

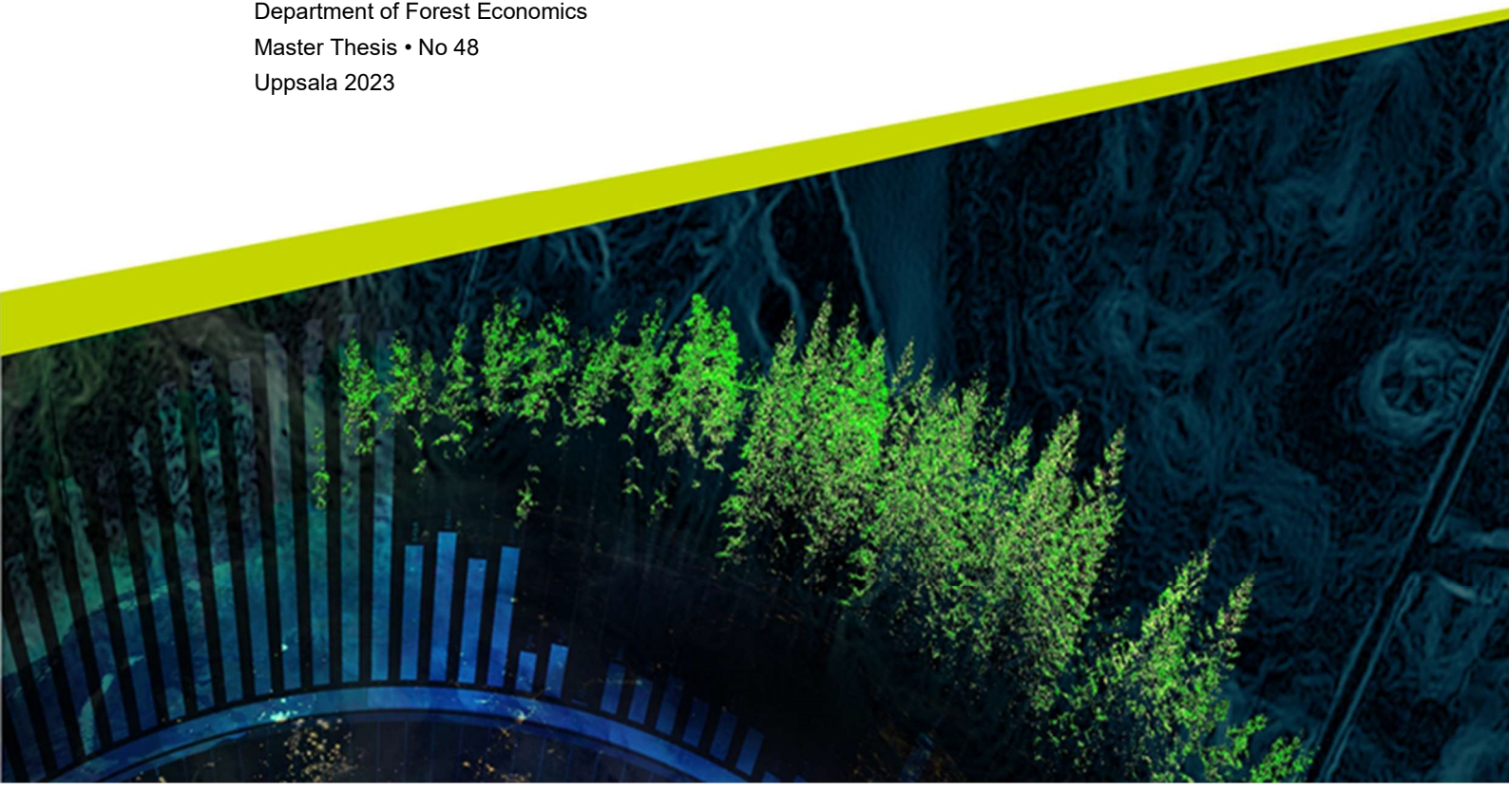


Local food networks

– value creation and the role of producers

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Local food networks – value creation and the role of the producer

Lokala livsmedelsnätverk – värdeskapande och producentroll

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Summary

The rise of interest in local food has given rise to many new forms of food supply chains, so-called Alternative food networks. One such network is the Facebook-based REKO, where consumers can purchase food products directly from the producers without intermediaries. This has also given rise to new forms of values regarding food. The vulnerability of the Swedish food system and the government's wish to strengthen it has put the producers of REKO in an exciting position. It begs the question of what a REKO producer faces within the network and what and whom they have the deal with in it. The aim of this study is to explain the value creation within a local food network focusing on the role of the producers. To answer the aim, a theoretical framework consisting of Service-dominant logic, which deals with value co-creation, and Schwartz value theory, which deals with value dimensions and motivations. Actor-network theory is used to identify the actors in a network and their agency. The study took place in Västra Götaland of Sweden and focused on the perspective of producers active in REKO-rings in the area. The data was collected from 9 interviews, observations and additional content in the form of articles, web pages and Facebook posts. The results found that the producer entered the network with different motivations and was presented with many opportunities for value creation with consumers and amongst each other. The study also found that many actors are involved in the network. The study found that REKO is a place for producers to grow, evolve and learn their craft but that the format has its limitation for larger producers.

Keywords: actor-network theory, agency, alternative food network, REKO. Schwartz value theory, service-dominant logic, value.

Sammanfattning

Det ökade intresset för lokal mat har gett upphov till många nya former av livsmedelskedjor, så kallade Alternativa matnätverk. Ett sådant nätverk är det Facebook-baserade REKO, där konsumenterna kan köpa livsmedel direkt från producenterna utan mellanhänder. Detta har också gett upphov till nya former av värderingar kring mat. Det svenska livsmedelssystemets sårbarhet och regeringens önskan att stärka det har satt producenterna av REKO i en spännande position. Det väcker frågan om vad en REKO-producent möter inom nätverket och vad och vem de har att göra med i det. Syftet med denna studie är att förklara värdeskapandet inom ett lokalt matnätverk med fokus på producenternas roll. För att besvara syftet har ett teoretiskt ramverk bestående av Service-dominant logik som handlar om värdesamskapande och Schwartz värdeteori som handlar om värdedimensioner och motivationer. Aktör-nätverksteori används för att identifiera aktörerna i ett nätverk och deras agens. Studien ägde rum i Västra Götaland och fokuserade på perspektivet hos producenter verksamma i REKO-ringar i området. Data samlades in från 9 intervjuer, observationer och ytterligare innehåll i form av artiklar, webbsidor och Facebook-inlägg. Resultaten visade att producenten gick in i nätverket med olika motiv och fick många möjligheter till värdeskapande med konsumenter och sinsemellan. Studien fann också att många aktörer är involverade i nätverket. Studien visade att REKO är en plats för producenter att växa, utvecklas och lära sig sitt hantverk men att formatet har sin begränsning för större producenter..

Nyckelord: agens, aktör-nätverksteori, alternativt livsmedelsnätverk, REKO, Schwartz värdeteori, service-dominant logic, värde.

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AFN	Alternative food network	1
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1 Introduction

Chapter 1 present the background, problem and aim for the thesis. It is to help the reader get a clear understanding about what the thesis is about.

1.1 Problem background

In recent years, demand for locally produced food has increased in Sweden and other parts of the world (Granvik *et al.*, 2017). Granvik *et al.* (2017) point out that a country like Sweden, with a net import of food, is vulnerable if the global food system is disturbed. The Swedish government also has taken this into consideration, which states that "consumers should have a high degree of confidence in food and be able to make informed and sustainable choices, for example, with respect to local and organic production" (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation 2016, 10). This is visible in the 2016 National food strategy, wherein one of the aims is to increase locally produced food to help strengthen crisis preparedness and create jobs in the agricultural field (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, 2016). This vulnerability is, however, still present, which can be seen in the Swedish Food Federation's quarterly State of the market letter for the fourth quarter of 2022 (Swedish food federation, 2023). It shows that earnings are down for the fourth consecutive quarter, and the interest in Swedish-produced food has lost its long-time first spot in consumer trends for low-price alternatives (The Swedish food federation, 2023). The reason behind this is, according to the Swedish Food Federation (2023), inflation and energy prices, combined with the fact that Swedish-produced food is not made for a low-price market, one in ten Swedish-produced goods are in the low-price category.

A reaction to the global food systems has emerged as Alternative food networks (AFN). They come in many different shapes and forms, but some key characteristics are a short-supply chain, organic farming, quality production, and direct selling (Renting *et al.*, 2003). Renting *et al.* (2003) see as part of an explanation for the rise of AFN is increased public concern regarding the environment, health issues, and animal welfare. This has, in turn, opened a market for products that distinguish themselves in the quality aspects of food. Renting *et al.* (2003) do point out that the main reason for the rise of AFN is the distrust in the quality of foods from conventional agriculture, coming from various reports of food scandals.

REKO-ringar (In Swedish: REjäl KOnsumtion) is a concept of a local food network that originated in Finland and started in Sweden in 2016 (The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, n. d. a). Rejäl konsumtion could be translated to responsible, robust or proper consumption. It uses Facebook groups to connect local farmers/producers directly with consumers. The groups are divided geographically, each with its own rules to fit the area where the group is active. The producers post images of the product they are offering and some information about themselves, and the consumer comments on the images to make an order. As of January 2021, there were about 220 active REKO groups in Sweden, with over 800 000 members (The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, n. d. b). There are few rules to follow to participate in REKO, it can vary from the different groups. There are however some main principles to follow; sell your own products, no intermediaries, products are pre-ordered at every drop off, every order is between buyer and seller, honesty, and it is free to participate (*Ibid*).

Previous studies on REKO have shown that one important motivation for participation is the direct contact that occurs between producer and consumer. A study on consumer motivations

in REKO by Helena Lindström (2019) showed interaction as an important value as well as the expertise the producer had. Ehrnström-Fuentes *et al.* (2019) describes in an article how the perception of bringing consumers and producers together is high within the community of REKO, as well as the perception that the practice provides more social sustainability in the community.

The low barriers to enter a REKO is also highlighted in a number of studies. Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021) points out that due to the low barriers of entry, the dissatisfaction with other food suppliers need not be at a great level in order to seek out REKO. Ehrnström-Fuentes *et al.*, (2019) mentions that while the use of Facebook has made the rapid spread of REKO possible, the reliance on the platform may also be a hindrance in the future, where social media creates short interactions rather than more long-lasting communities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic 2020-2022, the interest in REKO grew, but it is currently starting to weaken a bit (Klintö, 2023). In Malmö, one of the producers believed that the main reason is that fewer producers are using it since more of the traditional sell channels have opened up again. There is also speculation that the new Facebook algorithms make it harder for producers to be visible on the platform (*Ibid.*).

1.2 Problem

Much of today's food comes from long, complex industrial chains (Marsden *et al.*, 2000). The power of corporate retailers and manufacturers dominates the long vertical chain (Marsden, 1998). The long chains also create a greater distance between the producer and the consumer, in both perception and pure physical terms (Mount, 2011). In recent years a growing concern over the provenance and manipulation of foods has led to the development of AFN (Marsden *et al.*, 2000; Renting *et al.*, 2003). The consumer demand for locally produced food in Sweden is also on the rise (Wretling Clarin, 2010). With the changing customer conditions, food markets have become more differentiated, and the quality criteria involve a range of socially constructed values, including the locally produced (Marsden, 1998). These new definitions of quality can empower the local producer by giving them sustainable levels of value from their production (Marsden *et al.*, 2000). In order to succeed in the new shorter supply chains, the producer must use their knowledge and networking abilities (Marsden *et al.*, 2000). The Swedish strategy of supporting sustainable food chains and increasing Swedish production is ongoing as of the spring of 2023, and representatives of the Swedish Government continue to review it (Swedish Government, 2023). The resilience of Swedish food production against crises and extreme events requires improvement, which is difficult to achieve in an economically stressed industry (Högberg *et al.*, 2018). The small-scale local food producers have a role to play, as it is increasingly essential for employment and entrepreneurship in rural areas (Wretling Clarin, 2010). The increase in demand for small-scale, locally produced food thus presents new opportunities for producers (Wretling Clarin, 2010).

