



# Plants for everyone

- Prospects of upscaling consumption of plant-based protein products

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*En kvalitativ studie om möjligheten att främja konsumtion av växtbaserade proteinprodukter*

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*En kvalitativ studie om möjligheten att främja konsumtion av växtbaserade proteinprodukter*

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## Abstract

A change towards a more sustainable food consumption is necessary in order to mitigate climate change. Changing diets and preferences from animal-based to plant-based has a great potential to reduce impact on the environment. However, this requires action in both local and global contexts. This thesis focuses on the consumer perspective and how to upscale consumption of plant-based protein products (*PBPP*). By examining how consumers and retailers in Sweden understand the importance and opportunity to upscale consumption of *PBPP* I aim to synthesise how these perspectives mirror the participants lifeworld's and the socio-cultural norms, values and context they are embedded in. Findings in this thesis shows that vegetarians, vegans and flexitarians recognise a value and reason for upscaling their consumption of *PBPP* since these consumer groups have experiences of consuming *PBPP* and are aware about their function. Meanwhile, omnivores merely identify a value of upscaling consumption of *PBPP* in general, however many are not willing to start consuming these products themselves. This may be due to their lack of experience and knowledge about the products. Thus, the consumers experiences of past consumption habits, experiences of marketing and values of the products impact both their perception of and their willingness to consume *PBPP*. These factors play a part in how the consumer motivate their decisions in the supermarket. The findings can be used as suggestions for how to upscale consumption amongst consumers. Greater attention to personal experiences and social drivers of food preferences has the potential to identify pathways to scale up *PBPP* through changing consumer consumption patterns. This results in a complex framing of consumption moving beyond physical factors towards social factors as decisive for changing consumer patterns.

*Keywords:* Plant-based protein products, Consumption, Lifeworld, Discourse, Habit, Culture, Motivation

## Sammanfattning

Nutida klimatförändringar kräver att ett flertal förändringar genomförs för att skapa en mer hållbar konsumtion av livsmedel. Att på en generell och individuell nivå förändra en preferens från animaliebaserade till växtbaserade produkter kan ha en stor potential för att minska utsläpp och klimatpåverkan från livsmedelssektorn. En sådan förändring kräver åtgärder i både lokala och globala sammanhang. Denna uppsats tar avstamp i ett konsumentperspektiv för att undersöka hur konsumtionen av växtbaserade proteinprodukter (PBPP) kan främjas. Genom en kvalitativ intervjustudie undersöks hur konsumenter och återförsäljare i Sverige förstår vikten och möjligheten av en ökad konsumtion av PBPP. Med syftet att syntetisera hur dessa perspektiv speglar forskningsdeltagarnas livsvärld och de sociokulturella normer, värderingar och sammanhang de är inbäddade i. Studien visar på att konsumentgrupperna veganer, vegetarianer och flexitarianer identifierar både en anledning samt ett värde i att öka sin konsumtion av PBPP. Detta kan bero på att dessa grupper har erfarenhet av att konsumera och är medvetna om dess funktion. Samtidigt identifierar konsumentgruppen allätare ett generellt värde i ökad konsumtion av PBPP. Däremot ser de inte ett värde i att själva konsumera dessa produkter, vilket kan bero på att de har bristande erfarenhet och kunskap om produkterna. Således påverka vanor och värderingar konsumenters uppfattning om och vilja att konsumera PBPP.

Denna studie kan användas som en markör för hur konsumenter kan motiveras till nya konsumtionsvanor. En prioriterad förståelse för personliga erfarenheter och sociala drivkrafter bakom matpreferenser har potential för att identifiera hur konsumtionsmönster kan påverkas. Detta visar på ämnets komplexitet samt vikten av att verka bortom fysiska aspekter för att öka konsumtion av PBPP.

*Nyckelord:* Växtbaserade proteinprodukter, Konsumtion, Livsvärld, Diskurs, Vana, Kultur, Motivation

# Table of contents

<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Aim & Research questions.....	9
1.2 Thesis outline.....	9
<b>2. Background .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 A transition towards new consumer patterns.....	11
2.2 A Swedish perspective.....	12
2.3 A gap in research.....	14
<b>3. Methodological &amp; Theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 A phenomenological angle.....	16
3.2 Collection of empirics.....	17
3.2.1 Selection of observations and research participants.....	17
3.2.2 Collection of data .....	18
3.2.3 The participants .....	19
3.3 The analytical process .....	20
3.4 Conceptual framework .....	20
3.4.1 Lifeworld.....	21
3.4.2 Culture & Habit formation .....	21
3.5 Delimitations.....	22
<b>4. Findings .....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 Price, Placement & Product.....	24
4.1.1 Price.....	24
4.1.2 Placement.....	26
4.1.3 Product.....	28
4.2 Motivation & Knowledge .....	29
4.3 Identity & Culture.....	31
4.4 Summary of findings .....	33
<b>5. Discussion .....</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1 Summary of trends.....	34
5.2 Connection to theory.....	37
5.2.1 How to change consumer behaviour .....	38

5.2.2	How to understand consumer behaviour.....	40
5.2.3	The social context of the consumers.....	43
5.3	Implications for future actions.....	44
<b>6.</b>	<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>48</b>
	<b>References.....</b>	<b>50</b>
	<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## Abbreviations

PBPP	Plant-based protein products
ABPP	Animal-based protein products
GHGEs	Greenhouse gas emissions
ESFC	Environmentally sustainable food consumption
FC	Food choices

# 1. Introduction

The relationship between a person and their food consumption can be multifaceted. In recent years, interest in eating plant-based products has grown. According to a TNS-Sifo survey, every third Swede chooses a flexitarian diet and thus eats vegetarian once or several times a week (TNS-Sifo 2015). In this thesis the term *plant-based* is recognised as all products that are derived from plants (Tuso 2013). *Plant-based protein products* (PBPP) is a collective term referring to both vegetarian and vegan protein products (ForksOverKnives 2022). Thus, PBPP refers to all plant-based protein products, both processed and unprocessed such as; legumes, sausages, patties etc. In general, the most important drivers for shifting to a plant-based diet are concerns about animal welfare and personal health (Hargreaves et al. 2021; Havermans et al. 2021). However, environmental, religious, and social reasons are becoming more important (Hargreaves et al. 2021). To understand the ongoing trends in consumption there is a need to examine the relationship between consumers and their consumer preferences.

Household food consumption in a global perspective gives rise to more than 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGEs) and between 50-80 percent of total resource use (Ivanova et al., 2016). Thus, changing and making people's eating patterns more environmentally sustainable becomes increasingly urgent (Springmann et al. 2016; Hartmann and Siegrist 2017; Magrini et al. 2018; Hedin et al. 2019). Considering climate change and carbon footprint, the largest reduction in GHGEs can be achieved by eliminating meat from diets (Birth et al. 2017). The World Wildlife Fund (2022) recommends that each person eat a maximum of 500 g cooked meat per week, about half the amount of what a general consumer in Sweden eats today (*ibid*). To implement an active change in consumption amongst the general consumer requires substitutes for *animal-based protein products* (ABPP). In this study, the general consumer is considered to mostly consume and prefer ABPP over PBPP. Therefore, it would be relevant to study consumers' perspectives on what incentives they perceive as necessary to overall increase consumption of PBPP. It is also interesting to examine a retailer perspective, since retailers play a part in how PBPP are placed, priced and what products are available in store. The cultural and social dimensions of how consumer groups perceive the value of their consumption, and how retailers in stores seek to support those objectives has inspired this thesis, its aim and research questions.



Based on this context, this thesis will look further into the specific research problem on how various consumer groups' understanding of PBPP reflect their values, norms and socio-cultural context as well as their and the general consumers' willingness to consume these products. The findings and implications of the thesis can result in an improved understanding on how consumers and retailers in Sweden address and discuss the current situation. I draw on Habermas's concept of the lifeworld and analyse how culture and habits influence consumption practices. This can help to understand and synthesise changes in consumption and values in both the national and global context, since sustainable consumption is an international dilemma. Accordingly, this study can provide implications for how the general consumer can be motivated to consume more PBPP. The findings can fill research gaps on what actions to take on both operative and administrative levels. Furthermore, this thesis can act as a point of departure for larger actors in development of policies and structures mitigating climate change and moving past old norms, habits and cultural context of food preferences.

## 1.1 Aim & Research questions

In a time of changing consumer patterns, this study focuses on the topic of upscaling consumption of plant-based protein products from a consumer and retailer level. This will be carried through by studying individual experiences of consumption and PBPP. The aim of this study is to understand what shapes research participants' comprehension and intention towards PBPP in relation to ABPP.

Two research questions further refine the aim:

- *How do different consumer groups understand the importance of plant-based protein products and how does this reflect their values and the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded?*
- *How do consumers and retailers conceptualise opportunities for the general consumer to scale up consumption of plant-based protein products?*

## 1.2 Thesis outline

The thesis is a qualitative study. Its outline is based on the two research questions, in order to explore and identify the perspectives of consumers and retailers on plant-based products and their significance. The second chapter presents a background for the study. Introducing the subject of consumption in Sweden, culture and habits in consumption as well as current gaps in research. Thereafter, follows the third

chapter presenting the theoretical and methodological concepts and choices that guided the collection and analysis of data. The centre of the thesis is the fourth chapter, presenting the empirical findings, and the fifth chapter, analysing the implications of the findings. The sixth and last chapter concludes the thesis, summarising the main phenomena presented in the analysis and my overarching interpretations of the study.

## 2. Background

This background will provide information on current research and specifics of Swedish consumption of PBPP. Research gaps that this thesis aims to fill will be highlighted.

### 2.1 A transition towards new consumer patterns

There is a challenge in convincing people to change their eating habits toward more environmentally sustainable food consumption patterns and it is becoming increasingly important to overcome. Food preferences, choices and eating habits are notoriously hard to change as they are a central aspect of people's lifestyles and their socio-cultural environment. Additionally, food choices are subject to marketing efforts of food companies and in the cultural values underpinning food behaviours (Cairns 2019). The complexity that surrounds food related decisions makes them susceptible to a wide range of social, cognitive, affective, and environmental influences (Hargreaves et al. 2021). Thus, efforts to promote changes in consumption competes with other contextual influences on people's food choices. Hence, it is not surprising that even though many people express concerns about emissions from the food industry they do not consistently act on it (Vermeir et al. 2020). In other words, consumer attitudes toward environmental sustainability are mainly positive, but there is a notable gap between favourable attitudes and actual purchase of sustainable food products (*ibid*).

Related to the aspect of habits is the concept "meat paradox", which is created when consumers care about animals yet eat meat and engage in a diet that requires animals to be slaughtered and suffer (Gradidge et al. 2021). This highlights the moral dilemma involved in eating animals, a dilemma that all people eventually have to resolve if dietary change is to take place. Most people view eating animals as a cultural norm, rather than a choice (Enriquez & Archila-Godinez 2021). In most meat-eating cultures around the world, people typically don't think about why they perhaps find for instance eating dogs disgusting and other animals more appetising and legitimate to consume (Gradidge et al. 2021). A set of social and psychological defence mechanisms hides the contradictions between people's values and behaviours. This allows individuals to make exceptions to what would normally be considered unethical. These patterns of not questioning one's reasoning and dilemmas are strengthened by habit formation (*ibid*).

