



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Department of Economics

# **Max(imum) vegan**

- A case study on vegan products in the food service sector

*Julia Marcopoulos*

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Julia Marcopoulos

# Abstract

Animal based foods have been important components of the Swedish diet for many years. As the meat, dairy and eggs require more resources than plants the sustainability advantage of the vegan diet is becoming increasingly acknowledged. However, research has shown evidence of it being difficult to change peoples' dietary habits. This is especially true if the people are asked to give up on foods they value highly, such as meat.

Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB is a Swedish food service company that realised that their own environmental footprint largely originated in the meat in their meals. In order to address this problem they decided to launch five new vegetarian/vegan meals in the beginning of 2016. The campaign was a success and as a next step towards more sustainable business they are targeting to increase their number of vegan meals. The focus of this study is on the developments of vegan food in the food service sector. A shift from animal based diets to food that contain more vegan sources can be of importance in the context of sustainable development. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate hindrances and opportunities for development of vegan fast food in the Swedish food service sector from a marketing perspective. The thesis is conducted using a qualitative research approach and the design is case study. Semi-structured interviews with key respondents have been used to collect data.

This study identifies several hindrances towards development of vegan fast food products. One is the state of meatnorm in society – that consuming meat is norm and consuming vegetarian/vegan is considered non-mainstream. Another is peoples' wish to belong in a group, and therefore being afraid of stepping outside of the group when consuming vegan. The perceived worse taste of vegan fast food products compared to animal based equivalents was another hinder. Lastly the current political structures are viewed as hindering the development of vegan fast food products. Numerous opportunities were also identified. The sustainability, health and animal welfare advantages of vegan food are evident and could thusly be elevated more. There is a vego trend, or even shift towards vego being more common, occurring in Sweden today. Companies such as Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB can benefit from riding on the wave of change, and they in turn can have a key role in shaping the food of the future. The younger generation is according to the respondents positive towards veganism and this creates an opportunity. Making products that feel familiar to the consumers can be advantageous as that makes it easier for the consumers to perceive them as necessary. Lastly, communicating the vegan fast products in a positive way can create an opportunity for their further development.

# Sammanfattning

Under många års tid har animalier varit en viktig beståndsdel i svenskens diet. Intresset för hållbarhet ökar alltmer, och vilken roll våra matvanor har i detta likaså. Då animalier kräver långt mycket fler resurser än växter har veganism fått allt mer uppmärksamhet som ett alternativ för den som vill äta hållbart. Forskning har dock visat att det är svårt att övertyga människor om att ändra sina matvanor. Detta gäller särskilt om människan i fråga ombeds ge upp livsmedel hon är speciellt fäst vid, såsom kött.

Fast food-kedjan Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB undersökte sin klimatpåverkan och fann att köttet i deras mat var den post som resulterade i störst klimatpåverkan. I försök att minska sin klimatpåverkan bestämde sig företaget för att lansera fem nya maträtter som var vegetariska eller veganska. Satsningen blev mycket framgångsrik och nu ämnar företaget fortsätta på denna väg genom att i framtiden lansera ännu fler veganska alternativ. Fokuset för denna studie är utvecklingen av veganska produkter inom sektorn för livsmedelsservice. Ett skifte från en animaliskt baserad diet till en som innehåller mer veganska produkter kan vara av intresse i en hållbarhetskontext. Målet med denna studie är således att undersöka hinder och möjligheter för utvecklingen av veganska fast food-produkter i den svenska food service-sektorn från ett marknadsföringsperspektiv.

Den teoretiska bakgrunden för studien består av två teorier med företagsperspektiv – Strategic Niche Management och New Product Development, samt en med marknadsperspektiv – Consumer Culture Theory. Med tanke på studiens mål och enhet för analys, konsumtionskultur kring veganska fast food-produkter i en svensk kontext, valdes den sistnämnda teorien till studiens analytiska ramverk. Studien har ett kvalitativt perspektiv och utförs som en case-studie. Metod för datainsamling är semi-strukturerade intervjuer och analysen gjordes med hjälp av tematisk struktur och progressive funnel approach.

Efter studiens genomförande identifierades ett flertal hinder och möjligheter. Ett av hindren är den så kallade köttnormen – att det anses vara norm att konsumera kött och avvika från normen att äta vegetariskt eller veganskt. Ett annat hinder är människors tendens att söka grupptillhörighet, och därmed står deras rädsla för att sticka ut i vägen för att konsumera mer veganskt. Bilden av att veganska fast food-produkter smakar sämre än likvärdiga produkter som innehåller animalier är ytterligare ett hinder. Till sist ansågs dagens politiska strukturer missgynna utvecklingen av veganska fast food-produkter. Det identifierades vidare också flertalet möjligheter. Fördelarna med vegansk mat ur hållbarhets-, hälso- och djurvälståndsperspektiv är svåra att bestrida och kan därmed lyftas fram mer. Respondenterna pekade på att det finns en vegotrend, eller till och med ett skifte, som pågår i Sverige idag och företag såsom Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB kan ta vara på denna möjlighet, och case-företaget kan i sin tur ha en nyckelroll i att påverka framtidens matvanor. Den yngre generationen lyftes också fram av respondenterna som generellt mer positivt inställd till veganism, vilket också skapar möjligheter. Att utveckla produkter som känns bekanta för kunderna kan vara fördelaktigt då det då blir enklare för kunderna att se produkterna som nödvändiga för dem. Slutligen lyftes det fram att det är viktigt att kommunicera de veganska fast food-produkterna på ett positivt sätt för att öka möjligheterna för deras utveckling.

# Abbreviations

CCT – Consumer Culture Theory

NPD – New Product Development

SNM – Strategic Niche Management

SSS – Same-Store Sales

QSR – Quick-Service Restaurant

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# 1 Introduction

*This chapter contains and identifies the background of the studied subject. Furthermore, it includes a description of the problem connected to the background. The aim of the study, research questions and delimitations of the thesis is also included.*

## 1.1 Problem background

Humans have used meat to satisfy their nutritional needs for several millennia, and this is believed to have shaped the human evolutionary history (Leroy & Praet, 2015). Meat has historically been a scarce but cherished food (Chopra, Galbraith & Darnton-Hill, 2002). However, during the last century there was a global and massive shift towards an increased consumption of meat and other animal-based products, and a decrease in the consumption of grain and other plant-based foods (*ibid.*). This shift, called the “Livestock revolution” is believed to have occurred because of three major reasons: urbanization, economic growth and changes in the food industry (Delgado, 2003). The nutrition of millions of rural poor in unindustrialized countries is improving. However, in many cases these dietary changes also create substantial environmental changes (*ibid.*).

The commercial production of meat and other animal-based food products is associated with significant environmental impact and is contributing to climate change (Hedenus, Wirsenius & Johansson, 2014). Livestock production requires large areas of land and leads to high emissions of greenhouse gases and nitrogen (Westhoek et al., 2014). The consumption of meat is of the highest level in the western world and the livestock sector is the largest single contributor for greenhouse gas emissions globally (Raphaely & Marinova, 2014). For these reasons, the scientific debate on sustainable diets puts increasing emphasis on the consumption of meat and other animal-based products (Macdiarmid, Douglas & Campbell, 2016). A transformation of how we eat, from a meat high in animal based products to a more plant-based diet, has thus been called for (Raphaely & Marinova, 2014).

A vegan diet is a plant-only diet, excluding all flesh food, egg and dairy products (Baroni, et al., 2007). Baroni et al. (2007) studied how different diets impacts the environment. They found that beef is the single food with the biggest impact on the environment. Cheese, fish and milk were also found to be foods with great impacts on the environment. Baroni et al.s (2007) study found that the vegan diet, regardless of if it is based on conventional or organic farming, is the diet that has the least environmental impact – especially in terms of resource requirement. As stated earlier, the production of meat and other animal-based food products is associated with substantial environmental impact (Hedenus, Wirsenius & Johansson, 2014). This suggests that there is need for a societal change – we need to eat less animal-based food products to reduce environmental impact. Firms in the food service sector has the potential of being part of this change. One food service company that has become aware of the environmental impact of meat, and chosen to take action towards change, is Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB.

Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB is a fast food company which was founded in Gällivare, Sweden 1968 (Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, Historia, 2017). From its founding, the company only uses Swedish meat in all their meals (*ibid.*). The company states that one of the reasons why they only use Swedish meat is because of the emission of greenhouse gases from

beef is 2,5 times lower for Swedish meat compared to the global average (Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, Utvecklingen, 2017). In 2008 the company began cooperating with “Det naturliga steget”, an organization that provides sustainability consulting for companies, in order to take further steps with their sustainability work (*ibid.*). This led to that Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB started to mark all their products with how much carbon dioxide each product generates (*ibid.*). The company hired a consulting company that specializes in sustainability, U&We, to help them create a climate report for their business activity of year 2015 (Wrenfelt & Dahlgren, 2016). The report showed, in line with Baroni et al.s (2007) study, that the meat was the single biggest contributor to their environmental footprint. Out of Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB’s total environmental footprint the beef alone represented 66 percent while for example transports 2 percent (*ibid.*). In the beginning of 2016 “the Green family” was launched – five new vegetarian alternatives, one of them being vegan, at the same time (Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, Greenfamiljen, 2017). The campaign was successful and the company now looks for new ways to continue this work (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Being aware of that the vegan diet is a diet with a small environmental impact, Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB has now set up a goal to increase their selling of vegan meals (*ibid.*).

## 1.2 Problem

Drawing from concerns surrounding meat production and consumption there is benefit in developing the knowledge on the willingness of consumers to decrease their meat consumption and adopt a more plant-based diet (Dagevos & Voordouw, 2013). Evidence suggests that plant-based diets and alternatives to meat are increasingly linked to several benefits, for example a decreased environmental impact (Baroni et al., 2007). However, a high consumption of meat, low regard for meat substitutes and lack of willingness to convert to a more plant-based diet remains the overriding culture pattern in most western societies (*ibid.*). Changing dietary habits in line with dietary recommendations has been proved difficult (Macdiarmid, Douglas & Campbell, 2016). It has been argued that meat’s superior status as a food item seems to be invested with a socially constructed meaning that goes beyond its nutritional aspects and biological role (Schösler, de Boer & Boersema, 2012). Recent findings have gone in line with this idea – that consumers may have an affective connection towards meat that may play a role in their willingness to alter their consumption habits (Garça, Oliveira & Calherios, 2015). It has been claimed that the affective connection towards meat may be a spectrum where one end refers to disgust and the other attachment (*ibid.*). The end of disgust refers to repulsion and moral internalization while the end of attachment refers to a dependence on meat and feelings of deprivation and sadness when considering abstaining from consuming it. This is believed to obstruct a change in consumption habits (*ibid.*).

Macdiarmid, Douglas and Campbell (2016) conducted a study aimed to understand the public awareness of the environmental impact of food and the reluctance to eat less meat as part of a sustainable diet. Their study showed that the resistance to the idea of reducing personal meat consumption emerged in all socio-economic groups and the resistance did not differ based on location (rural/urban) or gender (Macdiarmid, Douglas & Campbell, 2016). When their respondents were asked what they thought of people inferring that eating less meat is good for the environment the reactions were mixed. Some agreed, but more commonly the statement was considered controversial and triggered lively discussions in the focus groups being interviewed (*ibid.*). Another barrier for adopting a more plant-based diet which was presented in this study was that some of the respondents who said to be willing to consider consuming

less meat said that they would not know what to replace it with (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Macdiarmid, Douglas and Campbell (2016) found that there was a lack of awareness of the connection between climate change and meat consumption – but even when the participants were aware of the connection they were reluctant to reduce their meat consumption. It emerged that meat still plays an important role, both from a nutritional perspective as well as for various social and personal reasons. Even though there is evidence for environmental gains and some potential health benefits from reducing meat the acceptability of eating less meat is still missing (*ibid.*).

According to a nation-wide poll executed in the US only 1,4 percent of the country's adult population claimed themselves to be vegan (Stahler, 2006). One definition of niche is “a distinct segment of a market” (Dictionary, 2017). With only 1,4 percent of the population claiming themselves as vegans, eating a diet which contains animal based products is mainstream and eating according to the vegan diet can be considered a form of niche. If the societal gains of people eating more plant based, such as a decreased environmental impact, is to be achieved it is important to understand the niche character of vegan food products. Firms in the food industry may play a key role to develop and promote food that is more sustainable. There is furthermore limited knowledge on the phenomenon of vegan food from a marketing perspective, especially using a qualitative approach to investigate. Drawing on a marketing perspective in business administration, this study focuses on the situation of Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB seeking to promote vegan food products. This reasoning has lead up to the aim and research questions.

### 1.3 Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate hinders and opportunities for development of vegan fast food in the Swedish food service sector from a marketing perspective, and the research questions are as follows:

- How can we analyse and make sense of vegan fast food products from a marketing perspective?
- What are the hinders for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden?
- What are the opportunities for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden?

This study is important from a societal point of view because a transition from meat-based diet to more plant-based is needed for environmental reasons. Furthermore, the focus on the food service sector can be of importance for companies such as Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB which can be important players to promote changes in diet.

### 1.4 Delimitations

This thesis is limited in that it does not evaluate or consider the sustainability of the vegan diet in absolute terms. The case company uses sustainability arguments for their strategy of developing vegan products. Whether or not this strategy truly is the best possible sustainability strategy for the company will not be subject of discussion in this thesis. All of the empirical material of this study is from Sweden. Actual consumers associated with the food service sector were not studied directly. This study is limited to qualitative approach. Studying consumers typically calls for quantitative approach, e.g. attitudes, etc. This study did not follow such an approach. See 3.1.1 Qualitative approach, for further description of this.

## 2 Theoretical perspective and literature review

*Chapter 2 presents a variation of terms and theoretical perspectives that are used as a foundation for understanding the empirical material of chapter 4, the analysis of chapter 5 and discussion of chapter 6. This chapter explores theories from a corporate perspective and a market perspective. The corporate perspective consists of theory on Strategic Niche Management and New Product Development. The market perspective has its foundation in Consumer Culture Theory.*

### 2.1 Introduction – literature review

A literature review contains that what is already known and written down, which is relevant for the research project (Robson, 2011). The aim of this study is to investigate hindrances and opportunities for development of vegan food in the Swedish fast food service sector from a marketing perspective. An article which is related to the study's aim, as it focuses on meat substitutes from a market perspective, is one by Hoek et al. from 2011.

What determines the consumer acceptance of alternatives to meat? Developing new food products that are attractive to consumers is challenging (van Trijp & van Kleef, 2008). It becomes particularly challenging when the new foods are meant to act as alternatives for products which are greatly appreciated, such as meat (Wansink et al., 2005). Hoek et al. (2011) produced a study which aim was to investigate what drivers and barriers there are for consumers' acceptance of meat substitutes. The authors compared the attitudes of non-users, light/medium-users and heavy-users of meat substitutes. Eleven types of food motives were explored: health, mood, convenience, sensory appeal, natural content, price, weight control, familiarity, ecological welfare, political values and religion. Important barriers for light/medium-users and non-users were the unfamiliarity with meat substitutes and the perceived lower attractiveness compared to meat (Hoek et al., 2011). It was also discovered that the non-users had a higher tendency to avoid new foods in general. This meant that the less the consumers were using meat substitutes, the more they wanted these substitutes to be similar to meat. It was only the heavy-users of meat substitutes who were highly motivated to choose ethical foods. The biggest difference in motives for food choices were found between the heavy-users and the non-users in the form of that heavy-users gave higher ratings for political values and ecological welfare. Other differences between the groups was that sensory appeal was considered more important by the non-users than the light/medium-users. In conclusion, to make consumers more willing to embrace meat substitutes the focus should not be on communicating ethical aspects, but instead on improving the sensory quality of the meat substitutes and their likeness with meat (*ibid.*).

An article that looks at fast food products from a corporate perspective is one by Mathe-Soulek et al. Quick-service restaurants (**QSRs**) have menus that generally are "static" and limited to ensure efficiency in forecasting purchases and preparations (Pavesic, 2006). Aside from their everyday static menus QSRs mainly focus on two types of promotion formats: new product promotions and price-based promotions (Mathe-Soulek et al., 2016). The price-based promotion strategy is often used by QSRs because it requires little investment in product development, and the firms can highlight selected products which aim to generate the highest profit from purchasing decisions (*ibid.*). The new product promotion strategy is beneficial for QSRs because products in the restaurant industry are easy to copy and QSR-firms should

therefore aim to create products which are rare and not interchangeable in order to reach success (Harrington, 2004).

The primary reasons for why restaurant executives and marketers choose to add new menu items is to respond to customer demands and reach increase in sales and profit (Glanz et al., 2007). Other possible reasons include adding a seasonal flavour, replacing a poorly selling menu item or responding to trends for a particular ingredient or diet (Pavesic, 2006). New product introduction generally occurs in two forms: new platform introductions and product line extension (Mathe-Soulek et al., 2016). When a new type of product category which was not formerly on the menu is introduced it is new platform introduction. Product line extension is when a new product is added as a flavour extension to a present platform. New platform introductions are not as common for QSRs as product line extension, this because they require additional space, new stock-keeping units, training of the staff etcetera (*ibid.*). Mathe-Soulek et al. (2016) investigated what effect price-based promotions versus new product promotions would have on same-store sales (SSS)<sup>1</sup> and percent change in stock price. They found that price-based promotions had no noteworthy impact on changes in SSS, while new product promotions resulted in significant difference in changes to SSS (Mathe-Soulek et al., 2016). The authors reflected that the reason for the positive impact of the new product promotion was that the ability to choose a new and innovative product may be enticing for the customer and give her a more premium experience (*ibid.*).

