

THE TURN INTO DANGEROUS MEAT: CASE STUDY OF HORSEMEAT FOOD FRAUD IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

EVA KOTAŠKOVÁ

Eva Kotašková, Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Brno; email: eva.kotaska@gmail.com; Ph.D. student

The aim of this article is to analyze context and strategies to decrease the alternative use of safe food product that does not fit into the market system. This process is revealed in a case study of a horsemeat food fraud in the Czech Republic that took place in 2013. Unlike many other European countries, in the Czech Republic food products containing undeclared horsemeat were not given to charities or used as a source of fuel but were classified as dangerous and thus turned to a category of non-edible food. How can we understand this way of processing and what can this case say about attitudes towards classification of food?

Following a story of products containing undeclared horsemeat, a network of context and strategies that are relevant in this case is developed. The analysis is inspired by Science and Technology Studies, mainly the study of classification and standards.

The horsemeat case shows that categories of waste and food are consequences of depoliticization of politics, market regulation, technologies, and understanding of objects. Together with various strategies of decreasing the possibilities to negotiate leads to preservation of prevailing standards and classifications.

Keywords: food fraud, food waste, dangerous meat, STS, standards, classifications

INTRODUCTION: THE STORY OF HORSEMEAT FOOD FRAUD

At the beginning of 2013, a report spread from Ireland and the United Kingdom saying that there are food products containing undeclared horsemeat on the European market. Various investigations started immediately – the main concerns were about public health and about the possible offender(s). After few weeks health control tests were coordinated and largely financed by the European Union (EU) and very soon it was quite clear that the whole case is not a food safety or public health issue but “just” fraudulent labeling (Houska, 2013; European Commission, 2013).¹

1 The main cause for concern was the possible presence of fenylbutazon (medication for horses, forbidden to feed slaughter animals with, since it has unfavourable side effects for people). Testing of the food products in the affair proved no presence of this medication.

According to EU regulation, mislabelled products should not be on the market (Regulation No 178/2002). However, each state can determine how to further process these kinds of food products, since the protection of consumers itself is the responsibility of individual states (ibid). In the case of the horsemeat food fraud, the question of how to deal with those products appeared as well. In France, Sweden and Finland the food was given to charities dealing with both poor people and food waste (Independent, 2013; Šmíd, 2013; Yle, 2013). In the UK, the products were used as an alternative source of energy (Šmíd, 2013; Yle, 2013). In Germany, there was a large public discussion between various political parties, charities, and control institution. In the end, some of the producers followed the UK and the products were turned to biogas (The Local, 2013; Independent, 2013). Various solutions and alternatives to EU regulations were realized in Europe.

The Czech Republic followed the basic EU regulations, i.e. withdrew the food products from the market and either gave them back to the producers or destroyed them in rendering plants. There was neither a public discussion nor a suggestion of the further use of these products. When the idea of neighboring German politics to donate the products to the charities was presented in the Czech press, the Czech minister rejected this idea without hesitation (Houska, 2013c; Třeček 2013 i.a.). Without any noticeable resistance towards this decision, the products were disposed of, together with any possible further use. How and why did it happen? How was the rejection of the further use of the unmarketable products formed? How can we explain the absence of a discussion? What are specifics of this case and how can it help a sociological understanding of the current classification of edible and non-edible food?

The whole case is a story of a large-scale regulation act² with a connection to anxious persistence on freshness and disposability. It was (at least in the Czech Republic) not a question of ethics and/or moral dilemma of horsemeat as something not good or common to eat. The point was in the *undeclared* ingredient: no matter what kind of meat was it, it was not declared precisely. It thus became part of a discourse of public hygiene, but also a part of a strict approach towards frauds and falsifications.

The main line in the whole story was an attempt to deal with infringement of classification and standards in food production and the market system. The case also shows conflict emerging from different aims and understanding of standards and classifications and I will show what strategies are used by different actors and institutions in order to change or maintain existing classifications and standards. Last but not least, the analysis will enable an understanding of the role of technologies and material objects in this case.

Theoretical understanding of standards and classifications is inspired mainly by Science and Technology Studies. Classifications are in this perspective ideal forming consistent and complete 'boxes' for phenomenon description (i.e. they are part of the organization, social and individual knowledge). Standards are then instructions for action; a set of arbitrary rules for production and description of objects, fundamental for knowledge production (Bowker and Star, 2000: 11–15). Classifications are in ideal cases consistent and complete – however, in practice, there are many conflicts and ambivalences.³ Following this perspective, the article is focused on contradictions,

2 As was for example discharge of infected slaughter animals in foot-and-mouth disease case in the UK, 2001.

3 Many authors note that cases especially adequate for analysis are those which in some way do not fit into existing classification (see Gille, 2007: 21–22; Bowker and Star, 2000: 6–10; etc.).

conflicts and negotiation between different groups and their understanding of standards and classifications emerging in this case. At the end, several analytical outcomes and theoretical implications concerning the sociological understanding of this case are discussed.

RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The horsemeat food fraud affair has many story lines, interpretations, and possible research problems. The question of food classification, as presented in the previous chapter, is one of them. It is a situation where boundaries within phenomenon and contexts are not clear, and there is a conflict of interests, a case study is an especially suitable research method (see Yin, 2009). The studied phenomenon is possible to demonstrate in practice, in details and with emphasis on its diversity. The outcome of the case study is then a detailed description, which is at the same time an explanation of the phenomenon.

The main source of data in the analysis itself was interviews.⁴ Since one of the strategies of avoiding selectivity in a case study is to focus on the analysis of the case from different points of view, my aim was to include all actors who had an irreplaceable role in the studied case (see Stake, 2005: 443). There were five semi-structured interviews with the representatives from charities, an inspector from State Veterinary Administration (Státní veterinární správa – SVS) and also a representative from a distribution company which was at the center of the affair.⁵

The number of interviewed companies is limited, because even though I contacted all big companies in the affair, only one of them was willing to communicate with me. Thus in a question of the role and position of the companies, the analysis is unfortunately not as deep as it could be. Also, it was not possible to arrange an interview with the Ministry of Agriculture, one of the key actors in the whole case. The bureau was, in fact, open to an interview, and I was in contact with the Department of Food Production and Legislature: Section of Food Market Control. Unfortunately, mainly due to technical problems in our email communication (the emails were not delivered several times) and logistics (incapacity of the employees for several weeks) we could not make an agreement sooner than this analysis had to be delivered. However, they did send me several official documents and I further replaced the interview with official statements in the media.

For a better understanding of the context of the case, and to illustrate statements from the realized interviews, I also used the legislature and other official documents from SVS as an additional source of data for this research. This analysis is based on interviews and document analysis.

The analysis is based on a careful combination of both theoretical and methodological operations during which I focused on keeping the connection between theories and empirical data (Ragin and Becker, 1992: 221). For this purpose, I used the scientific software for qualitative analysis Atlas.ti. This software enables analysis of all the

4 The interviews were realized in 2014, took about an hour each and additional email communication followed some of them. The interviews were realized in Czech language and so for the purpose of this article they were translated to English

5 All the respondents signed informed consent and so all the interviews are anonymized in accordance with ethical principles of academic research and legislation of the Czech Republic.

interviews, documents, and academic texts, to find repeating patterns and the links between them. It also enables structuring the whole analysis in a way that it neatly follows the topics and questions arising in the interviews. Interpretations growing out of such method are thus based on data sources and grounded in theories and the selectivity is minimalized.

ROLE OF POLITICS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGIES IN THE CLASSIFICATION OF (NON-)EDIBLE

The report about the possible presence of food products with undeclared horsemeat came to the Czech Republic in February 2013. SVS realized preventive controls and even before the EU started to coordinate the testing, almost a hundred of products were checked. Altogether they found and tested four types of products containing undeclared horsemeat in the Czech Republic. As it was mentioned before, none of them was health hazardous – the only problem was fraudulent labeling (EAGRI, 2013; EAGRI, 2013b; EAGRI 2013c).

The non-health hazardous conclusion was confirmed also by experts from the European Union and it was one of the impulses for opening the question about further processing of the products with undeclared horsemeat. The Czech press informed about solutions of a few European states, mostly about the possibility of giving the products to charities (as suggested for example in a discussion in neighboring Germany), however, the Czech Minister of Agriculture explicitly rejected this option. No other solution alternative to the standard legislative procedure was suggested or considered (EAGRI, 2013d). In spite of various possible alternatives of EU regulations, some of them realized by many European countries, the Czech Republic followed the standard EU procedure and discarded the products with no further use of them. The Minister's argumentation had several levels and I will come back to them later in the text.

The minister's statement played a significant role, but it was not only the direct power of the minister that formed the final solution. For example, in Slovakia the products were handled in a similar way as in the Czech Republic even though in a press conference the Slovak minister recommended to donate the products (Krajanová, 2013). However, in cases like this, often it is not direct power but a context, network of alliances and strategies that form decisions and outcomes. In this case, a significant actor was the State Veterinary Administration – a control institution towards which the minister showed loyalty.