Extrinsic (external) motivation arises from outside of the individual while intrinsic (internal) motivation comes from within (Breckenridge et al. 2019). Theories for motivating change in general claims that change is more likely to be

sustained if there is synergy between the actors perceived need and desire for improvement, and extrinsic forms of motivators for change. This calls for an intrinsic form of motivation which requires individuals to experience feelings of: autonomy (being able to act according to our values); competence (confidence that we can act in the way we want); and relatedness (connected to others through our actions and choices). For change to be self-determined, individuals must feel able to actualise these three senses regardless of whether the original driver for change is external or not (*ibid*).

A recent study by Vermeir et al. (2020) presented a theoretical framework for how to look at the challenge of making people consume more sustainably. They assumed that food consumption can be deliberately or unintentionally connected to attaining goals. Food consumption is then a goal-directing behaviour. Thus, to make people change their eating habits, the consumer has to engage in certain steps. The study states that "Consumers need to positively value the environment, discern a discrepancy between the desired versus the actual state of the environment, opt for action to reduce the experienced discrepancy, intend to engage in behaviour that is expected to bring them closer to the desired end state, and act in accordance with their intention" (*ibid*: 1).

A number of studies have focused on what hinders consumers from acting upon their values and from consuming more plant-based. The most commonly reported inhibitory factor of a vegetarian diet is the enjoyment of eating meat and the difficulty in giving up meat consumption (Fehér 2020; Havermans et al. 2021). This is followed by health considerations, e.g., lack of various ingredients in foods (Havermans et al. 2021). Convenience and taste factors are also important disincentives. These findings indicates that more education on the plant-based diet (i.e., increasing awareness of the benefits, and skills to procure or prepare a plant-based meal) might increase both knowledge and plant-based food familiarity (*ibid*). This shows that targeting individual or environmental determinants are the most effective measures for change (Taufik et al. 2019).

## 2.2 A Swedish perspective

Every third Swede chooses a flexitarian diet. However, in a 2018 survey examining vegetarian food trends among the general public in Sweden, only 10% stated that they were vegan or vegetarian (Statista 2018). Among Swedes who were not vegetarians or vegans, the share of individuals being interested in vegetarian food has increased in recent years from 27 percent in 2015 to 35 percent in 2018. However, a majority of the respondents who were neither vegetarian nor vegans had not noticed a development in their interest in vegetarian food within the past years (*ibid*).

Swedish agriculture accounts for 13 percent or 7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents of the total GHGEs emitted in Sweden (Naturvårdsverket 2020). However, since Swedish food import is large, an extensive part of the emissions caused by food production take place abroad (SCB 2020). The imported products that cause large emissions are mainly beef and cheese, but also imports of other foods and input use like fertilisers (*ibid*). Thus, emissions from the production of specifically animal foods, meat, dairy products and eggs, account for a little less than 70 percent of the emissions that originate from the food consumed in Sweden (SLU 2021). There are four main ways to reduce emissions from food; (1) *Increase productivity, i.e. produce more food with less input from, for example, energy and fertilizer*; (2) *Develop and apply technical solutions that reduce emissions, such as technology to reduce emissions from manure storage*; (3) *Reduced waste at all levels*; (4) *Change towards diets that mainly contains less animal products* (Bryngelsson et al. 2016). The Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2019) estimate that emissions from Swedish agriculture could be reduced by about 20–25 percent by 2045 if various types of improvements in agriculture are implemented on a large scale. The potential is not greater since Sweden already has a relatively technically advanced and efficient agriculture. Thus, in developed countries like Sweden changing diets has a greater potential to reduce emissions (*ibid*). By reducing the amount of animal foods in Western diets, GHGEs from diets can be reduced by about 50 percent (Hallström et al. 2015).

An environmentally sustainable food consumption (ESFC) is defined to consist of products that responds to basic needs and an increased quality of life whilst at the same time minimizing the use of natural resources, materials, emissions and pollutants to not jeopardize the needs of future generations (Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption 1994). Increasing consumption of plant-based products is considered to contribute to a ESFC (Lea et al. 2006). Buying locally produced, organic and seasonal products and reducing meat consumption can also be more environmentally sustainable (*ibid*). The meat-based food system requires more energy, land, and water resources than an average vegan or vegetarian diet (Pimentel & Pimentel 2003; O'Neill et al. 2017). Swedish chicken meat in comparison to other meats generates a significantly smaller amount of GHGEs. However, the emissions are still about ten times higher than some corresponding plant-based alternatives, such as beans (Djurens rätt nd). Additionally, issues such as food shortage and malnourishment are primarily related to rapid population growth in the world plus the declining per capita availability of land, water, and energy resources (*ibid*). Hence, there are multiple reasons for promoting an increased consumption of plant-based products.

## 2.3 A gap in research

There is a lack of agreement in current research about what products are the most sustainable to consume (Lenas 2022). For example, differences in emphasis on economic, social or ecological aspects of sustainability can affect the conclusion drawn. Regional differences in soils and climate also influence the discussion. In general, it is easier to produce cereals and vegetables in warmer climates while relying more on animal products the closer you get to the south and north poles (*ibid*). Hence, global recommendations for consumptions fail to account for demands for more regionally and locally customised recommendations.

The premise for this thesis is that the general consumer utilises animal products for their protein consumption. The basic assumption that all plant-based products are more sustainable than animal products is dismissed since a product's measure of sustainability is based on various factors. A PBPP that is for instance highly processed, imported or highly water demanding, can be less sustainable than a ABPP (cf. Kustar & Patino-Echeverri 2021). However, a decreased consumption of animal-based products is necessary to enable an environmentally sustainable food consumption (cf. Ivanova et al. 2016). Thus, to examine how this upscaled consumption can be managed is of interest for all levels and contexts.

Several studies have examined how development can continue in order to increase consumption of plant-based products. Studies on protein consumption in Sweden have examined barriers to increasing consumption of various plant-based products or meat substitutes amongst consumers (Mousel & Tang 2016). A recent 2022 study found that an increase in knowledge about the environmental and health benefits of legume-based substitutes can increase participants intention of decreasing their meat consumption (Röös et al.). Further, the study concluded that to increase consumption of legume-based meat substitutes aspects of taste, familiarity and overall attractiveness act as hindering factors. This study point to the hinders and possibilities from a consumer perspective (*ibid*). Continuing, further studies have been made on the aspect of how incentives from retailers and supermarkets affect consumption. A 2016 study examines how consumer knowledge, product development and promotions can act to increase the consumption of plant-based foods (Spendrup). These findings of possibilities and hinders to consider in order to increase consumption of plant-based foods reveals a relevance in looking further into how consumers' and retailers' perspective on plant-based consumption varies and compares. Thus, this study examining consumers and retailers' perspectives on PBPP in specific can fill a gap in knowledge of variations in specific factors affecting consumption. Further, the findings in Swedish consumption can be applied and fill gaps of knowledge in grander contexts, since actions towards climate mitigation are demanded globally. The implications can relate to how consumers and retailers conceptualise consumption and what changes they believe to be necessary for upscaling consumption of PBPP.

In the end, this study can result in an improved understanding of how changes in norms, values and physical aspects such as marketing are being understood and how this understanding can be influenced. Furthermore, implications for how policymakers and other actors should approach the question of upscaling consumption of plant-based products can be presented.

## 3. Methodological & Theoretical framework

The purpose of the following chapter is to give an understanding of the methodological, analytical and theoretical approaches and processes that have shaped this thesis. First comes a description of the thesis research design, a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with consumers and retailers and complemented by observations of supermarkets. Then follows a description of how the study was performed, initiated with the selection of participants, continued by an illustration of how the interviews and observations were made and concluded with an explanation of the subsequent analytical process. Thus, explaining and justifying the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that will be applied to the empirical material for analysis.

### 3.1 A phenomenological angle

This chapter offers motivations for methodological and analytical decisions to increase overall validity and reliability (Howell 2013). The study is centred around semi-structured interviews oriented towards understanding people's experiences, values and perspectives. Therefore, the interviews revolved around understanding the research participants' perspectives on consumption and attention towards plant-based products. The specific focus on the research participants experiences of the same concept makes the study phenomenologically inspired (cf. Creswell 2007).

Phenomenology is a branch of qualitative research that focuses on the lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Neubauer et al. 2019). It seeks to describe the phenomenon in question and how people encounter and experience it, with as much richness and detail as possible (Randles 2012). The aim is to describe the "essences" of the phenomenon that contribute to an understanding of meaning (*ibid*). By applying a phenomenological angle in my thesis, attention will be drawn to the values and experiences that the consumers and retailers accord to PBPP, which is important in relation to the research questions.

*Discourse* theory concerns how individuals accomplish personal, social, and political projects through language (Starks & Brown Trinidad 2007; Piazza & Wodak 2014). Language both mediates and constructs our understanding of reality (Sköllerhorn 1998; Inglis 2012). It also defines the social roles that are available to individuals and serves as the primary means through which they enact their identities (*ibid*). Different discourses each point to different courses of action (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). Hence, by examining the language used, individually and commonly by the research participants, their reality and how they create their reality can be understood. The theories on phenomenology and discourses both



centre around how individual occurrences can explain a phenomenon (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002; Engdahl & Larsson 2011). Thus, the focus on expression and language use with a phenomenological angle can provide a dual lens to explore qualitative information, interpreted as both lived experience and discursive practice (Hood 2015). This is of relevance, in relation to the research questions, since it can show variations in how consumers and retailers talk about and act towards PBPP.

By applying a phenomenological angle, in what ways people think differently can be explored. Exploring how the research participants framing of their ideas can serve as a window to how consumers in general experience the matter, the base idea of phenomenology.

## 3.2 Collection of empirics

### 3.2.1 Selection of observations and research participants

This study was initiated through observations of supermarkets. The observations was based on a quantitative approach as the purpose was to understand what the stores looked like physically, to what extent PBPP were represented and how these were marketed. The observations further guided the interview process and what question would be relevant to ask the research participants. I chose 11 supermarkets of different sizes and store chains, within a limited area of 10 km. The variation in store size enabled to identify if the placement, marketing and presentation of PBPP depending on this factor. All stores were either an ICA, Hemköp, Coop or City Gross store, which are all prominent chains in Sweden. These chains were chosen because there is a certain degree of difference between the design of the stores, product placement and marketing, within the same chain. None of the stores observed was represented in the interview study.

