a great example of how confusing shopping for sustainable seafood can be.
Prawns can be a bad choice; for example, if they’re black tiger prawns farmed and imported. They can be a “think” choice, if they’re king prawns that have been trawl caught. Or they can be a “better” choice, particularly if they’re greentail prawns that have been haul caught in NSW.

Photo Taken by Author

Given this complexity, it is important that the origin and fishing/farming method be labelled at any seafood vendor. If prawns are just labelled “prawns”, how can a consumer know what they’re getting?

Australia needs laws that require more stringent labels on seafood sold at any vender.
Together with consistent sustainable seafood guidelines, labelling laws could help make the consumption of sustainable seafood commonplace.

In some cases, however, it is straightforward. For example, both guides discussed here consider orange roughy unsustainable. In fact, as part of the WWF-Coles Sustainable Seafood partnership, Coles has taken orange roughy off the shelves of all their stores. This action that could make a big impact on the population of this species in Australia.

Globally, the health of our oceans is rapidly declining and is due, in part, to the

consumption of seafood. A majority of the world's marine stocks are over fished. To counter this, some seafood production has moved to farms. These can harm the ocean as well though, through pollution spreading of disease, and reliance on wild fish for feed.

How do you figure out what it is they're selling? Jeremy Keith

The state of the ocean is problematic, not only from an environmental perspective, but also from a health perspective. Over a billion people rely upon seafood as their main source of protein and many others consume it for its unparallelled health benefits. The conservation of our ocean requires actions at many levels. Given consistent guidelines and clear labels, consumers have the power to improve the state of the ocean by choosing sustainable seafood.

## Appendix C: Academic Blog comments

To maintain anonymity and privacy, pseudonyms have been used for all commenter's names. Affiliations have remained the same.

| *To comment or recommend, sign in or sign up* | |
|---|---|
| 37 Comments sorted by Oldest Newest | # |
| **Olivia Cooper** Research Fellow<br><br>Hi there, Unfortunately I think its even more complex than you describe. For example, even the orange roughy fishery is not so cut and dried as I understand it - while there was an enormous amount of illegal fishing previously and the stock plummeted, good policing efforts have reduced illegal fishing considerably in Australian waters. If consumers stop buying this fish from the well- monitored and regulated Australian orange roughy industry, then who will be there in sub-Antarctic waters to notice and monitor the illegal fishing of this species? | 1 |
| **Mark Marsh** Analyst<br><br>The concept is excellent.<br><br>The Australian government should be fully supporting efforts to have both Australian produced food and Australian manufactured items assessed and labelled for sustainability, as this could provide a major competitive advantage for Australian exports, and significantly help reduce the huge amount of imports into Australia.<br><br>Unfortunately, we have the most short-sighted governments, (to the extent one could call them un-Australian), and now organisations such as the AMCS are financed through charity donations, and being run by volunteers.<br><br>The concept is excellent, but getting our governments on board, and supporting the concept is perhaps the greatest obstacle. | 2 |
| **Kluapashma** logged in via Twitter<br><br>A popular local tavern we attend started indicating "food miles" and attempting to indicate sustainability on their menu.<br><br>For example, one of the things they did was take swordfish off the menu, as the fish take about 14 years to get to the stage at which we were eating it.<br><br>It's a pretty difficult job no doubt and interpretation of data will result in inconsistencies I imagine. This can only improve however.<br><br>As long as it's not a cynical 'greenwash' attempt from Coles, more power to them I say! | 3 |

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| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br><br>In reply to **Kluapashma**<br><br>Agreed, All power to Coles, even though as an independent researcher I development the "rival" AMCS guide's classifications.<br><br>So the consumer get's a bit confused with different guides.<br><br>It doesn't matter too much at this stage, in the early development of fish guides, if we do have a bit of a difference between them. At least we have some guides now!<br><br>Differences do and will mainly turn on the weight given to ecosystem affects and bycatch issues, rather than whether a species is overfished or subject to overfishing, which is well documented. | 4 |
| **Kevin Murray** Retired agribusiness manager & farmer<br>In reply to Neil Jones<br><br>It's worth the risk of being 'noticed' in a supermarket, to go and observe the shoppers and how they behave.<br><br>By far the majority seem to be in a hurry, they buy by reading the big print and seldom, very seldom from my observations, read the small print. Not surprisingly, really, because in so many cases the 'small' print is very small and often printed on a coloured background, like black on dark green. One does get noticed if you carry a torch!<br><br>I just wonder if, no matter what we do, we will ever outwit those who don't want us to know? | 5 |
| **Grace Wilkinson** Researcher/Lecturer<br><br>There is such a programme being developed by the Australian Conservation Fund in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney: http://www.acfonline.org.au/be-informed/oceans-rivers/sustainable-australian-seafood | 6 |
| **Grace Wilkinson** Researcher/Lecturer<br><br>Such a scheme is already under development led by the Australian Conservation Fund in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney: http://www.acfonline.org.au/be-informed/oceans-rivers/sustainable-australian-seafood | 7 |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br><br>In reply to Grace Wilkinson<br><br>Grace, All very well. However, at the rate of classifications under this scheme - just 5 sustainable fish identified in in 2010 and 12 in 2011 - it will be a case of far | 8 |