SVS is based on 1) state (and also within EU supra-national) politics/legislation⁶ and 2) expert administration necessarily incorporating scientific resources, procedures, and outcomes. It is a bureau of veterinary administration with national activities and with authority to do repressive actions. The aim is to control animal health, safety of food products containing meat and dairy and protection of the Czech Republic from hazardous infections (law n. 166/1999). Thus, this control institution is (in)directly responsible for citizens' health (EAGRI, 2012); it should have oversight of the whole production chain, immediately identify possible infringement and take action to eliminate them and/or punish the responsible. Even though in this case there was

⁶ It is established by law n. 166/1999, it is subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture and its activities are also defined by regulations of EU (EAGRI, 2012).

clearly no health risk, the fraud disturbed the authority of this control institution; it disturbed the overview, raised uncertainty and questions about the general discipline of actors. It also raised concerns about potential health risk frauds in future.

SVS: The biggest issue is that there was something going on and the authorities basically did not know. There was something on the market, horse meat, and it was claimed to be something else - beef. It is not that the horsemeat would be bad. No one actually would recognize. (...) If it is possible to do this, kill a horse and claim it as a cow, I do not see a big problem for someone to do it with something that is really not good to eat. We can eat a horse. But from this point of view, it is trouble because there was something which should not have been there.

As a consequence of industrialization and globalization⁷, together with contemporary discourse of private hygiene and public health⁸, the system of food production brings more concerns about security; it is fragile and easily disturbed; and its control requires constant work, monitoring and disciplination of human and non-human actors⁹ in a way that they would act acceptably (Bush, 2004; Bowker and Star, 2000; Strasser, 2000). As in this case, discipline is not always successful: firstly, the behavior of actors is not predictable in all cases and secondly, they are connected in complex networks with various aims and understanding of these aims.

At this moment the role of technologies and objects appears, which influences the discipline, co-creating safety but also co-creating risks. In this case discovering a new character of technologies for detection of DNA helped to prove whether a specific DNA is or is not present in a food product and it not only brought out the whole case but it fundamentally influenced the classification of food products and questions about safety, health or discipline of both human and non-human actors. It was not only the act of fraud or contamination itself but also this newly discovered character of technology that disturbed the authority of control institutions.

Company: There is no method to put a product into an analyzing machine that would tell you everything it contains. You have to search for a concrete DNA. So there was a group of students doing some practice, learning how to analyze DNA and that is where it came from. And there was also a paradox that the biggest issue, which originated in central Europe, was revealed in February. But the method, used in this way and with this intention, was first used in November or December. So until then nobody actually knew the way of investigating the products.

When the new invention was brought out, the food products could be perceived as (potentially) dangerous. Contamination of a small amount of ingredient is not an

7 There are many other related consequences within the production chain: the relationship between producers and consumers were in some way disembodied; new technologies and forms of organization of production changed the way of food production (e.g. conservation, refreezing), food contents (e.g. additives) and also availability, scale and amount of import and export (Bush, 2004).

8 For more information about socio-historical development of this discourse, see e.g. Bowker and Star, 2000: 16; Douglas, 1966; Strasser, 2000; Lucas, 2002 and others.

9 The food safety includes social as well as natural parts; it is dependent not only on the socio-historical situation but also on the behavior of biological and chemical entities in the food itself, or in organisms surrounding the food.

uncommon consequence of food production, where in one place there are several food products processed. Adding information about potential trace amounts is an easy way to solve a possible problem. But how much of the horsemeat actually was in the product? Since it was not declared in advance, the exact ad-hoc classification of the product became difficult, for technologies are not sensitive enough to recognize the exact amount of horsemeat – or in other words, the horsemeat resists the exact measurement. Then, should it be labeled as a horsemeat product, should there be only information about potential trace amount or should it be shifted from the category of an edible food product?

The newly discovered character of technology, together with the inspection that actually detected horse DNA in the products, also had other consequences. Next to the infringement of hygiene and other standards, it highlighted the role of other technologies and character of the current system of food production.

SVS: Let's take an example. You will produce cans with food. And into this can, pardon me, you will add shit. Then you will conserve it, make five tons of it and if you put enough spices, no one will find out. You will mix it there and no one will find out this one shit. And in the test, the can will be OK because you will sterilize it, so there will be no polymorphic germs, nothing. But you used non-edible material and so the final product cannot be edible. If we go on from this, then we can put anything in the cans because no one will find out. And so the origin of the horsemeat was not traceable, and thus not edible. But in the end even if I did a thousand inspections, everything would be OK. However, there was this one inspection where it was proved that there was horsemeat and it was not clear where the horsemeat came from. As this, it should be considered as non-edible.