The selection of research participants for the interviews were guided by the thesis research questions. For the first research question, I selected participants based on two criteria's; variation in diets/lifestyles, and variation in age and gender. Diets are the primary factor for discussion and age and gender is used to establish potential variety between research participants. To get in touch with the consumers, I contacted people from internet forums with an interest in food. In total, 20 consumers were interviewed. For the second research question, 6 additional participants were selected to represent the retailer perspective. In my selection I wanted to achieve a variation in food store chains represented, geographics and occupation amongst the retailers, for instance both store managers and representatives from head offices. To get in touch with representatives for supermarkets I contacted stores in 15 different regions in Sweden. Results may be affected by the selection of regions. In total, 26 people were interviewed. Due to time restrictions and the scope of the report, the interviews were not as in-depth as

the phenomenological methodology often suggests. However, the considerable total quality of participants was justified since it gave opportunities to explore many different perspectives.

The collected research material is not representative for all consumers and supermarkets in Sweden. However, by attaining all set criteria and a wide range of research participants the data can be a valuable contribution for understanding how different consumer groups and retailers perceive PBPP (cf. Sergeant 2012).

### 3.2.2 Collection of data

A primary constraining factor for the collection of data was the prevailing restrictions during 2022 due to the global pandemic (Folkhälsomyndigheterna 2022). The secondary constraining factor was the time scope of the study. This resulted in limiting the number of visits and interviews as well as that all interviews were conducted through online meetings on the platforms Zoom and Teams.

All observations were performed during the same week. I visited each store and filled out a checklist of 12 criteria. These criteria, compiled in Appendix 1, focused on the number of PBPPs in stores' fridge and freezer sections, how many PBPPs were at a reduced price, and how the store places PBPP in relation to ABPP.

The interviews were held individually during four weeks, on telephone and the digital platform Zoom. Since the aim of the study was to investigate how people believe and opinionated around a certain subject, interviews through telephone and online platforms could be considered a sufficient methods for data collection (cf. Kaijser & Öhlander 2011). The research participants were informed that I would make notes during the interview and that all personal information would be anonymized. Since the empirical material is presented themes and anonymised quotes I consider the risk of adventuring the research participants anonymity as low. The aim of the study was only partially revealed to the research participants before the interviews. I revealed the main subject and my interest, however, withheld the specific aim and research questions. With specific reason and intention to not steer or influence the research participants expressions (cf. Pripp 2011). The interviews held a semi-structured form, entailing that the set of questions for the research participants acted merely as a guide for the interviews (Robsen 2002; Prowse 2010). The specific set of questions asked depended on the research participants interest, knowledge and personal experiences. The questions for the consumers focused on the person's reasoning concerning diet choices, choices when buying products and their perspectives on future consumption. The questions for the retailers focused on their perspectives on the effects of marketing, sales and placement for upscaling consumption of PBPP.

I made notes during all interviews and since the interviews were made in Swedish, I later on translated the material from Swedish to English. Since I did not record the interviews, I may have missed small statements and nuances from the

informants. However, since the final collected material was large and nuanced, I experience that the most important parts of the interviews were noted. I made an effort to not make leading questions or statements or apply my personal views to the next research participant (cf. Creswell 2007).

### 3.2.3 The participants

I interviewed 20 consumers: 5 *Vegans*, 2 *Vegetarians*, 5 *Flexitarians* and 8 *Omnivores*. *Vegans* were those who did not consume or use any animal products, *Vegetarians* those who did not consume animal products, *Flexitarians* those who actively choose to eat more plant-based meals and *Omnivores* those who did not make active choices to consume more PBPP. The consumers were anonymised and given a letter (See Appendix 2), based on diet preference and age. These were applied to make it easy for me as a researcher to compare and contrast the different consumer opinions and for the reader to recognise the differences between consumer statements without compromising the person's anonymity. This division was done to compare similarities and differences between diet/lifestyle since this is a relevant factor for the discussion later on.

A certain variation in ages amongst the consumers was achieved, with research participants in the ages 24-76. However, a predominant proportion of the consumers were between the ages of 24 and 30. Further, there was a certain gender distribution but with an over-representation of women as vegans and flexitarians, an over-representation of males as omnivores and only females as vegetarians.

I interviewed 6 retailers; 1 Retail manager, 1 Category manager, 1 Fresh produce manager and 3 Store managers. The stores represented were ICA, Coop, Hemköp and City Gross, the same selection of stores as for the observation. The research participants were an equal mix of ages and genders. Variations in professions, genders and ages are not included in the analysis of these interviews since it is not relevant for answering the research questions. The retailers were anonymised and given a number (See Appendix 2). The stores/offices represented were either a head office, large store (large supermarket), medium store (supermarket) or a small store (local store). There was a certain variation in which sizes in stores/offices the retailers were responsible for, with a larger number of large stores represented by the participants. No small stores were represented. All the retailers were located in areas defined as urban, either in a larger or smaller city (cf. SCB 2017; SCB 2017). This homogeneity is, at least in part, because supermarkets and head offices are usually located closer to areas that are more densely populated.

### 3.3 The analytical process

Throughout a process of qualitative form, it is of importance to keep record of how the process of collecting and analysing material was conducted (Kaijser 2011; Bryman 2016). Hence, to enhance reliability and validity of this research project, the analytical process will be described in this section (*ibid*). After transcribing all material, I created categories of the most common opinions and statements. These are presented as themes, collecting all research participants' relevant opinions, recurrences and discrepancies, in order to analyse them. These themes have together with the further applied concepts built the model for my discussion where a collection of opinions will be used to present larger socio-cultural trends (cf. Creswell & Creswell 2018).

Themes can be used to create a description of what the participants experienced (Creswell 2007). The process of analysis for me as a researcher entails to derive the reasoning from the empirical findings and at the same time maintain validity (Creswell 2007; Kaijser 2011). Therefore, I have been a part of the creation of the material, through the organization of the material. Moreover, I have continuously revisited the empirical data and theory to ensure that the analysis stays true to the empirical data (Öhlander 2011). This have worked to contradict and/or confirm my findings and implications (cf. Robson 2002). Since a qualitative form of analyse is derived from people's lived experiences and thinking, every set of qualitative data should be considered unique (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014). Thus, it is important to note that the generalisations that will follow with the analysis are not applicable to all forms of conversion or changes in food consumption. Instead, it can be recognised as examples explaining the context of consumers and retailers perspectives on PBPP.

Parallely to the data collection, I applied theories to the material in order to identify beneficial concepts for the discussion. I have chosen what to compare and describe, and consequently what kind of knowledge that has been produced (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Therefore, my previous knowledge has provided a set of assumptions that have shaped the final product, and this should be kept in mind throughout this report (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Kaijser & Öhlander 2011; Bryman 2016).

### 3.4 Conceptual framework

Explaining the conceptual framework will help clarifying how the empirical data has been approached, both during the collection and the analysis. The phenomenological angel on the study is motivated by the concept *lifeworld*. I use the lifeworld to analyse habits and social-cultural dimensions of food preferences

and culture and habit formation to analyse how consumption practices are influenced.

### 3.4.1 Lifeworld

The sociologist Jurgen Habermas' (1987) theory of social integration describes how people live in common or similar *life worlds* (Engdahl & Larsson 2011). Individuals share the horizon of understanding with which they orient themselves towards the world with others in their vicinity (Inglis 2012). They have similar cognitive and normative notions about how they should act towards each other and how the world is shaped (*ibid*).

In order to be able to orientate oneself and one's actions, the actor must interpret and define the situation (Engdahl & Larsson 2011). This presupposes an ability to be able to understand and interpret life (*ibid*). In sociology, this ability can be said to be linked to the *meaning context* of the action and the person's *lifeworld*. *Meaning context* refers to the concrete context or context in which an action is given its meaning, while the concept *lifeworld* denotes the whole larger context in which the action can be understood (*ibid*). This includes the whole horizon of experiences and knowledge that people have at their disposal and whose dreams and action plans are built up (Eriksen & Weigård 2000).

*Lifeworld* is the environment we are in, where we simultaneously gather strength and resources to work in the world in a deliberate way (Engdahl & Larsson 2011). In this thesis, lifeworld is perceived as the research participants everyday lives which their diet and consumption are part of. The concept is used as an input in the discussion and used to read meaning into the actions described by the participants. Given the short duration of this study, I am not able to penetrate the research participants' lifeworld in depth, however, I use this concept as a way to signal how consumer choice is embedded within broader values, experiences, and ethical propositions that are culturally defined. The concept of the lifeworld will be further explained and exemplified alongside the empirical data in the discussion.

### 3.4.2 Culture & Habit formation

Food is an expression of people's identities, values, and lifestyle. Consumers play a decisive role in consumption trends since human food choices (FC) build upon shaped habits and behaviours (Enriquez & Archila-Godinez 2021). The influence of socio-cultural aspects, such as cultural capital, social stratifications, and inequalities could possibly influence consumers' food choices. The concept of *cultural capital* indicates that the accumulation of culture is inherited or acquired through socialisation; hence cultural values increase as the social class gets higher (*ibid*). *Social stratification* refers to the hierarchical structure of a society that divides people into classes, groups, castes, or some other form of strata (Pfautz

1953). Food habits and behaviours are preferences that have been shaped by past food choices and these patterns help to understand how they arise (Mizia et al. 2021). *Food habits* can be defined as the set of culturally standardized behaviours regarding food, shown in individuals who are raised within a given cultural tradition (Mead 1943). Additionally, other standardized behaviours in the same culture systematically interrelate with these behaviours (*ibid*).

Consumption of a product is *habit forming* if current preferences depend on past consumption (Pollack 1970; Daunfeldt et al. 2012; Al-Adili 2018). Thus, habit formation means that past consumption reinforces the propensity to consume the same goods over time. Habit formation in food can have implications for public policies and marketing campaigns (Daunfeldt et al. 2012). If habit formation is strong, information campaigns will need to be more forceful, and consequently more costly, to affect consumption. Thus, price changes will have little effect in the short run compared to cases where habit formation is weak. In addition, the strength of habit formation seems to vary across food products. There also seem to be regional and/or cultural differences in food habit formation (*ibid*).

The concepts of culture and habit can be used to present how measures for change are individual, and that contexts around people's choices are contextual. Presenting the picture that there is a wide variety of reasons and a large difference, affected by individual, cultural, regional etc factors. Further, the concepts are used to look at what general inhibitory factors there could be for consuming more PBPP.

### 3.5 Delimitations

The study explores how Swedish consumers and retailers' perceives PBPP. The study is not focused on a specific geographical area since the aim of the study is to understand the general research participants' perspectives on PBPPs. For the scope of this study all experiences and opinions concerning one or more vegetarian and vegan protein products that are sold in most commercial supermarkets in Sweden are relevant.

In order to get a deeper understanding of a limited number of research participants and to create a material that can contribute with more general conclusions, the selected research participants accord to different diet/lifestyle categories and have various interests and backgrounds. Since subject selection in qualitative research is purposeful, the participants selected were those who could inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon of the study (Sargeant 2012). There were an overrepresentation of women and younger people in the consumer groups *Vegans*, *Vegetarians* and *Flexitarians*. And an overrepresentation of men and older people in the consumer group *Omnivores*. This could have angled and affected the results. However, it can also mirror the reality of which genders and ages that are currently most willing to consume PBPP.