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| too little too late.<br><br>And what about species not exploited sustainably? Consumers need to know this, above all, when they go shopping.<br><br>In the AMCS Guide over 130 species are classified and imports and canned products are covered too. Classification of Imports are just as important as the status of locally-caught fish. | |
| **Richard Stewart** logged in via LinkedIn<br><br>The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation will be shortly releasing the first Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks - late November early December - www.fish.gov.au<br><br>For the first report, 49 wild caught species were selected based primarily on their contribution to the value of Australian fisheries and volume of catch.<br><br>The big difference with this report, is the fact that assessments were undertaken on at the individual stock, management unit or jurisdictions assessments level depending on the species. This resulted in over 140 individual assessments were carried out.<br><br>This will result in a simple summary for the species (i.e. Whiting) and an assessment on each individual stock around the country. In addition to the summaries, the background research and related documentation that underpins them will be available from the website.<br><br>The report is being compiled by Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) in collaboration with government fishery research agencies in all jurisdictions.<br><br>While this inaugural Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks reports focuses on the fish stock; future editions or companion reports are envisaged to provide broader assessments of Australian fisheries – forming a triple approach, covering these issues. While the broader ecological effects of fishing, such as bycatch (the incidental catch of non-commercial species), are not formally assessed here, they are discussed briefly for each stock.<br><br>In addition, later in the year the FRDC hopes to release another report that examines the key production factors for aquaculture. This includes:<br><br>» fishmeal/oil replacement<br>» nutrient release<br>» escapes<br>» wildlife interactions<br>» chemical use<br><br>Both these resources aim to help inform the general public, policy makers and industry on the sustainability of wild fish stocks and aquaculture production. | 9 |

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| For request more information on the Report or to view it once it has been released visit www.fish.gov.au | |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Richard Stewart<br><br>Richard, It is unfortunate that the above comprehensive classifications, which will be very welcome, stop short of adoption of more than a brief review of ecosystem effect.<br><br>It is painfully obvious that there are many fisheries where ecosystem and bycatch effects are extremely important and that on any reasonable interpretation should render them "say no".<br><br>Moreover, fish imports are now greater than Australian produced fish in value and volume. The importance of their assessment for sustainability goes without saying. | 10 |
| **Richard Stewart** logged in via LinkedIn<br>In reply to Neil Jones<br><br>Well Neil, you may be surprised. The reviews in many cases do take into consideration other factors, including by-catch. As noted this is the first time a review of this kind has been undertaken.<br><br>Imported products are another question which at this point we are not focused on. The goal is to progressively improve the reporting in Australia. | 11 |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Richard Stewart<br><br>Richard,<br><br>The status of fish stocks managed by the Commonwealth, i.e. whether overfished and subject to overfishing, is already available through the comprehensive annual ABARES Fisheries Status Reports and in the case of state managed fisheries from their published status reports. So it seems that what you intend publishing is not new but a compilation of existing assessments.<br><br>The AMCS fish guide takes into account these assessments as well as the wide literature on ecosystem and bycatch effects of fishing and incorporates them in its assessments of 130 species; It also includes assessments of imports - fresh and canned fish - important because these make up >50% of Australian fish consumption.<br><br>Moreover, I doubt whether a fish guide produced by the Fisheries Development Corporation will have have the same level of independence in the eyes of the consumer as the AMCS Guide which was put out for tender, undertaken by an independent researcher and peer reviewed. | 12 |
| **Jason Hunter** forestry nurseryman | 13 |

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| Olivia raises some good points regarding monitoring. I firmly believe that a properly and scientifically scaled 'Sustainability Label' would be an enormous help particularly if in conjunction with accurate labeling of country of origin. Our family will not buy imported fruit, vegetables, canned or processed food unless it is a rare treat and not produced by any Aussie manufacturer or grower. The label specifying 'Imported and local product' just doesn't cut it. What part is imported? Is the Aussie part the package or the water in it? Are the standards as good as ours when health is concerned? Is it full of chemicals or does it have the potential to bring a new plant, animal or human disease into the country. Yes, a sustainability label in conjunction with proper country of origin may force some better regulation into the market place. | |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Jason Hunter<br><br>Jason, A very, very good point.<br><br>Labeling is the key to providing the consumer with reliable information. Let's take a simple example. "Flake", very popular in fish and chips is actually shark.<br><br>Shark is listed as "say no" in the AMCS Guide for very good reasons. But many Brisbane consumers would be revolted if they realised that they were eating scalloped hammerhead, IUCN-listed as endangered globally.<br><br>Likewise many Victorians would be aghast at knowing they were eating school shark, listed as conservation dependent by the Commonwealth government.<br><br>The fish guides aren't so helpful where there is lack of labelling or labelling is misleading.<br><br>We need to get to a point where every fish is labelled correctly by species, country of origin (of the fish and not the can!), and if aquaculture or wild caught, and if the latter by what method (e.g. longline, purse seine or pole-and-line in the case of canned tuna). | 14 |
| **Kevin Murray** Retired agribusiness manager & farmer<br><br>What an interesting article.<br><br>Here we are in Australia, surrounded by massive oceans and of course, marine parks, so 70% of the fish we consume is imported from all four corners of the world. I find that difficult to understand.<br><br>I suppose it means we don't mind importing from countries who strip fish? A sort of Australian fish NIMBY or an 'I'm alright, Jack' attitude?<br><br>Country of origin laws (COOL) laws are difficult if not impossible to impose.<br><br>Our supermarket fridges are full of frozen vegetables marked as produce of New Zealand from local and imported ingredients. I checked on a bag of mixed veg and was told by McCains that the peas were from NZ and the rest was from China.<br><br>NZ has an FTA with China, we do not, but we do have the Tasman Agreement or whatever it's called with NZ. | 15 |