This thesis uses both a market and a corporate perspective. First, the corporate perspective (2.2) will be presented, then the market perspective (2.3) and lastly the literature framework and analytical framework (2.4) will be discussed and presented.

## 2.2 Corporate perspective

There are numerous perspectives which could be used when researching this subject. What vegan fast food products that can be available on the market is closely related to how the companies on said market act. Two kinds of theoretical frameworks within the corporate perspective have been chosen for this study. The first is Strategic Niche Management (SNM) and the second New Product Development (NPD). SNM is used because the vegan fast food product can be viewed as a niche, a specific segment of the market, and SNM can help understand how such as niche works and what can be done to make the niche transition into the mainstream market. NPD (which starts at 2.2.2) is used in attempt to understand the process of how a product is made, and thereby create knowledge in how the vegan fast food product can be developed.

### 2.2.1 Strategic niche management

A niche is defined as a protective space for path-breaking innovations (Smith & Raven, 2012). Using a niche to experiment on finding ways to learn about and tackle social challenges, such as sustainability, can be a beneficial (Raven, van den Bosch & Weterings, 2010). In the article by Smith and Raven (2012) they state that in order for the protective space of a niche to create an effective transition process the following three requirements need to be met: shielding, nurturing and empowerment. Initial shielding is needed because new-to-the-world innovations fail to successfully compete with established concepts (Smith & Raven,

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<sup>1</sup> Same-store sales is a financial metric which companies in the retail industry can use to evaluate the total amount of sales in the company's stores that have been operating for a year, or more (Investopedia, 2017).

2012). Within this shielded space niche actors can nurture the innovations to make it strong enough to be launched into the world. The nurturing can be done through performance improvements and expansion in supportive networks (*ibid.*). The need for protection falls away gradually as the innovation enters wider markets. The innovation can now become competitive and influential enough to contribute to regime shifts or transitions towards sustainability (*ibid.*). An example is the development of solar photovoltaic cells, which initially were developed in the protective space of the satellite programmes of the 1960's, and later the public research programmes in material science and policies for the development of renewable energy since the 1970's (*ibid.*).

### **2.2.1.1 Empowered to make a difference**

According to Smith and Raven (2012) empowerment can be understood as a process that either makes niche innovations competitive within unchanged environments, or that contributes to changes in the mainstream environments in positive ways to path-breaking niche innovations. When a niche innovation is developed in such a way that it fits into and conforms to a relatively unaltered environment it is called *fit and conform empowerment* (Smith & Raven, 2012). The process to develop and empower this niche innovation has been the goal of making the innovation competitive within the current environment. The other type of empowerment is called *stretch and transform empowerment* (*ibid.*). This is the type of empowerment that enables the niche to change its' environment, rather than being inferiorized by it. It is a process that re-structures the mainstream environment in ways favourable to the niche (*ibid.*). If we return to the example of solar powers these continued their empowerment after the research programmes initiated in the 1970's. Since the 1990's sustainable energy policies in some countries of the world has allowed for the solar panels to enter a market-niche for retrofitting or integrating solar power systems into buildings and then selling this electricity into the grid (*ibid.*).

Empowered niches play a role as symbols for more sustainable alternatives, and as such they can inform processes of institutional reforms even if they rarely drive those processes by themselves (Smith, Stirling & Berkhout, 2005). Reforming or creating new institutions requires power (Smith & Raven, 2012). Stretch-and-transform niches can create capabilities and attract resources that empowers participation in political debates on the future shape of institutions. The objective in the stretch-and-transform type of niche empowerment is to convince the broader social world that the rules of the game need to be changed (*ibid.*). It is possible to observe this process as niches become more established. The example of solar panels is relevant here as well. It has been observed that advocates of them have been able to get into wider social movements for anti-nuclear sentiments, low carbon energy and policy elite interest in ecological modernisation – as well as the development of green jobs and economies (*ibid.*).

### **2.2.1.2 Strategic Niche Management and (Sustainability) Transition Management**

Many sectors in modern society, such as the energy sector and mobility sector, face structural problems (Raven, van den Bosch & Weterings, 2010). The environmental performance of these sectors has improved over the last 30 years, but an increasing number of actors such as scientists, industry and policy makers have begun to realise that technological fixes and end-of-pipe solutions are not enough – there is need for structural change (*ibid.*). Raven, van den Bosch and Weterings (2010) refer to Geels (2002), Rotmans (2003) and Kemp and Loorbach (2006) when they state that as an answer to the realisation of the need for structural change,

programs for innovation and research on 'transitions' towards a more sustainable solution to social problems have emerged.

Raven, van den Bosch and Weterings (2010) reference to Rip and Kemp (1998) and Geels (2002) when they describe that transitions can be defined as key shifts in social-technical regimes or the main way in which social needs such as energy supply are fulfilled. Transitions are complex and long-term processes, often lasting many years, because regimes tend to be stabilised and then resist any fundamental transformation (Raven, van den Bosch & Weterings, 2010). This lock-in arises at three levels: institutional, technological and social. Institutions can be both formal, such as regulations and laws, and informal such as cultural values. The institutions can hinder transformation because they are often rigid and thus prevent breakthroughs of social innovations (*ibid.*). The technological aspects give a stiffness to the regime and they furthermore often represent great vested interest of incumbent actors. The social actors are the ones representing institutionalised power and organisational capital. This may lead them to support the old system even if the new alternative presents improved economic, social and environmental features (*ibid.*).

Raven, van den Bosch and Weterings (2010) refer to Rip and Kemp (1998) and Geels (2002) when presenting the multi-level perspective on transitions. This perspective distinguishes three analytical concepts: regimes, the landscape and niches. The regime concept is often seen in a negative light (Raven, van den Bosch & Weterings, 2010). It is often viewed as a way of explaining why innovations do not break through. Regime rules and institutions guide regime actors in a specific direction which could make them blind for new alternatives, or even discourage or punish the development of new alternatives (*ibid.*). The landscape works as a metaphor for the background setting and background developments of regimes and niches. It is the social and external context that constrain or enable the possibilities for regime change. The niche concept is often viewed in a positive light – as a counterpart for regime problems (*ibid.*). Niches represent the things new to the world, fundamental change and promise of progress and improvement. In the multi-level perspective niches are where radical innovations are developed and from where they can grow to be able to replace regimes practices (*ibid.*)

The field of sustainability transition research is characterized by a broad variety of approaches, topics and methodologies (Farla et al., 2012). Socio-technological transitions towards sustainability are however generally understood as fundamental changes in organizational, technological and institutional terms for both production and consumption. Such transitions require new business models, services and products to emerge – complementing or replacing existing elements (*ibid.*). An example of a socio-technological transition is the introduction of the car and related infrastructure. Socio-technical systems can often be traced back to strategic interventions of specific actors. Transitions and innovation processes do not emerge from unintentional interplay of actors that pursue their own individual strategies. Instead, they may be shaped by actors with some form of bigger plan or vision. Future research may embark in a more thorough way on how actor resources and strategies influence the outcome of sustainability transitions (*ibid.*).

### 2.2.2 New Product Development

NPD is a business activity which generally is connected to promise and approached with optimism (Trott, 2005). If new products become successful they possess the ability to revitalize the organisation which sells them. Through the development of new or improved products to existing markets an organisation has the possibility to grow (*ibid.*).



What a company can accomplish is bound to its core capabilities, and the capabilities it can acquire or develop (Trott, 2005). Trott (2005) refers to Kay (1993) who suggests that a broader view of the issue includes that the capabilities of a company goes beyond the technical, such as a company's 'architecture', and that it includes the networks within and around the company. He refers to Doyle (1995) when he explains that product development can be seen not as created by individual producers, but by networks of alliances and partnerships.

Before substantial resources are applied to a project a product planning process is initiated (Trott, 2005). A product plan should be closely linked to the broader strategy of the company and requires input from research and development. Creating products which consumers perceive as worth buying may be unplanned, but more often it is the result of systematic and careful work (*ibid.*). A product plan is not for only one of the company's products but for their entire portfolio. For a company to be able to match market opportunities they need to offer a balanced set of capabilities to their customers. The planning process should therefore consider development ideas from different sources of the companies, such as marketing, customers and current product teams (*ibid.*). The product plan needs to be updated regularly to adapt to the changing competition. Product development strategies are generally divided into four different categories: new product platforms, derivatives of existing platforms, incremental improvements to existing products and fundamentally new products (discontinuous products). New product platforms involve a major development effort to establish a new group of products based on a new and common platform. This type of category of product development could be in the form of a development of a new core technology. Derivatives of existing platforms are projects that aim to develop an existing platform, to ensure that the existing products are updated. This type of product development is performed to either make sure that the products can compete with the current competition or provide the products with an advantage over the competition (*ibid.*). An example of this is how Honda have used their product platform of small petrol engines and applying this technology to a variety of applications, such as lawn movers, chainsaws and motorcycles (*ibid.*). Incremental improvements to existing products are the type of projects that may only involve adjusting or adding to the current products. This is done to keep the product line up-to-date and competitive. Fundamentally new products (discontinuous products) are projects that aim to create radically different products or production technologies. These projects may take the company into new and unacquainted markets. This means that they are risky from a short-term perspective, but may help secure the company's future long-term (*ibid.*).

Developing new products can be a risky endeavour, but it is required to fulfil the needs of both the customers and the organisation (Trott, 2005). The organisation need is articulated in the organisation's strategy and there it will be likely to find comments about what type of product development the company aims to strive for, e.g. to lead in the technology. The new product development can vary between different companies depending on if they want to be a leader or a follower. If a company strives to be a leader they will be interested in developing new-to-the-world innovations, but since most companies are followers most product development has its base in existing products (*ibid.*). The development planning may also vary based on short-term or long-term perspective. Short-term development may be in the form of adding new features to existing products or producing new sizes of the existing products. The company may employ these changes to secure small market segment from possible competitors or to secure distributor loyalty, because they can then carry a full range of the product and be less motivated to take on rival offerings (*ibid.*). Short-term new product

development requires little to no research. Taking the long-term perspective means looking for more substantial contributions from new products. This can entail venturing into new product categories, within the same or a related technology – or one that is a new area for the company. The new products may aim to attract the company's regular customer base or entirely new segments. Because this long-term strategy requires more substantial changes it will likely entail thorough marketing and technical research, development and testing (*ibid.*). Developing new products also has a value as a learning experience for the company. The company may have to develop new skills and knowledge in operations, technical and marketing areas (*ibid.*).

## 2.3 Market perspective

As established earlier, there are numerous perspectives which could be used when researching this subject. What vegan fast food products that can be available on the market is closely related to how the consumers of that market act. Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) has therefore been chosen as one of the theoretical perspectives of this study. One of the areas within the CCT that is investigated for this thesis is consumption identity and desire (2.3.1). The other area of CCT used in this study is wants and necessities (2.3.2). These two areas have been chosen in attempt to understand if and how the consumption of vegan fast food products is based on the consumers' identity, desire, wants and/or necessities.

### 2.3.1 Consumption identity and desire

The way we consume says more about our identities than we might think. In his article from 1988 Belk explores the idea of possessions and the extended self. Belk (1988) writes that possessions both show a reflection of, and contributes, to our identities. Possessions incorporated into extended self-serve functions to the human that owns them. Such a function is acting as an objective manifestation of the self. Possessions help us change our possibilities and present ourselves in a way that gathers feedback from others who are reluctant to respond openly to the unextended self (Belk, 1988). The way we consume can therefore be a way to find group membership, and vice versa, that the group we belong to can affect the way we consume. Belk (1988) refers to Boorstin (1973) who proposes that one of the key ways of defining and expressing group membership is through shared consumption symbols. We often define family, subculture, group etcetera through consumption objects (Belk, 1988). Food is a form of possession that literally becomes an extension of ourselves. Therefore, sharing food with others is a symbolic way of sharing group identity (*ibid.*). Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) write that the human body is a cultural body and therefore we find different foods disgusting or delicious largely based on our culture. It appears that an underlying motivation behind even our most object-focused desires is having social connections with other people and receiving desired responses from said people (*ibid.*). Even though desire is felt internally, it is ultimately social. The object of desire is hoped to enable social relations, joining with others and directing one's social destiny (*ibid.*).

Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) discuss in their paper the idea of *desire* being the motivating force behind much of consumption. The authors define desire as an embodied passion involving a quest for sociality, otherness, danger and inaccessibility. What drives and underlies the pursuit of desire is longing, self-seduction, desire for desire, hopefulness, fear of being without desire and tensions between seduction and morality (Belk, Ger & Askegaard 2003). We live our daily lives torn between social encouragements to both control and indulge in our desires and more or less successfully controlling and resisting our consumer

desires. Constrains on desire have traditionally been imposed by institutions, but today they are embedded in the range of social lifestyles available for us to choose from (*ibid.*). For example, the desire to eat animal-based food can be replaced by constrain, not forced by an institution, but chosen by the person herself. The informants in Belk, Ger and Askegaard's (2003) study expressed that a fundamental appeal of desire lies in the promise of otherness or escape. Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) write that the informants of their study linked desire to figures such as Cinderella and Batman. These figures represent an anticipated transformation to the future, past or another place – all of which offer escape from the person's current life conditions. "*To desire is to envision a transformed and ideal self*" (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003, p. 343).

The article written by Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) further discusses the combination of culture and the socialization of desire. The data from the study implied that on one hand the pleasure of desire rests on breaking the order, routines and rules – but on the other hand moral conduct, sociality and self-control are themselves desirable. These tensions are neither solely between the individual's desires and social or self-constrains, nor merely between desires and sin – the tension is also between the individual's own moral, social, emotional desires and more transgressive desires (Belk, Ger & Askegaard 2003). Paradoxical tensions can be in the form of freedom versus enslavement of addiction, enjoyment versus guilt and rationality versus childishness and uninhibited animality. The different play of these forces can be seen in the cultural variations found in Belk, Ger and Askegaard's (2003) study. They found that consumer desire is likely to be manifested differently in different times and cultures depending on socialization and cultural intermediaries such as marketing, media and advertising. With capitalism being a global phenomenon its ideology of consumerism is likely to create a connection between human potential of desire and objects of consumption (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). The authors found that there were clear connections between the informants' desires and their exposure to the capitalistic tools such as marketing and advertisement. However, the authors also express that "*the consumer is no mere pawn, either in the web of seduction or in the web of social relations*" (*ibid.*, p. 346). Through the desire to desire, consumers allow and prepare themselves to be seduced. They only need to make themselves accessible to becoming enchanted by the promises of the market – their imagination does the rest (*ibid.*).

### 2.3.2 Wants and necessities

Consumption can take many forms. In their article from 2016 Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk explore how a product gains the status of necessity. Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) mean that we need to move away from the classical dichotomy of necessity versus luxury as universal and constant. The authors instead present a focus on how consumers experience emotional events in their lives linked to certain products, and that these products then move from unnecessary to necessary. The result of Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) study presents that there are five stages of necessitation (how a product becomes necessary). They are as follows: familiarization, transformation in the form of redemption or contamination, memorialization, (re)integration and reconstruction, and solidification. The familiarization stage is, as it sounds, the first contact the consumer has with the product. The first contact can be that the consumer purchases the product in question, but it can also be familiarization in the form of hearing about or seeing the product through acquaintances or commercials (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016). The transformation of how the consumer views the product can be in the form of redemption or contamination. Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) refer to McAdams and Bowman (2001) and Pals (2006) when they explain that

redemption is when a bad or emotionally negative experience changes into a good or emotionally positive experience. Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) refer to McAdams and Bowman (2001) to explain contamination which, in contrast to redemption, is a movement in a person's life from a good or emotionally positive experience to a bad or emotionally negative experience. Memorialization can be explained as when consumers do or create something that will aid them in remembering the transformational experience (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016). Finally, solidification is the point where the consumer decisively perceives the product as a necessity – a product that she will not live without (*ibid.*).

Understanding how necessitation works is useful for researchers as well as companies, especially the ones working with marketing at said companies. Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) claim that we should move from the classical distinction between necessity and luxury and realise that what is considered a luxury for one person may be a necessity for another. The authors encourage researchers to investigate the historical and cultural aspects of consumer experience to better understand why certain products have come to be perceived as necessary. Marketers can make use of the insights of the five stages of necessitation when planning their campaigns (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016). By knowing of these stages the marketers can develop materials to ease the movement of their company's products from the familiarization, through transformation and toward the final solidification stage (*ibid.*).

## 2.4 Summary of literature

There are different possible perspectives to take when researching the subject of this study. The aim of this study is to investigate hinders and opportunities for development of vegan fast food in the Swedish food service sector from a marketing perspective. This aim relates to both a market perspective and a corporate perspective, and therefore literature from both of these perspectives has been used for this study. As can be seen in the figure below (Figure 1) the company and market co-exist.