Additionally, the research interest is limited to understanding the research participants perspective towards specifically PBPP. The aim is to understand how people understand and value these products and to bring forward implications for helping to advance adoption of plant-based diets. The following thesis does not explore the particular policies, political incentives and other strategies that can also affect the availability and production of PBPP. That is since the intention is not to specifically address all factors affecting and changing patterns of consumption and retail.

## 4. Findings

Three overarching themes have been gathered from the empirical material to answer the two research questions; *How do different consumer groups understand the importance of plant-based protein products?* and *How do consumers and retailers conceptualise opportunities to scale up consumption of plant-based protein products?*

Each theme (4.1-4.3) presents the various perspectives of the research participants and this form of categorisation present a contrast the findings (cf. Robson 2002). Experiences from each consumer group is set against the other groups to creates opportunities for subsequent comparisons in the discussion.

### 4.1 Price, Placement & Product

This first theme introduces the physical aspects of how stores look today and consumers and retailers opinions on how current consumer patterns can be changed. The aspect of *Price* looks at how reduced prices campaigns and marketing affects perspectives. *Placement* refers to the physical planning of stores. *Product* aims toward looking at product development and how opinions towards different PBPP differ.

#### 4.1.1 Price

The observations of supermarkets indicated that the prices on PBPP were overall similar amongst the stores. Moreover, similarities were also found in the prioritization of campaigns for PBPPs among stores within the same chain. Differences in campaigns and prices between stores depended mostly on the stores size and which supermarket chain it accorded to. Larger stores had in general more offers and campaigns on PBPP and some chains focused more on promoting and discounting PBPP than others. The retailers pointed out that most stores that are a part of a chain are thoroughly controlled centrally and has more or less manoeuvre to affect what products should be on campaigns and what prices to offer. However, they claimed that the specific interest of the store manager or the specific area manager can affect prices and campaigns. Retailer 5 gives one example of this:

Since I have an interest in plant-based foods I have made an extra effort to prioritise these products in our store. Customers buying plant-based products are good customers for us, they often have expensive shopping baskets. (Retailer 5)



The quote explains that if actors in the store have an interest or clear goal in increasing consumption of PBPP, factors such as: an increased marketing, reduced prices and extra additions (e.g. meal suggestions and recipes) are easy to apply. The quote further discloses that a consumer buying PBPP is a beneficial customer for stores to attract due to profits. Thus, retailers have a clear incentive to prioritise these customers. A majority of the retailers showed clear interest in increasing specific marketing of PBPP but stated that it would be necessary to give a specific employee the overall assignments in promoting and working with developing ways of promotion in store, on social media, websites etc. To ensure that the marketing works in one united direction with the same aim. The retailers believed that this assignment will be important to allocate in the future.

All consumers and retailers perceived sales and marketing of products in store as methods with some value for increasing sales of PBPP and to allure new consumers. However, the attitude towards the importance of pricing varied between the retailers.

Sales mean that we will sell significantly more of the product and we define them as a sustainable strategy for promoting sales. (Retailer 3)

Promotions and sales are to increase interest and get more buyers into the category. However, not enough costumers make use of the promotions and in the long run, you should not need them. (Retailer 4)

Some retailers meant that not enough consumers buy PBPP with reduced prices for it to be profitable and that reduction of prices are not a long-term method for increasing sales. However, other retailers expressed that reductions function as a long-term method, since they continuously remind the consumers of what products there are to offer and that lower prices together with marketing and placement is a long-term strategy. The retailers differentiating views could depend on their different experiences with pricing and factors such as location, customer base, focus of the store etc. These mixed opinions can show that even though prioritised marketing, recipes and offers are a good way to make consumers aware about the products, the consumer need to have a further interest in order for them to continue to buy PBPP when they are no longer on sale.

Additionally, several retailers expressed concerns about how promotions of PBPP affects the general consumer. They described that an overly prioritised focus on PBPP had made the general consumer to feel de-prioritised and that neglected promotions on ABPP. Thus, making these consumers even more reluctant towards PBPP.

During our campaigns for vegetarian products a lot of people complained on the absence of campaigns on meat and “normal foods”. (Retailer 3)

When I was eating meat I did not even look at what offers there could be on PBPP that I'm not interested in but now when I eat plant-based sometimes when there is a reduced price on some product I will choose it over something else. (Omnivore M)

The retailers' attitude is shared by the consumers. This quote shows that to an omnivore, a reduced price does not matter significantly. They often look past the offer since they lack an interest in trying PBPP, are unfamiliar with the products or how to use them. Vegans and vegetarians perceive sales as beneficial tools to encourage the general consumer to try PBPP. However, they do not think that this factor can work on its own. These findings display that sales and reduced prices can steer consumption if the consumer already have an interest in the product.

#### 4.1.2 Placement

The observation of supermarkets showed that the range of products as well as the number of products in the refrigerator and freezer department was comparable based on the size of the stores. All stores had the PBPP products either placed in separate areas or clearly placed as a unit in a part of an area. The main difference observed between the different stores were the extent to which the PBPP and their aisle was marked with a sign. Six stores had clear signs over the PBPP marked as either "Vegetarian" or "Vego". The five remaining stores had no sign at all, which can make it more difficult for the consumer to find the section for PBPP. The observations further showed that PBPP were placed close to animal products such as ham and cheese in the refrigeration section in all stores. In the freezer section, the products were placed close to the vegetables and ready meals such as pizza, pie and pasta. This was true for all stores except one, where the refrigerated products were placed in the middle of animal dairy products. The larger stores also had PBPP that were on sale or extra prices in campaign boxes, either specific to PBPP or together with other products that were also on sale. In the smaller stores, PBPP on sales tended to be placed together with vegetables on campaign and not with other protein products on promotion. Additionally, while the smaller stores seem to have put the products in places where space were offered, the categories were seldom clearly communicated, and it could be difficult to find the products. The larger the store the more of a possibility there seemed to be on prioritising and thoughtfully planning the placement of PBPP. However, the sections were still often in corners, next to the vegetables and market with green colours.

The observations present that there are differences in how PBPP is placed, which can depend on the stores size and thus their available space to work with. The retailers meant that the buyer of PBPP is an important customer for the retailer, both financially and environmentally. They explained that a prioritised placement of PBPP should be prioritised by all stores, no matter size.

A majority of the consumers and retailers believed in a combination of having special placement and sections for plant-based products as well as placing meat-

substitutes near their similar animal product. Retailer 2 and 4 gives two examples of this:

In order for more people to buy plant-based, we must work with both the consumer and placement. We can choose how and which products we highlight in advertising, physically and also online. Further, we can lift out certain products and put them at the beginning of the fresh produce round. (Retailer 2)

I do not think that all products are ready to be integrated into a "regular" shelf or department, but I believe in the long run that this is where we will end up with most products that are substitutes for animal products and today we can do it with our bestsellers. (Retailer 4)

All research participants believed that special sections for plant-based foods is currently the most beneficial placement, since it makes it easier for the consumers to find the products and see the assortment of PBPP. There were various opinions on how placement of the plant-based sections should be prioritised, if it should be the most prioritised to increase sales or if it should be in the section of special foods, such as gluten-free products. The retailers reasoned that the PBPP that currently could be placed next to the meat products and in prioritised sections today would be the products with the highest sales. These would then be already recognised by the customer and give the consumer an easier choice of switching from animal- to plant-based products. However in today's situation, where not enough PBPP are sold, the retailers expressed a belief in placing PBPP in specific sections. Vegan E explains their point of view:

I believe that you have to allure the consumers eye towards the products by truly prioritising the products through prioritised placement as well as by giving the consumers easy recipes and ideas of how to cook these. Put the vegan dishes in the buffet first and have it visible in the store. (Vegan E)

For the consumers, both vegetarians and vegans expressed that in order to make more people transitioning towards consuming more plant-based they have to be aware about the variety, innovations and possibilities in plant-based foods through concept placement, where PBPP are marketed and placed together with recipes and visual pictures of food and dishes. Further, the vegetarian and vegan research participants suggested to place new, innovative and "less-meat like" products in prioritised placement and to focus on making the products look enticing.

The flexitarians were uniformly positive towards having separate shelves and sections for plant-based products, as exemplified by Flexitarian H.

I believe that it's good to easily see where things are, that there is a sign and that it's separate, would have bothered me if regular milk and oat milk were mixed. When I see a shelf marked as "vegetarian" I always go there to see what news and special offers there are. (Flexitarian H)

This quote shows the perspective on giving options for all products to give the consumer an easy choice and a possibility to venture into the world of PBPP. Thus, presenting the group of flexitarians lifeworld's and cultural contexts where they are aware about both plant and animal products and can make an active choice in the store depending on what they are interested in for the moment they go to different parts of the store.

The omnivores perceived placement as less important. They looked at their own experience and meant that since they are not interested in the PBPP, they do not search for these areas in the stores. A majority had no idea if the products were placed separate or together with other products.

When I search for products in the store I look for what I like. Usually it is animal products. I more often know how to cook dishes with animal protein as opposed to plant-based. (...) I do not think that product placement is that important. If you are looking for plant-based products, you look up where they are anyway. (Omnivore Q)

The quote by Omnivore Q shows that when the omnivores talk about other alternatives, they view it solely as products for people that do not want to consume animal products at all. Not as a separate product with its own benefits and possibilities, available to all regardless of diet and lifestyle. The omnivores opinion argues against the vegetarians and vegans who claimed that visibility and prioritising placement of PBPP could attract new consumers. Thus, according to the omnivores, visibility and priority in stores is not enough in order to upscale consumption. Since there still is a basic lack of interest and willingness to act upon the products from the general consumer.

### 4.1.3 Product

During the observations, a majority (approximately 65%) of the plant-based goods in all stores were meat-substitutes. These are products that resemble an animal product, for example sausages and burgers. There were less products that do not directly resemble an animal product, for example: Falafel-, Tofu- and Quorn-products, (35%) in the stores. Although the range of PBPP were basically the same in all stores, larger-sized stores had a larger variety of products and they were also the stores that had the widest range of new products. The observations shows that meat substitutes take up most space, and PBPP that do not directly resemble animal products take up less. This can mirror the overall higher demand for substitutes and is attested by the retailers claiming that there is a higher consumer demand of meat-substitutes then other PBPP.

Both consumers and retailers agreed upon and believed in two future main lines for PBPP; (1) development of more meat-substitutes that are easy to prepare and with attention on flavour and texture that are appealing to omnivores and novice PBPP consumers and (2) developing more products that are not direct substitutes

for already convinced people and those who want to branch out after trying substitutes. However, there were some differences between the consumer groups' focuses.

