



LUND UNIVERSITY

# “Close Enough”

*A Cultural Analysis of Plant-Based Meat Consumption in  
Everyday Food Practices*

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## Abstract in English

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Meat has been one of the common foods for humankind for many millenniums and an important part of food memory in different cultures in relation to everyday food practices. Nowadays, plant-based meat (PBM), as substitution of animal-based meat (ABM), has become popular and common among consumers living in Northern Europe with various motivations including environmental problems, animal welfare, and human health. In this thesis, as a niche product category, PBM is studied from a cultural analytical perspective. The aim of this thesis is to identify and interpret the hidden effects of consumers’ interactions with PBM by focusing on their daily practices including shopping, cooking, and eating. To achieve this aim, these practices are taken into consideration with their performative aspects while analyzing the collected data from various qualitative research methods including interviews, focus groups, shop, cook, eat-alongs, and online ethnographic research (netnography). Additionally, by using the theoretical approaches of semiotics, (embodied) food memories and myths, consumers’ personal practices, narratives, and food rituals are analyzed.

The thesis shows that the naming of PBM products as *meat* make an impact for consumption but also their physical properties evoking consumers’ senses and (embodied) memories and their contributions to develop social interactions, e.g. *commensality*, i.e. providing an opportunity for sharing *meat* by everyone at the table, affect consumers’ PBM preferences in their everyday food practices. In terms of applicability, the findings of this thesis provide culturally valuable consumer for various stakeholders to design, develop, and produce consumer-centered plant-based meat products. Moreover, they raise new questions for further researches in academia while providing a new perspective for the discussion of PBM in politics, society, and industry.

**Keywords:** meat, meat substitutes, animal-based meat, plant-based meat, performance, practice, commensality, narrative theory, semiotics, food memory, ritual, myth, embodied memory

## Abstract in Swedish

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“Tillräckligt Nära”: En kulturell analys av växtbaserade köttprodukter i vardagliga livsmedelspraktiker

Sahra Rosenkvist

Kött har varit ett av de vanligaste livsmedlen för mänskligheten i årtusenden och en viktig del av minnen kopplade till mat i olika kulturer, i förhållande till vardagliga livsmedelspraktiker. Numera har växtbaserat kött (PBM), som substitut för animaliskt kött (ABM), blivit populärt och vanligt bland konsumenterna som bor i Nordeuropa. Detta av olika anledningar, däribland miljöproblem, djurskydd och personlig hälsa. I denna masteruppsats studeras PBM som en nischproduktkategori från ett kulturanalytiskt perspektiv. Syftet är att identifiera och tolka de dolda effekterna av konsumenternas interaktion med PBM genom att fokusera på deras dagliga praktiker, att handla, laga och äta. För att uppnå detta syfte betraktas de performativa aspekterna av nämnda praktiker. Materialet är insamlat med olika kvalitativa forskningsmetoder: intervjuer, fokusgrupper, deltagande observation i form av cook- eat-along, handla, och netnografi. De teoretiska angreppssätten inkluderar semiotik, (förkroppsligade) matminnen, och teorier kring myter och ritualer, vilka används för att analysera konsumenternas personliga berättelser, praktiker och mat-ritualer.

Denna uppsats visar att namnet på PBM-produkter som *kött* påverkar konsumtionen, men också deras fysiska egenskaper som aktiverar konsumenternas sinnen och (förkroppsligade) minnen och bidrar till att utveckla sociala interaktioner, t.ex. *commensality*, d.v.s., ger möjlighet att dela *kött* av alla vid bordet. När det gäller tillämpningar kommer uppsatsens resultat att ge kulturellt baserade insikter som kan möjliggöra för olika intressenter att utforma, utveckla och producera konsumentvänliga växtbaserade köttprodukter. Dessutom lyfter de nya frågor för ytterligare forskning i akademien, samtidigt som den ger nya perspektiv för diskussionen om PBM i politik, samhälle och industri.

**Nyckelord:** kött, köttsubstitut, djurbaserat kött, växtbaserat kött, utföranden, praktiker, commensality, berättande teori, semiotik, matminne, ritual, myt, förkroppsligat minne

## Abstract in Turkish

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“Yeterince Yakın”: Günlük Yemek Pratiklerinde Bitki Bazlı Et Tüketiminin Kültürel Bir Analizi

Sahra Rosenkvist

Et binlerce yıl insanoğlunun ortak gıdalarından biri ve günlük yemek uygulamalarıyla ilgili olarak farklı kültürlerde gıda hafızasının önemli bir parçası olmuştur. Günümüzde hayvan bazlı etin (ABM) ikamesi olan bitki bazlı et (PBM), çevre sorunları, hayvan refahı ve insan sağlığı gibi çeşitli motivasyonlarla Kuzey Avrupa'da yaşayan tüketiciler arasında popüler ve yaygın hale gelmiştir. Bu tezde niş bir ürün kategorisi olarak, PBM kültürel analitik açıdan incelenmiştir. Tezin amacı, alışveriş, yemek pişirme ve yemek yeme gibi günlük uygulamalarına odaklanarak tüketicilerin PBM ile etkileşimlerinin gizli etkilerini tanımlamak ve yorumlamaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için, tezde bu uygulamalar röportajlar, odak grupları, katılımlı alışveriş, yemek pişirme ve yemek yeme gözlemlenmeleri ve çevrimiçi etnografik araştırmalar (netnografi) da dahil olmak üzere farklı nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden toplanan verileri analiz ederken performans yönleriyle birlikte dikkate alındı. Ek olarak, göstergebilim teorik yaklaşımlarını, (somutlaştırılmış) yiyecek hatıralarını ve mitlerini kullanarak, tüketicilerin kişisel uygulamalarını, anlatılarını ve yiyecek ritüellerini analiz eder.

Bu tez, PBM ürünlerinin et olarak adlandırılmasının tüketim için bir etki yaratmasının yanı sıra tüketicilerin duyularını ve (bedenlenmiş) hatıralarını uyandıran fiziksel özellikleri ve sosyal etkileşimleri geliştirmeye katkılarıyla, örneğin toplulukta herkesin eti paylaşması için fırsat sunarak (*commensality*), tüketicilerin PBM tercihlerinin onların günlük yemek pratiklerinde etkilediğini gösteriyor. Uygulanabilirlik açısından, bu tezin bulguları, tüketici merkezli bitki bazlı et ürünleri tasarımları, geliştirmeleri ve üretmeleri için uzun vadeli bir tüketici araştırmasına dayanan kültürel açıdan değerli tüketici görüşleri sağlıyor. Dahası, bu tez PBM'nin politikadaki, toplumdaki ve endüstrideki tartışmalarına yeni bir bakış açısı sunarken, akademi'de ilerideki araştırmalar için yeni sorular ortaya koyuyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** et, et ikameleri, hayvan bazlı et, bitki bazlı et, performans, pratik, commensality, anlatı teorisi, göstergebilim, yiyecek hafızası, ritüel, mit, somutlaştırılmış hafıza

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Lund, 2019-05-10

Sahra Rosenkvist

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## **List of Abbreviation**

ABM	Animal-Based Meat
CA	Cultural Analysis
EP	(the) European Parliament
HMT	Healthy Marketing Team
MA	Meat Alternatives
MACA	Master’s Programme in Applied Cultural Analysis
PBM	Plant-Based Meat

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## 1. Introduction

“We soon realize that we ought to use our own experiences as starting points for the ethnographic work.” (Ehn, 2011, p.54)

In spring 2016, while doing grocery shopping at a supermarket in Sweden, something suddenly took my attention in the frozen food section. I saw a vegetarisk/vegansk signboard at top of a freezer, I looked at products closer. Then, I saw the first item was a *meat* product and I got confused. I turned and asked “isn’t it a sausage, why is it located here?” to my boyfriend, now, my husband. He answered me “yes, but it is vegan”.

As a vegetarian for eight years then, I was shocked because there was a huge meat-looking vegetarian and vegan food selection including schnitzels, burgers, different types of chickens, and even beef strips, which I had never seen before in Turkey. I was concerned about their appearances, I asked two questions to myself: why do companies prefer to shape these products like *meat* which makes no sense for their targeted consumer group including vegans and vegetarians and why should I, as a vegetarian, prefer to eat a meat-looking product, which reminds me dead animal bodies, torture, and blood? I refused to eat them for a while, but afterwards, I changed my mind and started to consume these products because they came to me as funny plant-based alternatives with some protein in for my boring vegetarian diet. Thus, I bought and tried different ones. Even though I did not exactly remember how animal-based meat tasted, some of them felt like almost *real* with certain textures and spices. Some remembered me of dead animals, which disgusted me. However, I have kept eating them by deciding shopping only the ones with less similar animal taste so far and I started to wonder why I consume them and how others indeed feel about them.

My personal interest in plant-based meat (PBM) motivated me to take it as a study subject to my academic field, applied cultural analysis. In September 2018, I partnered up with Healthy Marketing Team (HMT) for a four-month-long project called *Meatless Future* in a work placement course. I researched about consumers’ perspectives on sustainable meat substitutes including plant-based meat and lab-grown meat which does not exist at the market yet. During the fieldwork in the project I gained a lot of cultural insights about plant-based meat consumption which led me to an additional fieldwork with an enhanced theoretical framework and all these finally led me to write this thesis.

## Background

On April 1, 2019 the European Parliament banned the use of *meat terms* for plant-based products under the article 17 of regulation (EU) no 1169/ 2011 (Boffey, 2019). The reason was that these products do not have edible parts of animals, which does not make them *meat*, therefore, naming them as such creates a confusion for consumers. This decision has caused plant-based meat producers to find new names for their plant-based sausages, hamburgers, steaks, and similar in the near future. Many has started to discuss if animal-based meat industry got involved to this and affected to this decision. Regardless of the EP’s decision reasoning like quality control and issues related to agriculture, the most interesting for this thesis how and why consumers have accepted them as *meat* or something else to their everyday lives. But before exploring these questions, what is plant-based meat (PBM)?

Plant-based meat is also known as meat alternatives, meat substitutes, faux meat, meat analogue, and vegan meat. It is approximately designed similar with animal-based meat (ABM) in appearance, taste, texture, smell, and bloodiness. Their sources are plants such as soy, mycoprotein, chickpeas, beans, and oats. They were produced first time in the 60s in a way that of “dry[ing] texturized vegetable protein by cooking extrusion of usually defatted soy meal, soy protein concentrate or wheat gluten”, however, a more advanced technology and “research on the high moisture cooking extrusion process” in the 90s “let to new possibilities for texturing food proteins into distinctive fibrous structures to mimic muscle meat” (Wild et al., 2014, pp.45-49). Moreover, in this decade with the food trends of eating plant-based protein these products have gained importance in the marketplace and people’s diets next to them being animal-cruelty free, environmentally friendly, and healthy comparing to animal-based meat (ABM) including high cholesterol and saturated fat content (Euromonitor International, 2017, Nov, Consumer Health 2018).