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| NZ imports frozen vegetables from China in amounts which are totally disproportionate to the population of NZ.They finish up in Australia. Meanwhile Heinz et al, abandon Australian growers and move offshore. Heinz tomato sauce now comes from NZ. Wonder where the tomatoes come from?<br><br>There are frozen sweet potato chips for sale in Australia marked as produce of Canada etc., Canada does not produce sweet potatoes.<br><br>I understand China exports fish to Canada where it is canned. Suppose that finishes up as produce of Canada ...?<br><br>This fish COOL question is nearly as baffling as the international trade in 'organic produce', which is consumed by Australians with 'relish'. No. I don't know where the Relish comes from. | |
| **Mark Marsh** Analyst<br>In reply to Kevin Murray<br><br>If humans can't solve the sustainability problem, then eventually we are doomed, and there is no question about that.<br><br>There seems to be 2 parts to the problem.<br><br>- Getting a sustainability label on the packet.<br>- Getting country of origin label on the packet.<br><br>It would probably be easier to produce food sustainability in this country than in various others, and the rewards for Australian food producers are potentially great.<br><br>It would be a win for the environment, a win for the consumer, and a win for Australian food producers. | 16 |
| **Kevin Murray** Retired agribusiness manager & farmer<br>In reply to Kevin Murray<br><br>Correction: COOL - Country of Origin Labeling, not Law, I had N Roxon on the mind at the time. Wondering how, with her experience, she became who she is. | 17 |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br><br>Alison, I undertook the research and classified fish in the AMCS Australia's Sustainable Seafood Guide.<br><br>All fish species are highly researched with every available relevant reference having been consulted to arrive at a classification. The online version of the AMCS Guide gives the seven main references underlying the salmon (Atlantic) classification as 'say no', and this referencing is followed for every species.<br><br>Before publication classifications were independently reviewed by leading experts. | 18 |

The differences in the recommendations of the AMCS Guide and that of Coles' stem from the weight given to environmental problems of raising carnivorous fish in cages, over large areas in pristine inshore waters. The Guide takes an ecosystem approach.

The AMCS Guide's criteria applies to aquaculture, including to Atlantic salmon, is as follows.

"Say no" if:

Overfished wild fishery is the source of fish or fish eggs for farming
or
Coastal ecosystems and/or habitats are irreversibly modified on a large scale

or
Marine ecosystems are polluted or modified on a large scale
or
Escapes of introduced or modified wild species are harmful for native species

or
Feed for the farmed fish is sourced from a wild fishery that is overfished, or subject to overfishing, or interacts negatively with other species

It was concluded in classifying Atlantic salmon as "say no" that there are undesirable features associated with its intensive farming in Tasmania and, moreover, the scale and intensity of salmon farming needs to be regulated to prevent potentially serious pollution of inland waters.

Further amplification of the problems of Atlantic salmon in sea cages is as follows.

Atlantic salmon require fish-based feed, but a poor conversion ratio of feed to fish means that much less fish protein is produced than is fed, and there is a relatively large generation of waste and a significant net input of dissolved nutrients to the marine environment.

The release of uneaten food, dissolved nutrients and fish faeces in the water column may result in nutrient enrichment and may lead to local algal blooms and have direct impacts on seabed organisms.

Such changes are considered to be the most important environmental impacts of intensive aquaculture.

Antibiotics are used in feed in intensive salmon farming in Tasmania. Although current information suggests that human health effects are highly unlikely, it is important that the incidence of antibiotic resistance in the environment and in fish bacteria is thoroughly investigated and monitored

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| Sea cage aquaculture can also lead to harmful interactions with other species.<br><br>It should also be noted that for some people there are additional ethical reasons for opposing the caging of carnivorous fish. | |
| **Richard Stewart** logged in via LinkedIn<br>In reply to Neil Jones<br><br>Neil, when did you do the review for the AMCS? I would appreciate a copy of the references you used. Likewise the list of experts that reviewed the material. I would be interested in the data you used for the comment about the use of antibiotics in Salmon in Tasmania. Antibiotic use is controlled by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, so they are pretty serious claims. From my understanding the FRDC are one of the only organisation that have undertaken a review of antibiotic use and based on this I think you are making a very un-informed comment. Likewise I would appreciate to know if you did any analysis comparing aquaculture, in this case Salmon and other forms of primary production, such as dairy, beef, pork etc? | 19 |
| **Alison Nash** Postdoctoral research fellow in conservation biology at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Neil Jones<br><br>Yes, Neil, one of the great things about the AMCS guide is that the criteria for categorising seafood are transparent. This is a contrast to the Coles/WWF sustainable seafood program. After failing to find any information online about how Coles/WWF decides which seafood are sustainable, I contacted Coles via their online customer service form. Coles responded via email but they were unable to provide me with written criteria or even a list of which seafood they classify as 'sustainable' - I was told no such list exists. When I responded asking for more information, I received a phone call from someone involved in the Coles sustainable seafood program. They indicated that they use the same type of criteria that you mention Neil, e.g. by-catch, ecosystem impact, population status, pollution, etc. Although this is great if they use these criteria, it should be transparent and made publicly available to consumers. Transparency is absolutely essential to making any environmental decision. | 20 |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Richard Stewart<br><br>Richard, The references for Atlantic salmon are as below.<br><br>You would be most interested in [4] on antibiotic use in Tasmanian salmonid farming.<br><br>As mentioned, in the interests of transparency, these references are listed with the clasification in the AMCS online web guide when "salmon atlantic" is entered.<br><br>The guide was launched in October 2010 and was updated in may 2011. | 21 |

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| A comparison between fish aquaculture and intesnsive anilmal husbandry is not relevant here. What is relevant - and something the consumer should be aware of - is that antibiotics are used in intensive fish farming just as they are in internsive pig, cattle, and chicken farming.<br><br>I will email the list of referees to you.<br><br>[1]Ford, J. and Myers, R. 2008. A global assessment of salmon aquaculture impacts on wild salmonids. PLoS Biol, 6(2): e33. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.0060033. [2]Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, undated. Position statement: Aquaculture within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, at: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/7513/position_statement_aquaculture.pdf. . [3]SA Government, 2003. State of the environment report, Environmental Protections Agency, Adelaide. [4]Macleod, C. and Eriksen, R. 2007. A review of the ecological impacts of selected antibiotics and antifoulants currently used in the Tasmania salmonid farming industry (marine farming phase), Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Final Report (Project No. 2007), Australian Government, Canberra. [5]National Oceans Office, 2001. Impact of aquaculture, South-east Regional Plan, Commonwealth Government, Canberra. [6]Crawford, C. 2003. Environmental management of marine aquaculture in Tasmania, Australia, Aquaculture, 226: 129-138. [7]GBRMPA, undated. Position statement: Aquaculture within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, at: http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/7513/position_statement_aquaculture.pdf | |
| **John Clarke** logged in via Facebook<br>In reply to Richard Stewart<br><br>Further i think your statement<br><br>" A comparison between fish aquaculture and intesnsive anilmal husbandry is not relevant here. What is relevant - and something the consumer should be aware of - is that antibiotics are used in intensive fish farming just as they are in internsive pig, cattle, and chicken farming."<br><br>is completely wrong. When was the last time there was a labelling campaign that gave the "No go" destination to pig, cattle, and chicken?<br><br>That's right NEVER<br><br>And the Salmon Farms use significantly less anti-biotic than those terrestrial endeavours, many living their lives without ever being treated and never treated prophylactically.<br><br>How exactly does this infrequent use of anti-biotics contribute to unsustainability?<br><br>regards<br>John Clarke | 22 |