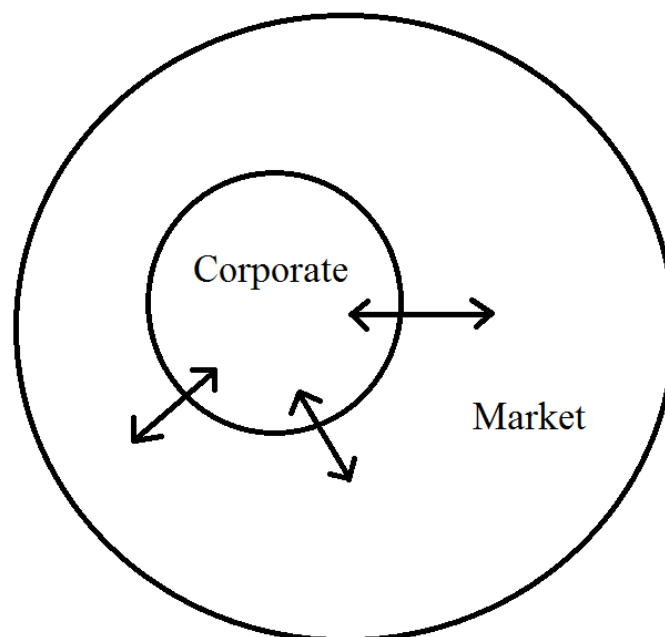


Figure 1. The relationship between company (corporate) perspective and market perspective.

It is important to research the corporate perspective in order to understand how companies develop their strategies for what they want to launch out on the market. It is equally important to study the market perspective in order to understand what is demanded there, which the companies then can provide. The corporate perspective part of this literature chapter consists of SNM and NPD. The market perspective is made up of CCT. SNM is a theory used to understand how innovations can be handled in a guarded space, the niche, to study it in a safe and shielded environment. This is done to find ways of empowering the innovation so it further on can release into the market and create for example, sustainability transition. NPD can be used to understand the process of product development. It focuses on how a product goes from being an idea to a finished product, ready to be consumed. CCT focuses on the consumption and the cultural influences on it. It can be used to understand how culture and human behavior affect one another and how this in turn affects the market. Table 1 presents three different analytical perspectives, identified from the literature, to analyse and make sense of hindrances and opportunities.

Table 1: An overview of the literature framework.

	<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Application</b>
<b>SNM</b>	An innovation within a niche (protective space)	Innovation, empowerment, transition	Learning, guide for teaching how to empower and transition
<b>NPD</b>	Product development, corporate development	Stages, process, development	Guide for product development for firms and within firms
<b>CCT</b>	Consumers, consumption culture	Culture, behaviour, consumption, marketing	Guide for marketing, understanding consumer culture

The SNM theory is generally used to analyse and guide technology development, for example how solar panels were developed – as mentioned earlier in this chapter. A drawback with this framework being applied to this study is that it might fit well for technology, but possibly not for vegan fast food products. The idea of niche can however help identify the vegan market as a niche market. It is however not a purposely developed niche, as suggested by the SNM framework. The NPD theory has focus on product from a corporate perspective. Furthermore, this perspective has focus on the firm and does not recognize the influence of non-profit organisations, industry associations, political structures etcetera. This framework covers products, which is relevant for this study, but may fail to cover consumer culture. The CCT focuses on consumption and consumer culture. It has a disadvantage in that it does not put much emphasis on the product being consumed. It does however highlight and nuance consumers, which is relevant for this study’s unit of analysis, which is consumer culture of vegan fast food products in the Swedish context.

For this thesis the chosen analytical framework is the CCT. This was chosen based on the nature of the thesis’s aim and its’ unit of analysis. The CCT components are, as seen in Figure 1, culture, behavior, consumption and marketing and the theory can be used as a way of understanding consumer culture and as a guide for marketing. In this thesis two themes in CCT are discussed – consumption identity and desire (2.3.1) and wants and necessities

(2.3.2). Part 2.3.1 discusses how our identity affects how we consume and vice versa. The possessions, experiences and products we chose to consume can help us find and express our identity and find belonging in groups of people how consume in ways similar to our own. The group we belong to can in turn affect how we consume. Furthermore, desire and its' connection to consumption is described. Desire and constrain can take many forms, but they have in common that they affect consumption. Culture and desire is also discussed – and how the individual can be torn in her desire because of culture, her group belonging and personal identity. Part 2.3.2 discusses wants and necessities and the term “necessitation” is introduced. It is discussed that what an individual considers necessary may not be universal, but be so because the object considered necessary has gone through the five stages of necessitation: familiarization, transformation in the form of redemption or contamination, memorialization, (re)integration and reconstruction and finally soldification. Understanding necessitation can be of importance in marketing.

Because CCT covers many aspects that could be connected to the thesis's aim, research questions and unit of analysis it has been chosen as the analytical framework of this thesis. For example, CCT focuses on consumers and the unit of analysis of this study is consumer culture surrounding the consumption of vegan fast food products in the Swedish context. Some connections between the empirical results and SNM and NPD will be discussed in chapter 6, Discussion, but the primary analysis of the data will be done using CCT. The analysis of the empirics using CCT as the analytical framework will be presented in chapter 5, Analysis. More about the analytical choices made can be found in chapter 3, part 3.4 Analysis of the data.

## 3 Method

*Chapter 3 aims to present arguments for the approach and further methodological choices of this study. It contains a review of the theoretical framework and literature, a description of the data analysis, a discussion of the methodological choices, a reflection on trustworthiness and reflexivity and lastly a presentation of ethical considerations.*

### 3.1 Research approach and design

#### 3.1.1 Qualitative method approach

For this study, a qualitative method approach was used. Compared with quantitative research designs, qualitative research designs focus more on words than numbers when collecting and analysing data (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The qualitative study is also characterised by its inductive view of the relationship between empirics and theory and its focus on interpreting – a focus on understanding the social reality for the participants of the study and how they interpret this reality. Furthermore, the qualitative method approach has a constructionistic ontological standpoint, meaning that social features are a result of interplay between different actors – not something that is separated from those who are involved in the construction (*ibid.*).

Traditionally, the basic choice to make when conducting social research was quantitative or qualitative social research (Robson, 2011). The quantitative approach was inspired to essentially follow the same research route as researchers in the “natural” sciences such as physics, biology and chemistry (*ibid.*). Advocates of the qualitative approach are of the opinion that because social research focuses on human beings in social situations the quantitative method, which is of the same research path as the “natural sciences”, is not suitable for social research (*ibid.*). Human language and consciousness, the interactions between humans in social situations, the undisputable fact that both the researcher and the researched are human and a list of other aspects were the reason why the qualitative approach was considered required (*ibid.*). Qualitative social research focuses on meanings, context is viewed as important and situations are described from the perspective of the ones involved (*ibid.*). All of these features of the qualitative approach go in line with the subject of this study. The aim of the study is to understand a complex and socially created phenomenon within its current context. Veganism is concept which is created by and for humans and how we eat, as seen in chapter 1 and 2, is based not only on nutritional aspects but the feelings of the human and her ethical and social standpoint plays a big part. Making this research with a method that focuses on human consciousness and interaction was therefore deemed fitting.

Within the qualitative approach there are different research designs. Three widely used research designs within the qualitative paradigm is case study, ethnographic study and grounded theory study (Robson, 2011). The case study’s typical features include a selection of a single case which is then studied within its current context. The ethnographic study aims to capture, explain and interpret how an organisation, community or group experience, live and make sense of their world. A typical feature of the ethnographic study is that uses a participant observation (*ibid.*). The grounded theory study seeks to generate theory from data collection conducted during the study. For this thesis, the case study design was chosen.

### 3.1.2 Case study

In a case study the case is the group, individual, organization, situation or whatever it is that the researcher is interested in (Robson, 2011). The case study is a well-established research strategy where the focus is on case in its own right, with consideration for its context. It normally involves multiple methods of data collection, quantitative or qualitative, though the qualitative is almost always involved in some form (*ibid.*). Robert Yin (2009) defines this strategy for social research as one that involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its own context using various sources of evidence.

A case study is concerned with the particular nature and complexity of the case in question (Bryman & Bell, 2013). What distinguishes a case study is the focus on a bounded system or situation (*ibid.*). Stake (1995) states that the selection of a case should first and foremost be based on maximization of what we can learn. Because of the uniqueness of Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB as a hamburger chain that focuses in such an extent on meals that does not consist of the traditional idea of a hamburger, this case presents a great opportunity for learning. For example, this case could teach us more about how a firm in the food service sector promote a more vegan based diet.

A case study allows the researcher to go in depth of a phenomenon, group, and situations etcetera (Robson, 2011). There is however of course critic against the case study. A central question in case studies is how a single case possibly could generate findings that can be applied more generally to other cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Can there be generalizability or external validity of a case study (*ibid.*)? The answer to that, according to Bryman and Bell (2011) is that there cannot. It might be possible to use details from a single case study to use in theoretical generalizability (*ibid.*). Whether or not this will be possible based on this study remains to be seen. The researcher of this study is however aware of the difficulty in reaching generalizability with a case study and therefore it is not a goal of the thesis. The goal instead goes in line with that what Bryman and Bell (2011) recommend for a case study – to concentrate on the uniqueness of the case and develop a thorough understanding of its complexity.

### 3.1.3 Choice of case company

This study is a case study where Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB is the case company. The study uses the case company as a key informant, but it remains an independent study with societal relevance. However, to study development of vegan products in the food service sector, collaboration with a company within this sector was deemed appropriate. This enabled the researcher to gain insight into an organisation in the chosen context.

## 3.2 Review of theoretical framework and literature

Theory can have many different meanings for different people (Robson, 2011). It can in general terms be seen as an explanation of what is going on in the phenomenon, situation or whatever that the researcher is investigating (*ibid.*). It is advantageous to be able to link one's study to current formal theories. It shows that the researcher's work goes in line with the attempts made by other researchers to understand what is currently happening in the study field. It also provides quality to the study and it may then be a chance that the study can make a contribution, however small, to the development of the theory (*ibid.*).



References to build the theory of this study on were found using different approaches. Mainly, they were found through academic search engines such as Google Scholar, Web of Science and the Library Database of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences – Primo. In order to aim for high quality references the searches were specified so that peer reviewed articles would be prioritized. The articles and books were also chosen based on their novelty. Mainly new references were chosen over old to ensure that this study was not built on information that may be faulty due to new discoveries in the respected fields of study. Some older references, such as the article by Belk written in 1988, were used because their authors are famous for their excellent research and/or because they were the most suitable reference for this thesis that could be found.

When developing the background of the study it became clear that veganism is not mainstream. As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to a nation-wide poll executed in the US only 1,4 percent of the country's population adult population claimed themselves to be vegan (Stahler, 2006). This implies that veganism is a form of niche in consumption. Therefore, the SNM theory was chosen to build the theoretical background of the thesis. However, when searching for theoretical material on this subject it became apparent that most articles were written focusing on technology. In the field of technology SNM is used when developing new technological innovations. The niche becomes a place where the innovation can develop and build strength. Finding references on SNM that related to vegan food products and/or fast food products proved to be difficult. The references for this section has therefore been focused on SNM in general terms.

NPD was the second theory chosen to build the theoretical background for this study. The case company wishes to be able to develop vegan food products that can appeal to vegans and non-vegans alike. An insight into the theory on how to develop new products was thereby deemed fitting for this thesis. As mentioned in the previous chapter CCT is the analytical framework and primary theory of the study, but some discussion of NPD and the empirical results will be presented in Chapter 6 Discussion.

For this study, it was essential to create an understanding of consumption theory. Since the aim of the study is to understand the market and consumers of vegan food products, an understanding of what makes people chose to consume or not and why was deemed useful. Many quality references on consumption could be found, but when searching for fast food consumption it became more difficult. The articles that could be found on fast food consumption mainly focused on the social status of the consumer and/or health and obesity. When searching for consumption with focus on veganism the results were also few. It appears, that there perhaps are theoretical gaps present here.

There is theoretical relevance in combining the corporate- and market perspective, since most studies and articles focus on one of the two perspectives – not both. Because most studies focus on one of the two perspectives, and this investigates both, this study then becomes an exploratory study. It is exploratory because the study is conducted in such a way that it investigates a phenomenon from a novel perspective. Vegan food products and fast food products, and these two concepts related to any of the three main theories for this thesis, seem to be areas in need of further research. The lack of this kind of theory could problematize the writing of the analysis for this study, but it could also mean that this study has an innovative trait. Hermerén (2011) states that when a study is innovative and aims to create something new in some regard, it benefits greatly to that study's quality.

### 3.3 Data collection

There are several possible approaches to data collection. In social research some of the most common data collection techniques are: forming questionnaires, using observations and interviewing (Robson, 2011). Questionnaire-based surveys are simple and straightforward and provide high amounts of data standardization. However, the data collected from a survey are affected by the characteristics of the respondents, who may not want to report their attitudes and beliefs truthfully (*ibid.*). A key advantage of observation is its directness – the researcher does not need to ask people about their opinions and feelings, he or she can simply look and listen. There is however in issue in what extent the researcher affects the observed situation by being in it (*ibid.*). The data collection chosen for this study is semi-structured interviews. What they are and why they were chosen will be explained below.

The data of this study has been collected through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview entails that the researcher has an interview guide which serves as a form of checklist for topics to be covered (Robson, 2011). The guide contains default wording and an order of the questions, but based on how the interview flows, additional unplanned questions are asked to follow up on what the interviewee articulates (*ibid.*). The interviewees were asked for consent before recording, this in accordance with The Swedish Research Council (Hermerén, 2011) recommendation as an ethical consideration. The interviews were recorded with a dictaphone, transcribed and key insights were formed. The interviews were conducted in Swedish and the key insights were written in English. All of the respondents are Swedish and the interviews were therefore chosen to be conducted in their mother tongue to allow them to express themselves with freedom and ease. The key insights were then sent back to the interviewees so that they could highlight any eventual misconceptions and thereby strengthen the validity of the result.

For this study seven interviews were conducted. Each interview consisted of 15 questions and took on average 45 minutes each. The identities of the interviewees are kept anonymous for this study (more about this in part 3.7 Ethical considerations). The interviewees are a mix of representatives from organisations with some form of connection to veganism, employees at the operational level of Max Hamburgare and people from companies working with food products in general and/or vegan food products. The interviewees (except the ones from the case company) were found by searching on Google using keywords such as “vegan”, “vegan food”, “sustainable eating”. The method of snowballing was also applied when searching for respondents, ergo that one respondent could lead to another. For example, one respondent that works for a non-profit organisation was contacted and she said that she was not available for an interview but recommended another respondent whom she had worked with and this respondent was then contacted and said yes to being interviewed. The ones chosen to be interviewed were the ones considered most relevant for this study, for example if the organisations had many members, had been active in vegan issues for many years, if the companies had produced vegan products for several years etcetera. All of the possible interviewees were initially contacted via email. Those who responded that they wished to participate were then contacted further via email or telephone to set up a specific time for the interview.

An interview is an adaptable and flexible way of understanding phenomenon (Robson, 2011). Face-to-face interviews, which were used for four of the interviews in this study, offer the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry and following up interesting responses with further questions and/or comments. Non-verbal cues may give message which help in

understanding the verbal response of the interviewee, or even changing or reversing its meaning (*ibid.*). Three of the interviews were conducted by telephone. It can be discussed which of these types of interviews is preferable. The telephone interview is quicker to administer and cheaper (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Telephone interview has another advantage in that in personal interviews the respondents may be affected by the characteristics of the interviewer, such as ethnicity or class. The remoteness of the interviewer in a telephone interview removes this potential for bias to a great extent (*ibid.*). A disadvantage of the telephone interview is that there is no possibility for observation. This entails that the interviewer is given no chance to see the facial expressions of the respondents. In personal interviews the researcher can respond to these expressions by for example restating the question (*ibid.*). By having (almost) half of the interviews being done by telephone and the (slightly bigger) other half in person this could better the data quality by having the disadvantages of each form level each other out.

One of the critiques towards interviews is that there is no standardization of them. Biases are also difficult to distinguish and exclude. Interviews also require a lot of preparation and are time consuming to perform (*ibid.*). In attempt to avoid these disadvantages some measures were taken. To create interview questions that would generate a lot of information, but not be too time consuming or bias, the questions were created by the researcher, but then discussed with the supervisor and the contact at the case company. By discussing it with these two important contacts for the study the hope was that they could see flaws with the questions that the researcher might be blind to. Furthermore, as mentioned in part 3.3.1, the key insights of the interviews were sent to the respondents so that they could see if there was bias or other mistakes made during the interviews. Table 2 offers an overview of the interviews.

Table 2: An overview of the interviews.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Interview structure</b>
Söderlund, Nina	Member of the board of a non-profit organisation	2017-03-02	Telephone interview
Björkgren, Sara	Chairperson of a non-profit organisation	2017-03-07	Telephone interview
Johansson, Eva	Chairperson of a non-profit organisation	2017-03-08	Face-to-face interview
Lindgren, Frida	Product Portfolio Manager at a food company	2017-03-09	Telephone interview
Torstensson, Samuel	Expert on climate at a non-profit organisation	2017-03-10	Face-to-face interview
Strömberg, Lars	Manager at Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB	2017-03-14	Face-to-face interview
Andersson, Urban	Manager at Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB	2017-03-14	Face-to-face interview

Seven interviews have been conducted. Two of them were with employees at corporate level at Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB. Four of the interviews were with people working for non-profit organisations which work with veganism in different forms. The remaining interview

was with a manager at a food company which produces vegan products. The identities of all of the interviewees, except for the ones at Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, are kept anonymous. The reasons behind this decision are further explained in chapter 3, part 3.5 Ethical considerations. The interviewees have been given fictitious names to protect their identity, and still make it easy to understand the results by naming the respondents. It is worth mentioning that Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB was never brought up by the researcher, so when the interviewees used the company as an example they did so spontaneously.