Plant-based meat category seems to have a potential to change meat consumption patterns at the marketplace and in food practices in different cultures. According to reports published in 2018, it is already sold 1.5 billion dollars in 2018 (Popper, 2019). Therefore, except for these reasons, culture-wise, the questions of how and why people consume it and how consumers are affected by it in their daily lives in relation to animal-based meat become important.

## Previous Studies

Food is not only nutrition for human body but also an abstract concept which social interactions are created around and all are affected by. It is a way of creating meaning in everyday life with

establishing “relationships and social positions” in societies (Ashley et al., 2004, p. 59) and it is “a medium that has created bonds between people” (Jönsson, 2014, pp. 6-8). With Roland Barthes’ words, food is a system of communication including “a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior” (Barthes, 2013, p.24). Food and taste are social status markers, which are constituted in relation to a person’s economic and cultural capital. Moreover, the consumption of food is, with Pierre Bourdieu’s words, “a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code” (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 2-3). However, food is not only social and cultural, but also individual, a food preference can display an individual’s lifestyle and sociocultural values (Douglas, 1975). Food as a “highly condensed social fact” which “is fundamental, fun, frightening, and far-reaching” (Appadurai and Rozin as cited in Belasco, 2008, pp. 2-3). In relation to these aspects, *meat* (consumption) have been studied with various contexts in academia, here, I will briefly mention about some for framing this thesis and reflecting upon the current discussion of plant-based meat in relation it.

#### *Animal and Plant-Based Meat in Academia*

In cultural studies, social anthropologist Nick Fiddes (1991) examines the consumption of meat to understand why it is important, why people have them as a part of their diets, and how its consumption related to culture, environmental issues, and ethics. He approaches *meat* as a natural symbol, showing supremacy of humankind on nature, particularly on animals (p.2). He elaborates its cultural dimensions and explains that the consumption of meat is closely attached to creating hierarchy and status in food share (p.5), becoming a part of festivity in collective food rituals such as roasting ceremonies, (p.16), and of course historical connotations and values of hunting (p.20). Food historian Warren Belasco (2008) approaches *meat* as “a badge of success, health and power, especially for men”, as “a compact package of nutrients” regarding, as a hazardous food for human health, animal, and environment welfare. He finalizes his analysis with saying: “[m]eat has a central place in the modern diet because it is an emblem of success and power (identity), and it is relatively convenient to cook and consume and its “consequences” are equally monumental” (pp.11-13). Lupton (1996) sees meat a symbol of *life, discordance, family ties, passions, and sacred powers* (p.28). Similarly, Douglas (1975) draws attention on meat in relation to religions and rituals by exemplifying Jewish food practices. But she also finds meat as an important food component of an ideal meal, it takes place as protein sourced from animals next to cereals and vegetables on the plate (p.225). Moreover, Orlove (1994) studies meat in terms of providing sociality, vitality, securing

hierarchy, and identity-making in nineteenth century Chile. Lastly, there are also scholars like Carol Adams (1990) studying meat with a gender and sexuality perspective, which will be further discussed below.

When it comes to plant-based meat, unfortunately, there is not much research done from a cultural perspective, at least not in comparison with other fields of food studies, such as food science and technology (Asgar et al., 2010), nutrition and diet studies (Pawlak et al., 2010), as sustainable food choices in food studies (Boer et al., 2007). Additionally, there are some researches of PBM related to marketing and advertising of them such as replacement of animal meat with them (Hoek et al., 2011a & Schösler et al., 2012) and consumer categorization of them (Hoek et al., 2011b) in consumer studies, meat substitutes in relation to vegetarianism in marketing and advertising (Arora et al., 2017 & Shprintzen, 2012), and consumption of them with health benefits in food science and technology (Sadler, 2004). In relation to cultural studies there are articles written about it in the fields of philosophy and gender studies which I will mention in the next section.

#### *(Plant-Based) Meat in Gender Studies*

Plant-based meat is both denotative and connotative at the same time. It is denotative because it is still some type of meat sourced from plants, but also, it is connotative with the cultural meanings of ABM as mentioned above. For instance, for some researches, it still refers to masculinity, animal slaughter, blood and hierarchy, wealth, festivity, and supremacy over animals, with being opposite to plants known as a type of bloodless food for women and as a symbol of fertility. In relation to meat's gender connotations and animal slaughter Adams (1990) explains how animal flesh consumption is related to animal, women, and queer rights, how eating *a piece of animal flesh* is used for securing masculine subject and its hegemonic practices over *the Other* subject(s). Relatedly, Sinclair (2016) brings a similar perspective in plant-based meat (eating) and she says “I have a bunch that plant-based meats have been helpful in preserving intelligibility, securing subjecthood, and appealing to ‘meat’ eaters precisely because they still refer to the flesh of edible bodies in much the same way “real” meat does, and serve a similar function in the symbolic domain” (p.230). She develops her argument around the term of *absent referent* developed by Adams (1990) and she explains that in meat-eating there is an *absent referent*, which is dead, suffered animal, in the process of becoming dead animal to meat itself, which helps *modern* human to ignore the production story but only focus of the product itself [as a capitalized object] (p. 234-235). When it comes to plant-based

meat, she gives chickenless chicken as an example and says: “chicken as-living-being and chicken-as-consumable product remain semantically interchangeable, even if the latter becomes plant” (p.236).

Derrida says about a substitution object, it may “become a sign of the lack, the mark of an emptiness” (Derrida, as cited in Falk, 1994, p.108). Therefore, plant-based meat is either as a replacement or substitution regarding with a utility function in the food or a hedonistic object of satisfying desires for ABM or as a new product, it will never *become* an ABM and it will probably never fully fill its place, but instead it will be another type of meat sourced from plants to replace ABM. When this is taken into consideration with Adams and Sinclair, it is possible to say that plant-based meat might occur as a *rebel* to the masculine meat consumption of ABM. As the feminine and *the Other*, it destroys this accustomed masculinity by imitating it. Thus, *meat* which has started to be produced by plants are not chained to the masculine animal exploitation anymore. It becomes a *liberated* object just as women’s starting to wear trousers in the 1920s, just as showing that women *can* wear trousers as men, just *meat* can be *feminine* with its plant resources. In this sense, as sexualized objects, trousers, how women wear trousers but not become men, eating plant-based meat does not make a consumer performing masculinity and supporting the exploitation of animals as long as we can discriminate *animal-based* and *plant-based meat* as I do in this thesis. Therefore, based on this, as a feminist-vegetarian researcher, I do not see any ethical reason not to research about it with bringing an applied cultural analytical perspective with an ethnographic fieldwork for the first time in academia, to understand how these products are shopped, cooked, and eaten by consumers. This is what I do in this thesis, the one which has never been done previously.

## **The Research Aim and Questions**

With this thesis I want to contribute to food and cultural studies by researching plant-based meat with a cultural analytical framework. By doing so, I would like to provide cultural insights of plant-based meat to help various stakeholders to design, develop, and produce better products. Additionally, regarding the EP’s recent decision about naming PBM not as *meat*, mentioned in the background, I would like to bring a new cultural perspective to this discussion. To be able to achieve these, *the aim of this thesis is to identify and understand the effects of consumers’ interactions with PBM in daily performative food practices of shopping, cooking, and eating*. In relation to the aim the research questions which have been guiding the process are:



- Why, when, where, and how do people consume plant-based meat products?
- What affects consumers’ interactions with them during shopping, cooking, and eating performative practices in relation to animal-based meat?
- What are the drivers or obstacles when it comes to the consumption of them in relation to animal-based meat?
- What role do food memories take in the consumption of them in relation to animal-based meat?

## **Disposition**

To start to study PBM and answer the research questions, methods and materials will be provided with the data collection strategies in the next chapter. After this, theoretical framework will be explained to present the background of upcoming discussions located in analysis chapters. Furthermore, the analysis is divided into three chapters around the everyday *performative* practices of shopping, cooking, and eating PBM respectively. In the beginning of each chapter, how these practices can be taken into consideration with their performative aspects will be showed and then the materials will be analyzed with theories and related food concepts primarily to answer research questions and eventually to succeed the research aim. Finally, there will be a conclusion chapter including a short summary of the thesis, a concluding discussion, and a section explaining the applicability of findings.

## **2. Methods and Materials**

The major data which will be examined in this thesis comes from a consumer research project called *Meatless Future*. The project was designed and conducted by me as part of MACA work placement course at Lund University in autumn 2018 with a collaboration of HMT. In this project I was project manager and researcher, investigating consumers’ perspectives on plant-based meat (PBM) products and lab-grown meat.

Due to the partially different aims of the previous project and this thesis, I conducted a small fieldwork including a short-term netnography on the Internet and two participant observations structured as shop, cook, and eat-alongs, lasting three to four hours per each with two different informants living in Sweden. This helped me to collect more material in the field to fill information gaps in my data to enhance both prospective analysis and findings. On the other

hand, I excluded the data about lab-grown meat in materials because of it being irrelevant to the research focus of this thesis.

### Selection of Informants

At the beginning of *Meatless Future* with a common agreement of the company and me the research fields were determined as Sweden and Denmark. These countries have highly developed policies for solving environmental issues and make their residents live in a more sustainable way. Thus, residents do not only regard transportation or industries when it comes to sustainability but also, they consider their food, specifically ABM, consumption burdens to the environment. Since most of these consumers think that ABM production is harmful for sustainability and try to reduce meat consumption while looking for new products helping them to succeed this purpose. When this is the case, researching plant-based meat products in these countries became important in terms of collecting comprehensive data and make analysis of it.