Omnivores focused on the nutritional value; "I don't buy it because I feel like it is not enough protein and that the taste is boring" (Omnivore M). This quote can be an example of omnivores having limited and unfruitful experiences of PBPP and thus having a negative tone towards all PBPP. Meanwhile, the flexitarians focused on developing a wider range of PBPP and took notice in which categories they still preferred ABPP over PBPP; "I never eat meat but when I do eat seafood, I do it because it is good and there are bad alternatives that replace it" (Flexitarian I). This can explain the flexitarians interest in having good PBPP substitutes to all sorts of ABPP if they are to choose the plant-based alternative more often.

Vegetarians focused on developing certain sectors "I miss good alternatives to fish" (Vegetarian F). Vegans focused on innovation "Products like Seitan and tempeh need to be more cool, these are fun products that are a bit "innovative"" (Vegan D). This shows a similarity between the perspectives of vegans and vegetarians as well as between vegetarians and flexitarians. Nevertheless, the vegans had a larger focus on innovation and vegetarians more of a focus on expanding the variety of products. These variations could be signs of their similar aim of wanting all people with all preferences to find something plant-based appealing. More substitutes to fish can benefit flexitarians to consume more PBPP and more innovative products can benefit vegans and vegetarians to recognise the variety and possibilities of PBPP.

## 4.2 Motivation & Knowledge

As previously mentioned, there is a lack in motivation amongst the omnivores to change their patterns of consumption and try PBPP. All research participants agreed upon that institutional governance is not an efficient factor to motivate consumption of PBPP. Omnivore M gives one example of this:

We need more marketing, better prices, and campaigns that shows what contributions the products come with in climate, ethical and social aspects. But we need something more that attracts, for example that the consumer thinks that the product is tasty and know how to cook it. Because the more money I get, the more expensive meat products I buy since I know nothing about them (PBPP). So for me, the price is not the definitive factor. (Omnivore M)

This quote mentions that interest in climate, an extrinsic form of motivation, as well as values and knowledge, intrinsic motivation, is necessary for the omnivores to have in order to make a change. The vegetarians and vegans, the group of consumers that are already motivated to consume PBPP, explained that their transition in diet and lifestyle demanded interest, time and energy. However, when

they looked back on their choice, they expressed that the actual change was easier than they thought it would be.

Changing to buying a vegetarian schnitzel instead of a pork schnitzel or making a vegetarian stir fry for dinner instead of a meatloaf was not hard itself for me, it was the initial step to buy plant-based foods and to state that I was a vegan. (Vegan C)

This quote by Vegan C shows that the most difficult part that was to make the choice and to stand by it and not the actual consumption or preparation of the PBPP itself. Even when the choice is not to become vegan or vegetarian but to merely buy more plant-based, to choose PBPP over ABPP becomes an active choice that needs to be based on a strong willingness to do this.

I asked the research participants why they believed that some people did not want to eat PBPP and what changes could be made. All research participants mentioned a lack in knowledge and motivation amongst the general consumer about the products itself as well as the food industry. Further, the omnivores commonly mentioned a lack in interest or feeling reluctant to even try and instead shifting focus towards other forms of conscious consumption. "I do not see it as an equivalent commodity" (Omnivore R). "I rather focus on other aspects in my consumption such as buying locally produced products" (Omnivore T).

The research participants discussed how knowledge and information about PBPP could be spread to the general consumer in order to spark motivation. Examples from each consumer group:

In order for more people to eat the food, you have to make it visible, easier and perhaps that you can taste products and meals in the shops. (Vegan A)

The products should find their way into people's everyday lives, political stuff does not give much, those who are opposed will continue to be. Instead, serve more "Vego" in schools, move the shelves in the store, increase marketing and ensure that companies that innovate the field get rewarded. (...) Sneak in it so that people no longer see it as a strange thing especially for older people who feel that they "need their meat", de-dramatize it. (Vegetarian F)

I think that one thing that can help is that you have a more uniformity, that you do more like a taco shelf, they have a lot of food in a shelf that complements each other. Then the general consumer becomes more used to what the products looks like and become more inclined to try new products if they look cool, tasty and easy to make into meals. (Flexitarian J)

I do not think I would try such a (vegetarian) product in a store. I do not know what would make me consume more of this. Maybe if someone had invited me home for dinner and cooked a very good vegan dish that I easily can enjoy. (Omnivore P)

These quotes show that there is a certain difference between the consumer groups statements. One is that the vegetarians, vegans and flexitarians all focused on making changes on various levels outside of homes. Mentioning implementations to make in stores, schools and public sectors etc. Meanwhile the omnivores focused

more on making changes on more personal levels such as at home and within their social connections. By being invited to someone and served a meal with PBPP they would feel more enticed to try and appreciate the products further on.

A matter of interest that was mentioned in many interviews was the feeling of disbelief amongst the consumer groups and the gaps that have been created between people due to diet and lifestyles.

It feels like people the second that I open my mouth and want to talk about plant-based foods rolls their eyes and do not want to listen. This affected me and I have started to talk less about it and I feel that no one wants to listen to me and do not want to be a part of our community. (Vegetarian F)

I feel like the labels such as green, vego, plant-based makes it look like just a bunch of carbs and it makes me not feel entitled to buy these since I do not feel like it is for me and that I would not like to be a vegan person. (Omnivore S)

These quotes describe a disbelief between consumer groups. This creates a conundrum of how to invite outsiders to the conversation, how to normalise plant-based foods and overcome the gap that different consumers experience between each other. Yet, it creates a disbelief from the omnivores towards the possibilities of the PBPP and the community, which has a negative effect on their willingness to consume PBPP. The observations displayed that PBPP are frequently labelled and marketed specifically to vegans or vegetarians. Thus, creating a space where the products are perceived by the omnivores as not for them. Similar to gluten free and lactose free products, PBPP becomes products that are only meant for a certain consumer group with a special preference. Hence, the current strategy of informing, labelling and marketing of the products may work as an excluding factor instead of an inviting one for the general consumer.

### 4.3 Identity & Culture

Even though consumption of PBPP can be seen as a long-lived trend, statistics declare that merely 10% of the Swedish population are vegetarians or vegans (cf. Statista 2018). It is also presented that interest in vegetarian food has not increased amongst meat eaters, omnivores. As previously described, a transition in consumption was described by the research participant as a large step. However, some research participants described a change in consumption to create further change in values, norms and identity:

It feels like a lot of people value their consumption of meat as a human right. (Vegan D)

I do not think that you should force people to eat more vegetarian, make them eat less meat instead. Eating animal-products is the norm for me and I do not know what I would do if I was unable to do it. (Omnivore P)

We have concept where if you buy a specific plant-based product every week you get a little extra points. But when we first tried to give more points to these products, it turned out completely wrong, people became super angry because they thought that only plant-based products would be promoted, so we had to change. Thus, I believe that for more people to eat plant-based, you can not only exclude the focus on meat and only promote and price consumption of plant-based products. We have to focus on providing products to those who already eat it and provide good and tasty alternatives to the potential consumer. (Retailer 5)

These quotes create a picture that omnivores view their consumption of animal products as their right and as an important part of their identity and cultural norm. If the omnivores would not be able to consume meats, they would feel lost in their consumption and lifestyle. Further, the omnivores expressed that campaigns for PBPP tries to paint a large part of the animal industry in an unfair way and that promotions of PBPP infringes on their right to consume animal products. Additionally, the retailers validated that the omnivores perceived intrusion on their free will by recent forms of marketing and campaigns. They meant that campaigns and sales have to be experienced as equal for the customer and that all consumer groups should feel seen.

A clear difference between the consumers of PBPP and the general consumer is the way they perceive labelling and promotion of direct meat substitutes. Vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians value substitutes and talk about them as essential for themselves and for introducing consumers to PBPP and give them easy options that resemble foods that they already cook. Although the omnivores agree, and believe that substitutes play a role, they have a larger scepticism directed towards the labelling and promotion of plant-based sausages, ham etc. Omnivore P gives one example of this:

Then I think that if you are going to market/label a product, you should not market it as a vegan or vegetarian substitute for meat, but for what it is and what you make it from. Then I think you can go out and let celebrity chefs discipline it, but do not call it “vegetarian sausage”. (Omnivore P)

This quote mirror a difference in which factors that are hindering the consumer from understanding the aim or the object of the product. The omnivores questions why vegetarian and vegans who have chosen not to eat meat needs substitutes to meat. Instead of seeing it as a product that can make it easier for a meat eater to change their meat sausage into a plant one.



## 4.4 Summary of findings

The themes above have presented the findings of the study in which way the two research questions can be partially answered for. (1) *How do different consumer groups understand the importance of plant-based protein products and how does this reflect their values and the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded?* Based on the findings all groups express that PBPP have some form of value. However, whilst PBPP have value in vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians everyday lives and act upon their importance by consuming these, the omnivores lack in interest of taking advantage of PBPP and their value. How these differences reflect the groups socio-cultural context will be further explored in the discussion. (2) *How do consumers and retailers conceptualise opportunities to scale up consumption of plant-based protein products* can be summarised as in order for the general consumer to upscale their consumption of PBPP, factors such as limited motivation, knowledge and understanding for PBPP has to be worked on. Which has been hindering until today by those factors that are implemented to increase consumption of PBPP, such as marketing, campaigns and labels, as well as the overall discourse and way that PBPP are talked about by consumers and non-consumers. The way consumers and retailers have conceptualised these opportunities will be further refined in the discussion.

## 5. Discussion

The findings indicated that consumers and retailers believe that price, placement and product development are not the factors that will benefit an upscaled consumption of PBPP the most. Rather, aspects of familiarization, information and relatedness towards PBPP are perceived as more beneficial factors.

In this section I will synthesise the findings and analyse what implications these can have on consumption of PBPP. By applying the conceptual framework previously described, the specific empirics will be connected to current trends and structures and the context behind the findings will be explored. The three subchapters deepen aspects of the findings; **5.1** discusses the general trends in the findings; **5.2** theorises the findings; and **5.3** reasons about which future changes can be made.

### 5.1 Summary of trends

A trend presented in the findings is that PBPP are being increasingly prioritised in terms of better placement, pricing and product development. Retailers stated they are willing to continue to promote these products since they notice consumers' appreciation of these products. Nevertheless, the retailers concluded that not enough PBPP are sold in relation to the space that the products take in both aspects of marketing and in stores. PBPP are mostly appreciated by vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians. The omnivores understand PBPP to have a function for other consumer groups, not for themselves. Thus, the omnivores exclude PBPP from having a part in their socio-cultural context. In one way, omnivores perceive PBPP similarly as they perceive gluten-free or lactose-free products. Creating the perspective of PBPP as products that are only meant for a certain group of people that in a way are "intolerant or "allergic" to ABPP. By expressing a lack of interest and prioritisation of PBPP, the omnivores distance themselves from the products. This is a mindset that was shared by all interviewed omnivores. In this study, a majority of the participants from the same consumer groups shared the same attitudes and opinions. This can be due to the specific and in general similar lifestyles that were found in each groups. Consumers with the same lifestyles and diets shared the same experiences of how placement had affected them. Retailers, with a focus on sales, aim to integrate PBPP in the most beneficial way to increase sales and thus show interest in all aspects of improving and increasing consumption of PBPP. The retailers focus on changes that will increase sales and one of the most cost beneficial consumer is the one buying plant-based. Meanwhile, out of the consumer groups, vegans and vegetarians were the ones most positive towards placing ABPP and

PBPP next to each other. This opinion can be explained since these groups express a desire to normalise the PBPP and have experienced visualisation as an effective strategy. On the other hand, omnivores opposed the idea of placing PBPP with ABPP. This mirrors their minimal experiences with PBPP, thus not seeing the benefits of a more integrated placement. This trend indicates how individuals from the same research groups that share the same experiences also often share similar opinions.