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| **John Clarke** logged in via Facebook<br>In reply to Neil Jones<br><br>So which of the list do you find salmon aquaculture guilty ? and more importantly where is the evidence? and to what are you comparing?<br><br>It is counter-intuitive to have farmed salmon a "no go" on sustainability and you have demonstrated no evidence to the contrary. | 23 |
| **Kevin Murray** Retired agribusiness manager & farmer<br>In reply to John Clarke<br><br>Antibiotics are not and have not been used in chicken farming 'feed' in Australia for a long long time.<br><br>Chicken produced in Australia is antibiotic free. I do not know if this applies to imported chicken or even if we import chicken. | 24 |
| **John Clarke** logged in via Facebook<br>In reply to Kevin Murray<br><br>So Kevin I suppose this 2005 policy guideline for anti-biotics in Australian chicken is for what purpose?<br>http://www.chicken.org.au/files/ACMF_Antibiotics_Policy.pdf | 25 |
| **John Clarke** logged in via Facebook<br>In reply to John Clarke<br><br>Also "Australia imports about 7 hundred tonnes of antibiotics annually. More than half of that goes into stock-feed, about 8% is for veterinary use, leaving only one-third for human use."<br>http://www.abc.net.au/science/slab/antibiotics/agriculture.htm<br>Where do you think the 700 tonnes end up?<br>IN the environment | 26 |
| **Kevin Murray** Retired agribusiness manager & farmer<br>In reply to John Clarke<br><br>John, I stand corrected. Don't know why, was thinking of hormones and chicken production, when I wrote about antibiotics.<br><br>Antibiotics and Meat Chickens<br><br>Antibiotics are an invaluable resource for the industry to ensure that chickens keep or regain their health. Both in human and in animal health applications of antibiotics, development of resistance to antibiotics is of concern. For this reason, antibiotics of importance in human health are generally not registered for use in livestock and use of any antibiotics in animals has to be approved by the federal authority (Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)). The industry has adopted an antibiotics policy which sets out the responsible use of antibiotics that it advocates. | 27 |

Associated with the use of antibiotics are often questions regarding possible residues on chicken meat and the concern that antibiotic resistance may develop. These issues are discussed in the documents cited below. Antibiotics may be used in chicken production under veterinary advice. Regular independent surveys are undertaken and have never found any residues of antibiotics. Antibiotics registered for use in poultry have been in use for a long time and yet remain effective, with no significant resistance developing. This is largely due to their judicious use by the industry. A review by Dr Stephen Page undertaken on behalf of the Australian chicken meat industry provides further information on the judicious use of antibiotics in the Australian poultry industry.

A range of documents are available on this website related to antibiotics, antibiotic resistance and antibiotic residues. This page serves as a convenient starting point to explore the more detailed documents available on this website. The main pages and texts include:

Antibiotics and Meat Chickens

Antibiotics are an invaluable resource for the industry to ensure that chickens keep or regain their health. Both in human and in animal health applications of antibiotics, development of resistance to antibiotics is of concern. For this reason, antibiotics of importance in human health are generally not registered for use in livestock and use of any antibiotics in animals has to be approved by the federal authority (Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)). The industry has adopted an antibiotics policy which sets out the responsible use of antibiotics that it advocates.

Associated with the use of antibiotics are often questions regarding possible residues on chicken meat and the concern that antibiotic resistance may develop. These issues are discussed in the documents cited below. Antibiotics may be used in chicken production under veterinary advice. Regular independent surveys are undertaken and have never found any residues of antibiotics. Antibiotics registered for use in poultry have been in use for a long time and yet remain effective, with no significant resistance developing. This is largely due to their judicious use by the industry. A review by Dr Stephen Page undertaken on behalf of the Australian chicken meat industry provides further information on the judicious use of antibiotics in the Australian poultry industry.

A range of documents are available on this website related to antibiotics, antibiotic resistance and antibiotic residues. This page serves as a convenient starting point to explore the more detailed documents available on this website.

The main pages and texts include

Antibiotics Policy:
http://www.chicken.org.au/files/ACMF_Antibiotics_Policy.pdf
Summary of Policy:
http://www.chicken.org.au/files/ACMF_Antibiotics_Policy_Consumer_Summary.pdf
Bibliography – starting point for further reading:
http://www.chicken.org.au/files/ACMF_Antibiotics_Policy_Annotated_bibliograp