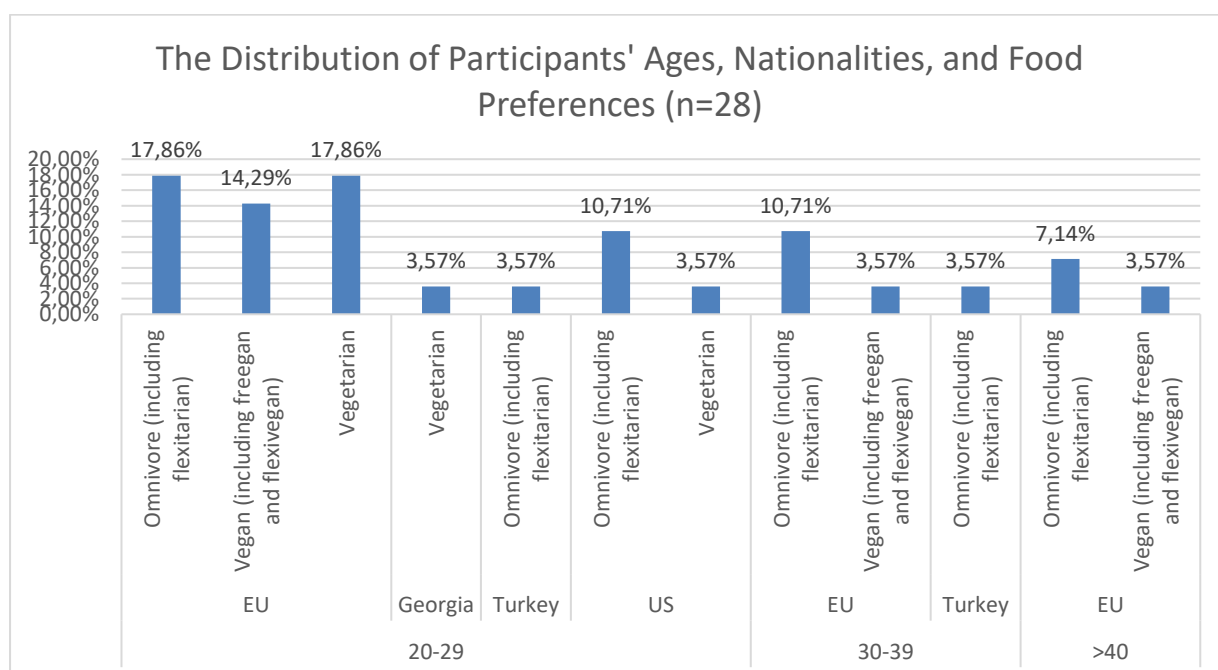
Købe mindre kød (Shopping less meat)	Det gør jeg allerede i dag (I already do that today) (%)	Forventer jeg at gøre i fremtiden (I expect to do this in the future) (%)	Har jeg ingen planer om at gøre (I do not have plans to do) (%)	Ved ikke/ikke relevant (I do not know/not relevant for me) (%)
<b>2012</b>	26,3	9,3	56,3	8,1
<b>2015</b>	21,2	9,7	59,5	9,6
<b>2018</b>	31,7	16,6	43,2	8,5

Figure 1. Data in table comes from “Coops Grønne Forbrugerindex 2012, 2015, and 2018” in the data base Coops mad-O-meter, by Coop Analyse, 2018 (<http://madometer.dk/#/consumerindex/>)

There were four reasons to focus these fields for the project. Firstly, PBM products are common and known by consumers living in Sweden and Denmark because there are lots of these products at supermarkets. Secondly, there are many PBM producer companies that are located in these countries. Relatedly, one report says “Sweden has shown by far the biggest improvements in the rankings in a variety of products, on the back of favourable legislation, innovative local brands, rising availability and the affordability of plant-based options” (Euromonitor, 2017, Mar). Thirdly, while some reports say 63 percent of consumers in Sweden have positive attitudes towards vegetarian food (Orkla, 2018) and on daily basis 21 percent eat vegetarian meals (Euromonitor, 2017, Nov, Ready Meals in Sweden). In Denmark the attitudes of consumers about buying less ABM has critically changed from 2012 to 2018. According to a supermarket research the percentage of consumers who did not have any plan to shop less

ABM was 56,3 percent in 2012, while it was 43,2 percent in 2018 (Coop Analyse, 2018). Additionally, the percentage of consumers who already shopped less ABM was 26,3 in 2012, while it was 31,7 percent in 2018 (see *Figure 1*). Lastly, since both the partner company and I are based in Southern Sweden, the research fields were also determined by the criteria of short-time transportation between these countries for physical fieldwork.

Different participants including both males and females, Swedish, Danish, and international participants who reside in one of these countries for a period of time were recruited to have multiple voices in the research. Including international participants did not create any problem for the research in terms of the given four reasons. Moreover, these participants, usually with a two years residence permit, are consumers in these countries for a while. Furthermore, since PBM is an international phenomenon and since this research is to understand how and why people interact with plant-based meat in different practices, having international voices were even a plus to compare their experiences. Lastly, I included international informants who were more accessible within my academic network, which was really helpful to accelerate the project flow and writing this thesis on time.



*Figure 2.* The Distribution of Participants’ Ages, Nationalities, and Food Preferences. \*The terms of flexiterians as “people eating mostly vegetarian but occasionally eat ABM”, freegans as “vegans who only eat ABM if it is about being wasted”, and flexivegans as “vegan who flexes their diets with animal-based milk products in everyday occasions but rarely eats fish” were referred.

All participants including the last two shop, cook, and eat-along participants, were recruited regarding some criteria. The ages of the twenty-eight participants with different nationalities and diets were from 24 to 51 at the time of data collection (see *Figure 2*). As seen, the majority’s

age was between 20 and 29. All the informants were selected from urban areas based on the marketing company's request. The reason was given as that urban consumers who are between 20 and 35 are defined as *lifestyle consumers* who do not shop based on their needs but their desires and personal beliefs. Moreover, they are open-minded to try new products and bond with different brands. Also, they probably access PBM easier than others living countryside, therefore, they are more familiar with these products, which this brings us to the following criteria. Before selecting informants, it was asked if they know about plant-based meat and if they tasted any. This was very crucial criteria to have a comprehensive fieldwork to analyze how they have experienced and positioned these products in their lives. Lastly, they were recruited with different diets because I did not want to reduce these products for people with vegan and vegetarian diets like some other researches unfortunately did in their researches.

### **Multiple Ethnographic Research Methods**

Ethnography is a daily practice to understand our complicated world, it is not possible to say where it begins and ends (Wilk, 2011, p.15-18). As “an inventive conversational practice” ethnography provides an “ongoing and principally unending dialogue between different people and perspectives, as they encounter one another across time and space” (Hasturp, 2014, p.49). Thus, it is a methodology naturally “involving multiple data sources and sustained involvement in contexts of production, enables the researcher to explore and track the dynamic and complex situated meanings and practices” (Lillis, 2008, p.355). In this research, as parts of ethnographic methodology, fourteen semi-structured interviews, three focus groups with three for the first, four for the second and five participants for the last focus group, and differently from the project, two additional short-term participant observations structured as shop, cook and eat-alongs, netnography (online ethnography) were included. With using multiple methods, I aimed two things: enhancing the research with providing comparative knowledge-making process and the data coming from it and “advance[ing] understanding” based on “multi-method” and “multi-theoretical approaches” (Williams as cited in Enevold & Hagström, 2009, p.13). Additionally, using multiple methods helped me to fill the information gaps and contributed to achieving my research aim through providing rich data to answer my research questions.

#### *Interviews and Focus Groups*

“Letting them [consumers] to speak for themselves gives us cultural data, namely the overt beliefs and justifications behind practices” says Parkin (1996, xviii). To trace people's

consumption motivations of PBM with its cultural dimensions including practices, beliefs, body experiences, and memories, fourteen interviews were analyzed. In these interviews consumers’ personal narratives including both cultural and personal aspects of PBM consumption in relation to ABM were collected in *friendly* settings. On the other hand, three focus groups were done, two in Lund where I study and one in Copenhagen to observe how consumers explain their interactions with PBM in social gatherings and how they affect each other’s’ opinions in social settings. These focus groups were arranged as open ending discussion meetings with regarding participants’ comforts. Moreover, one focus group included a small tasting experiment so that the participants could reflect upon taste, texture, smell, and appearance of different products in their consumption moments.

In all focus groups, I was the only person as a researcher moderating the discussions, which I think this provided a *less formal* discussion setting for collecting data effectively. However, there was one shortcoming I faced with. Out of my intention, Focus Group 2 consisted of more vegan and vegetarian participants. In such an environment, I was aware that regarding the dynamics of focus group method, the majority would affect others’ opinions in the discussion (Sunderland & Denny, 2007, p.176). However, nothing caught my attention about this during the session.

### *Shop, Cook, and Eat-Alongs*

Anthropologist Tim Ingold (2014) names participant observation as “observation from the inside”. According to him, while observing means “watch[ing] what is going on around and about and of course to listen and feel as well”, participating means “do[ing] so from within the persons and things that capture your attention” (p.387). As a hybrid form of participant observation and interviewing, in a go-along a researcher follows an informant in their natural settings such as at supermarkets and ask questions and do observations about the informant’s practicing and interacting meanwhile (Kusenbach, 2003, p.463). Since this research examines different cultural practices including shopping, cooking, and eating, both participant observation and go-along were combined in the fieldwork. I did *participant* shop, cook and



Figure 3. A photo from cook-along with Mathilda, Malmö. February 12, 2019

eat-alongs while following my participants and interacting with them at supermarkets, their kitchens, and their tables. By doing so, I had an opportunity to observe them and get to know their personal narratives and experiences of PBM in these three different interactions moments, in other words, with sociologist Kusenbach’s (2003) words, when they are *in situ* (p.463). For instance, differently from other methods, these *participant* alongs helped me to observe the sensory experiences of my participants while they were cooking PBM. Moreover, I dug deep into their previous sensory memories and bodily experiences of ABM while they were interacting with PBM during three to four hours of sessions. On the other hand, there was a problem with this method, as an active researcher in the field, I could not take notes instead I asked my participants to record their videos for transcribing the data later to make analysis of.

### *Netnography*

The Internet is an important field, with Kozinet’s words, it is more natural and less disturbing the others while collecting data because it provides “a window into the cultural realities of consumer groups as they live their activities” (as cited in Rokka, 2010, p.383). It is a place where people share their feelings and beliefs with others and getting influenced by others’, which all constitute *the transnational online community* (Davies, 2008, p. 152 & Rokka, 2010). Netnography basically means studying people online through adapting ethnographic methods and utilize them to collect written, visual, and oral data on online platforms such as websites, forums, blogs, and other social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook. For this research I collected some data how people in online communities share their experiences with plant-based meat and how some PBM producer companies explain their reasoning for their products in relation to ABM. While doing this I considered collecting the data which is *publicly* shared and accessible (Davies, 2008, p. 167). Thus, like Davies (2008) says, they were treated and analyzed as *any other public document* in this thesis. I did not collect material from my online network instead I engaged with the Internet and online communities as an independent researcher, I did not get involved but observed the unknown others. Moreover, I usually utilized online data when the *offline* data did not respond to my questions. However, this method may create problems in researches in terms of *trustability* of data and the unknown, even *fake* users. There is unfortunately not a long-term solution for this, however, to preserve data quality materials in this research, I collected data on Reddit, Instagram, and PBM producers’ websites that I have previously experienced with during the online fieldwork.