### 3.4 Data quality of the study

When assessing data quality one way to go about it is by weighing the evidence. Some data are stronger than others and you can place greater reliance on conclusions which are based on them (Robson, 2011). Stronger data are generally those the researcher collected firsthand, which were observed directly, which arise from repeated contact, which are collected when the respondent is alone rather than in a group setting and which come from trusted informants (*ibid.*). Out of these five criteria at least two were met. The data was collected by the researcher firsthand and it was directly observed. With the interviews being done in person the criteria of the respondents being alone with the researcher was also met. It is possible that the respondents being interviewed by telephone also were alone, but it cannot be guaranteed.

Receiving feedback from the respondents is another way of assessing data quality in a qualitative study. The process of “member checking” honours the contract between researcher and respondent to provide feedback on the findings of the study (Robson, 2011). It also gives the opportunity to corroborate the findings (*ibid.*) After the interviewees had been transcribed the key findings were translated to English and sent to the respondents via email. None of the respondents expressed need to change what the researcher had described in the findings.

One of the interview questions was added after the first interview was conducted. This question was therefore asked to the first respondent via email. She, and all the other respondents, were asked at the end of their interviews if the researcher could contact them with further questions if needed and she and the other respondents agreed. The fact that this additional question was answered via email instead of during the interview may have affected the nature of the answer, and therefore its quality.

### 3.5 Analysis of the data

From the beginning of the data collection the researcher starts to decide what things mean by noting patterns, regularities, explanations, causal flows etcetera (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A competent researcher is light in these conclusions, remaining open and skeptical. As the research continues the conclusions become increasingly explicit, but finalized conclusions may not appear until the data collection is over (*ibid.*). The unit of analysis is consumer culture of vegan fast food products in the Swedish context. The analysis has of course been made with this in mind.

#### 3.5.1 Identifying patterns

Once all the interviewees had been conducted they were transcribed. The transcripts were read, translated to English and in accordance with the analysis method presented by Graebner and Eisenhardt (2004) the researcher started to look for themes and patterns. These were formulated into key insights and sent back to the respondents for review. A data display with

quotes from the interviews was made in Excel to create an overview of the key insights (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). The quotes were placed in different categories while moreover being compared with the analytical framework (introduced in part 2.4.1). For an example of this, please see figure 1 in Appendix 2. The patterns, casual connections and the information that stood out as different were compiled and became the ground for Chapter 5 – Analysis.

The greatest requirement in qualitative analysis is clear thinking on the part of the researcher (Robson, 2011). Qualitative analysis remains nearer to codified common sense than the complexity of statistical analysis of quantitative data. However, humans as analysts have deficiencies and biases. There is for example a limitation to the amount of data that a human can deal with, she might not be able to evaluate the reliability of her sources and the human has a tendency to ignore information that stands in conflict with her initial ideas etcetera (*ibid.*). Documented approaches to analysis help minimize the human deficiencies. For this study, the methods by Graebner & Eisenhardt (2004), Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010) and the progressive funnel, inspired by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) were used in attempt to minimize the deficiencies of the human conducting this study. There are of course other ways of analysing the type of data used in this thesis, but the concept of structuring the different transcripts and compare them to the theoretical framework using an Excel file gave structure to the study and made it easier to overview. The progressive funnel approach helped focusing the study so that the line of argument will not be lost in a too broad analysis.

### 3.5.2 Progressive funnel approach

Processing of data can be a time-consuming endeavour, and it is therefore essential to perform some form of reflection on it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The progressive funnel approach, as presented by Hammersley and Atkinson, has been used for this thesis. This entails that the research problem is developed and becomes more focused as the study progresses (*ibid.*). This can be seen in how chapter 2 started with an exploration of previous research related to this thesis. From this exploration, it became clear that two different perspectives, corporate and market, could be taken to research this thesis's problem. Three theoretical frameworks were included in these two perspectives – SNM and NPD for the corporate perspective and CCT for the market perspective. After discussing these three theoretical frameworks one, CCT, was chosen as the analytical framework for the thesis. It was chosen because it goes in line with the unit of analysis which is consumer culture of vegan fast food products in the Swedish context. The study has thusly been narrowed and progressively become more focused – similar to the way water flows through a funnel. To see how the analytical framework was applied to the empirical findings of the study can be found in chapter 5 Analysis.

## 3.6 Trustworthiness and reflexivity

Issues of trustworthiness and bias are present in all types of researching involving people (Robson, 2011). The nature of the flexible research design, such as a case study, usually makes this even more problematic. There is generally a close relationship between the researcher and the researched which generates a risk for bias (*ibid.*). In the cooperation with Max Hamburgare the researcher has had regular contact with the Sustainability- and Information manager and some other employees of the head office. There are different approaches available to help prevent bias. One of these is triangulation – using multiple sources to enhance the rigour of the study (*ibid.*). Since semi-structured interviews has been the only method of data collection, triangulation has not been used for this study. However,

the researcher of this study has had the privilege of having access to a peer group. Robson (2011) states that having a group of students or researcher of similar status who look into your study can help guard you against your bias. Another method that has been used to avoid bias in the study is member checking (*ibid*). After the interviews had been transcribed and key insights discovered, these were sent to the interviewees. They could then check for possible bias.

Reflexivity is a term with several meanings. The one in focus for this thesis is that researchers should reflect on the implications of their values, methods, decisions and biases, and try to be aware of how their unspoken assumptions affect their study approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Another part of reflexivity which is included entails sensitivity to the researcher's social context and location in time. Bryman and Bell (2011) consider the most important factor of reflexivity to be covered in a quote by Riach (2009: 359), reflexivity "*requires a fundamental requisitioning of what is knowable in a given context*". The researcher of this study has tried to consider in what way her values, assumptions and decisions may have affected the study. One of the first things that came to mind is the inexperience of the researcher. This may lead to important data and conclusions of this study being overlooked due to her being novice. Another personal aspect that might have an effect on this study is that the researcher is not a vegan herself. This can perhaps mean that she will not be bias towards veganism, but perhaps it could mean that she is not informed enough on what it means to eat according to the vegan diet and can thereby not fully understand this subject. These aspects are not anything the researcher is currently able to change, but by discussing reflexivity and forewarning the reader about them (Bryman & Bell, 2011) it will hopefully be easier to see the potential bias and mistakes in this study.

### 3.7 Ethical considerations

Bryman and Bell (2011) stress the importance of ethical principles. One of these is whether there is the possibility of the research bringing harm to the participants. Possibility of harm should be investigated and minimized (Bryman & Bell, 2011). One way to minimize harm that was put into practice in this study was that the interviewees read the key insights of the interviews before they were used in the thesis. If something that was noted from the interview could be harmful to the participant, he or she could express that to the researcher and it could then be modified or removed completely to eliminate the risk. Furthermore, all the interviewees are anonymous. They were made anonymous both to protect them personally and to protect the case company. The subject of this thesis concerns future ventures for Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB. This means that if the information found through this study is treated in the wrong way it could hurt the case company. Therefore, tools such as anonymity of the interviewees were used. The publication of this thesis will also be delayed for one year to further minimize risk for the case company.

## 4 Results of the empirical study

*This chapter presents the results of the study. Results from the interviews are presented in two sections, in accordance with the aim of the study: to investigate hinders and opportunities for development of vegan fast food in the Swedish food service sector from a marketing perspective. In each section the voices of the respondents are presented in the same order – Söderlund first, then Björkgren and so on. At the end of the chapter the answers of the respondents are summarized in a table, part 4.4 Summary of the empirical result.*

### 4.1 Introduction

The case company of this thesis, Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, discovered that their environmental footprint was highly based on the meat in their products. Beef alone represented 66 percent of their environmental impact (Wrenfelt & Dahlgren, 2016) and in order to make a sustainability difference the company decided to add five new vegetarian meals, one of which vegan, at the same time (Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, Greenfamiljen, 2017). The case of Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB and their wish to become even more sustainable by providing more vegan meals is point of departure of this study. The food service sector can be found worldwide and hence what alternatives they provide has a big environmental impact. It has therefore been deemed interesting by the researcher of this thesis to combine the aspects of vegan food and the food service sector and learn more about the consumption of vegan fast food products. Since Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB has some experience of this, and has expressed an interest in continuing the work, they present an appropriate context for the study.

### 4.2 Hinders for development of vegan fast food products

In this section the respondents answer three of the questions asked during the interviews: What is your view on the role of animal based food in our society today? Why do you think that animal based diets are mainstream and vegan is not? Based on your own experience – what do you believe are the most important differences between vegan and non-vegan consumers? These questions were asked because after reviewing the literature related to the subject of the thesis, there were several sources that pointed towards that we make sense of vegan food by comparing it to animal based. It was highlighted that humans' strong bond to animal based food, and especially meat, could be a reason for why the vegan diet remains non-mainstream – and thusly hinders the development of vegan fast food products. There are naturally differences in the answers and they can be interpreted differently, but generally the subheadings below describe hinders towards the development of vegan fast food products. At the end of this chapter, in part 4.4, you will find a table summarizing the answers of the respondents. The questions asked to the respondents can be found in the Appendix, part 1.

#### 4.2.1 The role of animal based food in our society today

When asking Söderlund about animal based food and its role in our society today she put emphasis on the word “köttnorm”. “Köttnorm” directly translated to English becomes “meatnorm”, ergo an expression for how it is the norm that meals should contain some form of meat, and that vegetarian or vegan meals are seen as an exception from the norm. “*The main reason for questioning this norm is that eating a more plant based diet would be more sustainable*” (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). The reasons for meat being more of the norm is

according to Söderlund because of people saying that we humans have always eaten meat, our ancestors ate meat, we need meat for our protein intake and that meat is considered tasty.

Björkgren stated that she believes that people will eat meat as long as they believe that others do it as well. *“People are very afraid of stepping out of the norm, not only in terms of veganism, but in all subjects in our society”* (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). Björkgren further argued that we want to be and act like everyone else, and if more people become vegan or express themselves in a positive way towards vegans, then more people will start to reflect upon their own role.

Johansson stated that her opinion on the role of meat in our society today is that it is overrated and a norm. *“It is a strong norm that is not questioned since it is considered natural, normal and the way it has always been and always will be”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson expressed that there is however talk of a protein shift so something is about to change – a change in how we think about protein and food. Johansson described that she was at a seminar where they talked about new trends and one of them was the protein shift and to her disappointment eating rabbits and fish produced in circular systems were highlighted as the sources of protein for the future. *“This reflects the strength of the meatnorm – that we still stay in the mindset of that our protein should come from animals”* (*ibid.*).

Lindgren stated that she thinks that it is apparent that we eat too many animal based food products. She further expressed that the trend now is that the meat consumption is increasing, which she finds troublesome (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017). Furthermore, she stated that she can see an increase in awareness among young people, for example her own son who has started to express that our consumption of animal based is unsustainable without her telling him so (*ibid.*). Lindgren pointed out that she personally has nothing against animal based food, but that it is not sustainable to produce the amount that we are today.

Torstensson expressed that the role of meat in our society today is very problematic. Moreover, he stated that our consumption is incredibly big and according to the recent statistics it is still increasing despite that it feels like we have a huge vego-trend going on now (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Torstensson stated that it is absurd and it stands in the way of so many of our environmental goals. He further argued that it also is a health problem, but primarily an environmental problem because the production of animal based foods requires so many resources and leads to massive greenhouse gas emissions (*ibid.*). *“The way we consume meat today is completely unsustainable and we will not reach our environmental goals if we do not sharply decrease it”* (*ibid.*). Torstensson expressed that it is still a question that is not on the political agenda. He stated that it has however changed from being something that people snort and laugh at to an uncomfortable question, and if you are now aware of it being uncomfortable that is a big change from before (*ibid.*).

Strömberg began by describing that he has not asked himself the question of what the role animal based food has in our society today. One aspect however that he described as interesting in this subject is that when he has met traditional meat producing companies many of them have realised that their meat sales will decrease in the future (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). *“They have started to become drivers for change and in some cases also leaders in the production of vegetarian foods”* (*ibid.*). Strömberg argued that they have become aware that they are a part of the problem, and that they then also need to be part of the solution. Strömberg expressed that he thinks that this will increase, that it goes hand in hand and that this can be shown in what Max (Hamburgerrestauranger AB) does. *“It is about making good*



*food, not about it being vegan, vegetarian or meat – regardless of what you create, produce or sell it should simply be good food” (ibid.).* Strömberg expressed that he thinks that this is “what it’s all about” – that the barriers will be erased. He further explained that the meat producing companies have started to take more responsibility, they are taking it seriously – but time will tell if they will succeed (*ibid.*).

*“It is apparent that we eat too much meat from animals, and there are many aspects to it”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson stated that if we start with health there are some question marks related to red meat and processed meat. He stated that either way we know that it is good to eat greens. Andersson argued that another aspect which is important to understand is the way meat affects the climate of the world. *“Beef is something of a ‘climate bad guy’ so for environmental reasons we should decrease our meat consumption by 80-90 percent” (ibid.).* Andersson continued by pointing out the aspect of animal welfare and asked himself if we treat our animals with respect. Andersson pointed out that he believes that it is a good sign of a civilisation when more think that thoughtfulness should go beyond humans. He expressed that this connects back to the aspect of health because we know that out of the antibiotics used in the world more are used in the production of animals than for humans (*ibid.*). *“So, it is apparent that, based on several aspects, meat is a part of the problem” (ibid.).*

#### 4.2.2 Why animal based diets are mainstream and vegan is not

Söderlund put emphasis on our history of eating as a reason for why animal based diets are considered mainstream. She explained that because our ancestors have eaten meat and because the traditional Swedish food (husmanskost) is largely based on meat, meals consisting of meat remain mainstream (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). *“Many stay in the meatnorm because it is simple, comfortable and gives the eater a feeling of safety – when one is used to eating meat, it is easier to know what one considers tasty” (ibid.).* Söderlund further argued that there is something uncomfortable and frightening about leaving what you are used to and try new things. She expressed that the notion of not eating meat becomes a new concept which is difficult to understand, and people tend to avoid what they do not fully understand (*ibid.*).

Björkgren stated that the social pressure and what kind of culture one lives in are important factors for determining how much meat one eats. She stated that for example in India, people do not eat cows in the way we do in Sweden because of a difference in culture (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). Björkgren stated that she believes that meat is consumed in Sweden because it is a sign of prosperity. *“Sweden used to be poor and we ate mostly porridge and potatoes, and when our wealth increased we started to have meat with every meal” (ibid.).* Björkgren said that she believes that when the availability of vegan food products increase, it will ease the transition towards a more plant based diet. *“If veganism can be seen in cooking shows and in regular families and people it will be seen as more of a normality” (ibid.).*

*“We have not learnt to truly question meat”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson pointed out the expression meatnorm and explained that a lot of children have a period of questioning but eventually they learn that eating meat is the normal, hence the expression “meatnorm”. She expressed that the meatnorm is an invisible structure, something that we have built ourselves into (*ibid.*). Johansson further argued that according to our western culture it is acceptable to eat some animals and some not and it is interesting to think about why this is. Johansson told of that there is an author called Melanie Joy who is a professor in psychology

and that she has written a book explaining why we eat some animals and some not. *“In this book she also presented the term ‘carnism’ as an expression for the invisible structure we have developed around meat” (ibid.)*. Johansson explained that she believes that it is important to develop an expression for the meatnorm if it is going to be possible to challenge it. She expressed that vegan food products need to be welcomed into the mainstream *(ibid.)*. *“That Coop<sup>2</sup> made a ‘vegetarian commercial’, food companies have started to mark their vegan products with ‘Vegan’ and that food stores make the vegan products easy to find – these are the kind of things which decrease the controversy around veganism and brings it into the mainstream” (ibid.)*.

Lindgren said that she found it difficult to know why we still eat so much animal based food, but one reason she could think of was that it is the extremities which receive the greatest amount of attention. *“There is a view of eating more plant based as being equal to becoming a vegan – that if you remove something you need to remove everything, when in fact we need to decrease the animal based food, not remove it completely” (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017)*. Lindgren argued that it is important that ordinary and aware people become more visible, that we move away from the “activist label” *(ibid.)*. Lindgren explained that she has noticed people in her surroundings increasingly talk about eating more plant based food, but there is a lack of knowledge on how to do it. Lindgren expressed that TV-shows about cooking can make a difference here. *“They still often pull out a steak, but you can notice a change towards more vegetarian and vegan here – but the change is slow” (ibid.)*. Lindgren continued by describing that she believes there is a lingering image of how a vegan is, but that it is changing towards a more positive image. Lindgren described the special relationship we have with milk. *“Milk is very holy, we have received information from administrative authorities about consumption of milk and now when that is questioned it becomes very emotional” (ibid.)*. Lindgren explained that people are thinking to themselves that they have consumed milk their whole lives and given it to their children and now they seem to have acted in the wrong – there is an emotional connection *(ibid.)*.