Another trend that I see and that is described by the group of omnivores was their tendency to lack in both external and internal forms of motivation to consume PBPP. Hence, it indicates that there is a need to develop a synergy between the omnivores desire for improving and changing their consumption and external motivators for change such as official policies, climate factors etc (cf. Breckenridge et al. 2019). For this to happen, an intrinsic inner form of motivation has to be developed amongst these consumers in order for them to be able to relate and value external factors of motivation and act upon these. Thus, the consumer has to feel a personal connection towards climate mitigation to perceive it as both a motivational factor to act on from both external and internal perspectives. Through this perspective, the groups of vegetarians, vegans and flexitarians already have a certain synergy between intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation since they make active choices of buying PBPP. However, a motivation to strengthen amongst these consumer groups can be their willingness to invite the general consumer into their established lifeworld's to strengthen the trend of consuming PBPP amongst other groups. A "lifeworld" can reveal in what way people conceptualize their lives and further connected to how people communicate. Hence, vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians can make an active choice to discuss food choices and experiences with omnivores in a way that makes the omnivores feel heard and enticed to try PBPP. An example of this, expressed by an interviewed omnivore, could be to serve PBPP at a dinner party where omnivores are attending, making them able to try the products in a familiar setting, giving them examples of what to cook instead of ABPP. By creating a social community around PBPP that invites all consumer groups, the general consumer can feel motivated to join the discussion in order to interact and learn from others about PBPP. Thus, strengthening the relatedness between different people and groups and continuing to spread the action and motivation for choosing plant-based regardless of age, gender, upbringing or past choices. This trend helps to explain how to make the general consumer motivated to upscale their consumption of PBPP. When consumers have a close encounter with the products through someone they trust, it is more likely that they will be willing to create a new habit.

Related to this trend is that both consumers and retailers discuss familiarisation as a tool to increase consumption of PBPP, however, on various levels. The omnivores talk about familiarisation on a personal level, in homes and within their

social room. The other consumer groups talk about actions correlated to larger contexts. These trends reflect the various everyday lives that the consumers take part in. Omnivores are acting in a socio-cultural context that has no relation to PBPP. Therefore, if they were introduced to PBPP by someone who are already a part of their lifeworld and relatedness, they could feel more of an intrinsic form of motivation. Meanwhile, the vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians does not recognise relatedness as an efficient factor for motivating an upscaled consumption of PBPP. Possibly since these consumer groups already have this intrinsic motivation and have made it a part of their everyday life they tend to overlook this, for them, self-evident aspect. These consumer groups perceive more distant levels of familiarisation as relevant, such as visibility in stores, institutions and media. In other words, the omnivores focus on the operative levels and their socio-cultural context, where the discussion and cooking of PBPP can come to live. However, the other consumer groups focus on the more administrative and institutional levels, where policies and subventions of PBPP can be made (cf. Jacobsen & Thorsvik 2008).

Another trend mirrored by all research participants was that their past and present consumer behaviour impacts their use of words and expressions. The findings point out that research participants, omnivores and flexitarians that in past and present have had meat as a preference, talks more suspiciously about PBPP. They used words and expressions to describe PBPP such as *difficult to prepare, tasteless, and less nutritional dense*. Meanwhile, the research participants that grew up preferring ABPP or were influenced by plant-based movements early on have a more openminded approach towards PBPP. They talk about the innovative and beneficial aspects of PBPP. Examples of words they use about PBPP are *quick, changeable* and *substitutes*. The research participants growing up with a preference or partially preference for PBPP talk about meat and plant-based products with likewise importance. They focus less on PBPP as substitutes but as a natural form of protein that belongs on all consumer plates and describe PBPP as *natural, valuable* and *sustainable*. These are examples where the word of speech shows how those growing up with plant-based foods make them more receptive to trying new products. Meanwhile those growing up with ABPP as a preference express difficulty in accepting/showing interest in PBPP. This use of expressions clarifies how omnivores does not really recognise the products as substitutes yet, flexitarians and new plant-based dieters regard them as obvious and easy substitutes meanwhile consumers of long time identify them as more than a substitute, a natural condiment. These examples of language use, various discourses, can be explained to derive from the similar cultures and lifeworld's shared by the groups. These lifeworld's have shaped the research participants ability to understand and describe PBPP (cf. Engdahl & Larsson 2011). Each discourse also point to different courses of action, which explains why the various consumer groups talk about different actions to

implement for change, the various preferences in placement of PBPP (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). This trend exemplifies that how people talk about PBPP and value them effects their consumer preference.

## 5.2 Connection to theory

Based on the findings, I see that in order to upscale consumption of PBPP, the general consumers experiences of PBPP has to be widened. A *lifeworld* reflects the environment and experiences that the actor is located in and act upon (Engdahl & Larsson 2011). One's lifeworld is not primarily referring to the concrete natural environment, but rather the socially created horizon of understanding that we constantly carry with us and interpret the world through. Thus, we cannot step out or act outside our lifeworld. Nevertheless, our lifeworld can be expanded by adding new experiences and knowledge to the old ones, with the consequence that we can understand more than before or act in another way (*ibid*). In this conceptualisation, all knowledge is based on the individual's lived experiences and then the lifeworld of a general consumer can be actively shaped and reshaped by themselves. This would imply that in order to upscale consumption of PBPP and to enable an understanding of the importance of the products, a consumer has to gain more experiences of and with the specific products. Additionally, from a cultural aspect, there had to be changes made in how the general consumers talk about PBPP and the values attached to the products. These aspects can be impacted, as previously discussed, by inviting the general consumer into the discourse of the plant-based community. The general consumer has to eat and talk about the products with consumers of PBPP in order for them see how these consumers value the products. Only then can the consumer become competent to act, consume PBPP, since they are able to acquire and use the resources required to act (cf. Engdahl & Larsson 2011). Therefore, a consumers objection to consume PBPP could be related to them not having the competence and knowledge necessary to know how to understand and make use of the products.

That one's lifeworld can be expanded through new experiences is validated by the trends presented in the previous chapter. This shared trajectory, in the theory and findings, indicate that preference is not merely economic. It can also be built upon cultural dimensions, habits, experiences etc. Therefore, to only use economic incentives to change consumption, such as lower prices and campaign, will not be enough in order to change eating habits amongst the general consumers. Hence, it becomes relevant to examine other aspects of preference relevant in understanding how an upscaling of PBPP can be made. This study open up the possibility to think about other dimensions that we might not often consider.

The concept lifeworld sets the tone for this discussion. All consumer groups stated that a form of interest and motivation was necessary in order for the consumer

to willingly expand their lifeworld, change their habits and consume more or any PBPP. Additional concepts are applied in order to exemplify how lifeworld's can be shaped and reshaped. The concept of *culture* explains that initially, in order to change food habits, the consumer has to become aware of their current food choices (Enriquez & Archila-Godinez 2021). Then the consumer can engage and take advantage of a new food culture in order to generate a change in their consumer behaviour (*ibid*). Thus, information and motivation are beneficial to make the consumer able, willing and interested in choosing PBPP instead of ABPP. In order to motivate the omnivores, the motivational factor has to correlate with a context that can target this large groups of consumers with various experiences and backgrounds. As an example, the context can be climate changes and the motivational factor is to act sustainably. Motivation to change can come from both external (intrinsic) and internal (extrinsic) factors, and a sustainable change often requires the individual to experience both autonomy, competence and relatedness in their action (cf. Breckenridge et al. 2019). Therefore, the consumer has to gain knowledge of the motivational factor and, for instance, understand how a plant-based diet generally affects the climate in comparison to an animal-based diet. Knowledge can lead to a change in attitude that leads to changed behaviour (cf. Engdahl & Larsson 2011). The consumer has to take in and process knowledge about PBPP in order for them to commit to the action of consuming these types of products. This implies that it takes a few steps of preparation before the choice of buying PBPP can be made and implemented by the omnivore. These forms of preparation can be different forms of education on PBPP, their role, benefits and how to use them. Thus, its merely the initial choice and active choice to continue to make this change into a lifestyle that is the hard part. Hence, it becomes of interest to make that first step as easy as possible.

### 5.2.1 How to change consumer behaviour

In order to change consumer behaviour, the consumer has to primarily value both a change of habits and to consume more sustainable (cf. Vermei et al. 2020). Secondly, they have to be aware about how they consume today and how they should/want to consume. Finally, they have to act towards the stated desired consumption and actively act towards their goals and their intention to consume more sustainably (*ibid*). The findings showed that the omnivores, the consumer group that overall were reluctant to consume PBPP, explained their standpoint as due to; old habits and a lack of interest and knowledge about the products. This argues for the aspects of habit formation and knowledge to influence the individual level of progressive diet switching. Habits tend to be repetitive, routine, reliable, reinforcing, and rewarding and are often triggered by cues or stimuli (cf. Al-Adili 2018). In this study I would consider triggering cues to be hunger or social routine. The habit formation of eating meat are described by the research participants as

intrinsic, to come from within. This action is then familiar and part of the consumers habitual behaviour, which makes this action intuitive and comforting (cf. Mizia et al. 2021). Actions and habits becomes efficient as they in this case enable the omnivores to not have to pay attention to detail or to new information, such as new products and how to use them (cf. O’Riordan & Stoll-Kleemann 2015).

Continuously, since habitual behaviours such as consuming ABPP “fit” well into the individuals personality, experiences, customs, social networks, and cultures, they are often unexamined. Consequently, this habitual behaviour does not require constant refreshment by the omnivores of the weighing of gains and losses of consuming PBPPs instead of ABPPs. Nor does it make any demands for the consumers to make uncomfortable and self-searching evaluations of possible losses against established gains if they would to change their consumption (cf. O’Riordan & Stoll-Kleemann 2015). Thus, the omnivores comfortable position can be risked if their habits would be changed, hence why they cling onto and defends their habitual behaviour. This further confirms that the omnivores lack in experiences hinders them from changing their consumer habits. This suggests that in order to upscale consumption, the consumer have to gain more experience with these products. Motivating new experiences requires the consumer to create a relationship with the products and its community, as well as to create competence through expanding their knowledge in knowing how to act ( how to prepare, cook and consume the product). However, this can only happen if they value a change in their consumer behaviour (cf. Enriquez & Archila-Godinez 2021). A value that in some way or form are based in them wanting and highly prioritising to change their consumption towards more plant-based foods.