### *Cultural Analysis as an Analyzing Tool*

*Cultural analysis* (CA) is an interdisciplinary analytical tool to study everyday life, cultural reflections, representations, and practices through various ethnographic materials consisting of a *composition* of layered texts, images, verbal narratives, and other cultural materials in fieldwork (O’Dell & Willim, 2011, pp. 26-39). According to cultural theorist Mieke Bal, it does not study culture itself, but does study “various objects gleaned from cultural world for closer scrutiny are analyzed in view of their existence in culture” (as cited in Willim, 2018, p.80). To study plant-based meat in relation to animal-based one in consumers’ everyday food practices, I used cultural analysis for both collecting my material strategically and analyze them to understand how this niche meat affects their everyday food practices. During my ethnographic fieldwork I generated my data instead of just collecting them by focusing on consumers’ practices and their narratives, by following consumption motivations regarding cultural backgrounds like beliefs, and practices. Since the beginning of the fieldwork cultural analysis helped me firstly, to identify *taken-for-granted* details of PBM consumption to generate my comprehensive data and then, to make analysis of by examining these *cultural relations* within a theoretical framework which will be mentioned in the next chapter.

### **Ethical Considerations and Self-Reflexivity**

“The first task is to think through the proposed project and determine if it is harmful to the individuals who are the subjects of the study” says Jordan (2003, p.55). Since my research subject has commercially valued, before starting my project I needed to think twice how to study it. Especially collaborating with a food marketing agency company concerned me and led me to make a risk assessment and adjust the research appropriately regarding research ethics. I asked myself, how could I harm others, particularly consumers, even myself as a consumer with my study? What would I do if the results cause undesired results in marketing setting?

Davies (2008) emphasize the importance to informing participants to help them to make informed decision whether they want to participate or not, moreover, she says consent is a *continuous process* between a researcher and a participant during the research (p.56). Like Davies, for Jordan (2003) informed consent is a sensitive issue, which is why this consent must have been gotten from informants even before starting the research (p.55). Relatedly, as a professional in the field, I always obtained my participants’ informed consents verbally during the fieldwork. Even though Swedish Research Council (2017) points written consent as the

ideal way of getting participants’ consents (p.26), I did not prefer to get written consents since it creates a very structured fieldwork and discomfort especially for the participants. Since I had my participants from my academic and social network, there was already trust between my participants and me and they were already familiar with research consents, which is why I thought having verbal consents from them would be enough.

I explained why, how, with whom I worked with for the project and how their contributions will be used for. For my project, it was important to emphasize that I collaborated with a marketing agency company which will receive some commercially-valued deliverables eventually. Also, I mentioned that I will use the data obtained from them for an academic purpose, for my thesis, therefore, I asked all participants’ consents including the last two shop, cook, and eat-along participants for this thesis. I stated whenever they feel uncomfortable, they would share with me or end the sessions and withdraw from the research. For the case of recording their voices, photos, and videos I got their verbal consent beforehand and promised for their privacy. To use visuals in the thesis, I asked them and got permission in advance.

“[Confidentiality] overlaps with considerations of privacy and assurance of anonymity” (Sieber, as cited in Davies, 2008, p. 59). Therefore, “[a]nonymizing or *deidentifying* involves eliminating the connection between samples or questionnaire answers and a certain individual, so that neither unauthorized persons nor the research group can re-establish it; no one should therefore be able to combine a certain piece of information with specific person’s identity” (Swedish Research Council, 2017, p.40). Relatedly, in the research participants are anonymized with changing their names to protect them from any possible harm. Moreover, the informant contacts and real names are kept in my personal computer and accessed only by me.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

One of the challenges of cultural analysts is to find a way to translate and analyze their data to find out taken-for-granted details (Fischer, 2007, p.43). In this sense, theory opens a door to develop point of views, translating and analyzing empirical data, and eventually reach findings.

#### **Language, Narrative, and Myth**

“Language arises from man’s need to express himself, to objectify himself.”

(Bakhtin, 1986, p.67)



Language is active and in constant transition. Humans, as language utilizers, affect the evolution of language-based communication and be affected by it through conveying sentences involving messages, expressions, and meaning in speeches. Bakhtin (1986) says, speech and also language are evolved and developed by the interaction of different individuals, thus, “[o]ur speech [...] is filled by others’ words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of “our-own-ness,” varying degrees of awareness and detachment. In daily life, we “assimilate, rework and re-accentuate” these *interindividual* words of others including their own expressions and tone in our own way in different contexts regarding personal preferences (pp. 88-89 & 121-122). Adopting such a language approach will help to understand how plant-based meat is talked about, perceived, and understood among consumers within both personal and common bases through them using language. All these provide insights about the effects of consumer interaction with PBM in daily food practices. In this section, *meat* will be introduced as an *interpersonal* but semiotically and semantically interchangeable word.

### *Semiotics of Meat*

What makes meat *meat* indeed? Does its being sourced from animals make meat or does its different visual forms with particular tastes such as burgers, sausages, chicken breasts, beefs make what it is? Wolpa (2016) says “meat without animals is an oxymoron only insofar as it made that way by our own dominant ideologies”, moreover, “[c]hanging the physical substance of what meat is made from is seemingly less difficult than changing the semiotic stability of meat as myth” (p.90). He gives Magritte’s *The Treachery of Images* (1929) as an example of oxymoron and semiotic deconstruction in relation to meat without animals (see *Figure 4*).



Figure 4. “The Treachery of Images” by R. Magritte, 1929. (<https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/the-treachery-of-images-this-is-not-a-pipe-1948>). In the public domain.

Additionally, regarding the painter’s statement, “Ceci n’est pas une pipe [This is not a pipe]” in the painting, he mentions such an approach to pipe was challenging for this period, it arose questions as “what is it then?”. “This is a painting of a pipe”, “...a statement about art”, “... a symbol of patriarchy”, “...this is the idea of a pipe, before the pipe” (p.90). Wolpa interprets this pipe with Pierce’s triad and says “...we engage the visual representation of the pipe, the linguistic signifier for the pipe, the meaning of the pipe, the pipe itself, and the composite of all these forming the sign”. In this case, if this pipe sign in the painting is a(n) (ideal) *cultural*

construct of a pipe with its connotations, therefore, it is a *symbol* which means there is no direct resemblance of the sign (*signifier*) and object (*signified*) in Peirce’s semiotics. Thus, how can one know this pipe is *an ideal pipe* or regarding the thesis subject, *an ideal meat*?

He mentions the second painting called *The Two Mysteries* (1966) by Magritte, emphasizing the construction of a representation of the previous pipe and relatedly the concept of (ideal)

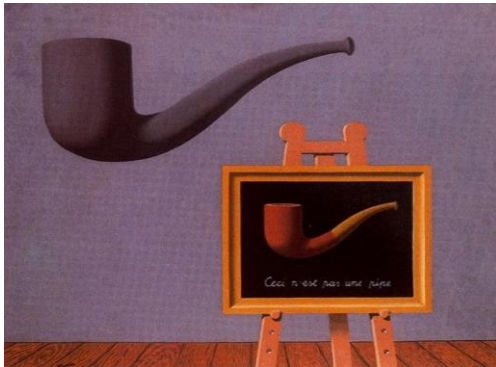


Figure 5. “The Two Mysteries”, by R. Magritte, 1966 <https://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/the-two-mysteries-1966>. In the public domain.

*pipeness* (see Figure 5). From this, he arrives to the point that the symbols constructed through the production of meaning within cultural settings (with Pierce’s words, *semiosis*), these symbols are not totally empty, but they are “the shadows of the ideal” [of a pipe]. And then he asks “what if the concept of *meatness* does not look like animal flesh in its ideal? What if our representation of meat has been misguided?” (p.90).

Such an approach makes the term of the plant-based meat possible with different shapes than ABM’s to talk about and to make consumer analysis of with maintaining the usage of the term of *meat*. But, at the same time, producer companies of PBM keep producing them similar to animal-based meat (ABM), which is a term that I use in this thesis to emphasize the different resources of these *meats*, with creating similar taste and chewiness and even sometimes bloodiness to some extent (see Figure 6). This shows that PBM has still, with Hacking’s words



Figure 6. A bloody vegobacon

(1999), a *precondition* of animal-based meat(ness) because of it bringing sensual, cultural, and linguistic connotations of accustomed ABM. Moreover, in relation to Baudrillard’s *simulacra*, meaning copies reflecting a basic reality of an object without its originals (as cited in Chandler, 2002, pp.80-81), these properties cause PBM occur as a *simulacrum* of ABM. However, PBM becomes an *iconic simulacrum* just like the pipe in Figure 5 because it physically resembles ABM with its package and shape but it is indeed not animal-based, but it is still a type of *meat* and it mostly functions as ABM.

To understand what happens when this niche plant-based meat enters to everyday food practices, it is important to consult personal narratives of consumers. Narratives are where the assimilated, reworked, and re-accentuated language occur. The narrative turn in the humanities disclosed the “basic cultural functions of narrative” as “the construction of meaningful temporal processes in both collective and individual levels in different frames such as literary, mythical, or historical”. Therefore, narrative “appears as a basic cultural tool used to make sense of experience” (Herman et al., 2008, p.89). This shows that narratives are not only in material dimension of culture-making process, but also inherently social and mental ones which includes “collective values, concepts of identity, and cognitive schemata” (p.90).

Relatedly, myth as a part of both material and mental dimensions of culture-making is in direct relation with narratives since the structure of myths are in the form of narratives. According to Strauss, *myths* are the narratives helping people to make sense of the world where they live, they are the messages from ancestors about humankind and the relations with the nature. He gives the example of the myth of domestic fireside mediating people “from nature to culture and from animality to humanity via the transition from the raw to the cooked” (as cited in Chandler, 2002, p.11). Therefore, in this thesis, consumer narratives will be analyzed in the form of quotations. They will be taken into consideration with their mythical aspects while sometimes, with Bakhtin’s (1986) words, *interindividual* aspects, which convey the effects of consumers’ PBM interactions and consumption.