Torstensson expressed that he thinks that habits, culture and norm affect why it is more common to eat meat than to be a vegan. *“Meat has been a big part of the diet in Sweden for as long as we have lived here” (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017)*. Torstensson argued that there are furthermore quite strong political and economic interests for upholding it. He stated that there are powerful industry associations for the eating of meat and drinking of milk, and there are none for eating vegetables *(ibid.)*. *“Political interests naturally have a big impact on how we consume animal based products because today we have political and economic systems that are encouraging the production and consumption of them” (ibid.)*. Torstensson argued that the agricultural politics from EU truly supports the animal based type of food production. He further argued that most of our political parties would agree with the policy that the one who pollutes should pay, but that is not put into practice in regard for food *(ibid.)*. *“If this would have been put into practice the market would look completely different – meat would have been more expensive and the alternatives then more attractive” (ibid.)*.

Torstensson explained that he believes that a hinder in the transition towards more plant based diets is that a lot of the focus is on labels and lifestyles, instead of talking about the food we talk much more about the lifestyle. *“Things become very black and white, that if you eat vegan food you become a vegan with all the connotations included” (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017)*. Torstensson stated that even if the image from the 90s’ when eating vegan meant that you had a Molotov-cocktail in your back pocket has changed, it is still difficult to go to a

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<sup>2</sup> Coop have around 655 food stores around Sweden (Coop, 2017).

restaurant and order something vegetarian and then having to stand up for it. *“It has been, and a lot of the time still is, a sacrifice to be a vegetarian or vegan”* (*ibid.*). He stated that for example, if one goes to a restaurant and there is a lovely menu but they only serve a “vegetarian dish of the day” which could be anything, and it is usually something quite boring (*ibid.*). Torstensson argued that we need to step away from this, make it more fun.

Strömberg stated that he does not know the answer to why it is more common to be a “meat eater” than a vegan. He described that he thinks that it can be related to that Sweden has had an extremely good economy for a long period of time (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). *“For a long period of time we have been a country where we have not had access to good vegetables during most of the year which means that we have learnt to live on salted pork and fish, so it has been ‘in the genes’ for a long period of time”* (*ibid.*). Strömberg argued that we are creatures of habit, so it has to do with that – what our habits are. Strömberg explained that he finds it “super fun” when his children question the decision to eat meat every day and that he thinks that previous generations, including his own, have been bad at questioning their own behaviour. He further explained that today’s youth are not content with “we have always done it this way in Sweden” – they question and want good answers for the future, sustainable answers and sustainable decisions (*ibid.*). Strömberg further argued for the important role of food companies and uses the increase Max (Hamburgerrestauranger AB) has had since the launch of the vegetarian products. He expressed that restaurants and the fast food sector can create an opportunity for people to try new products that they then can cook at home (*ibid.*). Strömberg stated that restaurants can show how tasty it can be and then people can go home and experiment, re-think if it is necessary to start planning a meal based on a piece of meat, potatoes and lastly vegetables. He further explained that they can start to think in the opposite direction, that they start with the vegetables, then sauce and lastly consider if there is need for some steak or sausage (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that they can ask themselves if the meat truly is needed. *“It is about changing old habits”* (*ibid.*).

Andersson explained that he thinks that culture and habits are important in deciding what we eat. *“If we for example look at India where the cow is holy they do not eat beef”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). He explained that it is apparent that before we became farmers, about 10 000 years ago, we were nomads (*ibid.*). Andersson explained that during that time, a considerable part of our diets was made up of meat and fish - it was natural to eat meat because it is rich in energy and protein. Andersson further argued that as time has passed meat has begun to be viewed as exclusive because it is more expensive. *“There is a clear connection to status which is surely also connected to the male culture of standing around the barbeque with a stake that cost 400 SEK per kilo”* (*ibid.*). Andersson stated that furthermore we humans have put many symbols around meat, how much it is worth.

Andersson stated that food companies absolutely can have an impact on the change towards a more plant based diet. He explained that it is apparent that people avoid having values which they cannot live by (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). *“When food companies offer new products, they make new values available, or at least make them easier to have”* (*ibid.*). Andersson stated that it has a lot to do with taste – if it does not cost anything to be vegan it is easier to be it. *“Then of course there are those who are attracted to the idea of belonging to a smaller group which is more progressive”* (*ibid.*). Andersson explained that he believes that if vegans increase so that they make out more than 30 percent of the population, we will probably see new subcategories forming. He expressed that perhaps people will say: *“But how can you eat mushrooms? Mushrooms are more closely related to animals than plants.”* (*ibid.*). Andersson stated that this will be interesting to see.

### 4.2.3 Differences between vegan and non-vegan consumers

Söderlund stated that she found it difficult to be certain of the differences between vegan and non-vegan consumers since it is difficult to define what a typical vegan or non-vegan is like. She explained that her own experience was that she started to reflect more about the origin of her food when she became a vegan (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). *“With origin, it is not simply where the food is produced but what type of state that place is in”* (ibid.). Söderlund stated that if there is a political conflict going on where the food is produced, or if politics in some other form affects the production that matters in the decision of buying the product or not. Söderlund explained that this view is not something that she has in common with all other vegans, some only care about the product being plant based. However, Söderlund also emphasised that a common misconception about vegans is that they only care about animals, but many of them also care about people and their work conditions. As an example of this Söderlund described a situation she experienced when seeing a discussion of the work conditions of the manufactures at H&M that took place in a Facebook group for vegans. She explained that this discussion was the most intense one on the subject she had ever experienced (ibid.).

Björkgren stated that she believes that non-vegans eat in a very limited way. In her own experience, she ate a very limited number of products before transitioning to vegan and then a whole world of food was opened to her (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). According to Björkgren you can see that many vegans try to “veganize” traditional meals but she herself is more interested in eating vegetables, fruits and nuts. She expressed that one similarity between vegans and non-vegans as food consumers is the lack of time (ibid.). *“We see evidence of this in an increased number of ‘food bags’ with prepared recipes that can be delivered to your home”* (ibid.).

Johansson stated that she believes that vegans are generally more aware as consumers than non-vegans. Vegans must look for their specific products (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson also expressed that there is a growing group of people who are interested in products that are good. She stated that they want to go to restaurants and buy food products that are good, that they like the concept (ibid.). *“The better vegan food products become, the more vegan can stand for something good and positive”* (ibid.).

*“Traditionally companies want to define their customers and divide them into different groups, but we do not do that”* (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017). Lindgren expressed that her company does not divide people because they want to communicate with everyone. Lindgren expressed that she believes that when you divide people you put them against each other. She argued that this can lead to exclusion and that the customers may feel they need to be a certain way to consume our products, for example that you must be a vegan (ibid.). *“Our products are good and sustainable so they are for everyone”* (ibid.).

Torstensson explained that he believes that the in most cases what separates vegan and non-vegan consumers is an active or non-active choice. *“The ones who consume vegan have made and active choice and likely taken some form of standpoint”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Torstensson argued that those who do not buy vegan can of course have made a choice in this, but in many cases it has more to do with routine and norm. *“It is not a difficult choice to follow the norm – you do not have to reflect upon it at all”* (ibid.). Torstensson stated that the choice can be related to accessibility, price, taste, culture and habits.

*“As a vegan, I think that you are extremely meticulous with the whole chain of content, ergo the whole table of content”* (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). Strömberg explained that this includes where something is produced and how it is produced. He further argued that as a vegan you may be more questioning – or maybe, this is the way it has been (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that vegans have traditionally been a little revolutionary – they wanted to stand up against the societal forces behind meat production, meat eating and milk drinking. *“The traditionally view of vegan is someone who releases minks and fights at ‘Djurens Rätt’<sup>3</sup>”* (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that he believes that this is starting to change now – veganism is starting to become a part of every-day life and part of the average person’s thoughts. He stated that not everyone is becoming vegan, but it is increasingly common that someone in every family choses to eat vegan and then the whole family is affected by it (*ibid.*). *“So, the revolutionary aspect has moderated over the last couple of years and above all an increasing number of people are becoming flexitarians”<sup>4</sup>* (*ibid.*).

Andersson stated that he believes that one could be vegan for several reasons. He explained that it becomes a question of definition (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson expressed that there are different incentives but he believes that the most common type of vegan in Sweden is one who focuses on the animals – one does not wish to eat at their cost. Andersson further argued that he would almost like to call this group “empathy eaters” as they are trying to extend their compassion to animals. *“Then this is a moral standpoint and hence can feelings become very strong for this type of vegan, compared to for example those who eat vegan in regard of their own health”* (*ibid.*). Andersson further argued that it is interesting that there is an over-representation of young people among vegans. He stated that it appears as if many become vegan in their teens, in that age where they are trying to liberate themselves from their parents and create their own path (*ibid.*). Andersson described that when he was young there were distinct groups such as punk rockers and head-bangers which you could identify yourself with. He explained that he truly believes that it is such a phenomenon we see around veganism in Sweden today (*ibid.*). Andersson stated that this is why it is not strange that vegan brands communicate more as lifestyle brands than functional brands. *“It is a little less ‘what’s in it for me’ and a little more ‘me, wow no cow, I belong to this group which is so special’”* (*ibid.*).

### 4.3 Opportunities for development of vegan fast food products

In this section the respondents answer the following three questions: Do you believe that the consumption of meat/animal based products will change, how and why? What is your view on the market for vegan food products, and how do you think it will develop in the future? What do you think is important to think about when developing vegan food products and vegan fast food products – which can be attractive to vegans as well as non-vegans? These questions were asked in attempt to understand what the respondents view were on how we consume animal based food and vegan food today, and how they believe it will change in the future. Moreover, to understand what they believe is important in the actual products to create opportunity for development. There are naturally differences in the answers and they can be interpreted differently, but generally the subheadings below describe opportunities for the development of vegan fast food products. At the end of this chapter, in part 4.4, you will find a table summarising all of the answers of the respondents. All of the questions asked to the respondents can be found in the Appendix, part 1.

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<sup>3</sup> Djurens Rätt is Sweden’s largest animal rights- and animal protection’s organisation (Djurens Rätt, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> A flexitarian, or semi-vegetarian, is a person who eats vegetarian but occasionally also eats meat (American Dialect Society, 2017).

#### 4.3.1 Consumption of animal based/plant based food in the future

Söderlund stated that she believes that the consumption of meat will change. *“The change is already visible, probably because an increasing number of people are becoming aware of what the animal industry truly entails – both for the beings who are included in it and the environment”* (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). Söderlund explained that people are becoming increasingly aware of our climate and the big grocery stores have also started to express the importance of a decrease in meat consumption. Furthermore, Söderlund stated that she believes that *“an increasing number of people dare to see the industry for what it truly is: disgusting”*. Söderlund stated that she has hope of that humanity *“will get rid of its God complex and realise that pigs, cows and chickens are also worthy of decent lives – and dare to see what the animal industry actually causes”*.

Björkgren described that she believes that you can see clear signs of a change in the consumption of animal based food. She stated that there is a strong “vego-trend”, but she believes that is not a trend but in fact a shift – something that has stuck (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). Björkgren stated that people seem to have become mentally aware now and it seems to be because of the health- and environmental arguments. *“If people, for example, see chickens being slaughtered on TV they will become very upset and stop eating meat for a few days but then they will start again”* (ibid.). She further argued that it seems however that the health- and environmental aspects are truly taken in by people (ibid.). Björkgren stated that the increase of vegan food products also makes a difference because it creates the possibility to choose. *“It used to be that one would have to travel to the big cities to find a good selection of vegan products but now they can be found everywhere, and vegetarian restaurants are also easier to find now”* (ibid.).

Johansson explained that a report on our meat consumption was published just recently and it said that the meat consumption is increasing, but that she despite of this believes that the consumption of meat will decrease in the future. She expressed that it must decrease and eventually disappear because if the meat does not disappear then we humans will, so we will have to do it whether we wish to or not (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson said that the meat consumption must decrease for the sake of the animals and for our environment, and it is important to not put all this responsibility on the consumers alone. *“It is necessary to implement political measures to decrease the meat consumption”* (ibid.). Johansson told of a research study she read where they had looked at the difference between citizen and consumer. *“Many citizens care about animal welfare and consider it important for politicians to act in this question, but then as consumers we act in a more selfish manner – putting our own wallet first”* (ibid.). Johansson argued that it is therefore not right to put so much responsibility on consumers because their choices of consumption may not reflect the way their actual opinions.

Lindgren explained that she believes that the consumption of animal based products will decrease in the future, and that she hopes that the animal based products we will still consume will be Swedish. Lindgren expressed that she believes that the awareness will increase and that this will change our consumption of animal based products. *“The focus will be more on quality than price, that when we for example buy meat we will make sure that it is good meat”* (ibid.). Lindgren stated that she believes that there will be an increase in the number of plant based products, they will be good products and they will be more visible and accessible.

Torstensson stated that he believes it absolutely necessary to change the consumption of animal based food in the future. *“We must change because it becomes increasingly apparent that meat consumption stands in the way of environmental sustainability, and that it is also a public health issue”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Torstensson explained that there seems to be a greater awareness and knowledge in society today. He stated that there is a greater willingness to change, especially among the young (*ibid.*). Torstensson expressed that teenagers today do not seem to find vegetarianism and veganism as provoking as the older generations do. *“Then it is necessary that this is followed by politics and that measures are taken to speed up the development”* (*ibid.*).

Strömberg believes that the consumption of animal based food will change in the future. *“Today we are the country in Europe that eats the least amount of chicken for example, and what type of animal based foods we eat will change”* (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). Strömberg expressed that he believes that people are becoming increasingly aware of that we only have one Earth. He stated that we cannot have the enormous overconsumption that we have today (*ibid.*). *“We need to start reflecting more on what we eat, how we eat, how we consume and above all about what we throw away”* (*ibid.*).

Andersson stated that he believes that the consumption of animal based products will decrease in the future. Andersson explained that he believes that one of the reasons for a decrease will be our health. *“We know that we should eat more greens and this will be the first driver of change, with the older target groups and for the younger it will be the vegan-part that will be the way in”* (*ibid.*). Andersson explained that the determining factor will be the discovery of good tastes in the plant based. *“If we can find plant based food products that taste just as good or even better than meat then people will choose the plant based alternative”* (*ibid.*). Andersson expressed that there is an opportunity here to create better food per SEK when one is buying vegetarian/vegan. He explained that it is more expensive to produce meat so it should be possible to have more carefully produced plant based food for 100 SEK than animal based food for 100 SEK. (*ibid.*). *“We do not see this today because of taste – it is the most crucial factor for what we chose to eat”* (*ibid.*). Andersson explained that we can see that taste is very much related to culture and it is in culture we can find the reasons for why things have become the way they are. *“Meat has been a scarcity and it has been viewed as very pleasant to be able to find it and therefore it has become more desirable”* (*ibid.*). Andersson described that it will matter if vegan food can handle a cultural shift and become desirable.

#### 4.3.2 The market for vegan food products today and in the future

According to Söderlund, vegan food products in the form of meat substitutes, such as vegetarian schnitzels and vegetarian sausages, are increasing which she finds fun to see. Söderlund pointed out that a common misconception is that vegans are very limited in their eating. *“There can be difference depending on where you live in the country, for example in big cities such as Stockholm and Malmö it is easier to find vegan food, but even in the smaller cities it is noticeable that the vegan market is increasing”* (*ibid.*). Söderlund stated that it is positive that there are new meat substitutes developing since in her own experience the meat substitutes made the transition from lacto-ovo-vegetarian<sup>5</sup> to vegan easier because they gave her a sense of familiarity. Söderlund expressed that another positive perspective with the increase of meat substitutes is that it is a form of conformation of that vegans also matter and deserve good food.

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<sup>5</sup> The lacto-ovo vegetarian diet excludes any meat and any products that contain these foods. In difference to the vegan diet the lacto-ovo vegetraian diet includes dairy products and eggs (Dietitians of Canada, 2014).

Björkgren expressed that she thinks that the market for vegan food products today is very good. “*New products are increasing, both in the form of specialized companies such as ‘Astrid och Aporna’ and the big food chains such as Coop and ICA developing their own vegetarian food products*” (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). Björkgren stated that the fact that the big food chains are developing their own products shows that there is “business” in this – that they believe in it (*ibid.*). “*Food companies such as Pastejköket which recently started producing a vegan pâté have created a product that can be appealing not only for vegans but for non-vegans as well*” (*ibid.*). Björkgren expressed that Oumph!<sup>6</sup> is a company that has reached great success with their products and can now even be found on the SJ-trains (*ibid.*). She stated that she sees this development of products as a sign of that the market will continue to grow (*ibid.*). “*It is not only the people who are vegans who eat these products, but also people who choose to eat vegan three days a week, who want their children to eat vegetarian balls instead of traditional meat balls and so on*” (*ibid.*).

Johansson said that she thinks that the market for vegan foods is good, it is at least better than it was before. “*There is a growing amount of people who do not become fully vegan but eat vegan perhaps 80 or 90 percent of the time, and it is hard to imagine that with this already big group growing bigger that the market for vegan food would decrease in the future*” (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson stated that it would also be beneficial if there were lobbying organisation that worked for the plant based food companies. She explained that there is LRF, LRF Mjöl, Svenska Ägg etcetera who benefit the companies producing animal based foods (*ibid.*). “*The vegetarian companies do not have the same and it would be good if they did, to level the playing field*” (*ibid.*). Johansson stated that it would be good if the vegetarian companies received extra support because they are the ones that can help Sweden reach better results in terms of climate. “*It is important that vegan food products are accessible, of high quality and affordable*” (*ibid.*). Johansson described that many animal based products are subsidized which is something that the vegan food companies need to wrestle with.