Combining networking and value co-creating within the local food market could add another perspective to a developing field of studies. In a study on brand value in local food networks in Penghu outlying island by Tang, Ming-Lun, and Tsai-Hsin Chiu (2018) Actor-Network theory (ANT) was used to identify actors, obstacles, and goals for the local producers. Using the perceptual map they created, the authors argue that it is a helpful tool for the local producers to identify factors that impact their brand-building and in making decisions and implementing strategies. Other studies have highlighted the importance of value co-creation

between producer and consumer, stressing that there is more to value creation than the products; it also matters how it is perceived and experienced. (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Akaka, 2009). Examining the local food market through these lenses could add helpful insights into what the producer entering such a network faces.

With few guidelines and rules to follow, it falls on the groups to organize and negotiate the values of the specific REKO-ring. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the producer's role within the local food network and what values can be created for them. Although this study will be limited to REKO-rings in the Västra Götaland region of Sweden and, therefore, not be applied as a general guide for all local food networks, it could, however, serve as helpful insights on how to identify the actors, obstacles and goals that the producers need to deal with in order to create value within the local food network

1.3 Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to explain the value creation within a local food network focusing on the role of the producers. To reach the said aim, the following key research questions are identified:

- What does the producer face in its role in the local food network?
 - What opportunities do the producers face?
 - What obstacles do the producers face?
- How is value created for producers in the local food network?

1.4 Outline

The thesis starts with an explanation of the background and the problem at hand in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework developed in order to present and discuss the findings. In Chapter 3, the research design and method choices that were used in the process are provided, as well as the consequences of used methods, ethical considerations, and how to ensure quality in the study. Chapter 4 presents background empirics, which is followed by the empirical results in Chapter 5. The empirics are analyzed in Chapter 6 through the lens provided by the theoretical framework of Chapter 2. This is followed by the discussion of the findings in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 presents the conclusions, which include a reconnection to the aim and a summarization of the key findings. This chapter also includes practical implications and suggestions for future research.

1.5 Delimitations

This study focuses on the perspective of the producers in REKO. The producers in this study are all active in REKO-rings within the Västra Götaland region of Sweden. Some producers are from outside of the region, and some are active in REKO-rings outside of the region, but for the purpose of this study, they had to be active in the Västra Götaland region. When "value" is described, it is from the producers' perspective within the REKO-ring context. The interactions and agency described are also in the context of REKO-rings. The timeframe for which the study took place is from January 2023 until June 2023.

2 Theory

Chapter 2 provides a presentation of the theoretical perspectives of marketing, values and actors used in this thesis. It presents the Service-dominant logic which focuses on the co-creation of value and service exchange. Schwartz value theory is used to define values and explain motivations, and Actor-network theory as a tool to describe the network and its actants.

2.1 Service-dominant logic

The theory of service-dominant logic (SD) offers a different approach to viewing markets and marketing, moving from a product-centric approach to a customer- and knowledge-centric one (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). According to Vargo and Lusch (2006), most economic theories have been focused on what they call a "goods dominant logic", which focuses on the producer and tangible goods. SD, however, focuses on the flow of service embedded in the market, of which tangible goods are a part. Service is exchanged for service, as in the services provided by one party is exchanged for the service provided by another. Service is defined as;

"...the application of specialized competencies (operant resources-knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself..." (Vargo & Lusch, 2006, 43).

Value is co-created with customers and partners within the flow of service (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). SD must therefore rework the traditional marketing mix of the four P's (price, product, promotion, and place) into a more strategic approach focusing on how value is co-created (Lusch & Vargo, 2006, p. 407). This approach is shown in the table below.

Table 1 The Traditional Marketing Mix versus Service Dominant Logic (Lusch & Vargo 2006, 408)

Traditional Marketing Mix (largely tactical)	Service-dominant logic (largely strategical)
Product	Co-creating service(s)
Price	Co-creating value proposition
Promotion	Co-creating conversation and dialogue
Channel of distribution (place)	Co-creating value process and network

Table 1 demonstrates how the focus of SD is on the co-creation of values, and aims to provide the four P's with a strategic direction. The strategic direction will in turn, according to Lusch and Vargo (2006) provide a more effective marketing, whereas the goal of the traditional marketing mix is production efficiency.

The co-creation of value is the focus of SD. As such, collaboration is necessary. SD offers four normative guidelines to follow for firms which, according to Lusch and Vargo (2006, 415), offer a competitive advantage if followed and serve as a moral compass.

1. All information should be truthful, and the firm should be transparent. The customer is a collaborator, and truthfulness is necessary for the collaboration to work.

2. The firm should strive to develop long-term relationships with its customers. Building relationships means looking after the customers' long-term well-being and looking out for their best interests.
3. Products are to be viewed as appliances in the value-creation process. They are operant resources or embedded knowledge used by other operant resources (customers) for this end. The focus of the firm should be on the service flow.
4. Firms should invest in knowledge and develop specialized skills (*ibid.*).

SD focuses on the exchange of service offerings of specialized skills and knowledge. Lusch and Vargo (2006, 408) argue that one of society's foundations is the exchange of these specialized skills, as the market and marketing are suggested to be one of society's driving forces. According to Vargo and Lusch (2006), goods and products are a particular kind of service, a vessel for a specialized skill; The service is always the common denominator. The ten proposed foundational premises of SD-logic are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Foundational Premises of Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Akaka, 2009,35)

	Premise	Explanation/ Justification
FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange	The application of operant resources (knowledge and skills), “service”, is the basis for all exchange. Service is exchanged for service.
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange	Goods, money and institutions mask the service-for- service nature of exchange.
FP3	Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision	Goods (both durable and non-durable) derive their value through use – the service they provide.
FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage	The comparative ability to cause desired change drives competition.
FP5	All economies are service economies	Service (singular) is only now becoming more apparent with increased specialization and interactional
FP6	The customer is always a cocreator of value	Implies value creation is interactional
FP7	The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions	The firm can offer its applied resources and collaboratively (interactively) create value following acceptance, but cannot create/deliver value alone
FP8	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational	Service is customer-determined and cocreated; thus, it is inherently customer oriented and relational
FP9	All economic and social actors are resource integrators	Implies the context of value creation is networks of networks (resource-integrators)
FP10	Value is always uniquely and phenomenological determined by the beneficiary	Value is idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual and meaning laden

Vargo and Akaka (2009, 36) argue that according to SD, value is always co-created (FP6). Firms cannot create value independently; they only propose it (FP7) and provide service to realize it. Furthermore, the value is phenomenologically and contextually derived from the beneficiary (FP10). For value to be created, the beneficiary needs to integrate and apply the service with other resources, including resources from other service systems. These other systems are “resource integrators” (FP9). So, for value co-creation to take place, the (integrated) resources from service providers are integrated and applied by service beneficiaries. Because the value is contextually specific, it is always determined by the beneficiary (Vargo & Akaka 2009, 36).

Value serves as an essential focus of SD and, as mentioned in FP10, is always unique to the context of the beneficiary. Because of this, further development of what value can be and what it can be meaning is necessary. What follows is, therefore, further development of a theoretical framework of values.

2.2 Schwartz value theory

Values can be used to explain what motivates us, what forms attitudes and behaviors, to characterize cultural groups, societies, and individuals, and to trace change over time (Schwartz, 2012). Values can identify what is important to us. According to Schwartz (2012), there are six main features of values.

1. Values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect and emotions; they make us feel. If independence is important to someone, they are happy when they have it and unhappy when not.
2. Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action. It makes a person pursue a goal. If independence is important, the person is likely to pursue independence.
3. Values transcend specific actions and situations. The abstract nature of values sets them apart from norms and attitudes, which refer to specific actions, objects, or situations.
4. Values serve as standards or criteria, e.g., what is good or bad.
5. Values are ordered by importance relative to one another, they guide us when we prioritize, different values are important to different people. Some value independence, other prioritize security.
6. The relative importance of multiple values guides action. Values influence action in situations where they are relevant.

What is presented above are the features of values. As mentioned, they influence different goals or motivations (Schwartz, 2012). Schwartz (1992) and Bandi and Schwartz (2003) identify ten values in terms of the broad goal that they represent. These are presented in Table 3, along with a set of items connected to each value.

Table 3. Definitions of types of values and the items that represent and measure them (Bardi & Schwartz 2003, 1208)

Type of value	Description
Power (social power, authority, wealth)	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
Achievement (successful, capable, ambitious, influential)	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
Hedonism (pleasure, enjoying life).	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself
Stimulation (daring, a varied life, an exciting life).	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life
Self-Direction (creativity, freedom, independent, curious, choosing own goals).	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring
Universalism (broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment)	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and of nature
Benevolence (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible).	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Tradition (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate)	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.
Conformity (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honoring parents, and elders).	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms
Security (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favors).	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self

Table 3 shows the ten values proposed by Schwartz (1992) and Bardi and Schwartz (2003). As seen, different values represent different items. They are ordered by importance. According to Schwartz (2012), the relative importance of multiple values guides actions. This can be interpreted as that in certain situations, certain values have greater importance than others. For example, one might be motivated by tradition and conformity in celebrating the holidays with one's family and by hedonism when going to Ibiza with a group of friends.

The pursuit of some values is in conflict with other values, while some values are congruent with others (Schwartz, 2012). Figure 1 shows these conflicting and congruent values and how they relate to one another. The closer to each other they are in the circle, the more similar the underlying motivation (Schwartz, 2012).

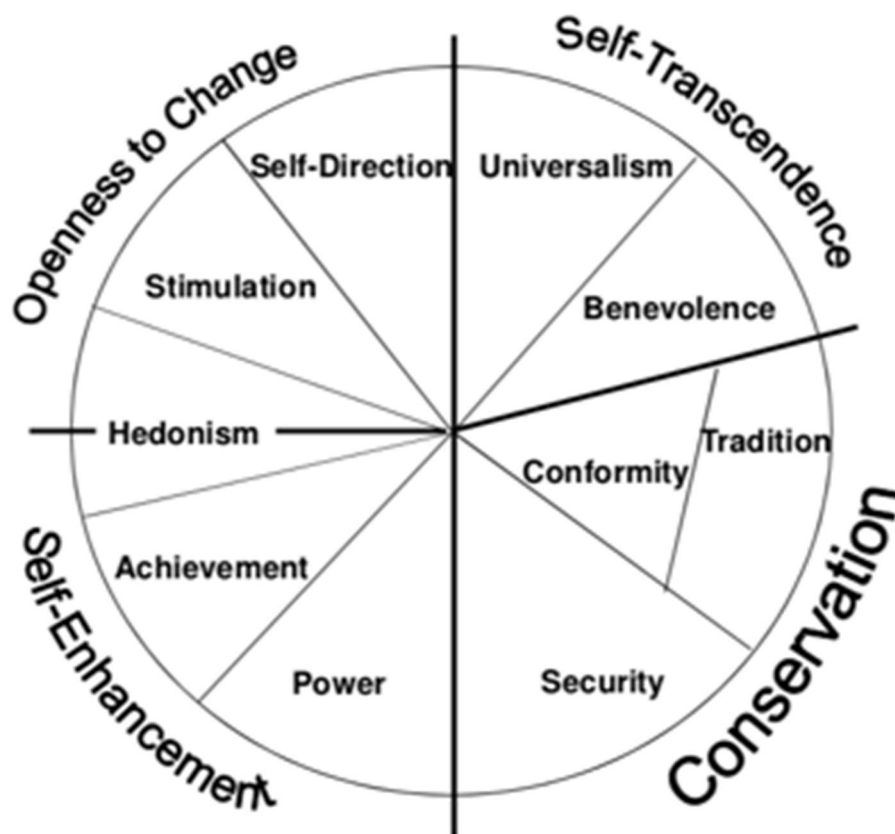


Figure 1. Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of value (Schwartz 2012, 9).