An understanding of methods and techniques, which are supposed to maintain standards and aims declared in law, was formed in several ways. First, it was formed by the arbitrary character of standards and categories. Second, by the techniques of food production as conservation and sterilization that serve as maintenance of standards as hygiene and safety but at the same time can hide what is actually added to a product and at the end, they increase uncertainty and fear of potential danger. In this perspective, the technologies and methods that should guarantee food safety are limiting the work of control institutions. The world of probabilities is in this case emphasized and the focus on elimination of the products increases.

The system of food control can be understood as an effective discipline of actors in the commodity chain. Implementation of critical points of control in a way of minimizing the risk of food contamination allows the marginalization of certain aims: it removes subjectivity from control by preferring measurement or routine practice (Bush, 2004). Decisions and practice of people (including construction and control of technologies, production process, monitoring, definition of safety, definition of edibility etc.) are thus hidden in the power of scientific objectivity (2004: 176). This context, directly and indirectly, shapes also an attitude of control institutions towards possible exceptions that are seen as a political action not based on expertise.

SVS: If these cases are in the media, then politics can shape their action under the pressure of the media and public. But this is high politics that does not have anything in common with expertise. Better not talk or know about it.

The change of once created categories and standards is usually a complex and complicated process full of bureaucracy (Bowker and Star, 1996: 3). In spite of this they can be revised as a consequence of new discoveries, change in chemicals or micro-organisms, but also needs and wishes of actors (Bush, 2004). In this case, both the new and already established technologies and discoveries had quite opposite consequences. They allowed both the fraud, recognition of fraud and the classification of the food product as dangerous. Risks concerning food thus can be understood as a consequence of the relationship between technologies and potential contaminants (ibid).

The general character of SVS is both political and scientific. This administration connects politics and science into a context of market regulation and protection of public wealth. As Michael Power (1997) notes, so-called an “audit society” is not only a solution for technical problems, but it also means a restructuralization of government practice (Power, 1997 in Bush, 2004: 175). In this case, the strategy of SVS was to depoliticize their position and action by stressing their scientific objectivity, highlighting the specific character of technologies and focusing on maintaining existing standards and technologies that are seemingly universal. However, in the emphasis on preservation of standards and classifications it often happens that some group(s) are marginalized or that some sort of conflict emerges (Bowker and Star, 2000: 41). The aims of actors are simply too various. In this case, it was mainly charities who’s aim was to use the unmarketable food products for humanitarian purposes. Nevertheless, their aims and strategies were not strong enough to withstand the scientific objectivity.

DECREASING THE POSSIBILITY OF DIVERGENT CLASSIFICATION

To give the food products for humanitarian purposes was the only suggestion of how to use the products in another than law-based way, mainly pursued by charities. Except depoliticization of the control institution, other strategies were used to avoid an alternative solution: shifting the problem of safety to the sphere of the market, elimination of products, and elimination of responsibility.

The argumentation of the Minister of Agriculture explicitly stressed the protection of consumer and his accurate information: even when the food would be for free it has to follow specific market regulated rules, one of which is proper labeling. Only this can ensure the knowledge about the source of food and thus the quality of it (EAGRI, 2013d). Thus, the rules and standards valid for the market were applied even to the non-profit humanitarian aims.

This was one of the most visible conflicts in the debate with those who supported an alternative solution. This support did not mean complete denial of existing standards and classifications. Also in the official letter to the Minister of Agriculture, the charities stressed the interest in fulfilling the standards of informed consumer and the nonhazardous character of food products. However, it was the shift to a market sphere that further influenced the understanding of needs of people, and in the end the classification of food products.

Charity n.1, an official letter to the Ministry of Agriculture: *I am familiar with your decision and aim to dispose of food products containing undeclared horsemeat. Naturally, I see that the consumer must be informed. However, I would like to ask*

you to change your decision and on the other hand, make an appeal so the companies do not dispose the products but donate them to the poor people, naturally with labels informing about the presence of horsemeat. I am aware that the horsemeat is not hazardous for human health and its consummation might be controversial from ethical reasons. However, in my practice (...) I meet people who, out of hunger, dive in dumpsters. These people in need could be receivers of the food products.