### **Practices, Performances, and Rituals**

Culture is the accumulation of standardized values of societies which affects individual experiences (Douglas, 2002, p.48). It makes individuals sustaining their traditions, which include all details how they celebrate and ritualize certain occasions, how they remember them via memories, comprehending meaning of their everyday lives in their communities (Littlejohn et al., 2009, p.2). (Everyday) practices, where peoples’ engaging with their cultures occurs, constitute the ways of *doing things* through their bodies in a routinized way, where “objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (Reckwitz as cited in Warde, 2005, p.135). PBM will be studied within three everyday practices which are shopping, cooking, and eating, in which their *cultural engagements* about food, particularly, (*plant-based*) *meat* occurs. Doing so will indicate consumers’ *doing things* with PBM, which will be helpful to provide insights about the effects of consumers’ interactions with PBM.

Anthropologist and sociologist Erving Goffman (1990) takes the term of *performance* from dramaturgy and performances and applies to everyday life. In his book he describes *performance* as “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (p.32). According to him, there should be a setting to perform including furniture, décor, and other background items helping to bringing out a performance (p.32). As another type of setting, personal front is also a crucial to perform and it includes performer’s clothing, sex, age, gender, speech patterns, facial expressions, bodily gestures and similar (p.34).

Performance is an act of doing and behaving in a *certain* way, in food context, it is to “behave appropriately in relation to food at any point in its production, consumption, and disposals” (Beasley, 2007, p.168). A human behavior is *performative* when telling a story or remembering the past through communication, relatedly, a cultural performance is “a process of throwing off and pulling in cultural forms centered in conflict and dynamic to the total sensual experience of a culture” (Littlejohn et al., 2009, p.2). Based on all mentioned above, it is possible to say that there are performative elements in the practices of shopping, cooking, and eating PBM. Therefore, in the analysis, I will examine them as *performative practices* so that I can find out what becomes important when consumers engage with PBM in these daily food practices which sometimes might include *food rituals*.

Rituals can be defined as “*thoughtless action[s]*” which are “routinized, habitual, obsessive, or mimetic ...” (Bell, 2009, p.19). According to sociologist Edward Shils, rituals and beliefs are intertwined but may be separable since while one can believe, she may not get involved into rituals (p.19). As a part of belief, Strauss associates rituals with myths, he mentions about *rituals* for living myths for thinking. Durkheim refers to rituals as “the means by which collective beliefs and ideals are simultaneously generated, experienced and affirmed as real by the community” making “individuals’ perception and behavior are socially appropriated and conditioned” (as cited in Bell, 2009, p.20). Therefore, I will use *ritual theory* regarding its collective characteristics and analyze food shares, particularly *meat-eating*, as *rituals* in the analysis to get knowledge about the social dimensions of eating plant-based meat while consumers interacting PBM with others.

## Memory

“We remember when some new memory helps us to piece together small, scattered, and indistinct bits of the past.” (Mary Douglas, as cited in Sutton, 2001, p.9)

Psychiatrist and philosopher Thomas Fuchs (2012) approaches *memory* from a phenomenological point of view. According to him, memory is not just the recollection of the *past* but also “the acquired dispositions, skills, and habits that implicitly influence one’s present experience and behavior” (p.9). Moreover, Fuchs subjectifies human as the *experiencer* of situations, moments, and eventually *memories* and he uses the term of *body memory*, which he defines sensations and situations as *memory cores* which “under suitable circumstances, can release their enclosed memories” (p.19).

Anthropologist David Sutton (2006) asks “[h]ow might we think of ordinary food preparation as a site that brings together skilled practice, the senses, and memory?” (p. 87). He particularly gives importance on food and food practices in relation to memory and remembrance of memory. For instance, he observes and analyzes the cooking styles of locals in his studies in Greece (Sutton, 2001; 2006 & Hernandez& Sutton, 2003). He refers to food as both *memory carriers* and *producers* at the same time: “[f]ood is equally important in creating prospective memories, that is, in orienting people toward future memories that will be created in the consumption of food” (Sutton, 2001, p.28).

Based on these given above, it is beneficial to study plant-based meat, as a novel meat, in terms of memory since the concept of it is *interrelated* with ABM which all people have memories and experiences of. By doing so, the theory of memory will contribute to understand how human bodies’ experiences with PBM are affected by the memories of consumption of ABM in their everyday food practices. Therefore, in relation to *body memory* and *memory cores* such as sensations including smell, taste, and appearance, through the thesis, I will use *embodied memories* produced and stored via senses of individuals in their bodies for interpreting and analyzing the ethnographic empirical data in the following chapters.

## **PBM Enters Everyday Performative Food Practices**

The journey of domestic food consumption starts with buying food, continues with processing, i.e. cooking it and ending with, like Falk (1994) says, accepting [the prepared] food to the body through mouth and sensory and intellectual taste. In each stage, several practices like expressing self-identity, attaching social groups, exhibiting social distinction and many more occur with the food engagement (Warde, 2014). In the following sections, I will analyze consumer interactions with plant-based meats in their everyday food practices which are shopping at supermarket, cooking in kitchen, and eating at table respectively, which all are *performatively* different but also interrelated practices. While doing this, I will use the given

theoretical framework as well as some additional food-related concepts to answer my research questions and succeed my research aim eventually.

## 4. Shopping

*She walks to vegetables section and starts to put some mushroom and a small piece of ginger. She looks at lime's price and walks through different aisles. She seems very confident to find her way at the supermarket. I do not stop myself and ask: “How do you find your way at the market?” She answers: “I usually shop here, it is kinda confusing but they have these boards. Here, I can show you the vegetarians, there are normal dairy products but on the other side vegan products, you know cheese, meat...” (Shop-Along with Mathilda, February 12, 2019)*

A supermarket is the stage where *performative* shopping occurs. They are the public places where consumers access food and their other needs. At supermarkets, shopping is accepted and expected as an everyday practice as the occasion of supermarkets allows consumers to perform shopping. There, one of the main tasks of shoppers is to get the most convenient food items. To be able to do this, they need to perform some additional acts. For instance, since these packaged products have a lot of information on them, the shoppers need to have interpretive skills to read labels, understand ingredients, compare the values of various products regarding other factors with each other, and decide to get the best of them over the others.



Figure 7. A photo of Ayla's shopping basket from shop-along, Malmö. February 28, 2019

At supermarkets, consumers are used to (un)consciously regard the *repertoire* of these settings. Sometimes, they prepare a shopping list including their needs beforehand like Ayla and they use it as a part of performative shopping repertoire: “Let me check my shopping list. We go to first, hmm, we have three things to get, paprika, vegobullar, and spaghetti, whichever comes first we will get it” (she starts to check signboards). At supermarkets there are baskets or carts to make shoppers easily carry the products that they get. Moreover, there are organized aisles with signboards showing product sections, which make them comfortable while way-finding at the supermarket. Additionally, there are performance helpers e.g. supermarket workers helping customers to find their ways, giving information about products, keeping shelves tidied

up, and completing customers’ food shopping journeys with getting payments from them at cashiers.

But, how do consumers decide to buy, for instance, a plant-based sausage product among many others? Sensing, knowing, remembering, comparing, and trusting products and companies are crucial to complete a shopping. All these can be experienced and performed in different ways by consumers regarding collective beliefs, myths, and ideals existing in different cultures. Therefore, “[b]y choosing certain products over others [they] are exercising [their] judgement of taste, through which [they] articulate [their] sense of social status, background and cultural identity” (Paterson, 2018, p.41). Based on these, in this chapter, I will mention two main plant-based meat shopping patterns which are called as *positional* and *intentional*. While the former is more related to shopping with collective ideologies and different *political views* e.g. animal and environmental activism, the second will be related to more personal intentions e.g. the taste of it, its replaceability instead of ABM, and similar. Lastly, I will explain a *recommendation network* for plant-based meat, which affects consumers’ shopping a particular product.

### **Positional Shopping**

“When he buys an item of food, consumes it, or serves it, modern man does not manipulate a simple object in a purely transitive fashion; this item of food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies.”

(Roland Barthes, as cited in Martschukat & Simon, 2017, p.57)

“For me, first, I started to cutting out red meat because of environmental reasons, my journey of becoming a vegan is quite factual” says Oscar (Focus Group 2). Like him many become vegetarian and vegan because of the serious environmental burden of animal-based meat production mentioned in the introduction, when this is the case, ABM becomes a political issue in food shopping. For Paterson (2018) some goods like champagne and luxury cars are positional goods which indicate social position (p.42-43). Moreover, he says that positional goods are not necessarily only related to wealth level of consumers but also different *lifestyles*, which means “the way[s] that the perception of social world is structured for the individual, a system of dispositions or acquired ways of thinking, perceiving, and acting” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.49). Relatedly, Köstlin (2013) explains “[d]ifferent values attached to culinary heritage, and attitudes towards food and the world in general, as a form of social and cultural responsibility, are under discussion in these times”, therefore, the current food products are filtered by

consumers with them being *good* or *bad* in terms of the environment, animal welfare, and human health (p.33).

As mentioned in methodology section, I included informants with different diets including omnivores, vegans, and vegetarians. Almost all stated that animal-based meat is a less sustainable food compared to plant-based one. Some explained that ABM is bad for the environment in comparison with PBM without giving how, as an *interindividual collective myth*; while some reflected on *scientifically proved* facts like omnivore Birgitta: “Plant-based meat is more sustainable in regard to environmental aspects, so it creates less methane gas that cattle produce, and it needs less water, land, and energy” (Interview). Therefore, they touched upon the discussions about the usages of different natural resources in their production. Then, they reached the result that ABM is very inefficient compared to PBM since it requires almost double natural resources. Based on this, even though some of them shop ABM, they state that they consume plant-based one in their diets due to this and other relevant concerns which will be mentioned below.

Here, I find it important to mention how this environmental aspect is also promoted by companies as a *mission*, as an *added value* for their products, might affect consumers’ positional shopping. The U.S.A based PBM producer company announced a *Save the Earth by Eating Meat* mission to market their products with an *environmental-saving added value*. According to them, the magical moments around meat like BBQs, midnight burgers at fast-food restaurants, Taco Tuesdays, hot dogs at ballparks, all these are very special for people and they do not want to end them. On the other hand, to produce them there is a huge land usage, freshwater, and ecosystem damage. Based on this, they offer their plant-based meat products to have the same pleasure from *meat* but in a more sustainable way with plants (Impossible Burger, n.d.). Therefore, this marketing strategy becomes an example of what Pétursson (2014) shows, the components of cultural capital, here, as food share around meat and environmental sustainability, turn into economic capital, as commercial goods, their PBM products (p.23).