Schwartz (2012) describes the different values and how they relate to each other. In Figure 1, the values are arranged in a circle, wherein the placement represents the similarity of the underlying motivations (*Ibid.*). The closer they are in the circle, the more similar the motivations are. The further apart, the more antagonistic they are (*Ibid.*).

Figure 1 also demonstrates value dimensions and the conflict of values within them. Openness to change contrasts with conservation, wherein values that emphasize independence, action and readiness for changes -self-direction and stimulation- are opposite of values of order, self-restriction, preservation and resistance to change -security, conformity, and tradition (Schwartz, 2012). The other dimension contrasts the values of self-transcendence and self-enhancement. Self-transcendence includes values concerning the welfare and interests of others -universalism, benevolence- and self-enhancement includes values that deal with the pursuit of one's interests and relative success and dominance over others -power and achievement (Schwartz, 2012).

Thus far, the theoretical framework has focused on the co-creation of value and attempting to create a more precise grasp of the concept of values. As the SD emphasizes that value is co-created, the following section will deal with identifying other actors within the local food network, which is needed for co-creation.

2.3 Actor-network theory

Actor-network theory (ANT) can be described as an approach to breaking down and making a phenomenon easier to understand (Latour, 2005). The theory assumes that social or technological changes are actualized by networks consisting of actors (*Ibid*). An actor network comprises technological and social elements and human and non-human actors. Law (1992) describes it as social relations are network effects. This could be interpreted as the actor not having agency; they do it. A football field is just a field of grass, but in the network of a football game, the field has an agency with clear rules and boundaries. By combining social and technological variables, the actors can build new networks (Latour, 2005). An actor-network is formed by actors with a common goal (Latour, 2005). ANT can be used to describe and examine the factors and connections within the network. The state of the network is not constant; instead, it is under constant development as the actors continue to interact (Latour, 2005).

The participant in a network is called an actor. An actor can be human or non-human; both play an essential role in ANTs' view of social interaction (Latour, 2005). A human actor is a human being, while a non-human actor could be anything non-human, e.g., a car or a concept. The actors interact within the network, forming it (Callon, 1984). They act with a common interest, the interest of the network. New actors can be created by tying them to the network (Callon, 1984). Latour (2005, 75) speculates that social in the context of ANT "probably has to do with reassembling of new types of actors."

A key concept within ANT is that of translation. Callon and Law (1982, 619) describe it as a process where "different claims, substances or processes are equated with one another: where, in other words, what it is in fact unlike is treated as if it were identical". This can be interpreted as the actors in the network having different agendas, but it is communicated to the outside as the same. The network of a football team, for example, has the outspoken goal of winning a match, but the players (actors) have different personal goals. The striker aims to score, and the defender stops the other team from scoring. Callon (1984) describes it as a process in which actors try to convince or persuade other actors to align with the network. Callon (1984) has defined four stages of translation. In the problematization stage, problems or resistance are identified to which a change is being requested. Callon (1984) coined the term Obligatory passage points (OPP), where the actors converge on a topic—the point where the actors join together in a common goal or interest. Inressement is the stage where actors try to convince other actors to join the network and define their roles. Callon (1984) describes the process as an entity of actors that are integrated through problematization, defining identity, goals, motivations, or interests in another manner. The Enrolment stage is where the actors build and strengthen the commitments to meet obstacles to strengthening the network. This involves the actors accepting the role assigned to them to ensure the network's collaboration is functional (Callon, 1984). These stages lead to the final stage, which is called mobilization. In this stage, the roles are accepted, and the actors work together in the network's interest (Callon, 1984). The actors feel secure that the interest is mutual, and they focus on the well-being of the network (Callon, 1984). Here the network can be considered to be stable.

2.4 Conceptual framework

This study uses the theories accounted for in a qualitative approach. Following the theoretical framework by Lindström (2019), by combining SD and Schwartz value theory. SD brings a

marketing and economic perspective to value creation, and Schwartz value theory describes values that can influence choice. As SD emphasizes co-creation, using the ANT to describe the other actors and the relations in the local food network will help to describe the context in which the producers are active, and therefore clarifying its role (Figure 2).

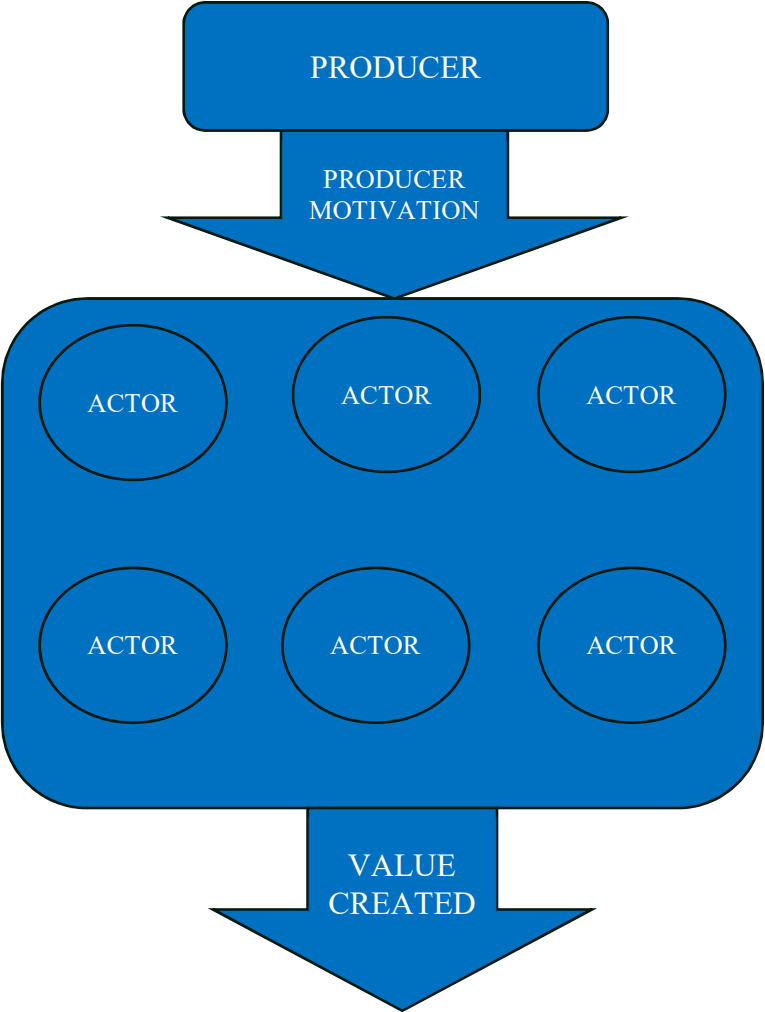


Figure 2. Model of the theoretical framework. The producer enters the network with its values and motivation and interacts with the other actors within the network value. By interacting with the other actors, value can be co-created, leading to the arrow representing.

Figure 2 shows the theoretical framework. The producer is represented at the top of Figure 2 in the box labeled producer. The producer enters with its values and motivations, labeled producer motivation, from Schwartz value theory. The arrow represents the producer entering the network with all its actors, represented by the larger box with the Actor-rings. The ANT is used to create the context and to identify the actors within the box. The producer and their motivation will join the context and the actors, thus being able to create value. The arrow labeled value creation represents the outcome of these interactions.

Schwartz (1992) describes how values can identify what is important to us and enforce our motivations and goals. SD argues that values are determined by the beneficiary (Vargo & Akra, 2009). Thus the argument for using the two theories is that to have an understanding of what value the beneficiary -the producers in this case- derives from the exchange, one must

have some understanding of what they value. As SD further argues that values are contextual and co-created (*Ibid*), there is a need to gain some understanding of the context in which the producer operates. ANT is useful in describing and examining the factors and connections within a network (Latour, 2005), thus describing the context.

3 Method

This chapter provides the choices of method used within the study. It presents the research design, the case study approach, how data was collected, how the data was analyzed, as well as ethical considerations,

3.1 Research Design

This study takes a qualitative research approach. This design choice is appropriate when trying to understand the why- and the how-kind of a phenomenon. The focus of the data collection is often words instead of quantifiable data (Bryman & Bell, 386). Since the variables in this study are not easily quantifiable but rather experiences and values that need interpretation, a qualitative approach is determined to be the better approach.

3.2 Case study

To answer the research questions, the approach used is that of a case study. This approach is functional when discovering much about a single case or a few similar ones (Robson & McCartan, 2016). The case in the study is that of the REKO-rings in Västra Götaland, which was chosen due to the rise of interest in locally produced food and its implementation in Sweden. The region of Västra Götaland was chosen due to convenience, as the researcher is located in the region. Case studies are helpful when seeking knowledge of current problems (Yin, 2009). The choice of looking at the problem through SD, Schwartz value theory and ANT means that the unit of analysis becomes the respondents perceived values, with ANT providing a context for the values. Such phenomena are not easily quantifiable; therefore, an in-depth description is suitable for exploring them. In a case study, the focus is on a single situation or system, where the case itself is an object of interest to gain insights into (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.3 Research delimitations

The scope of this study is limited to the producer's perspective in the context of REKO. The practices of producing and the upkeep of the business are looked at a superficial level, if at all, the focus is the producer's participation in the REKO-rings. In terms of value creation this study limits itself to the value creation proposed by the SD. While there are other theories regarding values, this study limits itself to the definition of Schwartz value theory. A further limitation is the geographical area, which is set at Västra Götaland in Sweden. The geographical limitations were made to focus on the producers' attitudes towards REKO without geographical or demographic differences. The time frame for the research was between January 2023 to May 2023.

3.4 Data collecting process

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. For interviewees in the study, the choice fell on producers active in REKO-rings of Västra Götaland. The choice of interviewees was based on a convenience sampling process. Convenience sampling means sampling through accessibility, which may impact the generalization of findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The sampling happened by contacting the producers active within the REKO Facebook groups of REKO Chalmers and REKO Backaplan, both located in Gothenburg. The sampling happened by contacting the producers active within the REKO Facebook groups of REKO Chalmers and REKO Backaplan, both located in Gothenburg. The two groups were chosen since they are open groups and, therefore, were accessible. Active is defined as posting and selling via the groups. The initial contact was taken through email or by using Facebook-messenger. One interviewee referred to three other producers active in REKO and provided phone numbers. This is called snowball sampling, where an initial contact helps to get in contact with other relevant participants (*Ibid*). The interviewees were given the option to have the interview by Zoom or phone if they preferred. This approach might miss some of the subtler hints that a face-to-face interview might provide, but the thought was to make it as convenient as possible for the participants. They were the ones offering their free time to help, and having the interviews by Zoom or phone meant taking less of their time and making it easier for them to participate.