Studies of the concept lifeworld by Engdahl & Larsson (2011) and Inglis (2012), further emphasizes that one’s knowledge is based on the individual's past lived experiences. This explains how a person’s interest or willingness to act or make change is connected to what is known. This in turn is built on experiences. Accordingly, for instance, a consumer that throughout life have consumed mostly ABPP also have most experiences of these products. These experiences creates and reinforces their action of buying ABPP. Thus, a change in perspective and the competence that one person has can be built on new experiences. In other words, people act upon their knowledge and if they would know more about the product, they would have a reason for choosing this product. They would then also the opportunity to make a choice on their own and turn towards PBPP. This relates to the research participants focus on familiarisation. However, the findings showed that information have to work on various levels to target all consumer groups. This can be clarified by connecting the concept of lifeworld with the aspect of motivation. By informing about PBPP in marketing campaigns, shops, education and through recipes, people can learn more about the products. This includes hearing the names and more knowledge about ingredients and nutritional aspects.

These experiences can expand the general consumers lifeworld's and increase their theoretical *competence* about the product. By providing the opportunity to taste the products, in shops, schools, restaurants and at home, people can become familiar with the taste, and ways of cooking in a practical and physical way, which can impact their *relatedness* to the product and the world of plant-based foods. This relatedness can in turn benefit an overcome of a gap between food communities and create more blurry lines between consumer groups. Making sure that all consumer that are willing to join the plant-based community can do it. They can also do it without feeling the need to identify as something entirely new, just because they have made the choice to eat a PBPP. Further, a feeling of relating towards and understanding the product can make the person feeling an interest in these products and thus creating new values of food consumption that this person felt able to act upon based in its own interest and *autonomy*. This form of reasoning can show that by working with different forms of factors to increase motivation, the consumers lifeworld can expand. Then the consumer can feel more interested in PBPP. They can also feel that they are able to act towards this interest of consuming more PBPP, since the consumer have obtained new experiences that can make them act in a different way. This discussion shows a lifeworld can be expanded and connected to others lifeworld's. This can expand the consumers value and relatedness to PBPP and make them able to change consumer patterns.

### 5.2.2 How to understand consumer behaviour

A persons lifeworld encompasses the horizon of understanding with which they orient towards the world and in turn how they perceive themselves (cf. Engdahl & Larsson 2011). Thus, the concept of lifeworld can be used to explain why the omnivores value the ability to identify as someone that eats meat. The omnivores have the understanding that eating meat is the norm, and that this assumption is shared by a large majority in the world. This understanding is based on their experiences of food habits in their upbringing and is constantly reinforces in their presence. They have been shaped by the products that always have been and should be the centre of the plate, the animal protein, and they identify themselves as meat eaters. The quotes by omnivores explaining that their consumption of meat is a part of their lifestyles presents that a change towards eating more PBPP is seen as not only an intrusion on the omnivore's consumption but their free will and their lifestyle. Implying that consumption of food is closely tied towards a person's everyday life and identity. Thus, if the omnivores were unable to be meat eaters, they would have nothing to be identified towards and feel a form of loss. In order to fill this loss and weakness in their identity creation, they would have to gather new knowledge and experiences to expand their lifeworld's and understandings that they can identify with. Knowledge that the individuals can use and that will make them competent to act, know what they are buying and how to prepare it. Then they



can orientate themselves in this new world of plant-based foods and with the new identity of a person that only or also consumes PBPP. However, in order for knowledge to work as a motivational factor, people have to be willing to listen, process and use the knowledge.

The possibility to expand one's lifeworld shows how the aspect of habit can justify actions, the omnivores expressed that they eat what feel natural and familiar for them. Thus, habit formation and a connection to products over time have a large impact on people's perspectives and how they talk about foods. Similarly, the vegan and vegetarian consumers made statements about how they perceive their diet as a big part of their lifeworld and identity. Thus, since diet in current societies have a large role to play in one's identity, perhaps one development of importance can be to focus on creating more of a flexible and less restrictive division of consumers. This can create a community where all consumers have the necessary knowledge about different foods that can enable them to consume the products that their past habits, experiences and culture previously have prevented. Enabling people to feel like they act in their everyday lives according to their values, in one way establishes a fresh moral framing. This establishment might enable those switching away from animal-based diets to feel more pride and personal esteem in acting sustainably even though other people and the surroundings refuses (cf. Mizia et al. 2021). Enabling cultural shifts away from meat eating can initiate a growing sense of *dissonance discomfort*, in other words that we become aware of when and that we act contrary to what we really think is right (cf. Ong 2015). It can further alert what contradictory or incomplete beliefs the consumer has and how they have been influenced by personal histories and social contexts. This could motivate the omnivore to consume less ABPP since they then recognise the moral dilemma of their consumption and value the welfare of animals and the environment higher than their habits and cultural norms (cf. Enriquez & Archila-Godinez 2021).

Another aspect, affecting one's lifeworld, is how labelling and categorising of people as parts of certain diets hinders them from exploring other foods and makes division between people based on diets. The observations in stores pointed out that PBPP was placed in specific areas labelled as *plant-based, green or vegan*. The research participants acknowledged that this form of placement mainly targets vegans and vegetarians. This could make the general consumers believe that the products are more closely connected with vegetables and pre-cooked meals than with protein products. Thus, contributing to an excluding social culture and social stratification around both the plant-based and the animal-based communities, reinforcing a division between groups due to diet and lifestyle. Which can make the general consumer believe that these products are only for one type of person and has nothing to do and no role to play in their lifeworld. By merely targeting vegans and vegetarians in PBPP marketing and by marketing animal products to the general consumer creates a division in the conversation and the physical room of where the

consumer feel that they fit in, what they can consume and in what aisles they can go. This can be interpreted as a form of social stratification. To change the way people look at whom has access to PBPP, the consumers have to feel a legitimacy to join other groups and have room for change in their lifeworld's. By changing the way people talk about PBPP and labels of diets, cultures and norms there would be a change in discourse. That would imply to change the way people talk and think about their own and others actions towards foods, and to create a discourse where there are no judgement or hindrances created based on what category of diet you fall into. Control of discourse amounts to control how the world is perceived (cf. Inglis 2012). Thus, inviting the general consumer to a new discourse where PBPP are informed about and discussed can be beneficial in influencing perceptions. Subjects for discussions can be a beneficial aspect of PBPP and meetings with consumers of PBPP. Further, how consumers, companies, stores, food commercials and tv-shows talk about products have an impact in both what consumer they want to target and which groups that feel targeted. By modifying marketing lines and discourses from merely targeting plant-based consumers to targeting and inviting all consumers no matter diet, a larger group of consumers can feel like they are invited to engage with and be a part of the plant-based culture. This reveals how important it is for proponents to reflect on that how they talk about and label PBPP, and the ways this affects values accorded to the products.

Habit formation and culture are essential factors effecting patterns of consumption and they play a part in peoples lifestyles, values and identities. As mentioned, the consumer group of omnivores value their consumption of meat as their valid right and that marketing and prioritising PBPP intruded on their rights and everyday lives. This shows how strong the bond is between ones diet and one's self-image and the importance of changing structures on more personal levels. Food is a large part of one's culture and since culture and cultural capital is inherited or acquired through socialisation, the focus can thus be on inspiring to consuming PBPP through meetings, social events, tastings in stores etc. These are all events where both socialisation and food have a natural role and where tasting of food can inspire conversations about these products. Thus, by meeting talking and eating, information is spread which can affect and make an impact on the social division and stratification that have been created between people due to their dietary choices and has shaped what they feel interested in and entitled to. This could increase peoples cultural capital and engage them in the new sustainable food culture where they can take part in both the educative and physical part of for example PBPP (cf. Enriquez & Archila-Godinez 2021).

As an example, meat-substitutes are valued by the consumers and retailers as strategical tools to impact consumers habit formation. Introducing these substitutes can make omnivores more interested in trying a plant-based diet by displaying options that can make a transition less labouring and that the consumer does not

have to obtain lots of new habits, knowledge or cooking techniques. Enabling a positive response if transitions in consumption does not immediately disrupt all habits that are embedded in the general consumers current lifeworld's. This positive response could be, for instance, an interest in trying these products after seeing it used as a replacement for meat in a cooking show. This creates a positive reaction towards PBPP and give the general consumer an intrinsic, inner, form of motivation to consume these products. The general consumer could then become more receptive to continuing on making changes such as replacing meat with plant-based substitutes in their everyday meals. Thus, the meat-substitutes have an importance in introducing new habits and overall interests in PBPP.

### 5.2.3 The social context of the consumers

The various opinions amongst the consumer groups is in part due to the research participants lifestyles/diets. Their choices of diet is a part of their own culture, habit formation and values which reflects their lifeworld's and shows in what space they can act. It also displays how they use their own experiences to make sense of the world and to act towards it. Hence, differing opinions on PBPP and how placement, price and product affect consumption correlates to the participants background. Whilst vegans and vegetarians talked about physical development of PBPP, they often reflected on and referred to the positive aspects, how many opportunities there were in further developing and exploring the market in taste, innovation and function. This shows that the consumers that have a long experience of consuming PBPP focus mainly on how to develop the products. They have a positive attitude towards the possibilities of expanding the market by producing the right products.

The overall similarity between the vegan and vegetarian research participants' opinions can be perceived as them being part of more similar lifeworld's and discourses. They have made choices of not consuming animal products, on various degrees, and take part in a culture that does not have to be persuaded in their consumption of PBPP. Therefore, they are enrolled in a context where the issue is about variation and not interest. Their discussions then revolve around how to further develop the products. Differences in opinions and believes can be distinguished between vegetarians and vegans, reflecting some variations in their lifeworld's. Vegans, that have distanced themselves from all sorts of animal products, expressed a lack of ideas about how they could make the general consumer interested in PBPP. This mirrors their context where they have distanced themselves fully from the animal-based community and the values of the general consumers. In comparison, vegetarians who are still consume some animal products have one leg left in the discourse shared by the general consumers, and have a better insight in what implementations that can attract this general consumer in order to upscale consumption of PBPP.

The flexitarians described PBPP and ABPP as equivalent products and discussed development of more substitutes. They have experiences of both cultures and lifeworld's which makes them open for a consumption where they can choose product based on the current preference, impact on climate etc. Thus, they are embedded in a context where the consumer is flexible in their own consumption and can make choices based on many experiences and perspectives. They can always choose the most "beneficial" products no matter if it appears to be a PBPP or ABPP. Accordingly, they make their subject of discussion how to develop good plant-based alternatives for all animal products.