In performative shopping practice, there are different motivations to decide on particular plant-based meat products. Many participants mentioned they are supporting these products by buying them. For instance, Oscar said even though McDonald’s sells animal-sourced burgers and other stuffs, it is not good to reduce eating plant-based ones to boycott them if one only does due to this. Instead, according to him, consumers can *vote with their wallet* for plant-based meat products and they can contribute to grow and expand this product category in the food



industry through their individual consumption (Focus Group 2). This *empowered consumerism*, meaning consumers’ actively participating to shape consumption in the society (Papaoikonomou & Alarcon, 2017, p.41) occurs at supermarkets as well, but in a more advanced level. In shopping PBM at supermarket, while some does not put a lot of time and effort to consider different aspects of products while some behaves very picky and tries to get the best products with their sociocultural *mission* which is “contributing to solve social and ecological problems” (Pétursson, 2014, p.21). To succeed this mission, they regard to their general sense based on their *interindividual interactions* with others and their *memories* about food consumption as a *repertoire* and use them to decide for a plant-based meat product through label and ingredient reading at supermarkets.

Local production is one of the motivations and trust factors to complete the decision-making process for a plant-based meat product regarding the environmental burden of long transportation: “I like when these products need less transportation, locally produced. There are some Swedish companies producing meat substitutes where the production is not in Sweden but other countries which is very environmentally unfriendly” (Karl, Interview). As known, many PBM products are made of soy due to good taste and consistency but its environmental dimensions are widely questioned: “So, Anamma, they produce here. Anamma have their factory outside of Landskrona, they are extremely local brand. Soy that they use doesn’t grow here but they have certificates for soy, they meet some environmental requirements” (Oscar, Focus Group 2). Not only long transportation of soy is an issue but also the sustainability of it as an ingredient is one of the common critiques. For instance, almost all informants find soy as an unsustainable base regarding the effects of industrialized production which causes huge forest destruction and threatens different living creatures living in. They say that this affects climate change by creating greenhouse gas emission. Moreover, they come up with ingredient suggestions such as oats growing in Sweden, sustainable peas, locally produced mushrooms, and algae. In relation to this, organic plant-based meat is highly desired: “there are not that many options for ekologisk [organic in English] plant-based meat products, I wish I could buy more ekologisk. If you don’t buy organic, if I don’t buy organic, who will? I can afford if they produce ekologisk, which is both healthy for me and the environment” (Lucas, Interview). For Lucas, organic is a strong deciding factor since it had double missions which are contributing the health of both Lucas and the world where he lives in, therefore, he is obviously ready to *vote* for organic plant-based meat products in advance.

Additionally, the label of plant-based is sometimes enough to shop PBM with inclusive connotations: “If it is plant-based, I don’t look at free froms because it means majority of ingredients come from plants” says Anna (Interview). PBM label creates a *trust* for everyone more than vegetarian and vegan labels by welcoming different diets, informants mentioned that emphasizing them being plant-based is very positive: “Vegan is kind of a high tense word, so if you label yourself vegan, you automatically get a very polarized audience, plant-based I think that everyone can relate to that” (Lars, Focus Group 3).

In the positional consumption, there are two more dimensions to be mentioned in this section: animal welfare and human health. In relation to animal welfare, I talked with some informants who are vegans and vegetarians, they stopped consuming ABM due to animal slaughter. I observed that their positional consumption against ABM also negatively affects them shopping PBM with similar characteristics of ABM based on cultural, sensual, and emotional connotations. For vegetarian Zoe and vegan Lilly shopping PBM is quite hard because of their family memories from childhood. Lilly says she cannot buy and eat these products because of their tastes reminding her dead animals in her memories and explains: “My family is from the countryside, they had their own animals, they had small lambs. I was feeding them myself with bottles, it was very strange that when they were my pets, afterwards we were eating them as food. They were saying to me it is good of me that I feed them and put as food at table” (Interview). “I saw my mother grabbing the chicken without the head and making it danced for me, I started crying ... she was forcing me to sit down at kitchen table and eat the soup that they made with my pet chicken” (Zoe, Focus Group, 2). But, she says, while shopping at supermarket, she sometimes buys vego chorizos and usually plant-based meatballs from a particular brand which she is familiar from other social food settings like midsummer celebrations in Sweden. Then, her *embodied memory* from these special occasions (Fuchs, 2012) becomes a motivation to shop them at supermarkets and her memory cores allow her to shop them since she knows that they are not *identical* with the taste of ABM, they do not recall bad memories with her family’s animal slaughter and her *pet’s dead body* on the plate.

Lastly, consumers perform shopping plant-based meat for the sake of their own health. In positional consumption, regarding consumers’ narratives, they compare ABM with PBM in terms of the ABM’s high fat and calorie content, which they believe threatens their health. In shop, cook, eat-alongs Ayla explained why she shops PBM even though she eats ABM and does not plan to give it up: “I feel better when I eat these, I usually want to eat vegetarian for



Figure 8. Vegobullar, shop-along with Ayla, Malmö February 28, 2019

four days a week because I feel psychologically lightened because these are like vegetables for me while meat [referring to ABM] is something heavier in the nutrition content. This feeling also affects our cooking at flat, for instance, when my partner and me cook meat we generally add butter and cream, but when we cook vegobullar (see Figure 8), we don't add any of these because they are lighter in taste and content and it feels like they aren't supposed to be made heavier with cream or butter”.

In her case, Ayla perceives PBM as *vegetable* with her belief in the *collective myth* of that it has low nutrition content because of its plant base. Additionally, she thinks that these products are good to balance her ABM consumption with lighter nutrition content. Even though they are known as processed in various ways in the society, these products have, with Guptill et al.'s (2017) words, a *health halo effect* on her with being plant-based. Therefore, while shopping, she recalls the *interindividual myth* of eating plant as a healthy behavior from her memories and then, she thinks if she consumes these products in her four-days vegetarian period in a week, she will become healthier. Therefore, according to her, PBM contributes to her nutrition balance management, and it balances her the heavy content of ABM while being some kind of vegetable for her. So, this makes it some type of *balancer* in her food diet, which finally leads her to shop it at supermarket.

## Intentional Shopping

Differently from the previous section, here, the focus will be on consumers' reasoning for shopping PBM products regarding their personal intentions, particularly related to the *presumptions*, *personal beliefs*, and *myths* of different usages of them in *cooking practice*. Relatedly, it is important to mention the factors contributing to food selection, which Shepherd gives as *food*, *person*, *economic*, and *social factors* (1990). Briefly, in food factor, consumers buy physical or chemical properties, and nutrition content, while in person factor, they buy regarding their *perception of sensory attributes* on the object, in relation to the thesis, here PBM, with its *similar* taste, texture, appearance, and texture with ABM. Lastly, he gives attention on economic and social factors of people like personality, beliefs and experience, and economic and social factors including price, availability, and brand (pp. 2-4).

As mentioned earlier, plant-based meat is *preconditioned* with ABM with its similar characteristics with ABM, it is a *simulacrum* of ABM, but not itself, it is an *interindividual* perceptual representation of ABM in relation to its characteristics. This is something both positive and negative in shopping, it is positive because these characteristics create a trust for plant-based meat especially in dishes, which is previously built upon ABM for many centuries. But it is also negative, these have the connotations of ABM sourced from dead animal bodies, which affects especially consumers who are vegan and vegan because of emotional commitment and disgust by its taste. Based on this, consumers shop plant-based meat as a new but familiar product and therefore when they are at supermarkets, they prefer to buy it with various intentions. Some replaces ABM with it regarding its similar characteristics with ABM, while some cooks their accustomed dishes including ABM with it when they do not want to use ABM but still want to have something similar to it to remember and re-experience these dishes. Moreover, some just buys it to cook it as another type of food.

Fiddes (1991) emphasizes that many people try to avoid *meat* but they need to fill the gap of meat in their daily habitual food diets and they would like to fill meat products with similar or same texture, taste, and function (p.16). Therefore, replacing meat becomes one of the aspects of intentional shopping. “I regularly shop meat substitutes, I think they are pretty good at taste when you want to eat less meat, some of them are very identical with normal meat...I use them in regular food recipes when I don’t want to use meat. ... I use them as replacement of meat in even traditional food recipes,” says Karl (Interview). He is not the only one mentioning about plant-based meat as a replacement of ABM. But distinctively, he gives his intention of shopping regarding these products’ similar ABM sensual references. For him, some plant-based meat products are very similar with animal-based ones, which makes him motivated to shop them more and replace ABM with them while keeping having similar sensual experiences. These sensual properties and replaceability function make him to shop these products and use them even while cooking traditional dishes originally including ABM.



Figure 9. Mathilda checks Pease product, shop-along, Malmö, February 12, 2019

Mathilda is an experienced consumer of PBM, she knows many products and she is always open to try new ones. In the fieldwork, she shopped vegetables and a plant-based meat product to cook an Asian dish with Korean barbecue sauce. She told me that she usually uses *dehydrated soy strips* but she would try something else for this dish since it does not affect her cooking. While she was



Figure 10. Beef-Style Strips that Mathilda shopped, cook-along, Malmö. February 12, 2019

performing shopping, she checked many products to figure out how to replace dehydrated ones. “I am looking for similar things that I have had when I eat the dish, you know when I was at restaurants. I usually use dehydrated soy strips for this...I can even have tofu, this kind of dish you can experiment, we don't need to have the same ... But for some dishes, you have to have similar texture and stuff ...” (She is holding and looking a product called *Pease* from freezer but she doesn't like it and puts it back and she grabs another one and looks at its photo and asks) “What is this?” (She shows the one called *Fry's Family Beef-Style Strips*) “I think maybe this will be good. (I ask if she has tried it and she answers.) No, but the picture looks really good and fit with my recipe, let's buy it.” (see *Figure 9 &10*). The given passage is very important to understand with what intentions she makes her decisions to shop this particular product. She buys it because the photo on the package *recalls* her experiences locating in her cooking memories with similar dishes that she previously interacted through senses. Based on this, the photo *convinces* her for a similar experience and with the effect of this intention she puts it in her shopping basket.

But why does she buy this product in an elaborated context? She mentions later: “I don't know but it is more about maybe the dish that you have meat [referring ABM] in it, that you had before, so maybe you like kebab or something but you don't like it anymore, which it is that meat from animals and you don't feel like ethically right but you feel like the taste is still good. The memory of dish that you had before is good, so, you want to create something similar without hurting the animals”. As seen, parallel to her positional shopping regarding animal welfare, Mathilda emphasizes her main intention of shopping PBM as *re-experiencing* similar

dishes that she was used to eating with ABM before becoming a vegetarian. Based on her *embodied food memories* with the coded senses of ABM she shops PBM to *remember* these dishes, to have similar cooking experiences with her food and to enjoy its taste that she likes without hurting animals.