Lindgren explained that she sees a great vego-trend in the society now, but that she does not like to call it a trend because a trend can come and go – this is more of a shift. “*The number of products on the market has increased and they are perceived as modern*” (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017). Lindgren stated that there are a lot of cool brands out there now – a change compared to before when plant based used to be seen as health food. She further argued that it is now more modern and a lifestyle, both the market and how we talk about it (*ibid.*). Lindgren stated that she believes that this development will continue in the future, it is not a trend but a shift. She expressed that politicians play a big role, both in setting rules and regulations, sending signals to the consumers and through the public sector (*ibid.*). Lindgren explained that everyone matters, our society is complex. Lindgren stated that food companies can play an important part here, to take responsibility and create a bigger mission. However, she stated that the food companies are controlled by regulations from politicians and whether the convenience goods companies chose to take in our products (*ibid.*). “*The convenience goods companies chose what the consumers will have access to*” (*ibid.*).

Torstensson expressed that his view of the market for vegan food products today is that it is growing rapidly. “*It is still small, and it can be difficult to find what you want depending on where you are*” (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Torstensson expressed that in just a few years so much has happened in terms of niched products. He stated that the products have

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<sup>6</sup> Oumph! is a concept with a food ingredient made from plants, but is similar to meat in taste and texture. It is produced by the company Food For Progress (Oumph, 2017).



moved from the “shame shelf” to be put up front, it is seen as hip, trendy and modern (*ibid.*). Torstensson stated that the market will continue to develop and hopefully we will see a change in the niched products. “*Today many of the niche vego products contain a lot of soy and/or palm oil, they are heavily processed and are made to mimic other products*” (*ibid.*). Torstensson described that he thinks that we will see a development of more well-thought-out products that are built on Swedish leguminous plants, organically produced, a little less processed and a little fresher which will attract much more people. “*Today there is a lot of mimicking instead of development of an original food culture*” (*ibid.*). Torstensson pointed out that he considers Oumph! and others as fantastic, but that he believes that we will see more exciting Swedish organic pea-patties and such.

Torstensson stated that food companies can be a part of the change towards a more plant based diet. He asked himself what is the chicken and what is the egg – we have a strong vego trend and strongly profiled vego companies and he believes that they enhance each other (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). “*Companies such as Oatly, Oumph! and Max follow a trend aspiring to make money, but then also help pushing the trend forward*” (*ibid.*). Torstensson expressed that with brilliant marketing and PR they manage to normalize and making it hip. He stated that it has now become politically correct to have oat milk in the fridge (*ibid.*). Torstensson pointed out that he thinks that the food companies will have a central role in developing the new type of vegan products he wishes to see. “*There needs to be companies which can develop new products to attract a bigger mass of people than the vegans who want sausages that remind them of what they ate as children*” (*ibid.*). Torstensson stated that it is difficult to imagine that a meat eater, who is not driven by ideological conviction, who will eat vegan food in the form of boring meat substitutes which try to mimic meat but fails to do so. He argued that to convince the people without the ideological conviction to eat vegan new tastes need to be developed that are attractive on their own (*ibid.*). Torstensson pointed out that he believes that this does not exist yet.

Strömberg stated that he believes that when it comes to vegan food products things are still in its early stages. “*There are still many companies that are too single-tracked*” (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). Strömberg expressed that they think vegan food for vegans – they need to change their focus and think more “good food for all”. He further argued that with vegan food it has been a lot of “nots” (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that when you cannot use this or that, and there is very little left in the end, the product consist of what was left. Strömberg described that he believes that the focus needs to change to make sure that there is good food that is appealing to more people, regardless of whether it is vegetarian, meat, chicken or fish. Strömberg expressed that he believes that when companies such as “Impossible Foods”<sup>7</sup>, who today work on small scale, find a way to increase their scale of production there will be products available which can be appeal to so many more meat eaters. Strömberg further argued that a vegan food product cannot just be something made of soy with some seasoning – it must be products with a much higher class, a much higher standard, better taste, and above all better texture to make people take the step to exclude meat. Strömberg expressed that he believes that there is a lot going on in this field that it is only a matter of time until someone figures out how to find these processes. “*We are not there yet but it is underway*” (*ibid.*).

Andersson explained that the market for vegan food products has exploded, it has increased in both grocery stores and in restaurants and other food places. “*It comes from very low levels so*

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<sup>7</sup> Impossible Foods Inc is a company which produces “a delicious burger made entirely from plants for people who love meat” (Impossible Foods, 2017).

*it has not become bigger than meat – the distance there is too long*” (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson expressed that a lot has happened during the last couple of years and the development should continue at least the next three years. He expressed that it could be the next 20 years, but his guess is at least the coming three years (*ibid.*).

*“This development has happened because people perceive it to drive health, sustainability, identity and other things. There are obvious advantages and it is an answer to many questions of our time – everything from building an identity to solving the climate issue”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017).

#### 4.3.3 Developing new vegan food products

When asking Söderlund about what she believes needs to change in consumer’s attitudes to make a transition towards a more plant based diet possible, she pointed out the importance of new vegan products. *“People will feel more secure in trying vegan products if they are not so far away from what they are used to”* (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). Söderlund gave an example of this in how Pastejköket which until recently have only sold regular liver pâté and have now released a vegan pâté. Söderlund said that she believed that this kind of products contribute to “meat eaters” noticing vegetarian products. She further argued that because the “meat eaters” are already familiar with the brand, in this case Pastejköket, they may dare to try these new products (*ibid.*). Söderlund also highlighted the food company Oumph! as an important actor for easing the passage for “meat eaters” to eat more plant based products. *“The products by Oumph! are similar to meat in texture, structure and appearance which makes it easier for ‘meat eaters’ to dare to try them”* (*ibid.*). Söderlund pointed out an example of this in that she has seen many positive reviews of the burger from Max (Hamburgerrestauranger AB) with Oumph!, the BBQ Sandwich, which were written by “meat eaters” (*ibid.*).

As a vegan Söderlund wishes that the vegan food products of the future will increase so that she will have more to choose from. More specifically, Söderlund described a wish to see more burgers and preferably not burgers with bean patties, because these can be found everywhere and they all taste the same. She stated that something new, like “fake chicken”, would be a better option (*ibid.*). *“It has to do with wanting the same options as everyone else, not having to eat the same thing over and over again”* (*ibid.*).

*“The most important aspect when developing new vegan food products is they taste good”* (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). Björkgren stated that they should taste good, be fresh, not contain strange additives, have clear declarations of content and preferably also be healthy – but the taste is more important than them being healthy. She further argued that when the vegan food product is in the form of fast food they should also taste good and be exciting and intriguing in some way, but not so exotic that they feel strange (*ibid.*).

Johansson explained that there will probably be a need for different type of vegan food products, both those that are similar to meat and those that are not. *“Accessibility is important, for example Max has been very successful in developing vegetarian and vegan products that are accessible”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson described that there needs to be quality to vegan food products and they cannot be too “hippie-like” – they need to look good and familiar (*ibid.*). Johansson told of a researcher at Chalmers whom she heard saying that there is no need for further research on meat consumption and climate, what is needed is a couple of PR-people who can make vegan food cool. In terms of vegan fast food products

Johansson said that she thinks that Max has been very successful with their products. *“They had a lot of marketing and because the vegetarian products are quite similar to their other products people may not see it as a sacrifice to buy the vegetarian or vegan alternative”* (*ibid.*). She stated that their vegan burger is very meat like and is probably seen as macho, it is not salad but instead something with some “sting” (*ibid.*). *“These meat like products may have the potential of convincing the strongly confirmed meat eaters, they may be a good first step for the big masses of people”* (*ibid.*). Johansson pointed out that it is important for the vegan fast food products to be able to stand on their own, that they are good products. *“Then you do not have to be a person who cares about animals or the environment – you can simply enjoy how they taste”* (*ibid.*). Johansson stated that she believes that it is here the real challenge is, in convincing the people that do not care about decreasing their meat consumption. She expressed that they can buy these products by chance and then start to like them because they are good food (*ibid.*).

Lindgren stated that producing good tasting products and transparency is important for food companies to consider. *“If you want to reach wider than vegans it is important the products are both tasty and functional – that the products are easy to use and consume”* (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017). Lindgren described that if the new vegan food products are in the form of fast food taste is also important, but also that the food looks good, and is not too complicated. She stated that they should be different, but not too different (*ibid.*). *“The products should have a sense of familiarity, otherwise it will be a miss – it should taste good and look tasty”* (*ibid.*).

Torstensson pointed out that he thinks that it is important to develop products that are modern and have a value on their own – not merely as a substitute or copy. *“Accessibility is important, for many it is difficult to eat vegan because they do not know what to do, what do buy or how to cook it”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Torstensson explained that if there is a way to lower the threshold and make it easier that would be positive. When specifying the new vegan food development to vegan fast food products Torstensson said that you should name things what they are and not what they are not. He stated that vegetarian and vegan does not describe what something is, but rather what it is not, and it does not sound tasty (*ibid.*). Torstensson expressed that price is important with fast food as well, and highlighting the environmental- and health benefits of vegan food might help. *“We have a strong health trend so it might be beneficial, but then again one probably does not eat fast food because it is healthy”* (*ibid.*). Torstensson stated that the central point is that the food must be tasty. *“Vegan food products have been targeted towards vegans for a long time and they are a not a picky group – they are used to eating food that tastes like cardboard. If it is going to be possible to attract more people the vegan alternative must be the better tasting alternative”* (*ibid.*).

When asking Strömberg about what he considers to be important when developing new vegan food products, he answered: *“It is taste, taste and taste and texture”*. He stated that he believes that people have realised that if you create a vegan product for vegans you will only sell to two or maybe four percent of people (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). Strömberg expressed that if you instead aim to make truly good food and that this food can be vegan you will reach far more success. He explained that it is also important how you characterise the product (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that for example, Oumph! have succeeded in that they talk about their products as good food. He further argued that they mention that it is vegan but that is not the focus but instead they have tried to find a more hip or popular take (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that there needs to be direction to be a good company, not just good

tasting products but also participating in bringing the world forward. Strömberg continued with the following statement:

*“We at Max (Hamburgerrestauranger AB) say that we want to “göra världen lite godare”<sup>8</sup> and I think that the will to do good is incredibly important companies’ survival. It is important to lift one’s head and not only aim for the vegan target group because then you will only sell your products to them. Looking at everyone and then make them eat vegan is the wiser choice. For example, if I am buying a margarita and it is described as a vegetarian margarita many will choose not to buy it – we need to get away from this. It does not have to be vegetarian or vegan – just good food. If you create good food everything will go super”*(Strömberg, 2017).

When asking Andersson what he thought was important to consider when developing new vegan food products to make them appeal to both vegan and non-vegans he answered:

*“If we have ten million Swedes and one in ten is a vegan or vegetarian, one million, we have three of those ten million who state that they want to eat more greens, the flexitarians – I would then put emphasis on the 90 percent who are not vegan. How do we find food that appeals to them? Perhaps this is one of the success factors of Max (Hamburgerrestauranger AB) – that this is the type of food we have wanted. It has been a resource that the ones working in the product group love meat to enable creation of the type of flavours of plant based food that works with the taste preferences of the flexitarians.”*(Andersson, 2017)

Andersson further discussed that it is not certain that vegans would have been able to accomplish the same, but on the other hand vegans are the ones who drive the development of finding new things that are then spread throughout the culture. *“This takes time and it is quite unclear what will survive in veganism”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson expressed that traditionally when you have ordered something vegan on a restaurant you have received a tomato soup or a salad. He stated that he believes that it has been this way for a long time and many find this disappointing as a satisfactory diet (*ibid.*) Andersson stated that it does not contain much protein, it does not make you feel full and it is not certain that it is tasty either. Andersson explained that he looks forward to seeing how the vegan culture will develop in the future.

*“If we leave out taste, which I have mentioned so many times, I believe that the way to communicate vegan food will be highly important as well”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson explained that to communicate in the way that Coop did where they said something like “Good bye meat, you taste very nice but our relationship is dysfunctional” was a way of grieving for meat and I do not believe that will work. He expressed his belief in that it is far better to communicate that “Yes! This new thing tastes so good!” (*ibid.*). *“Communication that focuses on loss will be less successful than one that focuses on that we are winning”* (*ibid.*). Andersson expressed that how we in a comfortable way receive access to the food will also be significant. He explained that many of the flexitarians have not grown up creating their own recipes so to then find new ones will take a lot of time (*ibid.*).

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<sup>8</sup> ”Göra världen lite godare” is a goal described by Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB (Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, Vårt ansvar, 2017). The sentence has a double meaning as the Swedish word ”godare” can mean both better and tastier. Ergo, the expression “Göra världen lite godare” can mean “Make the world a little better” and “Make the world a little tastier”.

*“Comfortable meals become important, that I can taste it without cooking it myself but instead find and copy. Cook books and TV-chefs can show the way here” (ibid.). “We talk a lot about that one needs to cook from scratch for it to be truly tasty, that one should take their time and that the produce is most important. So, we talk this way but at the same time people want to have time to see their friends, have a weekend in Barcelona and take care of the country house” (pers. com., Andersson, 2017).*

Andersson expressed that people will eat out more often because it increases the level of comfort.

## 4.4 Summary of the empirical results

Table three presents an overview of words used by the respondents. The words marked with an “X” when the respondents used these words to answer the questions, not when saying them for some other reason.

Table 3: A summary of words used by the respondents to answers the questions in their interviews.

	Söderlund	Björkgren	Johansson	Lindgren	Torstensson	Strömberg	Andersson
Taste	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Meatnorm	X		X				
Culture		X	X		X		X
Sustainable	X			X	X	X	
Health(y)	X	X	X	X	X		X
Politics	X		X	X	X		
Aware/ Awareness	X	X		X	X	X	
Teenagers/ Younger generation				X	X	X	
Commun- ication/PR/ marketing			X		X		X
Familiar	X		X	X			
Constrain	X		X		X	X	
Vego trend		X		X	X		

This table has been used to make sense of what the respondents considered important and thereby what is significant to analyse and discuss in the subsequent chapters.

# 5 Analysis

*In this chapter, the empirical findings in chapter 4 are analysed using the analytical framework presented in chapter 2 – CCT. The components of the framework that were presented are applied to the empirical results of the study.*

## 5.1 Introduction

The case study presented in chapter 4 is here analysed from a marketing perspective using the analytical framework – CCT. Thusly, this chapter is presented in the same themes of the CCT as was in chapter 2 – Consumption identity and desire, and Wants and necessities. The results of the empirical study of chapter 4 are compared to this framework keeping the aim, unit of analysis and research questions of the study in mind. The analysis of this chapter will be used for the discussion of the study (chapter 6) and its conclusions (chapter 7).

## 5.2 Consumption identity and desire

### 5.2.1 Meatnorm versus the vegan activist label

Possessions both show a reflection of, and contributes, to our identities (Belk, 1988). We can in other words both find our own identity and show it off to the world through consumption. In the empirical result, it became clear that there are tensions between people who identify themselves as mainstream and hence contribute to the meatnorm, and the ones who identify themselves as vegans and thusly, against or by their own will, are then perceived as “activists”. Lindgren expressed that she believes that it is important that ordinary and aware people become more visible, that we move away from the “activist label” associated with vegan food. Torstensson explained that he believes that a hinder in the transition towards more plant based diets is that a lot of the focus is on labels and lifestyles, instead of talking about the food we talk much more about the lifestyle. *“Things become very black and white, that if you eat vegan food you become a vegan with all the connotations included”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). *“Even if the image from the 90s’ when eating vegan meant that you had a Molotov-cocktail in your back pocket has changed, it is still difficult to go to a restaurant and order something vegetarian and then having to stand up for it”* (ibid.). Strömberg explained that vegans have traditionally been a little revolutionary – they wanted to stand up against the societal forces behind meat production, meat eating and milk drinking. *“The traditionally view of vegan is someone who releases minks and fights at ‘Djurens Rätt’”* (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017).

The way we consume can be a way to find group membership, and vice versa – that the group we belong to can affect the way we consume (Belk, 1988). This description by Belk goes in line with how Björkgren described the way she views the role of animal based food in our society today. Björkgren stated that she believes that people will eat meat as long as they believe that others do it as well, and that we humans want to be and act like everyone else. Ergo, as long as people feel that they belong to a group that consumes animal based products, the group can affect the person’s consumption of it and make her eat it as well.

Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) discuss the combination of culture and the socialization of desire. These tensions are neither solely between the individual’s desires and social or self-constraints, nor merely between desires and sin (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). The tensions

are moreover between the individual's own moral, social, emotional desires and more transgressive desires (*ibid.*). What Belk, Ger and Askegaard here describes can be connected to the tension between meatnorm and the vegan activist label. It is possible that more people would want to eat more vegan food, but they are afraid of being connected to the vegan activist label. This creates a tension in the individual, between her desire to live in a sustainable manner by eating more according to the vegan diet, and no longer belonging in the mainstream group of "meat eaters".