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| hy.pdf<br>Antimicrobial Resistance - Industry Position Statement: click here (PDF file) | |
| **Kevin Murray** Retired agribusiness manager & farmer<br>In reply to Kevin Murray<br><br>Dont know why it, my reply, coughed, double apology. Be nice to be able to edit. K | 28 |
| **James Hamilton** Computer Programmer, Author<br><br>Anything is sustainable if hardly anybody does it and the ocean problem is that hardly anybody gives a toss and providing guides for the people who do is just a feel good gesture of no consequences because the bulk of fish used in Australia will continue to be imported while demand so massively exceeds supply. Latest FAO data is 2009 but its easy to understand the ratios, we produce 239,000 tonnes of fish and seafood, we feed 200,000 tonnes to livestock (mainly other fish) and we consume 544,000 tonnes after importing 573,000 tonnes and export 68,000 tonnes (export high value, import low value). While demand is high, these kinds of ratios are unavoidable despite fish providing just 1% of Australian calories and being a totally unnecessary food. Why is demand high? A recent conversation piece got it in one:<br><br>https://theconversation.edu.au/mondays-medical-myth-fish-oil-is-good-for-heart-health-9564<br><br>The great fish oil scam ... more properly scams plural. People think they can fix a bad diet by adding something ... in this case fish, instead of removing the junk that is making them sick. Vegetarians live longer and get less heart disease and less of some cancers. That's no myth even though not all vegetarians bother to eat healthily by any means. If you care about the oceans, then just don't eat fish. Without falls in total demand, a few people being selective is really neither here nor there. | 29 |
| **Sebastian Lund** logged in via Facebook<br><br>Unfortunately, Coles' sustainability labelling doesn't apply to thawed fish, crustaceans, farmed fish, frozen fish, or preserved (tinned) fish. Tinned tuna, salmon and prawns are our most popular seafood products, so a meaningful system would be applied to them as well. Tinned salmon is mostly OK, coming from pretty well managed Alaskan fisheries mostly, prawns much less so, and tuna - the biggest selling product - is far from sustainably managed, with only a few pole and line products really being acceptable.<br><br>And as Alison points out, sustainability claims are meaningless unless the criteria are defined. | 30 |
| **Alison Nash** Postdoctoral research fellow in conservation biology at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Sebastian Lund<br><br>Actually Sebastian, some farmed fish are included in the Coles program. For example, farmed atlantic salmon from Tasmania are labeled as a sustainable | 31 |

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| choice by Coles (and not by the AMCS), which are farmed. You are correct that Coles only includes fresh fish in their sustainability labelling program, but I was told on the phone that they plan to expand the program in the future. | |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Alison Nash<br><br>Alison,<br><br>It's a pity these facts were not brought out in your article, as well as the fact that Coles couldn't provide you with the criteria for their classifications. | 32 |
| **Alison Nash** Postdoctoral research fellow in conservation biology at University of Queensland<br><br>Check out this 8 minute ABC video on the same topic, shown the day after this article came out: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-10-19/who-decides-what-fish-are-sustainable-and-is-it/4324230 | 33 |
| **Neil Jones** Honorary Fellow in Economics at University of Queensland<br>In reply to Alison Nash<br><br>The problematic nature of Coles' claims to market only sustainable fish is illustrated by the fact that Coles at Stockland Shopping Centre, Cairns still sells "flake": flake being shark.<br><br>So we have both mislabelling of fish and the sale of fish that should be 'say no', and indeed are 'say no' in the Australian Marine Conservation fish guide.<br><br>Many species of sharks are legally caught in Queensland waters, at least two of which are listed under the commonwealth's EPBC Act of 1999, such as the scalloped hammerhead and the shortfin mako. | 34 |
| **Julie West** PhD Candidate, GPEM at University of Queensland<br><br>Great piece, and I definitely think we need certification and labelling standards at a national level.<br><br>As a sidenote, Greenpeace just brought out their most recent canned tuna ranking guide:<br>http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/what-we-do/oceans/Take-action/canned-tuna-guide/ | 35 |
| **John Clarke** logged in via Facebook<br><br>Hello Neil Jones, could you explain the relevance of the first research article listed in your references for classifications. Specifically the Ford Myers paper of 2008. You are aware that it is largely based on mathematical models subsequently proven to be false and misleading. Also you are certainly aware that there are no wild salmonids in Australian waters.<br><br>What gives? | 36 |

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| regards<br>John Clarke | |
| **Amy Tripet** logged in via Facebook<br><br>One topic that is relevant but wasn't mentioned is traceability - there is so much seafood fraud or deception, at least here in the US. I wonder what is done about it in Australia and if the supply chains are less susceptible to it (i.e., shorter). If you aren't sure what you are buying is what the label says, your buying guide isn't going to do any good! I prefer quick, simple rules of thumb as opposed to buying guides like Seafood Watch because most consumers find them confusing or troublesome. My rules of thumb (developed for US but probably just as useful in OZ) are:<br>1. Always look for and ask for locally caught<br><br>2. Prioritize buying domestically caught<br><br>3. Say no to shark<br><br>4. Eat top predators sparingly (including tuna, swordfish, mahi, halibut, lobster, snapper, grouper)<br><br>5. Only eat shrimp or salmon if it is domestically caught or farmed, or if you know something about the farm its from<br><br>6. Any bivalves are good choices from all sources (except China, and some foreign scallop dredging practices) | 37 |

## Appendix D: Lifestyle Blog article

# tuna, salmon or mahi mahi: which fish should you be eating now?

posted on june 21st, 2011

Author: Anna Taylor*

(*Pseudonyms are used to maintain author anonymity and privacy)

This is a quick post, just to alert you to a resource for buying fish because I think many of us feel in the dark as to which are best to buy and why.

via pinterest.com

The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) have developed the first online sustainability guide for seafood consumers in Australia. It was developed in response to growing public concern about overfishing and its impact on our oceans and their wildlife, and is designed to help you make informed seafood choices and play a part in swelling the tide for sustainable seafood in Australia.

The guide lists fish according to 'better' option, 'think twice', or 'no'- which basically means don't eat it if you have a conscience.

According to the sustainability guide, some of the well-known 'better' options include

- sardines,
- whiting, calamari,
- oysters,
- and mahi mahi.

We should be saying “no” to:

- tuna,
- salmon,
- gemfish
- and farmed barramundi

Some of the ‘think twice’ fish include prawns(farmed in Australia), dory, and wild barramundi. See the guide for a full list and explanation of all fish, and if you’re interested, I’ve posted before on which tinned tuna to buy.

