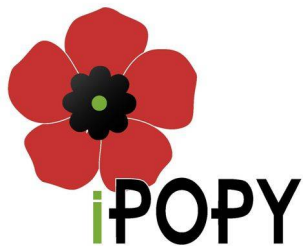


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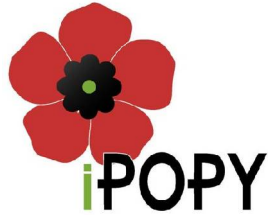
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# Organic food in the canteen – perceptions among cadets in the Norwegian Defense



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# Background

= innovative Public Organic food Procurement for Youth (CORE Research Pilot project, initiated by the CORE Organic Funding Body Network in the FP6 ERA-net project, CORE Organic, [www.core-organic.org](http://www.core-organic.org))

Aim = study how increased consumption of organic food may be achieved by implementation of relevant strategies and instruments linked to public food serving outlets for young people in the participating European countries: Denmark, Finland, Italy and Norway.

“WP4 Consumer perceptions, practices and learning”

[www.ipopy.coreportal.org/](http://www.ipopy.coreportal.org/)

# Background - Norway



- The share of organic of total agricultural land was 5% in 2008 and the share of the sales was 1% (FiBL, 2010).
- 2000 – alternative food market has grown (2007-2008 sales of organic food increased by 25%) (Terragni et al. 2009).
- The Norwegian government has a goal to increase organic agriculture and consumption to 15% by 2020 (2005 “Soria Moria” declaration: 15% BY 2015). Public procurement promising arena for advancing this.

# Background

- Norwegian Defense started in 2007 a pilot project in selected divisions and introduced organic food in 6 canteens.
- Policy principal driver of action.
- Aims = serve 15% organic food in these canteens by 2010 (today one kitchen reaches this goal) and increase knowledge among cadets and employees, reduce meat intake.
- Meals are provided in mess halls (“captive catering” – trapped consumer).
- Information (TV screens in the mess halls, animated films, trays, training of kitchen staff).

# Aim

Explore perceptions of organic food among Norwegian cadets. Explore dominant discourses utilized by the cadets in talking about organic food.

- How do perceptions depend on the context – mess hall?
- Organic food has a high moral status – need to justify. What justifications are used?
- Ambivalence.

# Methodology

Two focus group discussions with cadets in fall of 2008.

1. Air Force Academy, Trondheim – participated in pilot  
4 m, 1 f (21-32 years)
2. Military Academy, Oslo – no organic  
6 m (24-27 years)

Themes: role of food, food in the military, organic food (written assignment), sustainable development (written assignment)

# Findings

Mess hall: Eat what is served. Get what you need.

Air Force Academy – great choice, variation. Reputation = very good food. Hotel. Mess hall small. Motivated kitchen staff. Long lunch break. Organic.

Organic food was not the most relevant issue when talking about food. Scattered views. Complex. The participants tended to view organic food as being different from conventional food, and their descriptions reflected an expectation that organic food is better for themselves, animals or environment, or taste better (earlier research has shown similar concerns).

## Organic food – written assignment

	Air Force Academy (N=5)	Military Academy (N=6)
Production (pesticides etc.)	3	4
Health	3	4
Environment, nature	3	3
Animal welfare		4
Price	5	2
Fashion, focus	2	1
Choices (limited)	1	1
Taste	2	1
Quality (size)	1	



Healthism was dominant in talking about (organic) food; organic food was related to healthy diet but the cadets questioned if organic food really is healthier and safer.

Nature is highly valued in Norway and organic food was also viewed as more natural. However, some of the cadets questioned the positive impact on environment and if natural is safer.

Cadet's descriptions of organic food relied also on discourses of food as identity (religion, belief), commercial/marketing (luxury), fashion, price, taste.

Organic – the only right thing, virtue – too much focus.

## Wilk 2010: Moral calculus: People seek balance in different ways and along different time scales.

A see-saw, which balances evenly when equal weights are put on both sides.

“When the price of organic fruit suddenly goes up, we might maintain our consumption and seek balance (by actually consuming more hamburgers, or other ‘sinful’ products). Or we might decide that organic food is **really not much better for you**, so it **should not count as a virtue**, or we might even **redefine it as luxury** that should be counted as a **sinful indulgence**.

Note the paradoxical effect of the see-saw metaphor. When we are convinced organic food is really ‘good’ and then buy it, we also consume more ‘sinful’ food; then when we consume less virtue, we also can consume less ‘sin’.”