An interview guide (Appendix 1) was created for the semi-structured interviews to ensure that the topics and themes of interest were addressed in each interview—the guide aimed to ask questions relating to the research questions and the theoretical framework and model. The semi-structured nature gives the interviewee room to elaborate on their answers and allows the interviewer to follow up on the answers given (Bryman & Bell, 2011). At the beginning of each interview, a brief explanation of the nature of the study was given and asked for permission to record the interview. In all, nine producers were interviewed on either Zoom or phone. The length of the interviews spanned between 25 minutes to 47 minutes. During the interviews, the aim was to allow the participant to talk and ask follow-up questions or ask them to elaborate when needed. Once theoretical saturation was deemed to have been reached, no more interviews took place. Theoretical saturation means that no new or relevant data seems to emerge (*Ibid*). The list of interviewees is presented in Table 3, along with the form and length of the interview.

Table 4. Interviewees, type of interview, the date of the interview and validation

Respondent	Type	Interview date	Interview length	Validation
Interviewee 1	Zoom	2023-03-06	47:32	Transcript
Interviewee 2	Zoom	2023-03-08	38:32	Transcript
Interviewee 3	Phone	2023-03-09	34:51	Transcript
Interviewee 4	Phone	2023-03-20	35:12	Transcript
Interviewee 5	Phone	2023-03-20	25:29	Transcript
Interviewee 6	Phone	2023-03-22	26:09	Transcript
Interviewee 7	Zoom	2023-03-22	30:43	
Interviewee 8	Zoom	2023-03-29	38:52	Transcript
Interviewee 9	Zoom	2023-04-03	27:39	Transcript

The recorded interviews were transcribed. This had the advantage of being able to revisit what was said as not to miss any vital information (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Transcribing not only provides a record of the interviews but it also provides the opportunity to get familiar with the data, as listening through it multiple times was necessary in the process of transcribing. To ensure that the interviewees' answers, perceptions, and descriptions were correctly perceived, measures were taken to validate the interviews. Throughout the interviews, the interviewees were asked to elaborate or explain if something was unclear or needed further explanation. All the interviewees were offered to read the transcript to confirm it was perceived correctly. This procedure is called respondent validation (*Ibid*). The approved transcripts are marked "transcript" in Table 3.

3.4.2 Participant observations

Participant observations were used as a complementary method. Robson and McCartan (2016) describe it as an opportunity to share life experiences and learn about social conventions and habits, their use of language, and non-verbal communication. As value creation is seen as a co-created endeavor, the act of the trade itself was deemed of interest to investigate. The set-up of the trade places, the producers in relation to each other and consumers, as well as the space itself was all thought to be of use in the study. This was also of interest in trying to witness first-hand some of the translation processes of the ANT. The observations took place at two different pick-up spots. The choice of observing two different ones was founded on the idea that the setting of the spot might differ, and to observe such a difference could be proved to have some value for the study,

3.4.3 Additional data

Additional data was collected in the form of reading posts in the Facebook groups of the REKO-rings. This data can be regarded as a document not made for research purposes. Bryman and Bell (2011) refer to virtual documents, which are texts on the internet. Additional documents, such as newspapers and

3.5 Data analysis

The collected data from interviews were transcribed. The coding and analysis, however, started one might say during the interview. The words of the interviewee told a story that

needed to be put through the filter of the theoretical framework. This was done by coding and labeling. The coding was done by identifying items that dealt with the same issues. These items were then linked under a shared code. Doing so gathers all the items representing similar ideas under the same code (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Examples are ideas that resonate with the same value in Schwartz's value theory; these were coded the same. The codes were then organized under broader themes. Themes represent broader and not as strongly defined groupings that resonate with something deemed important concerning a research question (*Ibid*). Examples of coding in Appendix 2.

3.6 Quality assurance

Bryman and Bell (2011, 395) account for the reasoning of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) in using trustworthiness rather than reliability and validity standards in qualitative research. Their reasoning is that a single account of social reality is not possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994 in Bryman & Bell, 2011, 395). The four criteria of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility addresses that the research is responsible and accurate. It deals with following good practices. Steps taken to gain credibility in the study include Triangulation, which is the use of multiple data sources to study social phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This has been used in this study by having multiple interview sources and conducting observation and reading documents, such as articles, reports, and webpages. Further, respondent validation has been used by offering the interviewees to validate the transcripts to ensure they are correct (*Ibid*)

One should strive for a deep understanding of the context to obtain transferability. This can be done by thick descriptions of the cultural context (Geertz, 1973 in Bryan & Bell, 2011, 398). This is provided in the empirical background, which aims to describe the conditions of the REKO-concept in detail.

Dependability is gained by keeping records of all the phases during the research process, and this includes problem formulation, selection of research participants, notes, transcripts, and data analysis decisions (Bryman & Bell, 2011, 398). The interview guide and data analysis are presented in the appendices.

Confirmability is to show that the researcher has acted in good faith, even though a complete absence of bias is impossible in business research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, 398). To address this issue, the attempt to remain objective was made throughout the study, using a broad theoretical framework as a base for the findings and research.

3.7 Ethical considerations

All participants were informed about the nature of the study, and what the collected data was to be used for. The participants were also informed about their rights before the interviews took place and in written form via a letter of consent and information about GDPR (Appendix 3; Appendix 4). Permission was asked to record the interviews. During observations, it is hard to ask for consent, but the focus was on the settings and broader events with no data on individuals collected.

It is the researcher's responsibility to assess the possibility of harm to research participants carefully, and to the extent that it can be, the possibility of harm should be minimized (Bryman & Bell, 2011, 128). This has been addressed by anonymizing all the participants.

The role of the researcher comes with ethical considerations. One such consideration can be in an interview situation, where the researcher tries to lead the participant to the answer he wants (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Consideration must therefore be taken to conduct the study with honesty and integrity. The same can be said for analysis; it should be grounded in the theoretical framework, not just what the researcher wants to find.

4 Background for the empirical study

The following chapter gives some background to the concept of REKO-rings, and some previous studies done on the subject.

4.1 The concept of REKO

The direct sales from producer to consumer were on a downward slope for decades, all while the demand from consumers for locally produced food increased. The practical and logistic solutions were lacking, which led to a project started in Finland to come to terms with the issue. Drawing inspiration from AMAP, an AFN in France, the concept of REKO was presented in 2013 (The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, u. d. c). The concept was transferred to Sweden, where the first REKO-ring started in Grästorps in 2016 (The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, u. d. a). Each REKO-ring has a Facebook group in which producers post what they have for sale and information describing the products, price, and how to pay. The consumers order by commenting on the posts. (*Ibid*). The producer then comments on the comment to confirm the order. The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (u. d. a) have some pointers on this, where it is pointed out that it is a good idea to vary the answers so Facebook does not think it is a bot. There are no quotas to fill in sales or any demands to participate every time, and there is no limit to how many REKO-rings one can join (*Ibid*). The pick-up sites are public places, such as a parking lot, lasting up to an hour. The producer who makes the sale decides how the payment is arranged (*ibid*). There are no rules as such to participate in REKO. However, The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (u. d. a) lists some principles of REKO.

- Only food and direct by-products from own food production
- Only sales of own products
- No intermediaries
- The products are pre-ordered for each delivery occasion
- Each order is an individual settlement between the buyer and seller
- Trust between all involved – honest and factual dialogue
- It must be free to participate in a REKO ring

Every transaction takes place directly between the buyer and seller. It is stated by The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (u. d. a) that it is the seller's responsibility to comply with laws and tax regulations. The role of the administrators is simply to offer the platform, and they have no responsibility for the business.

4.2 REKO-ring structure

Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021) describe the structure of the REKO-rings network organization. It is described as lacking any central leadership and is said to be held together through shared sentiment, wherein different people fulfill different roles. The main roles that are specified in Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021) are those of consumer, producer, and administrator. They also describe Facebook as a platform provider for REKO-rings. The structure, as described by Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021), is presented below in Figure 3. The big circle represents the commercial activity, wherein the producers and consumer share their activities with the

administrator and the physical space. Outside of the central circle lies the discussion groups for producers and admins.

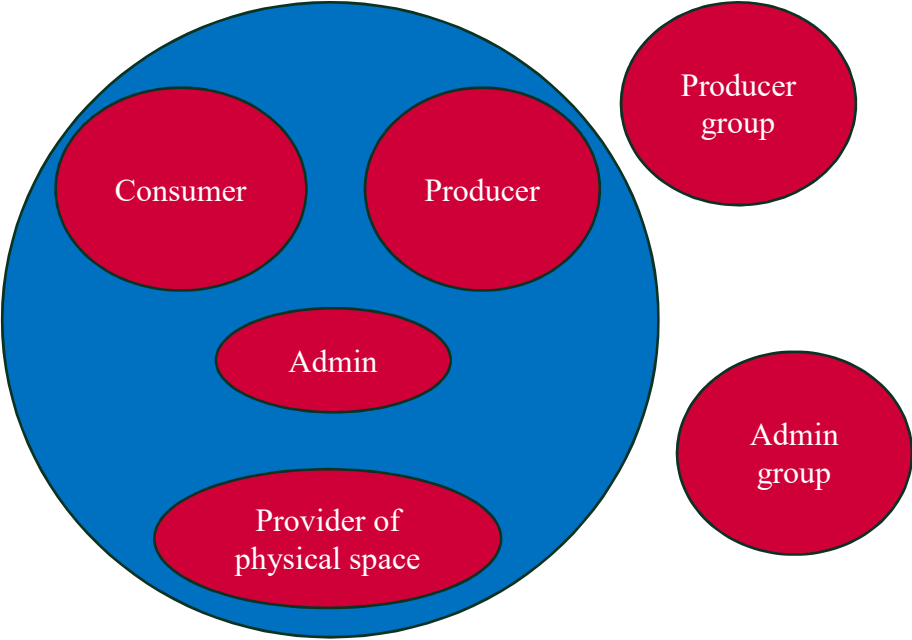


Figure 3. The structure of REKO-ring, made from Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021, 11).

The supply process is described and shown in Figure 4, where the pick-up is advertised on Facebook by an administrator, followed by the producer, who posts their product advertisement. Under these product advertisements, consumers place their orders by commenting on the posts. The admin creates an index post, and the delivery takes place at the pick-up place.



Figure 4. The supply process of REKO-rings, made from Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021, 10).

The structure and supply process forms a platform on which the consumer and producer can engage in direct communication, that of a REKO-ring.

In a case study on REKO-rings, Fuentes, and Fuentes (2022) suggest that the infrastructure of REKO-rings is formed through patchworking, meaning that practices performed by the actors involved interlinks components leading to a patchwork infrastructure. The AFN consumer is not "out there" fully formed, according to Fuentes and Fuentes (2022, 20), but rather develops

by interacting with the market structure. As for the producer, the REKO market infrastructure extends their agency and, in doing so, allows them to classify their products as local (*Ibid*, 20). This also allows them to charge more and increase sales, according to Fuentes and Fuentes (2022, 20).

4.3 Consumer motivation

Lindström (2018) conducted research aimed at explaining what values the consumer found in REKO-rings. In her study, the consumer valued many REKO-rings' unique offerings. Further, the consumer valued the interactions with the producers and being able to take part in their knowledge and expertise of their products. The products were perceived to be of higher quality by the consumer, mainly because of how they were produced. The small-scale production was valued, as well as the fact that they were produced locally, leading to the perception of it being more environmentally friendly than other products (Lindström, 2018). She also found that social interaction was valued in itself, and REKO was seen as a venue for new culinary experiences. The sense the consumer got that they themselves could influence the value offer was another point found in the research of Lindström (2018); the producers listen to the consumers' input and make use of it.