Here’s some bullet-pointed things to share at the pub tonight:

- One research team assessing the relative sustainability of the top seafood producing nations ranked Australia 31st out of the 53 nations considered. We still have a long way to go.
- When you’re shopping for seafood, ask if the fish is a **deep sea, slow-growing or long-lived species**. Deep sea species are generally slow-growing and long-lived. This makes them particularly vulnerable to fishing pressure, and they take longer to recover from impacts on their populations. Give these species a break.
- The ‘dolphin friendly’ logos evident on most canned fish, particularly tuna, are not a measure of sustainability. While dolphin friendly seafood is caught in ways that minimise the number of dolphins killed, they may still catch threatened species such as sharks or turtles. The ‘dolphin friendly’ logo also does not give any indication of overfishing. Although some companies try to do the right thing, there is no independent regulation of the use of dolphin friendly labels.

There is a lot of helpful information on the website. You can also buy a guide for $9.95 here. Keep it with you and shop with a clear conscience.

Mark Bittman from the New York Times says he only eats **white fillet**. He shares some tips on cooking and eating sustainable fish here. I’ve pulled out some top tips for you:

- cook any white fillet the same way you cook any other white fillet: broiled, sautéed, roasted or poached, and teamed with just about any seasoning you can think of, from the obvious, like tomatoes and capers, to the semiexotic, like sugar and fish sauce.
- thicker pieces of fish will cook in 15 minutes or less, thinner pieces in under 10.
- you can tell that any fillet is done when it’s opaque and a thin-bladed knife meets little resistance when you use it to poke the thickest part of the fish.

*I know a lot of eco-orientated nutritionists share on this blog…what are your thoughts? Anyone else got fish-buying tips?*

## Appendix E: Lifestyle Blog comments

To maintain anonymity and privacy, pseudonyms have been used for commenter's names.

| *Join the discussion…* | # |
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| 49 comments Sort by Oldest | |
| **Rebecca**<br><br>So, why is farmed salmon not sustainable? I ask because I really love to eat salmon, it is so good for us, and it tastes great.<br><br>I know most (if not all) the salmon I buy is farmed in Tasmania. It isn't fishing the wild stocks, so is it unsustainable because it is harmful to the environment?<br><br>I'd love to know, because I thought I was doing the right thing! | 1 |
| **Shannon**<br>In reply to Rebecca<br><br>It's unsustainable because of the amount of wild fish they catch and feed to the salmon, which totally mucks up the ecosystem, they produce a large amount of effluent, and it's kind of gross because of the antibiotics fed to the fish. I am very skeptical that no trace'of antibiotics ends up on the plate and it's also a concern because wild fish can eat the antibiotics too.<br><br>http://www.abc.net.au/news/sto... | 2 |
| **Anna Taylor**<br>In reply to Shannon<br><br>Shannon, thx for that succinct explanation and link! VERY helpful. | 3 |
| **Kate**<br>In reply to Rebecca<br><br>According to the guide it is OK to eat Australian Salmon (wild). I've never seen it though...but perhaps it's just not labelled as such. | 4 |
| **Pat**<br>In reply to Kate<br><br>That's because they tastes like shit. They feed off muddy sea beds. Even disguised in a curry they can taste ordinary. | 5 |
| **Michael**<br>In reply to Pat<br><br>Wrong, Aussie salmon don't feed off muddy bottoms they are a pelagic fish that feed on any number of bait fish, both in open deep waters and off beaches and headlands. They only travel upstream to breed and take refuge in rough weather. when caught if bled properly and looked after can taste great and are one of the best wild caught fish for your health (high in omega 3 and low to no traces of mercury).<br><br>We should be eating more of these species of fish if we want to eat fish 20 years from now. | 6 |

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| Really bugs me when people are so closed minded about this sort if thing. | |
| **michelle brady**<br><br>Aaron and Anthia at Origin of Energy just talked about his last weekend at a workshop...they pretty much don't eat any fish here in Australia due to the farming issues...the best way to eat fish is to go and catch it yourself! But hey who has the time! These are great tips to help everyone remember fish have feelings too! Ha I sound a bit hippy-ish - but its true!! :) | 7 |
| **Erin**<br>In reply to michelle brady<br><br>I was at that workshop too and a woman nearby gave me this link for wild salmon (sans antibiotics etc). http://thecanadianway.com.au<br><br>Totally agree - Fish is still important for our diet... but it's impossible to get the good stuff! | 8 |
| **Alan Dobson**<br>In reply to michelle brady<br><br>I did a reply for this and it went all the way down the bottom of the page.<br><br>So I'll try one last time before i give up forever.<br><br>A great man once said- "It's OK to eat fish, cos they, don't have any fee-eelings."<br>-Kurt Cobain (1967-1994) | 9 |
| **Bella**<br><br>I really wish I liked sardines, because they are so good for you - and, as you say, a safer option. But the whole hairy tiny salty fish thing just weirds me out too much. Maybe its an aquired taste. | 10 |
| **RosieB**<br>In reply to Bella<br><br>I am not a fan of sardines either. I try to eat fish like salmon on a regular basis because I need to increase my intake of omega 3. | 11 |
| **Nat**<br>In reply to Bella<br><br>Agree, very much an acquired taste and reminds me of cat food when all mashed up. | 12 |
| **Anna Taylor**<br>In reply to Nat<br><br>Have you guys tried fresh sardine fillets? Not from a tin? Not hairy at all. Grill them and sprinkle with a bit of chilli, lemon and parsley and have on toast. Quite different to the tinned ones. | 13 |
| **Stevo**<br>In reply to Bella<br><br>Too much discrimination going on here. I like my fish and my women hairy. Ban the brazilian, bring back the 70's. | 14 |