### 5.2.2 Desire for constrain

Constraints on desire have traditionally been imposed by institutions, but today the constraints are embedded in the range of social lifestyles available for us to choose from (Belk, Ger & Askegaard 2003). For example, the desire to eat animal-based food can be replaced by constrain, not forced by an institution, but chosen by the person herself. The article written by Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) discusses the combination of culture and the socialization of desire. The data from the study implied that on one hand the pleasure of desire rests on breaking the order, routines and rules – but on the other hand moral conduct, sociality and self-control are themselves desirable. These tensions are neither solely between the individual's desires and social or self-constraints, nor merely between desires and sin – the tension is also between the individual's own moral, social, emotional desires and more transgressive desires (*ibid.*). Söderlund, Johansson, Torstensson and Strömberg all spoke of vegan consumers as constraining their choices of food in different ways. Söderlund stated that she started to reflect more about the origin of food when she became a vegan. In origin, Söderlund included not only where the product was produced but also the situation of that place. "*If there is a political conflict going on where the food is produced, or if politics in some other form affects the production, that has an impact on the decision of whether to buy the product or not*" (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). This attention to origin could be viewed as a form of constrain. Not all food products are vegan and/or of an origin that is deemed suitable according to Söderlund, and she has thusly implemented a form of self-constrain. Johansson's statement of that vegans must look for their specific products could be linked to this theory of self-constrain as well. The "must" of looking for specific products which fit with the self-constrain of not consuming animal based food products. Torstensson explained that he believes that what separates vegan and non-vegan consumers in most cases is active versus non-active choice. "*The ones who consume vegan have made an active choice and likely taken some form of standpoint*" (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). This standpoint which Torstensson describes could then be in the form of constraining oneself from consuming animal based food products. Strömberg described that he believes that as a vegan you must be extremely meticulous with the whole chain of content, ergo the whole table of content of a product. Strömberg's view of a vegan entails that said person needs to make a conscious decision each time he or she needs to eat, a form of self-constrain in not being able to pick the first best things that he or she finds to eat.

Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) conducted a study which found that a fundamental appeal of desire lies in the promise of otherness or escape. Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) write that the informants of their study linked desire to figures such as Cinderella and Batman. These figures represent an anticipated transformation to the future, past or another place – all of which offer escape from the person's current life conditions. To desire is to envision an ideal and transformed self (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). This theory by Belk, Ger and Askegaard can be connected to a statement by Andersson. Then of course there are those who are attracted to the idea of belonging to a smaller group which is more progressive (pers. com.,

Andersson, 2017). Andersson explained that he believes that if vegans increase so that they make out more than 30 percent of the population, we will probably see new subcategories forming. Perhaps people will say things like “but how can you eat mushrooms? Mushrooms are more closely related to animals than plants” (*ibid.*). It appears that constrain can complicate the individual’s life, for example as in how Torstensson described the need to make an active choice as a vegan. Furthermore, it can also be that the constrain can have a value on its own, as how Andersson described that if veganism would become more mainstream, there would probably be new groups forming where people are constraining themselves even further.

### 5.2.3 New products create new consumption

Two of the respondents, Lindgren and Andersson, discussed the importance of the development of new products in order for the consumption of animal based food to change in the future. Lindgren stated that food companies can play an important part, to take responsibility and create a bigger mission. Lindgren stated that she believes that there will be an increase in the number of plant based products, they will be good products and they will be more visible and accessible. Ergo, Lindgren believes in an increase of plants based food products, and that food companies will be part of the change. “*Food companies can absolutely have an impact on the change towards a more plant based diet*” (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). It is apparent that people avoid having values which they cannot live by. When food companies offer new products, they make new values available, or at least make them easier to have (*ibid.*). These statements can be connected to how Belk (1988) described that possessions help us change our possibilities. The new vegan food products created by big and small food companies help people receive the possibility of eating according to how they wish to live their lives.

### 5.2.4 Making it hip

Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) found that consumer desire is likely to be manifested differently in different times and cultures depending on socialization and cultural intermediaries such as marketing, media and advertising. With capitalism being a global phenomenon it’s ideology of consumerism is likely to create a connection between human potential of desire and objects of consumption (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). The authors found that there were clear connections between the informants’ desires and their exposure to the capitalistic tools such as marketing and advertisement (*ibid.*). This theory can be connected to statements made by Lindgren and Torstensson. Lindgren said that the number of plant based products on the market has increased and they are perceived as modern. “*You can see a lot of cool brands out there now, if we look back plant based used to be seen as ‘health food’*” (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017). “*Now it is more modern and a lifestyle, both the market and how we talk about it*” (*ibid.*). Torstensson described that with brilliant marketing and PR “vego companies” such as Oatly, Oumph! and Max manage to make plant based products normalized and hip.

## 5.3 Wants and necessities

### 5.3.1 Necessity

Some of the interviewees answers can be connected to necessitation (how a product becomes necessary). Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) have described the five stages of



necessitation: familiarization, transformation in the form of redemption or contamination, memorialization, (re)integration and reconstruction, and solidification. The stage of familiarization is the first contact the consumer has with the product (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016). Familiarization can take place when the consumer purchases the product, but it can also be when the consumer hears about or sees the product through commercials or acquaintances (*ibid.*). Björkgren, Johansson, Lindgren, Strömberg and Andersson all spoke of the importance of familiarity. Björkgren stated that she believes that if veganism could be seen in cooking shows and in regular families and people it will be seen as more of a normality. Johansson emphasised that vegan food products need to be more welcomed into the mainstream. *“That Coop made a ‘vegetarian commercial’, food companies have started to mark their vegan products with ‘Vegan’ and that food stores make the vegan products easy to find – these are the kind of things which decrease the controversy around veganism and brings it into the mainstream”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Lindgren spoke of the importance of that ordinary and aware people become more visible to move away from the “activist label” of vegan. Strömberg described how restaurants and the fast food sector can create an opportunity for people to try new products that they then can cook at home. These new products could then, for example, be vegan food products that the consumers could begin to be familiarized with.

The second stage of necessitation is, as stated earlier, transformation of how the consumer views the product through redemption or contamination (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016). Redemption can be explained as when a bad or emotionally negative experience changes into a good or emotionally positive experience. Björkgren stated in her interview that she believes that meat is consumed in Sweden because it is a sign of prosperity. *“Sweden used to be poor and the Swedes’ diet consisted of mostly porridge and potatoes”* (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). When the wealth of the country started to increase the Swedes’ started to have meat with every meal (*ibid.*). The necessitation of meat could be because of this redemption sequence. Sweden was poor and could not afford meat, and when the country’s situation became better its’ inhabitants could afford meat. The meat then possibly became part of feeling of redemption, and became a symbol of redemption. Furthermore, Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) wrote that we need to move away from the classical dichotomy of necessity versus luxury as universal and constant. Ergo, meat might have been viewed as a luxury when Sweden’s economy began to develop, but by moving through the five stages of necessitation it is now viewed as a necessity – which then in turn can hinder an increased acceptance of eating according to a plant based diet.

### 5.3.2 Familiar comes first

Three of the respondents, Söderlund, Johansson and Lindgren, mentioned a wish for new products that are not too strange, feel familiar and not “hippie-like”. Söderlund pointed out that she believes that people will feel more secure in trying vegan products if they are not so far away from what they are used to. *“An example of this is how Pastejköket, that until now have only sold regular liver pâté have recently released a vegan pâté”* (*ibid.*). Söderlund said that she believed that this kind of products contribute to “meat eaters” noticing vegetarian products. *“Furthermore, because the ‘meat eaters’ are already familiar with the brand, in this case Pastejköket, they may dare to try these new products”* (*ibid.*). Söderlund also highlighted the food company Oumph! as an important actor for easing the passage for “meat eaters” to eat more plant based products. *“The products by Oumph! are similar to meat in texture, structure and appearance which makes it easier for ‘meat eaters’ to dare to try them”* (*ibid.*). Söderlund pointed out an example of this in that she has seen many positive reviews of the

burger from Max with Oumph!, the BBQ Sandwich, which were written by “meat eaters” (*ibid.*). Johansson described that there needs to be quality to vegan food products and they cannot be too “hippie-like” – they need to look good and be familiar. Lindgren stated that new vegan food products in the form of fast food should have a sense of familiarity, otherwise it will be a miss. The statements made by these three respondents can be connected to the first step of necessitation. Braun, Zolfagharian and Belk (2016) wrote about the five steps of necessitation where familiarization is the first. The stage of familiarization is the first contact the consumer has with the product (Braun, Zolfagharian & Belk, 2016). Familiarization can take place when the consumer purchases the product, but it can also be when the consumer hears about or sees the product through commercials or acquaintances (*ibid.*). This insights suggests that if a company wishes to make vegan food products feel necessary to the consumer they should make them feel familiar.

## 6 Discussion

*This chapter addresses the research questions presented in chapter 1. The research questions are: How can we analyse and make sense of vegan fast food products from a marketing perspective? What are the hinders for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden? What are the opportunities for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden? Moreover, the chapter discusses some of the chosen literature and presents a critical reflection of hinders and opportunities for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden.*

### 6.1 Introduction

The first section (6.2) discusses some of the chosen literature. The next section (6.3) addresses the first research question. It summarizes the findings connected to the market perspective literature, CCT, but puts emphasis on the corporate perspective literature – SNM and NPD. This is done because the market perspective literature was analysed in the previous chapter and not the corporate, and since this study uses both a corporate and market perspective this chapter will offer some discussion on the corporate perspective. The following section discusses the second research question (6.4), and the next the third research question (6.5). Finally, there is a section with critical reflection of hinders and opportunities for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden in a marketing perspective (6.6).

### 6.2 Discussion of literature

The two articles which started the literature chapter is one by Hoek et al. and the other is by Mathe-Soulek et al. The article by Hoek et al. is about meat substitutes – which a vegan fast food product could be viewed as. Furthermore, both the article and this thesis uses a market perspective. This thesis, with the aim to investigate hinders and opportunities for development of vegan food in the Swedish fast food service sector from a marketing perspective, and the article by investigating consumer behaviour. There are however three differences in approach between the article and this thesis. In contrast to the article by Hoek et al., this thesis uses both a market perspective and a corporate perspective, it focuses on the food service sector (not only meat substitutes) and the research approach for this thesis is qualitative. Hoek et al. performed a consumer survey and this thesis uses interviews with key informants. The article by Mathe-Soulek et al. focuses on Quick-service restaurants and this thesis is similar in that it focuses on the food service sector, and uses a case company which could be viewed as a QSR. Three differences can however be found between the article and this thesis. The article does not focus on vegan products, it uses only a corporate perspective and not both a corporate and market perspective and it used a quantitative approach.

### 6.3 Analysing and making sense of vegan fast food products from a marketing perspective

Vegan fast food products from a marketing perspective can be analysed using a number of different types of approaches. This thesis has applied both a corporate perspective, using the theory of SNM and NPD, and a market perspective using CCT. In this section examples of connections between the empirical material and the three different perspectives will be presented.

SNM could also be used to make sense of the results of the study. More specifically, the following section discusses the connection between answers of the respondents and an article on transitions and SNM by Raven, van den Bosch and Weterings. Söderlund, Björkgren, Lindgren, Torstensson and Mårtensson all used the words “aware” or “awareness” when describing why they believe that the consumption of animal based food will decrease in the future. The awareness was in form of health issues connected with a high consumption of animal based food products, the conditions of the animals involved in the production and the environmental effects of the production and consumption of animal based food products. Regardless of what type of awareness they can all be connected to the work of Raven, van den Bosch and Weterings (2010). Many sectors in modern society, such as the energy sector and mobility sector, face structural problems (Raven, van den Bosch & Weterings, 2010). The environmental performance of these sectors has improved over the last 30 years, but an increasing number of actors such as scientists, industry and policy makers have begun to realise that technological fixes and end-of-pipe solutions are not enough – there is need for structural change (*ibid.*). Raven, van den Bosch and Weterings (2010) refer to Geels (2002), Rotmans (2003) and Kemp and Loorbach (2006) when they state that as an answer to the realisation of the need for structural change, programs for innovation and research on ‘transitions’ towards a more sustainable solution to social problems have emerged. Ergo, the first step towards a sustainability transition, such a transition towards a more plant based diet, starts with realisation and awareness of that an issue is so great that end-of-pipe solutions are not enough – that structural change is necessary. Firms can produce vegan as much as they want, but demand is essential for such development/products to diffuse. Consumption is the challenge.

The result of the empirical study can be connected to NPD theory as well. This section presents an example of how there is need for diversity in product development. For a company to be able to match market opportunities they need to offer a balanced set of capabilities to their customers (Trott, 2005). This description by Trott can be connected to statements by three of the respondents – Söderlund, Johansson and Torstensson. Söderlund, who is a vegan herself, described that she wishes that the vegan food products of the future will increase so that she will have more to choose from. In terms of vegan fast food products she expressed a wish for a burger that does not contain a bean patty, because these can be found everywhere and they all taste the same (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017). Johansson stated that she believes that there will probably be need for different types of vegan food products, both those that are similar to meat and those that are not. Torstensson explained that he believes that it is important to develop products that have a value on their own, not merely as a substitute or copy. “*Vegan food products have been targeted towards vegans for a long time*” (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017).

CCT is a useful and valid approach for this study because of its relevance for the aim of the study, and it was thusly used in the analysis chapter. Table 4 is designed in attempt to show how the analytical framework chosen relates to the aim, and the first research question of the study.

Table 4. How the two parts of CCT, Consumption identity and desire and Wants and necessities relates to the aim of the study.

	<b>Hinders for development of vegan fast food products</b>	<b>Opportunities for development of vegan fast food products</b>
<b>Consumption identity and desire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meatnorm vs vegan activist. The tensions between the two creates hinders.</li> <li>- People want to belong to the mainstream, vegan is not considered mainstream.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New products enables new values, such as the vegan diet</li> <li>- The vego trend/shift is strong. Vegan is increasing in popularity.</li> </ul>
<b>Wants and necessities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meat has been a scarce but cherished food and has now through the five stages of necissitation transformed to be percieved as a necessity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating famliliar products can be a first step in necessitation.</li> </ul>

The two parts of CCT used for this study, consumption identity and desire, and wants and necessities, can be valid to use in relation to identifying hinders and opportunités for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden. CCT can for example help explain the hinder of meatnorm vs vegan activist, which was analysed in the previous chapter. A further discussion of the hinders and opportunities is presented in the subsequent sections.

## 6.4 Hinders for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden

The respondents highlighted a number of possible reasons for the current position of vegan food products on the Swedish market. These are in the form of informal structures such as culture, emotional connection and tradition. Torstensson stated that it is not difficult to follow the norm – you do not have to reflect upon it at all. If the plant based can be the norm, or at least take steps towards becoming mainstream, people would not need to reflect upon eating more plant based. Johansson explained that animal based food products are so embedded in our system of eating that it could be viewed as a form of norm and invisible structure – carnism. Meat has been a scarce but cherished food and has now through the five stages of necessitation transformed to be perceived as a necessity. People have a strong desire to belong in a group – as shown by both the theory and the respondents. We find group belonging and social interaction by sharing food. As animal based is mainstream and possibly even a norm, stepping away from consumption of it also means stepping away from the group. Andersson spoke of meat being expensive and therefore perceived as exclusive. This could entail that meat is perceived as a status symbol. Furthermore, when questioning the use of animal based products, you tap into something very emotional. For example, what Lindgren said about milk being “holy”. This is difficult to change. Perhaps highlighting the advantages of vegan alternatives can be a way to “turn the tide”.

All of the respondents pointed out taste as an important factor in vegan eating. For example, Torstensson stated that vegan products have been targeted towards vegans for a long time and they are not a picky group – they are used to eating food that tastes like cardboard. *“If it is going to be possible to attract more people, the vegan alternative must be the better tasting*

*alternative*” (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Andersson stated that it has a lot to do with taste – if it does not cost anything to be vegan it is easier to be it. Johansson expressed the importance of vegan fast food products being able to stand on their own, that they are good products. *“Then you do not have to be a person who cares about animals or the environment – you can simply enjoy how they taste”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). Johansson stated that she believes that it is here the real challenge is, in convincing the people that do not care about decreasing their meat consumption. *“They can buy these products by chance and then start to like them because they are good food”* (*ibid.*). It appears that today vegan food may not be perceived as the tastier alternative and that this creates a hinder for the development. The ones who choose to eat vegan do not do it because it is tasty, but because of care for animals, their health or the environment – but what do people prioritise when they eat? Do we eat to make a moral statement or care for our health, or do we do it to enjoy ourselves? Based on what has been found in the theory and the respondents answers the latter appears to be true – in eating it is personal enjoyment what weighs most heavy. Creating products that are so good that the consumer does not have to have awareness of the environmental, animal welfare or health benefits of plant based is therefore most likely of great importance.