As REKO is presented as something simple and with direct contact, Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021) argue that the emphasis on these attributes could point to the fact that there is dissatisfaction regarding this in the mainstream supply chain. They further argue that the forming of REKO was to address the issue and to create a simple way of doing business with producers or consumers. As they are separated in the main supply chain, REKO can achieve the value of a direct relationship by rectifying the problem (*Ibid*). They further argue that what is easy about REKO is not just access to food but also building relations between producer and consumer. The latter would take a great deal of effort on one's own, to search out and visit farms to build said relationships or, in the case of a producer, start a customer base from scratch (*Ibid*). A study by Barिताux *et al.* (2011) regarding mountain food products in Europe found that the retailers' perspective on consumer preferences matched better outside the main supply chain of supermarkets and was more in sync with alternative supply chains. This could add to the point made by Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021) that the main supply chain separates the consumer from the producer.

4.4 REKO and COVID-19

Giertz (2022) studied how the REKO networks handled the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. At first, the response was chaotic. The demand for REKO increased drastically, and some administrators noted that orders had tripled from one week to another in March 2020. A lot of new REKO-rings were starting up. Giertz (2022) notes that the producers were worried because measurements against COVID affected many of their sources of income, and restaurants and markets were closed, but thanks to REKO, they managed to stay afloat, some even earning similar as before. Giertz (2022) also describes how the consumer lost some faith in regular food suppliers and supermarkets because of the images of empty shelves and the fear of getting sick. According to Giertz (2022), the consumer found REKO to be a good option in this situation, as it is not as affected by the lack of imported goods and with the advantage of being conducted outside, where the risk of getting infected with the virus was deemed lower. Giertz (2022) also found that local patriotism was a factor in turning to REKO during the pandemic, a willingness to support local businesses and entrepreneurs.

4.5 Digitally-enabled shopping

REKO is one of many AFNs that has used digital means to conduct its business. Of the many examples are digitally enabled meal boxes, like Hello Fresh, food sharing apps like Olio, and those aimed to re-sell meals to reduce food waste, like Too Good To Go (Fuentes *et al.*, 2021). One of the bigger ones is Karma, with 1 400 000 app users and 9200 sellers in 225 cities, with offices in Sweden, the UK, and France (Karma, 2021a). The idea of the Karma-app is that surplus food from retailers and restaurants can be sold at a reduced price instead of going to waste (*Ibid*). They have also developed a so-called smart-fridge, where retailers can put unsold goods, which in turn, people with the app can purchase and come and collect straight from the fridge, without any interactions with the staff (Karma, 2021b).

The association MatVärden is also developing a digital platform to promote a long-term and sustainable node for food, intending to, through a green and digital transition, increase sustainable growth, attractiveness, employment, and ability to provide food. The digital platform is supposed to work as a new marketplace for regional food companies (MatVärden, 2019).

Fuentes *et al.* (2021) argue that the challenge of new digital ways of food purchases is to find its place among other practices. They argue that food practices, whether shopping or eating out, are deeply engraved with other practices, making them stabilized and hard to change. While using an app might occur every once in a while, for it to become standard practice, it has to be linked to other practices (Fuentes *et al.*, 2021).

5 Results

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the data collection. They are presented in order of collection method, starting with the interviews, and following with the findings of observations and findings on the Facebook groups.

5.1 Interviews

5.1.1 About the respondents

The interviewees come from different backgrounds and have different experiences producing and selling foodstuff. For some, the production and selling of foodstuff is the main livelihood; for others, it is a side business. Some have worked with it for years, maybe on a family farm. For others, this is their first venture with producing and selling foodstuff. Quite a few interviewees have a farm store in connection with their place of production; some sell to local stores and visit farmers' markets. Some have a website from which one can order their products.

They also differ in how many REKO-rings they are members of; some are part of three, while others are members in up to eighteen. Some travel only to the ones close to home, while others venture further. Some go to the pick-ups every week, while others might go every other week. Some have been part of REKO for years, while others are new. They offer different goods, and while some have a wide variety of products, others have fewer. Some sell a lot, while others sell less.

5.1.2 The practicalities of participating in the local food network

The interviewees described how they go about the practical side of being involved in a REKO-ring. All the interviewees told similar stories regarding this side of the REKO. A Facebook account is needed. Some have an account set up for the business. A computer or smartphone with an internet connection is needed to access Facebook. To be allowed to sell foodstuff, a permit is needed, which differs depending on what type of food one sells. To join, they make contact with an administrator of a REKO-ring. It can involve sending them a message on Facebook, describing themselves and their business, what they have to offer, where they are from, and so on. This contact can take place in the form of applying to the producer group of the REKO-ring; many rings have a group exclusively for the producers and the admin. This can involve answering a few questions in a form or the admin making contact and asking some questions. After that, they join the Facebook group of the REKO-ring in question.

Once they are in the group, they can start to put their goods up for sale by posting in the main Facebook group. They prepare the posts for the Facebook groups, mainly using the same template they have readymade, to present their offerings for the coming week. The template might change should there be a change in what they offer, for example, a new product. If the REKO-ring is on a Thursday, the post usually comes out between Friday and Monday. It differs from ring to ring; in some the admin checks the posts before they are posted, and in others they go out straight away. They then must monitor their posts, notice orders, and confirm them. Sometimes some questions need answering. The orders are prepared for pick-up. Some products need more time to prepare; it can be a sauce that is made, for example.

Some products can be packed in advance, while others need to stay refrigerated or stored in some other manner. Many producers pack their goods after each order, making it easier at the pick-up. They also need to keep books on their sales and goods, which involves taking orders from the Facebook group and entering them into their system of choice, which needs to be done manually. On the day of the pick-up, some travel further than others, depending on where the pick-up is on that particular day. Some producers are members of multiple REKO-rings, and many of the rings are coordinated so they can visit more than one in a day. In Gothenburg, for example, three different rings pick-up start at 6 p.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m., respectively. Each pick-up has a half an hour timeslot, making it possible to go to each. At the pick-up site, the producers park their cars or vans at the spot. Sometimes there is an admin from the ring that helps coordinate the parking. Some spots have different areas where they get assigned and asked to park in the correct one. They ensure the orders for that ring are ready. The customers arrive, give their name or order number and collect their purchases. The producers are not allowed to sell anything extra on the spot; all orders must have been made in advance. Selling goods on the spot would require a marketplace permit. Customers usually pay with the app "Swish," which is a mobile phone payment method. They usually pay on the spot, or in some instances, in advance. In the Swish app, one can view transaction history, which is shown to confirm the payment. If the opportunity is there, some customers like to chat for a while, mainly about the products. It can be to tell about the last purchase or ask something about the products, how to use them for example. The producers can also chat amongst themselves. When the orders have been handed out, the producers gather their belongings and make their way to their next stop, be it another REKO-ring or making their way home.

5.1.3 The interviewees thoughts about the concept

The interviewees, of course, have some opinions on REKO. First and foremost, it is a venue to sell their goods. Some mention that it is an effective way of reaching new customers where one meets them instead of waiting for them to come. They also value direct contact with the customers, without any middleman. This is twofold, they can keep more profits for themselves, but they also get to meet and talk to the customers. This social side of the REKO rings is something that several of the interviewees mentioned as one of the most significant upsides.

"...if we run past someone in town, we say hello, because they are our customers. And they greet us because we are their supplier. So, it builds other types of relationships with its customer, of course" (pers. com., Interviewee 8, 2023).

Even if a consumer did not order from a specific producer one week, they can still interact and show what type of products they have. Bringing a lot of producers and consumers to one place thus creates an opportunity to be seen. Not only do they get to meet the customer, but they can also build relationships with them and hear their opinions. Apart from being a social event, these relationships can also help the producers as they get quick and direct customer feedback.

"...It is the most fun thing because you have the opportunity, both as a producer and as a customer, to ask questions and get answers on the spot..." (pers. com., Interviewee 4, 2023).

Direct feedback can also be put into use. One example mentioned by an interviewee is that when discussing the products with the consumer, they get an idea of which aspects of it is worth mentioning a bit more.

It is not only with the customers that relationships are built. The producers also interact with each other. Some call it a networking opportunity. They share tips on doing things, and some start cooperating. They use the opportunity to make purchases for themselves. Many stated that the diverse set of products, some of which are hard to find anywhere else, is one of the appeals of REKO. There seems to be a camaraderie among the producers, as it is easier to make themselves heard as a group rather than one by one. One interviewee expressed it as they are more like colleagues than competitors. A few of the interviewees with a farm store will start to stock up on goods from other producers, goods they do not produce themselves. By doing this, they widen their offerings at the farm store. They can also help each other if one misses a pick-up; one of the other producers can bring the goods that need delivering.

"It is very fun to meet people. You meet people, and from meetings, things can happen, so to speak. Meetings that otherwise might not have happened" (pers. com., Interviewee 1, 2023).

The simplicity and the direct feedback make REKO an excellent place to start when one wants to try selling foodstuff. There is no need for a large production; for those interested, it is easy to start. One interviewee talks about how they got started:

"We noticed that many of our friends found it very tasty. And they wondered if they could buy. Then the idea was born that maybe we should do it [...] A colleague of mine suggested that there is something called REKO-rings, so I started looking into it." (pers. com., Interviewee 4, 2023).

According to the interviewees, the small scale is at the heart of REKO. Some interviewees argue that it could help them keep a better quality product by being the smaller producers. They also argue that it is better from an environmental standpoint, using a more sustainable practice. Furthermore, it gets more personal, and they can pay attention to details. As every customer is important for a small-scale producer, they have to take care to keep the quality. As one interviewee puts it:

"For a large producer, losing one customer might not be a big deal, but they are very important to us. Not only to keep them but also to help spread the word that they are good products" (pers. com., Interviewee 4, 2023).

The side of REKO that promotes local food is something the interviewees agree is good. They say that it helps keep the community alive and creates more opportunities. One interviewee argues that it is also beneficial from a food security point of view. The community is less dependent on buying food from further away when local food production is thriving, which in a crisis could be vital. They also mention that shorter transports are a good thing from an environmental standpoint.

The issue of food waste is also something they mention. Several of them take the example of going to sell at a market, there is no way of knowing how much will sell, and some products are not possible to take back and sell at another time. The premise of REKO is that one is only allowed to sell what has been ordered in advance, which the interviewees view as a good thing as it helps keep food waste to a minimum. This also makes it less of an uncertainty in

terms of if it is worth going. Going to a market can be a gamble, but at a REKO-ring they know exactly how much they will sell.

“..it took about two working days to participate in a market, first you have to pack all the things you have to take with you and then you have to be at the market, but you have no idea how much you sell” (pers. com., Interviewee 3, 2023).

The interviewees agree that the premise of REKO is straightforward. The premise stays the same for all the rings, but the administrators can set specific rules for their rings. Some admins have rules where the producers must be within 30 km or 100 km of the REKO-ring, while others have no limit. This brings us back to the local aspect; there is no universal rule when something is considered local. The specific rules also apply to letting new producers into the rings, and some admins want to have a cap on the same type of products, which in turn means that some producers have a more challenging time getting into certain groups.

The interviewees also mention that REKO is a good source of income. For some, it is the primary source. They mention how helpful it was during the pandemic of COVID-19 when restaurants and markets were closed, and the REKO-rings hit record numbers. Some say that without REKO they would have trouble making ends meet during this time. Others say that when their main business is in a slower period, for example, during the winter, REKO is a good extra income.