Minister of Agriculture, an official letter to Charity n.1: *I would like to ensure you that the Czech Republic is not the only EU state where there is a rule saying that food which does not fulfill requirements of the law cannot be given to a consumer. (...) So far, in this case, no products were disposed of in the Czech Republic. All products were given back to companies importing them. This procedure is possible to expect also in a case of further findings.*

What is interesting in this debate is that the argumentation about whether food should be classified as edible or not is here supported by another, seemingly not related classification of a specific group of people. While the charities are talking about ‘poor people’, the minister classified the clients of charities as ‘consumers’. A similar perspective was mentioned by one of the representatives from State Veterinary Administration, where the charity is considered as part of the market.

SVS: Even if it is for a homeless person, or upper class, the product coming from registered companies has to have standards of health. That is alpha and omega. We cannot allow to the market something hazardous and say that this person would starve to death, so he will be sick but will have something to eat. That is not possible. We are not in such an extreme situation to say this.

Different ways of classifying one specific group of people and/or edibility of food are a consequence of vague classification in laws and can be interpreted as a strategy of negotiating these standards and classifications (see e.g. O’Brien, 1999; Bowker and Star, 2000). In this case, the argumentation on the classification of one group of people was used as a strategy to further classify a food product and/or an instrument to maintain existing standards and classifications. While State Veterinary Administration is talking about “hazardous” food and “standards of health”, charities are talking about “food with a potential to use”.

Charity n.3: *To be looking for food with such requirements, in a situation of serious malnutrition or even life threat, when we do have a food with a potential to use, that is only theoretical displacement of a solution. No one would be able to pay for food products fulfilling the requirements of the market.*

The understanding of needs of actors formed an understanding of standards and classification of objects. It also further formed an understanding of the role of expertise. In a case like this, it is mainly the state bureaucracy who has a responsibility for a food safety. Other institutions and organizations are limited by the legislature, finances or lack of expertise and thus, cannot guarantee food safety or origin of food in the same way and with the same authority as state institutions.

In Finland, for example, it was precisely the control institution that guaranteed food

safety of the products and recommended a donation (Yle, 2013). There it was part of politics and strategies to fight poverty and waste – not uncommon issues in contemporary Europe. In the Czech Republic, the unpreparedness of legislation supported the strategy of depoliticization and the neo-liberal discourse of individualism that focuses on the responsibility of the individual more than of state or society in general.

Charity n.1: People coming to us often eat absolutely insufficient food and no one really cares. Because the responsibility is not on the ministry but on the people themselves and so no one is interested. So it seems to me that the attitude of the people deciding is very short sighted and selfish. And I do not know what to do about it. There is no interest there.

The food donation that charities provide is one way to partly move the responsibility from the individual to institutions. However, at the given time the legislation and general conditions for food donation in the Czech Republic were very adverse. In 2014, when donating unmarketable food, the companies had to pay 15 % taxes (SZ, 2014). Charities were thus struggling with general conditions for donating unmarketable food and the discussions about this were held in politics several times. In contrast to some political parties, the Minister of Agriculture at the time was not positive about the introduction of a new law (or a change of the established one). Neither the politicians nor legislation were ready to create conditions for general donations. According to the official statement of the Minister of Agriculture, the allowance of exception in the case of the horsemeat affair could bring many troubles for future assessment of similar cases (EAGRI, 2013d). The Minister thus rather supported the depoliticized expertise and the food was finally and irreversibly shifted to the category of non-edible. Apart from the publicity of a horsemeat food fraud being used by charities to politicize the question of food donation, it might have been an additional factor in the negotiation of edibility of food.

It is thus obvious that the practice of classification is an inherent part of social action and order, usually invisible but with inevitable consequences. It is fundamentally social activity; an ethical choice that values certain perspective and devaluates another (Douglas, 1966; Bowker and Star, 2000). It is hard to say, what kind of motivations for choosing the strategy of maintaining existing standards the Czech institutions had. It could be an attempt to gain back authority; the exaggerative focus on depoliticization of expertise; or the rigidity of bureaucracy. What might be clearer is how it happened, that in the Czech Republic the standards were maintained, the food was classified as non-edible and the alternative solution was silenced. Next to above described depoliticization of expertise and marketization of the food safety, it was an elimination of products and responsibility that further completed the process of food classification.