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| **Andy**<br>In reply to Stevo<br><br>Grow up Johnno | 15 |
| **Stevo**<br>In reply to Andy<br><br>Eat my shorts. | 16 |
| **Andy**<br>In reply to Stevo<br><br>Yep, should have known you had the mentality of Bart Simpson! | 17 |
| **Stevo**<br>In reply to Andy<br><br>Thanks for the compliment but I'm more like Homer sweetheart. Mmmmmm, hairy sardines. | 18 |
| **Andy**<br>In reply to Stevo<br><br>Stevo, you aren't even funny. You are embarrassing. | 19 |
| **Stevo**<br>In reply to Andy<br><br>Whose trying to be funny? What's funny is that you never have the courage to post under your own name Anna. Not very authentic. | 20 |
| **Stevo**<br>In reply to Andy<br><br>PS: So cute how you always have to have the last word. Alpha-female to the end. Love it. | 21 |
| **Andy**<br>In reply to Stevo<br><br>Stevo, you obvioulsy have it in for Anna. Can tell this from your previous posts. Why don't you just leave her and her blog alone. Pehaps you should head over to the Zoo blog - more along your blokey mentality level.<br><br>And btw, my name is Andrea Wellington, not Anna Taylor. | 22 |
| **Stevo**<br>In reply to Andy<br><br>Will you be on the cover page this month Andy? Leopard prints are currently in. I'll check it out fore sure. | 23 |
| **Anna**<br>In reply to Stevo<br><br>Don't worry Stevo i thought your comment was quite funny! Who says you can't add humour to a serious discussion? | 24 |
| **Nicole** | 25 |

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| In reply to Anna<br><br>I thought Stevo's reply very funny indeed. I wish the 70s were back too - would save a lot of money on waxing costs! :) | |
| **Shannon**<br><br>Yay I'm so glad they published a guide! It I was buying mussels the other day and the fishmonger was recommending this other customer buy orange roughy - I was pretty unimpressed, you think staff should have this sort of knowledge and there were a million other fillets of fish to choose from. | 26 |
| **hummingbee**<br><br>Does anybody have any information about trout? It is my favourite fish and we eat it regularly. | 27 |
| **Shannon**<br>In reply to hummingbee<br><br>http://www.sustainableseafood....<br><br>Seems to be no good unfortunately :( | 28 |
| **Bella**<br><br>Anna, I think if a past life you were a Viking. Your outdoorsy lifestyle and eating habits (porridge, meat, soups & fish type things) are very similar to how they survived way back when (not all of them were bad!) | 29 |
| **Anna Taylor**<br>In reply to Bella<br><br>And the pelt loin cloth...! | 30 |
| **Bella**<br>In reply to Anna Taylor<br><br>Think you're confusing cultures! | 31 |
| **Andy**<br><br>My rule is not to eat anything with eyeballs...fish included! | 32 |
| **Erin**<br><br>I've started only buying FISH4EVER - sustainably caught tuna. I'm not sure if it's my conscious but I swear it tastes better. Even my don't-care-about-sustainable-anything-boyfriend loves it.<br><br>Yes, it's not local, yes it's still in a can but despite cooking at least 85% of all my meals, eating mostly whole foods and grass fed beef, sometimes I just need a can of tuna!<br><br>Check it out<br>http://www.fish-4-ever.com/com... | 33 |
| **David**<br><br>What about Swordfish? I love it but have heard you should only eat it twice a week (and | 34 |

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| zero if pregnant) given mercury issues.<br><br>Is tuna also a mercury problem?<br><br>Anna, would be good if you could post a series on fish and how to make better choices (like your excellent cosmetics series). Both canned and fresh (or packeted in the fridge isle). I love fish and would like to know more.<br><br>I found your tinned tuna article from months ago invaluable - changed my choice of tuna. It's def. worth being informed. | |
| **Simone**<br><br>Paul, Swordfish is a definite no-no for two reasons. Firstly, it is fished with drifting longlines and secondly, some of the larger, older fish have high mercury levels. I have eliminated swordfish and orange roughy now for a decade as the numbers have not improved. Orange roughy, in particularly, can grow to 150 years old and the average age of the fillet in your fishmonger's display unit could be 40 years old! Seems selfish to unecessarily take such an old fish when there is so much else to chose from. We are overfishing this species from our seamounts off the continental shelf because the fishing technology is improving and the fishermen can get to places that were previously unreachable. It's really hard to see this species for sale and not speak up! Also Google 'tuna and headaches' and see what is being written about the mercury. connection. To avoid mercury connection, chose young, abundant fish like whiting, calamari, blue grenadier. Oh, and flake is a no-no too.....I could go on.... | 35 |
| **David**<br>In reply to Simone<br><br>Great, thanks Diane, excellent info. I'm mad for calamari and like whiting too so will stick with them. Eating a 40yr old fish sounds yuk, LOL! | 36 |
| **Malcolm**<br><br>Here in Canada, David Suzuki is our environmental guru. On his foundations website is listed the top 10 sustainable fish to buy in Canada. Much is similar to Australia but there are some differences, mostly because of location of species. We should remember that what's sustainable here might not be so on the other side of the globe.<br><br>http://www.davidsuzuki.org/wha...<br><br>Cheers. | 37 |
| **Duchie**<br>In reply to Malcolm<br><br>Thankyou thankyou thankyou. I was just this week thinking this. I had bought some salmon from our supermarket ()nearest shopping centre is a country town so not a great deal of choice) and was thinking, this tastes ok but...<br><br>I need some sort of animal protein besides eggs. On offer are:<br><br>1. beef mince from the farmer literally over the road (Some French boutique breed of cow, limousins??). Beautiful meat but I find it hard to digest beef. Food miles are obviously nil as I can walk there, and I can vouch for the quality of the feed. But I find beef really rich.<br><br>2. Lamb. Not from this area. i love lamb and find it heaps more digestible than beef, | 38 |