The postings and answering in the Facebook group are relatively easy, although they can be time-consuming. Since Facebook is not connected to any bookkeeping systems, all the information from the group must be transferred manually. This is what a few interviewees refer to as the biggest downside of REKO. Some also mention that posts or comments can disappear, which can cause confusion. If someone fails to show up, it is hard to get a hold of them fast. Some of the interviewees would like a better system, perhaps an app that can work to make the orders go into their system automatically. They do, however, realize that moving the vast number of people from Facebook to use a REKO app instead would be challenging, and a time of adjustment would be necessary. Some point out, however, that even if a REKO-group has thousands of members, only a fraction actually shops.

The pick-up spots take place in parking lots, which are public spaces. Some parking lots are big, open spaces, while others are more crowded and less spacious. Some interviewees point out that navigating at some pick-up spots can be challenging, especially if the parking lot is full of other cars.

The brief pick-up timeframe has benefits, as it is a quick way of moving many products. The timeframe of 30-45 minutes means offloading all that has been sold in a short time.

"You get a lot of goods out in a short time. There is nowhere else that we can rev up as much in a week as at REKO" (pers. com., Interviewee 6, 2023).

A downside of the brief pick-up timeframe could be that there are people who cannot make it to the pick-ups and, because of it, has trouble shopping at REKO. One such segment could be parents of small children.

"It's bed time and it's dinner time too. So there is a group who have purchasing power but who can't fit it into the life-puzzle" (pers. com., Interviewee 9, 2023).

To get around the issue of the timeframe the interviewee has a solution in mind, a shared space, like a shed, to use as drop-off and pick-up spots.

“The coolest thing would be to have like... neighborhood groups. Together they could have a small shed where we can come and leave the food” (pers. com., Interviewee 9, 2023).

Time consumption is something a few also mention as a downside of REKO. This is, of course, dependent on how much involvement is put in. The more one sells, the more the manual transfer of orders needs to be done. The more products, the longer posts and lists of ingredients need to be written. The journeys to and from the pick-up spots vary greatly for the producers. While some can measure their travel time in minutes, others spend a couple of hours going back and forth. However, the further they travel, the more customers they get in contact with, customers they might otherwise never have met.

5.2 Observations

Two observations were conducted. On the days of observation, the sun shone, and the birds sang. The first observation occurred in a parking lot in Gothenburg, the regular pick-up spot for one of the REKO groups. The producers had parked their cars or vans in close proximity to each other, giving the scene a feeling of a marketplace. The layout also made the pick-up spot easy to notice and find. The producers had signs to show who they were, making it easy to find them. The facilities in connection to the parking lot are mainly used during the day, and since the time of pick-up was set from 7 to 7:30 p.m., the pick-up scene could be set in its own entity without other cars blending in. On the day, quite a few people showed up, but not enough to create long queues. The customers arrived by foot, bike, or by car. It is possible that they used a bus or tram to arrive, as there are stops close by. The customers lined up when necessary, giving their names or order number to pick up their products. Some chatted with the producers, while others just picked up their orders and went on their way. Most conversations seemed to be about the products. Depending on what was purchased, a few of the customers brought their own bags or egg cartons. Some of the producers were chatting with each other when not attending to customers. After the time slot of the pick-up was over, the producers gathered their things and set off to the next pick-up in another part of the city.

The second observation followed the same patterns as the first. The second observation was done at another pick-up spot, still in Gothenburg. It is also the regular pick-up spot for one of the REKO groups in the city. As in the case of the first observation, the producers parked close to one another. This parking lot is more used during the evening because of the commercial buildings and shops close to it. The timeslot is 6 to 6:30 p. m. for this pick-up spot. However, there was much free space for the producers to park their cars or vans on the day in question. The customer arrived by foot, bike, or by car. There are also some bus and tram stops close to the parking lot. The proceedings were similar to the first observation; some customers just picked up their purchases, and others chatted. Again, some brought bags and cartons. The producers cleaned up their belongings when their pick-ups were done and set off to the next pick-up spot.

5.3 Facebook

The postings on Facebook were observed in the Spring of 2023, starting in February and ending in May. The producers post in the group of the REKO-ring what they have to offer. All the ingredients are listed in the post, making some posts longer than others. It also varies how many products they offer. A few write some information about who they are, where they are from, and what their business is about. There is also payment information on how and when to pay. Some set a deadline for orders a day or so before the pick-up; it can be products that need some preparation. There can be a disclaimer that the producer will only attend and be able to deliver if there are enough orders. Some have a link to a webpage. Some add information about the car or van they use at the pick-ups. Most of the post looks similar from week to week, adjusting when a new product is available. The customer comment under the post what they wish to order, which product and the quantity, and the producer replies with an affirmative that they have seen and noted the order. On rare occasions, the customer asks a question under the posts; it can be something regarding the product or if they can order in another quantity than stated in the post.

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6 Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the empirical data. By going by the theories one by one, to end with the framework putting them all to use.

6.1 Service-dominant logic

According to SD logic, service is the basis of exchange, as the skills and knowledge are what is offered, and the products work as a vessel for these (Vargo & Akaka, 2009). The producers' service is their knowledge, skill, and expertise in making their products. This service is also available to them, as they can use each other's services by buying each other's products or giving hints and advice. The service offered by the REKO-rings themselves, or perhaps the administrators, could be the skill to gather people or customers. Lindström (2018) points out that the consumer influences the value output, which in turn can mean that the producer takes part in the consumers' knowledge of what is a good value proposal. By using this knowledge, the producer can adjust and create a better proposal. Adjusting the product or how they market it by highlighting something a consumer pointed out is an example of how the producer can benefit from the consumers' knowledge. This also aligns with the premise that value is co-created (Vargo & Akaka, 2009).

The premise that value is always uniquely and phenomenological determined by the beneficiary (*Ibid*, 35), which can be interpreted as it is contextual, and the co-creation of value is seen throughout the REKO-rings. The meetings and discussions become a value in the context of REKO because they are valued by those engaging in it. It is seen as a unique point of REKO and adds to something more than buying and selling locally-produced food.

6.2 Schwartz value theory

6.2.1 Openness to change

Many producers express values that fall under the dimension of openness to change. The values linked to this dimension are hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction (Schwartz, 2012). The description of these types of values is excitement, daring, wanting a pleasurable life, and being creative and free (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). This can be seen in the interviewees that use REKO-rings as a venue to try something new, to see if they can sell their products and make a living, or to engage in a side business. In addition, the fact that many interviewees express that one of the most significant upsides of participating in REKO is the interactions with the consumers and how fun it is to meet them and hear their points of view.

6.2.2 Self-transcendence

Self-transcendence's dimension concerns others' well-being and welfare (Schwartz, 1992). The producers' willingness to help each other out and cooperate points to the value of benevolence, with concerns about the welfare of people with whom one is in close contact (*Ibid*). The mention of the producers calling each other colleagues further strengthens this point. They develop relationships with some of the customers as well. The local community's welfare is also relevant, where the interviewees express the importance of having a thriving local business.

The value of universalism is broader and concerns the welfare of all people and nature (*Ibid*). The presence of this value can be noticed in the concern for the environment that the interviewees express, such as the shorter transport, sustainable practices, and keeping food waste to a minimum.

6.2.3 Self-enhancement

The dimension of self-enhancement deals with personal achievements, success, social status, prestige, control, or dominance over people and resources (*Ibid*). It also shares hedonism with the "openness to change" dimension, where pleasure for oneself is the primary motivation (*Ibid*). All of the interviewees expressed a will to sell their products, which can be linked to personal achievements and success. This is, of course, a big part of participating in REKO. It is a platform for the producers to sell, after all. They also feel proud of their products and want to share them and their knowledge with others, which can be linked to status and prestige. The meetings with the customers and discussion of the products can be seen as both being proud of the success of their labor and having a good time sharing their knowledge.

6.2.4 Conservation

Conservation is linked to security, conformity, and tradition (*Ibid*). Conformity deals with politeness, humbleness, self-discipline, and respecting elders (*Ibid*). Even if the discussions might be polite, the interviewees do not express these traits as big motivation. Tradition deals with humbleness, accepting and following the culture's customs and traditions (*Ibid*). One might argue that some follow the traditions and customs of small-scale production. The value of security is, however, more predominant. This deals with the safety, harmony, and stability of society, relationships, and self (*Ibid*). Many of the interviewees mention REKO as a helpful addition to their business; it provides more opportunities to sell their products. As some interviewees expressed, REKO is very helpful when the main business is in a slower period, and they can make up for that by participating in REKO. This, in turn, provides more stability and harmony. This can also be said with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic when many venues of business closed for producers. Keeping business afloat with the help of REKO-rings during that period can provide security going forward. Should something similar happen again, the security of having REKO can be calming. The security value is also expressed in the willingness to have local food security. As one interviewee sees it, participating in the local food business strengthens it. It could lead to the local society being less vulnerable in a crisis when food imports decrease.

6.3 Actor-network theory

From the producer's perspective, the actor-network theory is used here to build the context of REKO. By combining social and technological variables, the actors can build new networks (Latour, 2005). The actors can, as stated by ANT be human and non-humans. The actors have passed through the OPP (Callon, 1984) and joined in the common goal of a REKO-ring. Figure 5 below is an attempt to visualize the actors of the Actor-network of the REKO-ring from a producer's point of view.

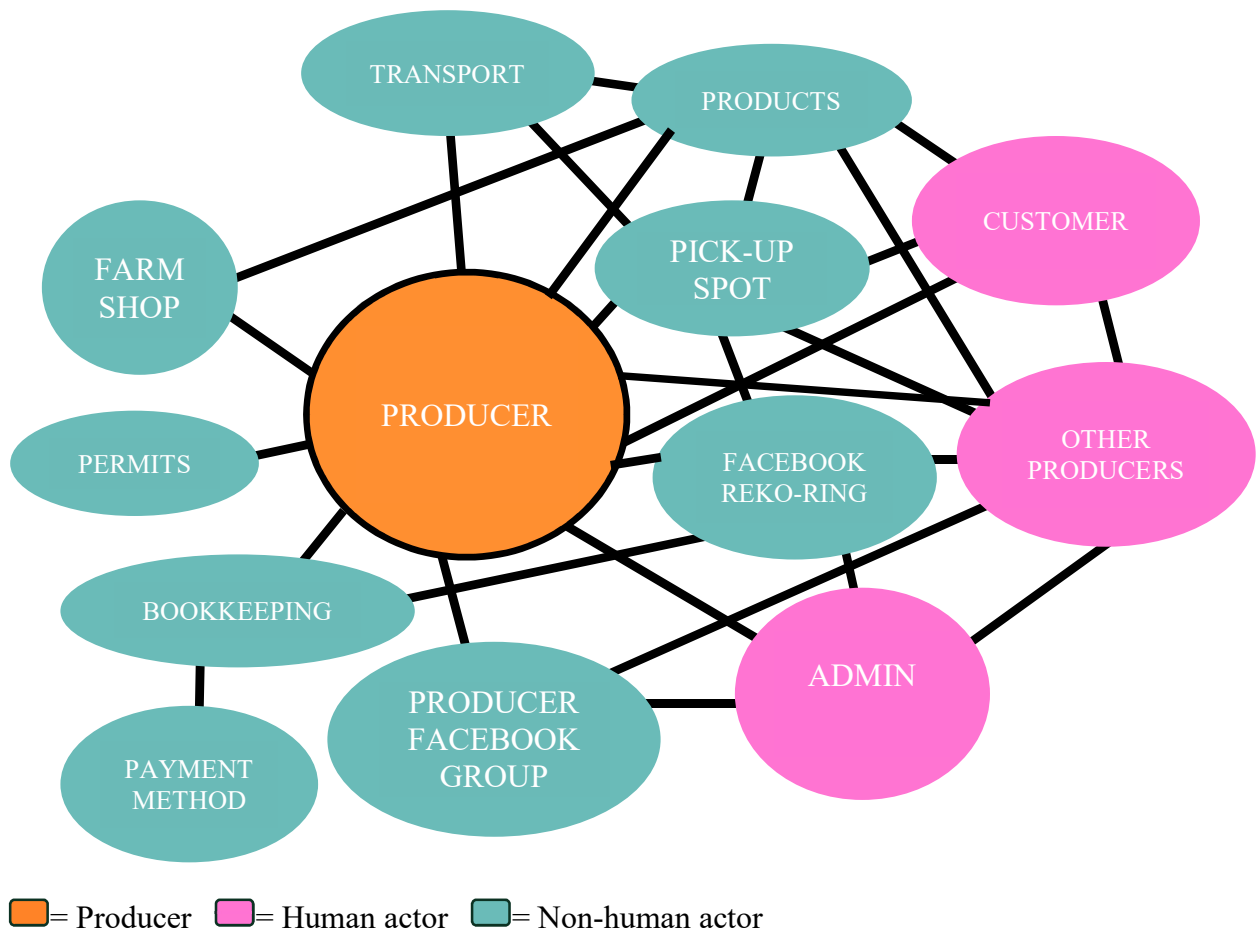


Figure 5. Actor-network model of REKO, from the producer's point of view.