The omnivores barely reflected on positive aspects, their focus were to make these "tasteless products" less umbering. However, some omnivores with experiences of PBPP had felt a certain interest but never tried it again. Then even though there are products on the market that could satisfy the omnivores demand, they mention an unwillingness of changing their consumer patterns that they have relied on through mostly their whole life's. The discourse they engage in and uses are then clearly showing the way they downplay the importance of PBPP by mentioning the negative aspects that they have experienced. Similarly, to the other consumer groups they have built their lifeworld's on the knowledge and the experiences that they have been through. Thus, omnivores have not expanded their horizon of knowledge about this sector and they need to be exposed to this phenomenon in a higher frequency. This shows that even though some of them have had experiences or been introduced to PBPP, it was not enough for them to continue gravitate towards those products or recipes. The context of the omnivores does not align or overlap with the PBPP or their community. These comparisons fortify that in order to upscale consumption of PBPP, the consumers lifeworld's have to be expanded, in forms of new values and experiences. However, in ways that appeal to the individual socio-cultural levels.

### 5.3 Implications for future actions

The previous chapter conceptualised how new consumer behaviours are motivated by habits, knowledge and experiences and an inclusive community that does not set boundaries. This invites to a discussion about sustainable foods and consumption.

Similarly as to how the research participants talk and understand the PBPP in presence and in their life, they talk about the future possibilities of PBPP based on the same assumptions. These attitudes are based on the persons lifeworld and the individuals that share the same experiences often refer to similar perspectives. Consumers of PBPP recognise possibilities of upscaling consumption amongst people who currently already consume some PBPP. However they notice a difficulty in upscaling consumption amongst people who do not currently consume these products. It is explained as a lack of motivation and willingness along with

deep set habits of meat consumption, which is hindering these from being interested in changing their consumption. Further, it is also perceived that the way meat consumers talk about products are a hindering factor. For the omnivores, consumption of meat is closely tied together with identity and how they perceive themselves. Meanwhile PBPP are perceived as something the omnivores could never normalise and integrate into their everyday lives. Thus, if an upscaled consumption of PBPP is to be made, PBPP have to be introduced without affecting their self-image and at the same time give a similar experience in taste and looks as a ABPP. Therefore, justifying the trajectory to further develop meat-substitutes in order to upscale consumption of PBPP.

Similarly, the retailer group recognise upscaling consumption for already interested as simple by continuing to market, place and promote PBPP. However, a difficulty in introducing PBPP into omnivores everyday lives. The retailers promote a discourse that talks about these PBPP possibilities in taste and flexibility. The retailers mean that to increasingly make PBPP a part of the general consumers everyday lives, focus should be on promoting these products on all levels, through marketing, social media and at home.

The omnivores are hesitant about a transition towards consuming more PBPP since they have a clear aversion towards consuming PBPP themselves. They perceive it as products for others to consume but promote other solutions instead when it comes to creating a sustainable consumption. Thus, the discourse is built on the negative aspects of the products experiences, in form of a lack in taste, nutrition and variety. To change this perspective and the system of thought, these have to be clearly proven wrong with information on how to cook, the nutrition and the beneficial aspects. This puts the responsibility on other consumers, relatives and people that take part in their lifeworld to show, tell and pursue the change upon them. However, it also gives institutions, media platforms and stores responsibilities in increasing the visibility of PBPP in recipes and programs and the taste experience in stores, and institutional arrangements such as in schools and events.

These considerations can indicate how breaking the habit formation of consuming animal protein for every meal, and slowly implementing PBPP as a substitute for some meals can make the consumer more willing to both look at the product as an actual option and to integrate the product into their lifeworld. Sharing food cultures and inspiring, increasing knowledge and giving the consumer an appealing option, patterns of consumption can be influenced no matter what background, current interest and preconceptions a person have.

A majority of the research participants predict a future where PBPP have a clear role. The general consumer are aware about the existence of PBPP today. The next step could be to make them aware about their possibilities, willing to consume these, where to find them and how to use them. These change can be connected to

other societal contexts and forms of development such as an overall increased awareness about how one's own actions effects the environment and what changes the general person can make in their everyday lives to make less negative impacts on our nature and environment. People have an interest in making environmentally conscious choices but some of them do not know how to start and how to do it. Although PBPP are not invariably the more environmentally conscious product choice, in general, consuming more plant-based foods is environmentally beneficial (cf. Lea et al. 2006; Pimentel & Pimentel 2003). In addition, consumer education can make the consumer aware about what choices they are making and what underlying factors and aspects of their lifeworld's that impact this decision and thus can create more of an aware consumption. Placing the general consumer in a position where they reflect upon their choices, what defence mechanisms they use to hinder a change of habit and what opportunities there are to change these, making their actions mirror their overall values. These defence mechanisms can be lack of knowledge, laziness and an unrelatedness to the products. Hence, a conscious way of marketing PBPP, directed to all consumer groups is of importance to impact the general consumers' willingness to upscale their consumption of PBPP. Additionally, in order to invite these consumers to the field of PBPP and give them knowledge of what the products can be used as they have to be invited to the plant-based community. This can be made through expanding knowledge, inviting people to the discussion through representation of PBPP in tv shows, restaurants etc. The general consumer needs recipes, directions on how to use the products on the packaging at the same time as they need information about why these products are beneficial (environmentally, socially and ethically). Thus, moving towards the synergy between the actors perceived need and desire for improvement, information on beneficial aspects and interest in taste and products, and as well an extrinsic motivators for change are important factors.

On the same note, a few omnivores explained that some campaigns for PBPP had made them feel that they were disapproved of for consuming ABPP. This can be another example on how ones lifeworld and culture can create feelings and expressions on experiencing limitation and the general consumer felt that increased promotions decreased their possibilities instead of increasing them. Thus, showing that promotion of PBPP have to come about without making intrusions on peoples *autonomy* and *competence*. Marketing should instead be inclusive, inviting the general consumer into the social community of PBPP and make them able to relate to the consumers and the products. Marketing should also give the general consumer enough information about the product for them to value the products and their aim, and later on act upon their values. Thus, it shows that in addition to promotions, reduced prices and bonuses, there has to be information about why these campaigns for PBPP are valid, their aims and why they can be appreciated and used by everyone. In order to make the general consumer feel that the beneficial

aspects of reduced prices are aimed towards all consumers. This would argue for that in order to make PBPP a staple in everyone's shopping baskets it is more beneficial to inform and market PBPP as products for everyone. Not as a category of products that wants to outcompete the general consumers right to buy animal products, but as tasty and nutritious product that the consumer can choose at their own wishes and needs.

Thus, these implications show that further actions to take can be to improve the way PBPP are marketed in stores as well as how they are talked about in commercials, official context as well as at home and in communities. Hence, why actions can be made by actors from official, commercial and private levels. Nevertheless, the most beneficial way to make the general consumer willing to consume PBPP is through introduction on socio-cultural levels.

## 6. Conclusions

Throughout the perspectives of habits, knowledge, identity and physical aspects it becomes evident that Swedish consumers' willingness to consume more PBPP can be linked towards what motivating factors for consumption that there are in their lifeworld's.

All four consumer groups understand the importance of changing consumption patterns to enable a more sustainable wellbeing in environmental, animal and social sectors. However, the role and importance that PBPP play in this vision and change differs. The importance of PBPP was understood by most consumer groups as to play a role in future consumption and to fill a gap and demand for products that have a lower impact on climate, health and overall welfare. However, the omnivores understand the importance of PBPP as less current and discuss other factors and actions towards a sustainable consumption as equally or more important.

The variations on the consumers and retailers' perspectives on the general consumers opportunities to scale up consumption of PBPP can be originated from the individual and shared lifeworld's presented. However, consumers and retailers overall agree upon if consumption should be increased, the scheme of marketing should be to increase consumption on PBPP and not to prohibit consumption of ABPP. Accomplishing that consumers feel that they want to make other choices in the supermarkets. Due to a willingness that they as consumers have created through experiences, enabling them to understand the discourse surrounding PBPP.

The two research questions can be answered by summarizing the findings. Regarding the first research question: *How do different consumer groups understand the importance of plant-based protein products and how does this reflect their values and the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded?* The study presented that the examined four consumer groups understand the importance of plant-based protein products differently based on their past experiences and contact with both PBPP and ABPP. Thus, showcasing how values, norms and socio-cultural contexts affect food consumption habits and preferences. Following, the second question: *How do consumers and retailers conceptualise opportunities for the general consumer to scale up consumption of plant-based protein products.* The study concluded that all consumers and retailers identify the opportunity for the general consumers to increase their consumption and everyday use of PBPP to be possible. A prioritisation of placement, marketing and prices of PBPP in supermarkets was perceived to positively affect the consumers interest in the products. However, it is concluded that in order for the consumers with a lower experience of PBPP, such as omnivores, to take advantage of these priorities they



have to be introduced to the products on multiple levels for them to voluntarily upscale their consumption.

Nevertheless, even though the findings and implications mostly point towards changes that can be made in peoples everyday lives, changes can be made on more bureaucratic levels. Implications for how policymakers and actors on administrative levels can approach an upscaled consumption of PBPP would be to support incentives to increase visibility of PBPP in contexts such as official arrangements and to increase the use and visibility of PBPP in institutions, schools, governments etc. Further research can be made on how information about PBPP can be broadcasted in various private and public contexts.

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# Appendix 1

*Table 1. Criteria for observations*

Number	Criteria
1	Size of store
2	It is advertised for plant-based substitutes outside the store?
3	How many plant-based substitutes are on a special offer?
4	Are plant-based substitutes placed separately in the refrigerated section?
5	How many plant-based substitutes are in the refrigerated section?
6	How much of the fridges extent is plant-based products?
7	Are plant-based substitutes placed separately in the frozen section?
8	How many plant-based substitutes are in the frozen section?
9	How much of the freezer's extent is plant-based products?
10	Which plant-based products are placed close to its corresponding animal alternatives?

## Appendix 2

*Table 2. The research participants: Consumers*

Consumer	Diet/Lifestyle	Age	Gender
Vegan A	Vegan	27	F
Vegan B	Vegan	28	F
Vegan C	Vegan	30	F
Vegan D	Vegan	37	M
Vegan E	Vegan	47	F
Vegetarian F	Vegetarian	24	F
Vegetarian G	Vegetarian	47	F
Flexitarian H	Flexitarian	24	F
Flexitarian I	Flexitarian	24	F
Flexitarian J	Flexitarian	25	M
Flexitarian K	Flexitarian	48	F
Flexitarian L	Flexitarian	50	F
Omnivore M	Omnivore	24	M
Omnivore N	Omnivore	24	F
Omnivore O	Omnivore	51	M
Omnivore P	Omnivore	64	M
Omnivore Q	Omnivore	65	M
Omnivore R	Omnivore	70	M
Omnivore S	Omnivore	73	F
Omnivore T	Omnivore	76	M

*Table 2. The research participants: Retailers*

Retailer	Size	Location	Gender
Retailer 1	Store (L)	Urban	M
Retailer 2	Store (L)	Urban	M
Retailer 3	Store (M)	Urban	F
Retailer 4	Head office	Urban	F
Retailer 5	Store (M)	Urban	M
Retailer 6	Store (L)	Urban	F

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