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| but the nearest lamb farmers are in the hunter valley, 200 km away. i know I am probably being neurotic, but i am close to only buying dishwashing gloves from the supermarket. I'm trying really hard because i think it's really important.<br><br>3. Fish. But WHAT fish. My dad, the ancient ecologist, took one look at our salmon meal and said i'd be more sustainable and healthier eating a Macdonalds burger. Oh damn it. Tinned tuna is not good. Whiting IS good? Excellent!!<br><br>This is so hard, but so worth it. I can't any more eat stuff that is not sustainable. It doesn't sit right in my stomach. It's so important. At least if I do it, that's one less person eating a deep-sea fish that can grow up to breed. Animals need to exist for their own beauty, not just as food sources for us. We got it wrong a while back. If we all need to become vegetarians. I will face that when it happens. But for now, thanks! | |
| **Malcolm**<br><br>Here in Canada, David Suzuki is our environmental guru. On his foundations website is listed the top 10 sustainable fish to buy in Canada. Much is similar to Australia but there are some differences, mostly because of location of species. We should remember that what's sustainable here might not be so on the other side of the globe.<br><br>http://www.davidsuzuki.org/wha...<br><br>Cheers. | 39 |
| **Russell**<br>In reply to Duchie<br><br>Hi,<br><br>Your commitment to sustainability is admirable. As a marine science graduate and a proud participant in Australia's seafood industry, I would like to take this opportunity to put up a few points for you to consider:<br><br>- There has not been one commercial finfish species that has been fished to extinction in Australia... To my knowledge there has not been any in the world.<br>> In Australia alone over the last 200 years<br>"Since European settlement began, just over 200 years ago, 18 species of mammals and about 100 species of vascular plants have become extinct. Currently about 40 species of mammals and many hundreds of species of plants are threatened with extinction. These figures are the worst in the world" - Australian Bureau of Statistics. Most comments on this site demonise the Australian Seafood Industry - If you can eat meat with a clear conscience, despite the damage that farming has/is still doing to terrestrial hanitats, then don't eat anything!<br><br>- Australia is recognised internationally for having world leading fisheries management.<br><br>- Yes Orange Roughy was overfished off the South-East coast of Australia in the 70's/80's. Through good fisheries management and fishing rights (Quotas), Stocks have recovered. There is a tiny area off St.Helens in Tasmania where commercial harvest of Orange Roughy is allowed (This species lives in deep waters all along the southern coast of Australia - by only allowing commercial harvest in one small area the stock can be managed).<br><br>At the end of the day, organisations such as Greenpeace and MCS are businesses. They have large numbers of staff to pay and so they need to keep themselves in the spotlight to attract donations. Don't take everything they say as gospel. If you are that concerned about sustainability, look up AUSTRALIAN scientific commentary and research on the | 40 |

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| issue. Most of the green NGO's like to use overseas stats on overfishing to demonise the Australian fishing industry.<br><br>There is still room for improvement in some of our fisheries, but we are managing this and heading in the right direction. Over 70% of seafood consumed in Australia is imported - much of it from poorly managed/unsustainable fisheries.<br><br>Support Australian fishers! Fishing is their livelihood - they don't want to destroy their future.... | |
| **Jacqui**<br><br>Can you aussies get tinned salmon? Imported from the U.S.?<br><br>As far as I know, there are pacific and atlantic salmon varieties (atlantic is a no-no by the way!) and pacific wild salmon can really only be found in the U.S. (maybe Japan too). Fresh, wild-caught Alaskan or Pac NW is the way to go. I imagine y'all could get it frozen, but it's probably really expensive. The canned pink salmon though is inexpensive, clean & safe, sustainable, and delicious! Salmon patties anyone?<br><br>Really and truly though, STAY AWAY from farmed salmon - it's no bueno. | 41 |
| **Rachel**<br><br>What am I going to do about sushi - I love the salmon and tuna sushi | 42 |
| **Mitsu**<br>In reply to Rachel<br><br>I was also at the Origin of Energy talk and can confirm from a nutritionist friend who recently researched this area that all salmon available in Sydney is farmed in fact most fish is farmed only a few varieties are wild. The only place to buy wild atlantic salmon in Sydney is from www.thecanadianway.com.au<br><br>I work in nutrition with children on the autism spectrum and fish is discouraged because of the high levels of mercury contained especially in tuna, swordfish, shark etc all the larger varieties. Preferable to eat white fish that are small in the fish food chain. We also avoid tinned fish because of of aluminium toxicity and sushi as well because of the high levels of parasites contained. | 43 |
| **Tracy**<br><br>Hi Anna,<br><br>This is related, but much more personal. I have killed a fish, and although it made me a little sad, I felt ok about it and I ate it. But I've never killed anything bigger than that, and I eat cows, sheep and kangaroos! I recently saw this pretty amazing and confronting film called 'Murder Mouth' in which the young woman, Maddie, who has been raised on Greek lamb souvlaki etc all her life, for the first time kills what she eats.<br><br>I don't know that I could kill a lamb. It has made me think seriously about what I am eating and really connected the animal with the food, changing my decision making process. A truly fascinating topic that affects us all, but we are so removed from.<br><br>Tracy | 44 |
| **Tracy**<br>In reply to Tracy<br><br>Also, the facebook for the film is /lifedeathanddinner. | 45 |

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| **Liz**<br><br>Great blog Anna! I didn't realise deep sea fish were so vulnerable to overfishing.<br><br>'Seafood fraud' was also something I didn't know about - until I read this report:<br><br>http://na.oceana.org/en/news-m...<br><br>It mentions that about 50% of the time, the fish on your plate is not the species that was listed on the menu - crazy! | 46 |
| **Rip**<br><br>If information were scceor, this would be a goooooal! | 47 |
| **Alan Dobson**<br><br>"These are great tips to help everyone remember fish have feelings too! Ha I sound a bit hippy-ish – but its true!!"<br><br>A great man once said "It's ok to eat fish, cos they, don't have any feelings"<br><br>It was Kurt Cobain. | (9) |
| **Marlin Fishing Cairns**<br><br>Howdy! This is my first visit to your blog!<br>We are a team of volunteers and starting a new initiative in<br>a community in the same niche. Your blog provided us beneficial<br>information to work on. You have done a marvellous job! | 48 |
| **Cairns Australia**<br><br>Your means of telling everything in this article is really pleasant, every one<br>be able to easily understand it, Thanks a lot. | 49 |

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