Awareness was pointed out as important by several of the respondents. Söderlund, Björkgren, Lindgren, Torstensson and Strömberg all used the words “aware” or “awareness” when describing why they believe that the consumption of animal based food will decrease in the future. The awareness was in form of health issues connected with a high consumption of animal based food products, the conditions of the animals involved in the production and the environmental effects of the production and consumption of animal based food products. Regardless of what type of awareness, it appears that it is something that is missing today and the lack of it can thereby be a hinder in the development of vegan fast food products. Three of the respondents, Björkgren, Lindgren and Andersson, highlighted that cooking shows on TV and cook books can raise awareness about the positive effects of eating more plant based. For example, Lindgren explained that she has noticed people in her surroundings increasingly talk about eating more plant based food, but there is a lack of knowledge on how to do it. TV-shows about cooking can make a difference here (*ibid.*). *“They still often pull out a steak, but you can notice a change towards more vegetarian and vegan here – but the change is slow”* (*ibid.*).

The formal structures in Sweden such as political systems were mentioned as hinders for development of vegan food products by some of the respondents. Torstensson stated that meat has been a big part of the diet in Sweden for as long as we have lived here. *“Furthermore, there are quite strong political and economic interests for upholding it”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). *“There are powerful industry associations for the eating of meat and drinking of milk, and there are none for eating vegetables”* (*ibid.*). Johansson described that it would be beneficial if there were lobbying organisation that worked for the plant based food companies. *“There is LRF, LRF Mjölk, Svenska Ägg etcetera who benefit the companies producing animal based foods”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). *“The vegetarian companies do not have the same and it would be good if they did, to level the playing field”* (*ibid.*). It appears that there are systems in place which work as hinders of developments on the Swedish vegan food market. If the companies which produce vegan food products would be guided by systems that are more helpful to them, and/or if there was lobbying being done to help them that could turn what today works as a hinder, become an opportunity.

## 6.5 Opportunities for development of vegan fast food products in Sweden

The cultural bond between people and animal based food appears to be strong, but there are nonetheless opportunities to be found in developing vegan food. Such an opportunity is that you can get more value for your money. Andersson explained that there is an opportunity here to create better food per SEK when one is buying vegetarian/vegan. *“It is more expensive to produce meat so it should be possible to have more carefully produced plant based food for 100 SEK than animal based food for 100 SEK”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017).

Three of the respondents (Lindgren, Strömberg and Torstensson) pointed out that they believe that the younger generation is different – they question more, are more interested in and willing to act for a more sustainable future. This creates an opportunity for future development of vegan fast food products being made easier. Lindgren expressed that the trend now is that the meat consumption is increasing, which she finds troublesome. Furthermore, she stated that she can see an increase in awareness among young people, for example her own son who has started to express that our consumption of animal based is unsustainable without her telling him so (*ibid.*). Strömberg explained that he finds it “super fun” when his children question the decision to eat meat every day and that he thinks that previous generations, including his own, have been bad at questioning their own behaviour. *“Today’s youth are not content with ‘we have always done it this way in Sweden’ – they question and want good answers for the future, sustainable answers and sustainable decisions”* (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). Torstensson explained that there seems to be a greater awareness and knowledge in society today. *“There is a greater willingness to change, especially among the young”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). *“It is a generation issue that teenager’s today do not seem to find vegetarianism and veganism as provoking as the older generation does”* (*ibid.*). The statements of these three respondents could entail that there is an opportunity in the future generation and their different mindset.

A positive view of the vegan and her lifestyle choices was discussed by Andersson. Andersson stated that there are different incentives but he believes that the most common type of vegan in Sweden is one who focuses on the animals – one does not wish to eat at their cost. Andersson stated that he would almost like to call this group “empathy eaters” as they are trying to extend their compassion to animals. *“Then this is a moral standpoint and hence can feelings become very strong for this type of vegan, compared to for example those who eat vegan in regard of their own health”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson further argued that it is interesting that there is an over-representation of young people among vegans. He stated that it appears as if many become vegan in their teens, in that age where they are trying to liberate themselves from their parents and create their own path (*ibid.*). Andersson described that when he was young there were distinct groups such as punk rockers and head-bangers which you could identify yourself with. He explained that he truly believes that it is such a phenomenon we see around veganism in Sweden today (*ibid.*). *“That is why it is not strange that vegan brands communicate more as lifestyle brands than functional brands. It is a little less ‘what’s in it for me’ and a little more ‘me, wow no cow, I belong to this group which is so special”* (*ibid.*). If what Andersson says is accurate it could mean that there is an opportunity in marketing vegan fast food products as part of a lifestyle choice.

The actual products and their taste is of high importance according to the respondents, but how the communication of the products is done was also highlighted by several of the

respondents. Communication is also important. For example, Andersson used the example of a commercial from Coop.

*“If we leave out taste, which I have mentioned so many times, I believe that the way to communicate vegan food will be highly important as well. To communicate in the way that Coop did where they said something like ‘Good bye meat, you taste very nice but our relationship is dysfunctional’ was a way of grieving for meat and I do not believe that will work. It is far better to communicate that ‘Yes! This new thing tastes so good!’ Communication that focuses on loss will be less successful than one that focuses on that we are winning”*(Andersson, 2017).

Torstensson also highlighted the importance of marketing. He stated that companies such as Oatly, Oumph! and Max follow a trend aspiring to make money, but then also help pushing the trend forward (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). *“With brilliant marketing and PR they manage to normalize and making it hip”* (ibid.). Johansson told of a researcher at Chalmers called Fredrik Hedénus who she heard saying that there is no need for further research on meat consumption and climate, what is needed is a couple of PR-people who can make vegan food cool. Johansson also emphasised Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB as a successful example in producing vegan fast food products because the products are quite similar to their other products and because of they had a lot of marketing.

There is possibly an advantage in making the vegan food products have a sense of familiarity. Three of the respondents, Söderlund, Johansson and Lindgren, mentioned a wish for new products that are not too strange, feel familiar and not “hippie-like”. Patejököket and other “traditional” meat producing companies that have begun to sense the change and started producing vegetarian/vegan products. This could possibly continue in the future, and help normalize and familiarize vegan food products. Feeling of safety, you already know what you find tasty. The last part of market perspective theory – they found that low-users are generally reluctant to trying new food. Söderlund said that the notion of not eating meat becomes a new concept which is difficult to understand, and people tend to avoid what they do not fully understand. In terms of vegan fast food products Johansson said that she thinks that Max has been very successful with their products. *“They had a lot of marketing and because the vegetarian products are quite similar to their other products people may not see it as a sacrifice to buy the vegetarian or vegan alternative”* (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). *“Their vegan burger is very meat like and is probably seen as macho, it is not salad but instead something with some ‘sting’”* (ibid.). On the other hand, Torstensson said that the products must be modern and have a value on their own – not merely as a substitute or copy. Some of the respondents said that the products should be familiar, but some said that the vegan food products of the future should not be substitutes or copies. It appears that there needs to be a balanced set of alternatives in order to cover different part of the market – both products that are “meat like” and those that are not.

## 6.6 Critical reflection of hindrances and opportunities

This section presents findings which could not be clearly identified as either hinder or opportunity. The respondents had differing opinions and their answers could be interpreted as hinder or opportunity, or both. This section furthermore intends to show how this study relates and contributes to the sustainability marketing field in business administration.



It appears that there are both opportunities and hinders in how vegan is identified not only as a way of eating, but also a way of living. The hinder is that people may be interested in eating more plant based foods, but do not wish to be associated with the lifestyle and group membership of vegans. Lindgren expressed that one possible reason for why animal based is mainstream and vegan is not, is that it is the extremities that receive the greatest amount of attention. *“There is a view of eating more plant based as being equal to becoming a vegan. That if you remove something you need to remove everything, when in fact we need to decrease the animal based food, not remove it completely”* (pers. com., Lindgren, 2017).. An opportunity in that vegan is seen as a group to belong in and not merely a way of eating can be connected to a statement by Andersson. *“Then of course there are those who are attracted to the idea of belonging to a smaller group which is more progressive”* (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). Andersson explained that he believes that if vegans increase so that they make out more than 30 percent of the population, we will probably see new subcategories forming.

What the word vegan entails and whether it is including or excluding can be discussed, so much so that a number of the respondents highlighted this in the interviews. Torstensson and Strömberg expressed that it could be beneficial to not use the term vegan. Torstensson said that you should name things what they are, and not what they are not. *“Vegetarian or vegan does not describe what something is, but rather what it is not, and it does not sound tasty”* (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Strömberg explained that if there is a margarita for sale and it is described as a vegetarian margarita many will choose not to buy it – we need to get away from this. *“It does not have to be vegetarian or vegan – just good food”* (pers. com., Strömberg, 2017). However, Johansson expressed another opinion than Torstensson and Strömberg. Vegan food products need to be welcomed into the mainstream (pers. com., Johansson, 2017). *“That Coop made a ‘vegetarian commercial’, food companies have started to mark their vegan products with ‘Vegan’ and food stores make the vegan products easy to find – these are the kind of things which decrease the controversy around veganism and brings it into the mainstream”* (ibid.).

As stated in the introduction chapter, firms in the food industry may play a key role to develop and promote food that is more sustainable. Drawing on a marketing perspective in business administration, this study focuses on the situation of Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB seeking to promote vegan food products. This study has identified findings which relate and contribute to the sustainability marketing field in business administration. For example, through the use of CCT as analytical framework, the concept of meat norm versus vegan activist was identified. As analysed in the previous chapter, this view that eating meat is the norm and anyone who excludes animal based products is seen as an activist, presents a hinder in the promotion and marketing of vegan fast food products. People who want to feel like they belong in the mainstream group may shy away from consuming vegan products because they are afraid of being viewed as an activist if they consume vegan products, and thereby lose their state of belonging to the mainstream group. This insight contributes to the body of knowledge in marketing because it highlights how marketing may need to be adapted in such a way that it can promote a dissolving of a norm, such as the meat norm, and normalize and expand marginalized concepts, such as the vegan activist label.

## 7 Conclusions

*This chapter intends to summarize the theoretical and empirical contributions of the study. It also covers suggestions for further research in connection to the studied subject.*

A qualitative case study on the phenomenon of vegan fast food has been conducted. The unit of analysis is consumer culture of vegan fast food products in the Swedish context. Drawing on a marketing perspective, hindrances and opportunities for the development of vegan fast food products have been identified. CCT has been used as the analytical framework. From a marketing perspective this thesis identified a valid and useful approach to analyse and make sense of the market for vegan fast food products.

### 7.1 Towards an approach to develop vegan fast food products

This study concludes that CCT is an appropriate analytical perspective when aiming to analyse and make sense of vegan fast food products from a marketing perspective. Through this study it has been identified that one of the great hindrances for the development of vegan food products is the meatnorm vs the vegan activist label, and it is when using CCT as theoretical perspective that this can be seen. The niche of vegan food products has come to pass because of this tension between meatnorm and the view of vegans as activists. The meatnorm needs to dissolve and become more inviting and accepting, and the vegan activist label needs to become more normalized and mainstream. This is an insight of societal importance, but it can furthermore be of importance for food service companies, such as Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB, in developing vegan products and promoting them. Based on this case study it can be concluded that firms such as the case company, which are striving to promote vegan fast food products, should consider the aspects presented below.

### 7.2 Empirical contribution

Create products that have a sense of familiarity. This can ease the transition towards eating more vegan for those who usually eat mainly animal based meals. Simultaneously, make the products be able to stand on their own – familiar, but not bad copies of normally animal based products. Dare to create products that are new and innovative to catch those consumers interested in being trendy. Using raw material such as Swedish grown beans for the products could be a way of creating something that relates to people who are interested in supporting Swedish farmers. Have a balanced set of alternatives – both products that are “meat-like” and those that are not to catch both the “meat-lovers” and the ones who are not fond of meat. For fast food in particular the respondents highlighted that they should not be too expensive or take too much time to prepare. Healthy products can be beneficial since six of the seven respondents discussed health or healthy during the interviews. Creating products that are as tasty, and preferably even tastier than the animal based alternatives, was identified as absolutely vital.

Having strong marketing and PR can aid in the promotion of vegan fast food products. Several of the respondents brought up Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB as an example of a company that has succeeded with their marketing of the products. Targeting the younger generation which is already showing a greater interest in sustainable eating than older generations could be beneficial. Since these are already more interested and willing to eat vegan products it is most likely easier to influence them. When forming the marketing and PR

– focus on the positive message. Highlight the advantages of vegan products, such as sustainability, health and animal welfare

### 7.3 Recommendations for further research

For further research which would be performed using the same method more respondents, especially from companies, would be interesting to see. In this study most of the respondents work for non-profit organisations. Asking typically non-vegan actors what they think about vegan food products and how they could be developed to increase in numbers would also be interesting to see. It would furthermore be of great interest to see a longitudinal study of if, and how, Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB chose to implement what was found in this study.

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Lindgren, Frida  
*Product Portfolio Manager, An anonymous food company*  
Telephone interview, 2017-03-09

Strömberg, Lars  
*Manager, Max Hamburgerrestauranger AB*  
Face-to-face interview, 2017-03-14

Söderlund, Nina  
*Member of the board, An anonymous non-profit organisation*  
Telephone interview, 2017-03-02

Torstensson, Samuel  
*Expert on climate, An anonymous non-profit organisation*  
Face-to-face interview, 2017-03-10



# Appendix 1: Interview guides

## Interview guide for the non-profit organisations

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? What is your role in the organisation?
2. Why did you found the organisation? What are your goals?
3. How do you work to achieve these goals?
4. What is your view of the role of animal based food in society today?
5. Why do you think it is more common to be a “meat eater” than a vegan?
6. Do you believe that the consumption of animal based food products will change in the future? How? Why?
7. Based on your own experience – what are the most common differences between consumers who buy vegan products and the ones who are not?
8. What is your view of the market for vegan foods today?
9. How do you believe it will develop in the future? Why?
10. How important do you think that the surroundings of the consumer are when she decides to buy vegan or not?
11. Do you believe that consumers’ attitudes need to change for vegan food products to increase? Why? How?
12. Do you think that food companies can be part of the change?
13. What do you believe to be the most important factors for an increase of the pace of change to a more plant based diet?
14. What do you think is important to keep in mind when developing vegan foods in order to make them appeal to both vegans and non-vegans?
15. If one is to develop vegan foods that are easily accessible, such as fast food, do you think that there is something in particular that is important to consider?

## Interview guide for the food company

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? What is your role in the company?
2. Why did you found the company? What are your goals?
3. How do you work to achieve your goals?
4. Why do you think your customers choose your products?
5. What is your view of the role of animal based food in society today?
6. Why do you think it is more common to be a “meat eater” than a vegan?
7. Do you believe that the consumption of animal based food products will change in the future? How? Why?
8. Based on your own experience – what are the most common differences between consumers who buy vegan products and the ones who are not?
9. What is your view of the market for vegan foods today?
10. How do you believe it will develop in the future? Why?
11. How important do you think that the surroundings of the consumer are when she decides to buy vegan or not?
12. What role does consumers attitude have in the increase if vegan foods? Why? How?
13. Do you think that food companies can be part of the change?
14. What do you think is important to keep in mind when developing vegan foods in order to make them appeal to both vegans and non-vegans?
15. If one is to develop vegan foods that are easily accessible, such as fast food, do you think that there is something in particular that is important to consider?

## Interview guide for the case company

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? What is your role in the company?
2. Why do you think your customers choose your products?
3. You launched "the Green family" about a year ago and then quintupled your vegetarian offers. Why did you create this campaign? What do think were important goals to achieve with the campaign?
4. Can you tell me something about the process of "the Green family"? Was there anything that was easier than you thought? Harder? Unexpected lessons?
5. What is your view of the role of animal based food in society today?
6. Why do you think it is more common to be a "meat eater" than a vegan?
7. Do you believe that the consumption of animal based food products will change in the future? How? Why?
8. Based on your own experience – what are the most common differences between consumers who buy vegan products and the ones who are not?
9. What is your view of the market for vegan foods today?
10. How do you believe it will develop in the future? Why?
11. How important do you think that the surroundings of the consumer are when she decides to buy vegan or not?
12. Do you think that food companies can be part of the change?
13. How important do you think that the development of new vegan products is in order to make it more common to eat vegan?
14. What do you think is important to keep in mind when developing vegan foods in order to make them appeal to both vegans and non-vegans?
15. If one is to develop vegan foods that are easily accessible, such as fast food, do you think that there is something in particular that is important to consider?

## Appendix 2: Data analysis

Figure 1: Example of the Excel files with themes/quotes from the data analysis

### Consumption identity and desire

Things become very black and white, that if you eat vegan food you become a vegan with all the connotations included (pers. com., Torstensson, 2017). Even if the image from the 90s' when eating vegan meant that you had a Molotov-cocktail in your back pocket has changed, it is still difficult to go to a restaurant and order something vegetarian and then having to stand up for it (*ibid*).

Food companies can absolutely have an impact on the change towards a more plant based diet (pers. com., Andersson, 2017). It is apparent that people avoid having values which they cannot live by. When food companies offer new products, they make new values available, or at least make them easier to have (*ibid*).

### Wants and necessities

It can be that we consume meat because it is a sign of prosperity, that one has enough supply to eat animals (pers. com., Björkgren, 2017). Sweden used to be poor and we ate mostly porridge and potatoes, and when our wealth increased we started to have meat with every meal (*ibid*).

I know that companies such as Oumph!, who produce meat substitutes, they make products that are fairly similar to meat in texture, structure and appearance which makes it easier for "meat eaters" to dare to try them (pers. com., Söderlund, 2017).