Lastly, consumers shop PBM as *another type of food* than being ABM substitution. Ayla thinks that PBM is another type of food which is like vegetables. When it comes to the vego meatballs that she uses, she does not find them similar with animal-based meatballs since they do not have *blood* on them. She is not alone in finding them as another type of food. Differently from her, vegan Lucas, who mentions ABM as *disgusting* and *terrifying*, finds PBM as something itself with being plant-based but in the form of ABM. According to him the forms like sausages, hamburgers, and similar do not make them ABM with just being similar with its shapes: “The meat shape does not disturb me because I know it is only shape but it includes oat, soy or beans” (Interview). Lastly, Samuel says he does not miss ABM as a vegetarian but he likes the structure of it [referring to chewiness]. Like Ayla and Lucas, he also finds these products as another type of food with some nice chewiness which is located in his *embodied memory* based on his previous ABM eating experiences as he implies in the first sentence. Additionally, he emphasizes that PBMs are just funnier than regular salad for a vegetarian. Therefore, his intention of shopping PBM is twofold: having *good chewiness* and *fun*.

## **Recommendation Network**

How do consumers start to shop PBM and why do they go with particular PBM products while shopping at supermarkets? There are obviously some factors affecting going with a particular PBM brand to cashiers. “I buy this brand, Anamma because somebody recommended it to me while we were cooking a Swedish Midsommar vegetarian meal. They are the best thing ever they discovered!” (Zoe, Focus Group 2). In this quotation, it is possible to see that she met with this Anamma product by means of another person in her network in a social setting. Therefore, based on this *body experience* of her, with senses locating as a *food memory* in her body, she starts to shop this particular product. During the experience, it is possible to say that she (un)consciously recorded the stimulated senses and this satisfied interaction with the particular PBM. Eventually, based on all these sensual references she preserves this as *an embodied memory* which makes it easy for her to know what to get as PBM next time at supermarket while possibly recommending it to others in her network.

When I ask who inspires her for food but particularly for PBM, Anna answers: “Some YouTube channels I follow for food, one is called *Healthy Crazy Cool* and *Benny Rebecka*, they are on Instagram too, I usually screenshot them and get recipes. But for meat alternatives, jävligt gott, omg! Vegan Philly sandwich! He has both YouTube and his blog” (Interview). On the other hand, Karl mentions how he is affected by his vegan big brother when it comes to PBM consumption since the big brother shops these products very often and cook with them. Here, both participants show that *how-to-consume* is important for food consumption in general. Therefore, the online and offline recommendations from different network members take an (in)direct role in shopping of PBM. Moreover, regarding Strauss’s words that *myths* as the ways helping people to make sense of the world (as cited in Chandler, 2002, p.11), here, it is possible to say that consumers have *mythical narratives* affecting each other in PBM shopping. An example of this comes from the Internet below.

On an online forum called Reddit (2018), a user shares a photo of a PBM and reviews it: “Hands down the best veggie meat alternatives I’ve tried.” (u/uTopcat187) and some following answers posted by different users: “Yeah, the shawarma kebab stuff is AMAZING like the perfect replacement for a greasy kebab!” (jessietee), “Ohhh I’d love to have a veggie meat kebab! Do you know where they are sold?” (greenfan033), “Sainsbury’s sell Vivera, Tesco sells Oumph! Kebab meat which I can heavily recommend” (Plastonick). In the first narrative, the user argues that she has found a product which is the best, even she does not explain why and how. In the second, another user gives detail how to use this product, which is a replacement for kebab, which includes more details to make sense of buying this product with its mythical narrative. And in the third one, the user is affected by the first recommendation and the second *mythical* explanation of how to use this PBM. Eventually, all affects her and makes her to ask supermarkets selling this product to shop it.

As seen, social media channels including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, blogs, and forums create *online recommendation network* to exchange information and recommend for particular products that they had good experience and memories with. For some sharing information about them becomes a responsibility to make sure others’ having good experiences and refraining from the bad ones. By doing so, they convey their *mythical* narratives based on their experiences with PBM among others.

“Meat [referring ABM] has both cholesterol and saturated fat, these create many sicknesses in human body. When I think all these dimensions, even though meat alternatives are some

processed, they are healthier” says Oscar (Focus Group 2). Like mentioned previously in positional consumption, scientific facts about ABM and its harmful impacts of production and consumption on the environment and human health are continuously conveyed in the form of online and offline network messages among different members. When this is the case, these *facts* and other related *factors* trigger consumers to shop PBM when they would like to eat some sort of *meat*. In addition to this, companies’ marketing strategies which mentioned above make stronger these network messages and constitute their references. Even though plant-based meat products are processed, they are perceived *healthier* when ABM’s negative effects on the environmental, animal welfare, and human health are considered in (relation to) consumers’ *mythical* narratives.

Therefore, based on what is analyzed so far, four main component of recommendation network are identified as *family/ friends/ celebrities*, *social media*, and *scientific facts/ additional motivations*, and *embodied experiences*, which all contributes completing shopping with a particular PBM product (see *Figure 11*). All these four constitute for a *recommendation network for shopping PBM* and all are interconnected when it comes to consumers’

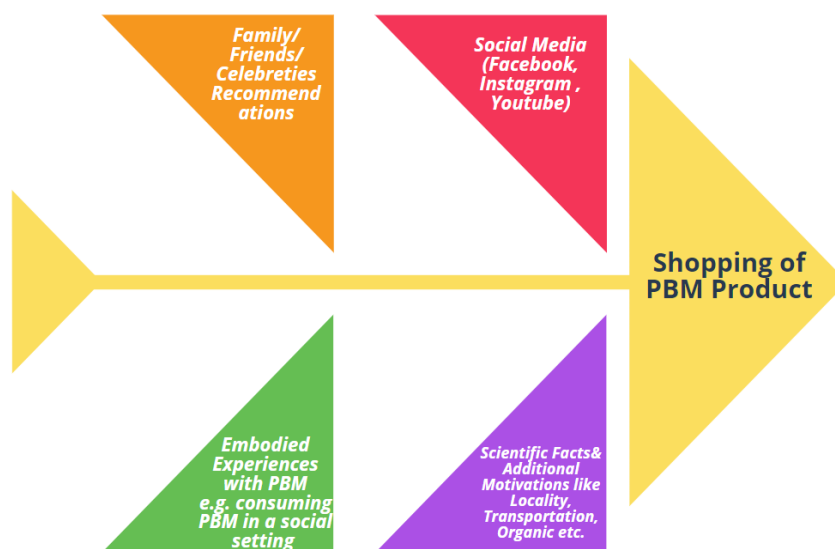


Figure 11. The Recommendation Network of PBM

decision-making for a particular PBM product on the way to cashiers at supermarkets. However, the strongest one among them is *embodied experiences* locating in consumer’s memories with their sensual cores since these PBM products are simulacra of ABM and the only way for getting them know better is to experience them like showed in the example of Zoe. These embodied experiences are not only important for the ones while making decisions at shopping PBM but also for their relatives, friends, and, if they are active Internet users, others who trust their experiences on social media.

Then, what does this chapter show us? While consumers *performing* their shopping PBM they shop in accordance with either their *positions* including ethical and political standpoints or *intentions* including more their personal preferences e.g. replacing ABM or consuming plant-



based meat as another type of food. Both of them are different but also parallel to each other in the shopping, which makes them occur together in consumers’ decisions at the same time. But, how do they go with PBM *product A* but not with *B*, then? The last section showed that there is a *recommendation network* with four components to help consumers to complete their performative shopping with *particular* PBM products. And the most inclusive and strong ones leading the repetitive PBM shopping, is found as *embodied food memories* with PBM which does not only affect individual’s own but also even others’ shopping.

## 5. Cooking

*She puts some music and takes what she bought from the supermarket out. She brings some additional ingredients like mushroom from her fridge and sesame from the drawers and locates them on kitchen counter to fix her stage to perform cooking. She starts with putting some water from sink to a cooking pot to boil it for pasta, she adds salt to the water, she says this makes water to boil quickly. After, she washes her vegetables and starts to cut while warming some oil on the cooking pan to start to fry. (Observation Notes from Cook-Along with Ayla, February 28, 2019)*

Cooking is a complicated *cultural* process; it includes many small actions with reasoning based on societies’ *interpersonal myths* coming from others’, especially elders’, previous experiences. Cooking is shaped within our physical, social settings, and culture, moreover, *performing* cooking takes its roots from the taught and accustomed actions to process food. Kitchen is a place where *performative cooking* occurs and exhibits through individuals’ interaction with ingredients like vegetables, grains, animal and plant-based proteins, spice and kitchen utensils like cooking pots, oven, stove, blender, chopper, cutlery, and mixer. As a cooking *repertoire*, food recipes may become cooking performers’, i.e. cook’s, the biggest helper since they include information what needs to be put, when, how, whipped, fried, boiled, grilled or not with what temperature on stove, in oven or any other. The result of this complicated process appears as cooked food which is prepared, cooked, and allegorically embroidered by the cook. Therefore, both the food and the process of performative cooking become *sacred* in a sense because of the cook’s sacrifices of effort and time which is put into cooking for the sake of cooked food.

### Convenient Cooking

“All animals eat but we are the only animals that cook. So, cooking becomes more than a necessity, it is a symbol of our humanity.” (Robin Fox, 2014, p.1)

“In the beginning, I didn’t want to buy meat substitutes because I thought it was for lazy people, you know you warm them, I was OK with cooking vegetables then. But this year, I have started to buy Oumph with my friend’s advice and realized that it is tasty and convenient. I have also tried Quorn, they are good to marinate, they keep spices and sauce flavors inside very well, I usually put them in my Caesar salad” (Emil, Interview).

When Emil’s quotation is regarded, there a few things to emphasize to see how his cooking is affected by PBM products. Firstly, he thought that these products were for lazy people because they do not need to cook something with them and they are *prepared* to eat after heating a few minutes. This affected him to not to shop and cook them, but when he experienced a PBM with a *recommendation* from his network, he changed his mind and started to use them in his cooking. When he interacted with them at his kitchen while performing cooking, he realized that, for instance, Quorn allows him to perform with it via marinating action, moreover, it successfully keeps whatever he put with his personal touch in it. Eventually, this successful interaction led him to use this PBM product instead of ABM in his Caesar salad. Referring to this example, this section will explore the various dimensions of performative practice of cooking when PBM enters to consumers’ kitchens.