The actors in Figure 5 are visualized according to human and non-human actors in different colors. The producer is made differently to emphasize that the study is focused on that particular actor. It is also made from the perspective of one REKO-ring, not connecting to many, as to make it clearer what actors are involved. While the ANT does not distinguish between the two, it has been done here to make clear that both are part of the network. The actors connect and react with each other within the context of the network, and they all have a part to play in keeping the network intact. This is necessary to keep the network functioning (Callon, 1984). Some examples of connections: The producer and the product connect to each other, and the transport is needed to move the product to the pick-up site. Depending on the product, the transport must be of a specific type to fulfill its role; some products need refrigeration, for example. The actors all have roles to fulfill for the network to function, and this being a part of the network is used as an example of how the actors interact according to their roles. At the pick-up spot, other actors connect, such as the consumer, and it goes on involving all the actors in the network. Should, however, an actor not fulfill its role, the network becomes destabilized (*Ibid*). Should the car not start or the refrigeration malfunction, the product that needs to be frozen cannot be transported; it cannot connect to the pick-up and the consumer, causing the network to destabilize.

6.4 Analysis with the conceptual framework

The producer brings their own motivations and goals for participating in a REKO-ring. One motivation for joining can be the value dimension of openness to change, where the producer wants to be creative and try to start selling a product (Schwartz, 2012). To get into a REKO-ring, they must first have a Facebook account. If they converge in the OOP, join in a common goal, and create an account, then the producer is allowed to use the functions of Facebook (Callon, 1984). The actor Facebook thus has the agency of letting the producer use or not use its functions. To be able to sell, the producer must join the producer group and be allowed by the administrator of the REKO-ring they wish to join. This can be seen as another OOP; the producer can join if they converge. The administrator has the agency to let the producer join or not. If the producer can join, they can create a post showing what they have to sell. Then the agency lies with the consumer; they can choose to or not to order. As seen, there are many steps, actors, and OOPs to pass through.

Skip ahead to a pick-up spot. Some orders were placed, and the car allowed the producer to reach the pick-up spot. The producer meets other producers, talks a bit, and exchanges ideas. The producer is enjoying the time, showcasing another motivation to join, hedonism as in enjoying the activity (Schwartz, 1992). The exchange of ideas also means that the producer has taken part in the other producers' knowledge while sharing what they know. According to SD logic, the exchange of knowledge is an exchange of service, and in doing so, the producer has co-created something of value with the other producers (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). Should the producer deem the advice from the others to be helpful, this can be seen as fulfilling the premise of Vargo and Akaka (2009, 35) value that says that determined by the beneficiary. If it is deemed by the producer to have value, then it has value. It has also shown another motivation to participate in REKO. By learning from others, the producer can achieve a better product—the dimension of Self-enhancement (Schwartz, 2012).

The consumer picks up the products and pays the producer. This could be seen as fulfilling the security and power values, as in the safety of having an income, and power over resources, as in money (Schwartz, 2012). According to SD, the money is a vessel for service and is useless until it is used. The money can, however, be exchanged for the service of having a roof to sleep under, as in paying rent.

As SD is customer oriented, and the producer cannot create value but offer value propositions, altering per the customer's wish might provide an opportunity to create a better value proposition (Vargo & Akaka, 2009). The consumer gives feedback on the product at the next pick-up, making suggestions on changes. In doing this, once again, providing knowledge as a service.

7 Discussions

The discussions aims to lead back to the research question, and to discuss the findings of the study in relation to them, as well as the empirical background.

7.1 The producer role

There are many actors and OOPs to converge with for the producer to maintain a stable Actor network in the shape of REKO. One can bring it down to the minute details if one so wishes, to the very last screw in the car. That might, however, distract from the bigger picture. According to Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021), the producer needs to cooperate with consumers, other producers, and admins. This is done within the structures of the main REKO group, where the three are active, which also features the Facebook group and the physical space for pick-ups. The producer interacts with the other producers and the admin in the separate producer Facebook group. If one then adds the Actor-network point of view to the structure provided by Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021), one can notice that many actors converge within these structures. All the actors must fulfill their network roles to stabilize it (Callon, 1984).

As the changes in demand have, according to Marsden (1998), created new constructed values, the producers must find ways to incorporate these into their way of doing things. The main challenge for the role of the producer is to provide the consumer with reasonable value propositions if one goes by the SD logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). To attain this, the producer must participate in exchanging information and knowledge with the consumer and other producers. Gruvaeus and Dahlin (2021) and Lindström (2018) argue that one of the central values a consumer finds in REKO is the interaction with the producer, which enables the producers to build relationships with the consumer that they did not necessarily have the opportunities for outside of REKO. The ideas of a smart-fridge like Karma, with no interactions (Karma, 2021b), or the proposed REKO-shed might serve as means to reach people that cannot make it to the pick-ups, it might lose something else. As the interactions between consumers and producers are seen as a core part of the REKO-concept, the producer is, in this context, no longer someone who just provides the consumer with food. The producers, one might argue, are part of the value proposition toward the consumer, sharing knowledge and expertise as part of the constructed values.

7.2 Value creation in the local food network

As the analysis attempts to demonstrate, the value creation in a REKO-ring is highly contextual. What motivations and hopes the producer brings to the table play a significant role in determining what values can be attained for them. It is, however, something that the producer needs help to do. The SD logic states that value is co-created and determined by the beneficiary (Lusch & Vargo, 2006), making the findings in Lindström (2018) particularly interesting in the context of this study. The study of Lindström (2018) used the SD logic and Schwartz value theory to explore the values and perspectives of the consumer. According to Lindström (2018), one of the main reason consumers participated in REKO was that the products and services were considered more environmentally friendly. There was also a willingness to support the local community and try the unique products REKO could provide, constructed values as Marsden (1998) labels them. As this study has focused on the producer, one can notice the interaction and the co-creation that SD logic stresses (Lusch & Vargo,

2006). The producers have taken the knowledge and input of the consumer to create a value proposition that suits the values and perspective of the REKO consumers. By closing the distance Mount (2011) suggest the main supply chain creates, the producers would be more in tune with the consumers' need, according to Baritoux *et al.* (2011).

The Facebook platform, and the administrator, also serve to exchange expertise and co-creating value. The platform provides the knowledge to bring many people to one place and to provide a physical space. By participating in it, the producers derive value as the beneficiary of this knowledge (Lusch & Vargo, 2006).

The interactions between producers are another source of value in the REKO context. The exchange of knowledge and services is prolific, making the producers beneficiaries of each other's services and knowledge, thus co-creating value (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). This is seen in using each other's products, helping, and learning from one another.

The findings of Giertz (2022) showed another way in which value can be found in REKO. According to Giertz (2022), many producers worried about their source of income when the COVID-19 pandemic caused restaurants and markets to close. The rise of REKO during this time provided many of the producers with an alternative way to make ends meet (Giertz, 2022). This can translate to using REKO as a security for times of uncertainty, as per the security value in Schwartz (2012).

7.3 Reflection on Facebook

Many producers have opinions on the platform of Facebook. While Facebook provides a good way of connecting with many people fast, a lot of them mention the idea of an app to simplify matters for the producers. The benefits are simplicity, it has many users, and the REKO-groups have many members. According to the producers in this study, the downsides are the cumbersome bookkeeping, the way some posts get deleted, and the difficulties in reaching people fast. The transfer of everybody in the REKO-groups on Facebook might prove difficult, but as the producers mention, not all in the groups are active customers. This could play in with the ideas of Fuentes *et al.* (2021), where the transition to everyday use is hard when it is not linked to other practices. The structure of REKO might also prove challenging, as it does not have a central organization, and every ring operates independently (The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, n. d. b). The administrator of each ring has agency in setting the rules they see fit for their ring.

7.4 Critical reflection

This study has focused on the producers' perspective in REKO in Västra Götaland, interviewing participants who fill those criteria. The chosen theoretical and methodological perspectives have been deemed to best answer the aim of the study, which is to explain the value creation within a local food network focusing on the role of the producers. The choice of talking to only producers meant getting many perspectives on the same role and, therefore, getting a more precise grasp of it. The geographical limitation served to talk to producers who, in part, experience similar challenges and served to get a better overview of the situation they are in by getting multiple accounts of the same phenomena.

However, expanding the respondents to include administrators and consumers could have provided a more holistic view of the REKO-rings. A broader geographical scope might bring other challenges and themes to light, where the challenges might differ due to specific local attributes.

Steps to gain trustworthiness has been carried out according to how they were stated in Chapter 3.

Consideration has been taken to the ethical aspects by being honest about the intent, aim, and purpose of the study. Analysis has been based on the theoretical framework.

8 Conclusions

This chapter presents the main findings and relates back to the aim of the study. It also features some reflections, and suggestions for future research.

8.1 Main findings

The study aimed to explain the value creation within a local food network, with a focus on the role of the producer. The main findings are that the REKO provides the producers with a unique setting in which direct contact with each other and the customer allows for ideas and knowledge to be exchanged at a high rate. The participation in REKO also opened new venues for the producers to collaborate and use each other's knowledge and products in providing a better value proposal themselves. It also opened up new markets by traveling to meet the consumer at their REKO-rings, making it possible to reach consumers they would otherwise not have been able to.

The downside of REKO turned out to be the platform of Facebook. The platform is not created for business in this manner, and keeping track of posts and orders takes much work for many producers. The administration of manually tracking every order and putting it in another system was said to be tedious and time-consuming.

8.2 Practical implications

As shown, REKO can be utilized as a platform to learn for new producers, with the knowledge that they can take part from the other producer and the possibility for direct contact and feedback with the consumer. As it is a simple premise, it can be a valuable learning opportunity for those inclined to do so.

However, the concept of REKO is less well suited for producers of more significant volumes, as manually keeping track of every order on Facebook and transferring them, and booking them in a preferred system becomes time-consuming when dealing with large quantities.