The Ministry, for example, emphasized that "... in this case no products were disposed of in the Czech Republic. All products were given back to companies importing them" (Minister of Agriculture, an official letter to Charity n.1). However, whether the products were given back to producers or disposed of in rendering plants (CT, 2013) they were materially, socially and spatially displaced. As a consequence, the object is made invisible (Strasser, 2000) and this leads to the invisibility of its usefulness on one hand and needs of certain people on the other hand. Moreover, the physical absence of products in the Czech Republic area allows the disappearance of the necessity to deal with them, discuss, organize and take responsibility.

CONCLUSION AND FINAL DISCUSSION

It is clear now how and why was the rejection of donating the horsemeat food products formed. After the fraud infringed the classification of a food product as marketable, in the Czech Republic several strategies were used to classify it also as non-edible. The standards and classifications are an arbitrary solution of negotiation between human and non-human actors and this analysis showed that in this case it was mainly the control institution, the Ministry of Agriculture and technologies who attained the maintenance of law-based standards and classifications.

The category of marketable food was firstly disturbed as a consequence of the newly discovered character of technologies and introduction of new methods. These methods allowed the whole fraud to emerge, and the Czech control institution saw this situation as violating not only the standards of food production but also violating their authority, overview, and discipline of actors. Consequently, uncertainty and fear of potential danger increased and so even though the non-health-hazardous character of food products was confirmed, the discussion was shifted into the world of probabilities.

Since the already established technologies were able to hide what was actually added to the products, and at the same time were not able to ad-hoc recognize the arbitrarily non-edible ingredients, the focus of control institutions was to stress the potential danger and the elimination of the food products. The elimination of products further allowed the elimination of responsibility and it was possible to avoid negotiation with those who tried to enforce different classification of horsemeat food products.

SVS strongly emphasized arguments based on expertise, scientific objectivity, and techno-economic sphere. This institution explicitly expressed distance from politics, which could from their perspective lead to possible change from scientific-based, seemingly universal standards and classifications. This strategy of depoliticization led to the elimination of subjectivity and of the arbitrary character of categories. The strategy of depoliticization again proved to be influential in enforcing a particular solution to a situation (see also Konopásek, Stöckelová, Zamykalová, 2008). With support from the Minister of Agriculture, this depoliticization strengthened the expert and technical sphere and thus the shift from food to danger was enforced further.

The only suggested alternative towards this classification was a donation of the products for humanitarian purposes. It was mainly the charities who tried to classify the food product as edible and thus attain this solution. However, the categorization of food as non-edible already strongly based on depoliticized expertise and technologies was even further supported by the categorization of all people as consumers and charities as part of the market. An important factor decreasing the already weak position of the charities was the character of legislation and the attitude of the Ministry towards food donation politics in general.

In this way, the analysis shows a connection between market regulations and science. According to Bush until the 1950's the concern was rather focused on food frauds than on food safety and the politics of food safety were transformed to the techno-economical field (Bush, 2004: 170-176). Cases like the horsemeat food fraud show the possible combination of concerns about frauds and safety as a consequence of the aims of actors, role of technologies and strategies of negotiation between human and non-human actors. In this case, risk became not the only market opportunity (Beck, 2011) but also an opportunity to maintain and strengthen existing law-based standards and classifications.

According to Bowker and Star (1996) the politics of classification and standards defines what is visible within system and what is not. It is precisely the marketization of the humanitarian sphere that makes alternative use of non-marketable food, and aims of some groups, invisible. Beck points out that a high level of certainty is accumulated in the upper classes (Beck, 2011) and as this analysis suggests, in the end the requirement of quality for everyone rather than divide poor and rich, keeps individuals in malnutrition or inadequately fed. The possible attempt to avoid the feeling of 'throwing bones', or moral dilemma 'what is not good for someone is good enough to someone else' has consequences for the charities that are trying to fight poverty and food waste.

The ethical and moral question of what is and is not edible food is in general, intuitively understood as a consequence of production, distribution and consumption; symbolic socio-historical outcome (Douglas, 1966); change of values (Thompson, 1979); or a consequence of the everyday behavior of individuals (Evans, 2012). This case shows that there can also be other factors: action of those who regulate the market, attempt to maintain the standards of consumer safety and health within all social groups; it can be a consequence of understanding and use of objects; understanding of standards, aims and needs of different groups of people; and finally various strategies of decreasing the possibility of alternatives. Together with the elimination of products, the negotiation with those who tried to change the existing system of classifications and standards could be avoided completely.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

EVA KOTAŠKOVÁ (*1988) is a Ph.D. student at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. She is interested in material culture, Science and Technology Studies and food waste. She studied at The Arctic University of Norway, and is currently working on ethnography of the Svalbard Archipelago.