8.3 Suggestions for future research

As the focus of this study was on producers involved in REKO in the region of Västra Götaland, with the observation in a city setting, the scope can be widened and cover a larger geographical area to investigate if it differs depending on the spatial context. This study used the actor-network theory to explore the role of the producer; the scope can also be widened, and instead of focusing on the producer, make more holistic research on the network as a whole. REKO-rings can, in this manner, also be investigated in a bigger context, providing an actor-network of a community of society and investigating the role of REKO in that network.

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A thought to my coffee maker, who has been working overtime.

Appendix 1 – Interview guide

Appendix 1 is the interview guide that was developed for the study.

Intervjuguide

Börjar med presentation av mig och studien, GDPR, intervjupersonens rättigheter.

- Beskriv er och er verksamhet
- Säljkanaler
- Hur och när kom ni i kontakt med REKO?
- Beskriv hur det går till?
- Vad behövs för att sälja via REKO? (Transport, Internet, varor etc).
- Vilka kommer ni i kontakt med? (Kunder, gruppadministratörer etc) Beskriv kontakterna.
- Motivation till att vara med? Utveckla [nämnd sak]
- Vad ser ni som de största värdena till att vara med?
- Vad tror ni är konsumenternas motivation till att vara med? Hur vet ni?
- Har ni förändrat något för att möta konsumenterna i REKO-ringar? Vad, hur?
- Vad fungerar bra/ dåligt? Utveckla [nämnd sak]
- Upplever du några hinder med REKO? Hur tar ni er runt dem?
- Tar det mycket tid i anspråk? Hur balanseras marknadsföringen, produktionen?
- Hur fungerar regelverket kring REKO?
- Är den lokala aspekten viktig? Varför, Hur?
- Får ni något stöd för lokal handel? Ex statlig.
- Hållbarhetsaspekt? Ekologisk ekonomisk socialt. Utveckla.
- Ser du REKO-försäljning som något du kommer ägna dig åt i framtiden? varför/ varför inte?
- Hur behöver REKO-utvecklas?

Är det någonting utöver det vi pratat om som du vill ta upp eller belysa, som du tycker är viktigt?

Appendix 1 – Translated to English

Interview guide

Starts with a presentation of me and the study, GDPR, the rights of the interviewee.

- Describe yourself and your business
- Sales channels
- How and when did you come into contact with REKO?
- Describe how it is done?
- What is needed to sell via REKO? (Transport, Internet, goods etc).
- Who do you come into contact with? (Customers, group admins etc) Describe the contacts.
- Motivation to participate? Develop [mentioned thing]
- What do you see as the greatest values in being involved?
- What do you think is consumers' motivation to participate? How do you know?
- Have you changed anything to meet consumers in REKO rings? What how?
- What works well/badly? Develop [mentioned thing]
- Do you experience any obstacles with REKO? How do you get around them?
- Does it take a lot of time? How is marketing, production balanced?
- How does the regulatory framework around REKO work?
- Is the local aspect important? Why, How?
- Do you get any support for local trade? Ex state.
- Sustainability aspect? Ecological economic social. Develop.
- Do you see REKO sales as something you will devote yourself to in the future? why/ why not?
- How does REKO need to be developed?

Is there anything in addition to what we talked about that you want to bring up or highlight, that you think is important?

Outro

Appendix 2 – Examples of coding

Schwartz value theory	Service-dominant logic	Actor-network theory
Value dimension: Openness to change	FP6 The customer is always the co-creator of value.	Obligatory passage points
<i>"We noticed that many of our friends found it very tasty. And they wondered if they could buy. Then the idea was born that maybe we should do it [...] A colleague of mine suggested that there is something called REKO-rings, so I started looking into it." (pers. com., Interviewee 4, 2023).</i>	<i>"...It is the most fun thing because you have the opportunity, both as a producer and as a customer, to ask questions and get answers on the spot..." (pers. com., Interviewee 4, 2023).</i>	<i>"And then you can apply to join the producer group. And there are different ones. Some have them closed and then you have to fill in a few questions and then you are approved or not approved, or you are contacted in some way by the administrator who asks some follow-up questions then perhaps" (pers. com., Interviewee 8, 2023).</i>
Trying new things, improve, testing, creating.	Exchange, feedback, co-creation	Agency, decide, joining
New things, Self improvement, stimulation	Feedback, co-creation	Agency, OPP, joining

Appendix 3 – Letter of consent

Appendix 2 is the letter of consent given to all interviewees that participated in the study.

Samtyckeblankett: Personuppgiftsbehandling i studentarbeten

När du medverkar i arbetet med examensarbete ”Local food network - The value creation and role for producers” innebär det att SLU behandlar dina personuppgifter. Att ge SLU ditt samtycke är helt frivilligt, men utan behandlingen av dina personuppgifter kan inte forskningen genomföras. Denna blankett syftar till att ge dig all information som behövs för att du ska kunna ta ställning till om du vill ge ditt samtycke till att SLU hanterar dina personuppgifter eller inte.

Du har alltid rätt att ta tillbaka ditt samtycke utan att behöva ge några skäl för detta. SLU är ansvarig för behandlingen av dina personuppgifter, och du når SLUs dataskyddsombud på dataskydd@slu.se eller via 018-67 20 90. Din kontaktperson för detta arbete är: Joakim Mattsson, jmma0002@stud.slu.se, [studentens telefonnummer].

Vi samlar in följande uppgifter om dig: För- och efternamn, ljud och text från intervjutillfället, mejladress och telefonnummer.

Ändamålet med behandlingen av dina personuppgifter är att SLUs student ska kunna genomföra sitt examensarbete enligt korrekt vetenskaplig metod och bidra till forskning på på handel av närproducerad mat och producentvärderingar. Examensarbetet publiceras i en öppen databas (Epsilon).

Om du vill läsa mer information om hur SLU behandlar personuppgifter och om dina rättigheter kan du hitta den informationen på www.slu.se/personuppgifter.

- Jag samtycker till att SLU behandlar personuppgifter om mig på det sätt som förklaras i denna text, inklusive känsliga uppgifter om jag lämnar sådana.

Underskrift

Plats, datum

Namnförtydligande

Appendix 3 – translated to English.

Consent form: Processing of personal data in student work

When you participate in the work on the degree project "Local food network - The value creation and role for producers", it means that SLU processes your personal data. Giving SLU your consent is completely voluntary, but without the processing of your personal data, the research cannot be carried out. This form aims to provide you with all the information needed for you to decide whether you want to give your consent to SLU handling your personal data or not.

You always have the right to withdraw your consent without having to give any reasons for this. SLU is responsible for the processing of your personal data, and you can reach SLU's data protection officer at dataskydd@slu.se or via 018-67 20 90. Your contact person for this work is: Joakim Mattsson, jmma0002@stud.slu.se, [student's phone number] .

We collect the following information about you: First and last name, audio and text from the interview, email address and telephone number.

The purpose of the processing of your personal data is for the SLU student to be able to carry out his degree project according to the correct scientific method and to contribute to research on the trade of locally produced food and producer values. The thesis is published in an open database (Epsilon).

If you want to read more information about how SLU processes personal data and about your rights, you can find that information at www.slu.se/personaldata.

I agree to SLU processing personal data about me in the manner explained in this text, including sensitive data if I provide such data.

Signature Place, date

Name clarification

Appendix 4 – Information GDPR

Appendix 3 is the paper containing information about personal data processing, which was presented to the participant of the study.

Till: Medverkande i masteruppsats vt 2023

Till dig som deltar i ett studentarbete vid SLU med personuppgiftsbehandling
Personuppgiftsansvarig

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet (SLU) är personuppgiftsansvarig för behandlingen av dina personuppgifter. Kontaktperson(-er) för denna behandling är: Joakim Mattsson, jmma002@stud.slu.se. Du kan också kontakta handledaren, Cecilia Mark-Herbert, på mail cecilia.mark-herbert@slu.se

Du kan nå SLUs dataskyddsombud på dataskydd@slu.se. Ändamål

Dina personuppgifter behandlas av SLU för att Joakim Mattsson ska kunna genomföra sitt studentarbete i ekonomi/skogsvetenskap med god vetenskaplig kvalitet. Dina personuppgifter kommer att ersättas av en kod för att det inte ska gå att se vem en personuppgift handlar om. I en inledande kontakt kommer Joakim Mattsson att redogöra för projektet och det av rättigheter som varje intervjuperson har (frivillighet i medverkan och möjlighet att närsomhelst avbryta dialogen) som en del av informerat samtycke, som är forskningspraxis.

Rättslig grund

Behandlingen av dina personuppgifter är nödvändig för att SLUs studenter ska kunna utföra sina studentarbeten med hög vetenskaplig kvalitet. SLUs utbildning är reglerad i lag. Behandlingen av dina personuppgifter är därför nödvändig för att SLU ska kunna utföra en uppgift av allmänt intresse.

Överföring av personuppgifter

Inga personuppgifter kommer att överföras till organisationer eller företag utanför SLU.

Lagring

Dina personuppgifter kommer att lagras till dess studentarbetet är färdigt och betyg har satts på arbetet.

Dina rättigheter

Du har enligt lag rätt att under vissa omständigheter få dina uppgifter raderade, rättade, begränsade och att få tillgång till de personuppgifter som behandlas, samt rätten att invända mot behandlingen. För att använda dig av dina rättigheter, kontakta integritets- och dataskyddsfunktionen med kontaktuppgifterna nedan.

Synpunkter och klagomål

Om du har synpunkter på SLUs personuppgiftsbehandling kan du vända dig till integritets- och dataskyddsfunktionen på dataskydd@slu.se, 018-67 20 90.

Om du inte är nöjd med SLUs svar, kan du vända dig med klagomål på SLUs behandling av dina personuppgifter till Datainspektionen, datainspektionen@datainspektionen.se eller 08-657 61 00.

Du kan läsa mer om datainspektionens tillsyn på <http://www.datainspektionen.se/>

Appendix 4 – translated to English

To: Participation in master's thesis vt 2023

For those of you who participate in a student project at SLU with personal data processing
Personal data manager

The Swedish University of Agriculture (SLU) is responsible for the processing of your personal data. Contact person(s) for this treatment is: Joakim Mattsson, jmma002@stud.slu.se. You can also contact the supervisor, Cecilia Mark-Herbert, at cecilia.mark-herbert@slu.se

You can reach SLU's data protection officer at dataskydd@slu.se. Purpose

Your personal information is processed by SLU so that Joakim Mattsson can carry out his student work in economics/forest science with good scientific quality. Your personal data will be replaced by a code so that it will not be possible to see who a personal data is about. In an initial contact, Joakim Mattsson will explain the project and the rights that each interviewee has (voluntary participation and the possibility to interrupt the dialogue at any time) as part of informed consent, which is research practice.

Legal basis

The processing of your personal data is necessary for SLU's students to be able to carry out their student work with high scientific quality. SLU's education is regulated by law. The processing of your personal data is therefore necessary for SLU to be able to carry out a task of public interest.

Transfer of personal data

No personal data will be transferred to organizations or companies outside SLU.

Storage

Your personal data will be stored until the student work is finished and a grade has been assigned to the work.

Your rights

Under certain circumstances, you have the right to have your data deleted, corrected, restricted and to have access to the personal data being processed, as well as the right to object to the processing. To exercise your rights, contact the privacy and data protection function using the contact details below.

Comments and complaints

If you have comments on SLU's processing of personal data, you can contact the privacy and data protection function at dataskydd@slu.se, 018-67 20 90.

If you are not satisfied with SLU's answer, you can complain about SLU's processing of your personal data to Datainspektionen, datainspektionen@datainspektionen.se or 08-657 61 00.

You can read more about the data inspectorate's supervision at <http://www.datainspektionen.se>

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