### *Quick Cooks of Prepared PBM*

“When I come out for shopping any of these [referring to PBM] I am just looking for something convenient, I am quite busy, so I don’t have time to spend time on what I am gonna cook” (Clara, Focus Group 1). Like Clara, Lucas especially buys *prepared* PBM products because they are convenient to cook quickly. He consumes them several times a week usually as dinner meals when he is tired after his work and he does not want to cook (Interview). When laziness, tiredness, and hunger come into existence, these prepared products have reputation as *handy* and *quick* food among consumers since they do not need to be cooked as raw ABM needs. They are ready to eat after a quick warming, which makes while some consumers unwilling to consume and the others like these informants encourages consuming even more in rush times. But why do these consumers like to get *prepared* food to just heat, what are the sociocultural factors of this type of *quick cooking* of PBM?

When one is hungry the main aim is to become full with food as soon as possible, according to Ritzer’s (2000) observations, in such urgent situations fast-food is quite convenient for people who are in a rush from one place to another. Regarding consumers’ fast-food preferences, here, I will explain how things happen with prepared PBMs in the kitchen. Firstly, regarding my

participants from urban areas, cooking quick food including plant-based hamburgers, sausages, and similar becomes helpful to keep their daily life flows ongoing without any *food obstacles*. Secondly, regarding food prices for eating outside in both Sweden and Denmark, even though these products have similar prices with ABM per kilo, they promise for more meals depending on consumer numbers. Thirdly, since they are simulacra of ABM, consumers *know-how-to* interact with them in their quick cooking such as frying or warming in microwave. In addition to this, on the packages of them there are easy cooking directions like how many minutes they need to cook in oven versus on stove, which controls their cooking experience and do not let them to expand their cooking unless they would like to put more effort and time for their detailed performative cooking by means of adopting food recipes. Shortly, regarding all, prepared PBM products become attractive for consumers with the feature of quick cooking like consumers are used to with prepared ABM. These products are convenient for busy people because they save both their times and meals. Before ending this analysis, it is important to mention that one cook might be a quick cook in one day while become another cook putting more effort to cook harder and detailed dishes with plant-based meat in another day or vice versa if the conditions permit and if they desire to do.

### *Compositional Cooking*

Zoe says she would not eat the plant-based sausages in the way I served with only warming in Focus Group 2. Moreover, she does not see them as the possible components of her cooking process and eventually her dishes because of them lacking performative cooking aspects. She thinks even though they are some type of precooked, they may still be cooked because according to her, cooking is not only frying plant-based sausages but more putting effort to *process* them with various actions to transform them into *food*: “I don’t know... like, like I would like to do something with these products in order to consider them as food. I can’t like this, I can’t just grab it and just..., it has to go through the cooking process in order to appeal to me... Ok, like, for vegetarian sausages, even them, a little bit onion on them it is like maybe bread to do hot dog... I would prepare the bread, get fresh ingredients for topping and then I feel like food to eat. I think it has to do more with them” (Focus Group 2).

“Even though the word ‘composition’ is a bit too long and windy, what is nice is that it underlines that things have to be put together (Latin *componere*) while retaining their heterogeneity” (Latour as cited in O’Dell & Willim, 2011, p. 31). For Zoe, it can be said that food is a *composition* of different ingredients. In relation to plant-based sausages, she refrains to have them without this composition including her body movements and ingredients in

cooking. She has an approximate image of a sausage composition in her mind while cooking, which possibly comes from her food memory. Therefore, this makes her feel that something must be done more with these plant-based sausages, such as maybe heating bread as well and preparing toppings including fresh ingredients. For her, no component can be missed in the composition that she aims to obtain, neither the plant-based sausage with desired sauces like ketchup, mayonnaise, and desired relishes and garnishes, regarding *performative* cooking actions, nor cleaning, cutting some greens or tomatoes, warming breads, frying these sausages, joining these with the other components of this dish. When this composition is completed with its heterogeneous components constituting this dish including plant-based meat, then Zoe thinks, this is *food*.



Figure 12. Naturli Plant-Based Meat Experience Visual Material. (Source: Naturli website, n.d)

There are a few *rawish* plant-based meat products as cooking ingredients which enhance performative cooking with an *uncooked* or *unprocessed* feeling. Like it is seen in the *Figure 12*, Danish company Naturli is one of the companies producing a rawish product called *Minced*. As seen from the different moments of cooking it in the figure, this product allows different body performative actions in cooking like adding flavor and spice, shaping it with hands, frying them in a pan, and putting them together with cheese, red onion, and some greens to create a *hamburger composition*. Therefore, instead of buying plant-based patties and frying them, the cook interacts with his food intimately through his body. He produces food with different ingredients and he remembers cooking actions from his food memories of animal-based hamburger composition. All these create the feeling of *unprocessed meat* for the cook and let him cook freely with previously adopted cooking actions for hamburger composition in his

kitchen. But how do all these correspond in consumers’ everyday performative cooking practices?

In the style of *cooking from scratch*, raw ingredients are more desirable with being less processed by consumers: “I like buying them as raw to cook something with it. When I cook them myself, I can add whatever I want in it such as fresh vegetables like onion, potatoes and carrots with different spices and ingredients... I think when I cook it, I feel it is healthier and it feels a real dish ... I cooked kycklinggryta [chicken stew] with a meat alternative, it was really good... but there are only a few products that you can get as ingredients and cook yourself”, says Karl (Interview). Performing cooking from scratch with raw PBM brings the possibility of controlling ingredients like seen in Karl’s example. This authoritarian feature of cooking the *raw* provides cooks a feeling that the food they cook is healthier and safer thanks to its being open to be controlled during their cooking process. In Karl’s experience, as a *simulacrum* and *substitution* of ABM, a PBM, was accepted to the composition of a chicken(less) stew with additional ingredients he counted. Moreover, through controlling both the cooking process and ingredients originated an (*industrially*) *unprocessed* and therefore *healthy* food feeling for his final dish including a PBM product.

### **Cooking Memory**

“Like, I really liked Carbonara, for instance. And if I do vegetarian one with mushrooms, it is another dish, but when I use them [referring to PBM], it is not real meat, but it just reminds me the original dish” (Mathilda, Cook-Along). Mathilda does not mind these products’ rawness as others but she uses them as *replacement* with another reason in her cooking. For Janelle Wilson “nostalgia may function as an expression of a person’s self-continuity and may also as a way of group bonding, it may create idealized, collectively shared versions of the past, but yet also be a commodity in contemporary market society” (as cited in Bardone, 2014, p.42). In Mathilda’s using plant-based meat in her Carbonara, *nostalgia* is in play. She was used to cooking this dish with ABM before becoming a vegetarian. Therefore, when she uses mushrooms instead of ABM, she does not get the same pleasure from her cooking and eventually eating it. But when it comes to cooking the same dish with plant-based meat which substitutes ABM, which is known as the *main actor* of her dish and the primary component of Carbonara dish, she gets some type of same satisfaction in her performative cooking. In her cooking she utilizes plant-based meat as a part of self-continuity, with Chandler’s definition, she “expend[s] [herself] temporarily backwards into the past and forwards into the future

[through cooking with it]” (as cited in Sadeh & Karniol, 2012, p.93). She does it by applying the original recipe of Carbonara with familiar ingredients including meat but sourced from plants. The performative cooking of the *idealized* and *collectively* shared version of Carbonara recipe is valuable for her bonding with her cooking *memories*, her past and people who she has experiences with in cooking and eating. Eventually, as a niche product at marketplace, plant-based meat enhances her dish and then satisfies her for her cooking performance as a *nostalgic* simulacrum of ABM.

How may cooking PBM be satisfying for the cook? What property of it does provide this and enhance cooking experience? Plant-based meat products are produced in similar shapes with ABM such as red and white meat including minced meat, chicken breast, and fish. Therefore, they are possible to be cooked and served in a similar way with ABM in various dishes (Shprintzen, 2012, p.120). One of the supermarkets of Sweden, ICA, made a research about the consumption of plant-based meat products in Öckerö, where the ABM meat consumption



Figure 13. After Maillard reaction, PBM becomes brownish, Mathilda starts to add other ingredients and flavors, cook-along, Malmö. February 12, 2019

is the highest per person in Sweden. In this research, a cook prepared different dishes with plant-based meat and served to people living in the area for free. In relation to consumers’ reactions on PBM food scientists and other professionals explains their analysis. As one of them, Johan Swahn, PhD in Sensory Marketing, explained that consumers possibly like plant-based meats since it includes fat and sweetness, but most importantly due to the reaction of *Maillard*. He says: “When the protein meets with the heat, then, a chemical reaction occurs, that causes you to get this frying or baked surface called Maillard. And

this is what we feel this fragrance gets such amazing emotions in the brain and it just waters our mouths” (ICA, 2016, 1:20- 1:37).

Mathilda describes the reflection of this reaction on her while she mixes ingredients in the frying pan: “It smells, mmm, like it smells a lot this stuff, I think it is good... (I ask if these smells tasty) ... I think it is memories of eating something delicious that you have good experience of... It smells like (she comes closer to it and smell), it smells like meat (she

laughs)” (see *Figure 13*). Without cooking these *frozen* plant-based meat strips, neither her nor me felt any smell which we can associate with something, the only thing was that took our attention the delicious food photo on the package of it, which recalled our *sensory memories* of tasty food with its appearance.

Warde (2010) says smell is the most important sense for the overall experience of a food, therefore it gives appetite and arouse desires (p.107). Relatedly, when she started to fry them, a *smell* surrounded us, which comes from the frying action, and *Maillard* reaction became perceivable in the kitchen. Since both of us were hungry, this *fried meat* fragrance coded as delicious in our sense cores woke up our appetite and made us glad. Like Mathilda mentioned, it smelt good to her because she knew what it smelt like, as *animal-based meat* has been coded as *delicious* in her sense cores since her childhood through the stimulation of the reaction of Maillard. Therefore, while she was cooking these strips the senses of her interacted with previously coded *ABM’s sensual properties which comes to her delicious* with this chemical reaction and caused her to say that it smells good like *meat*, and something delicious that *she experienced*. Eventually, thanks to both this reaction and its *familiar* sensual reflection on her she enjoyed her dish while *performing cooking* with plant-based meat.

### *PBM in Traditional Recipes Instead of ABM*

“For me, meat substitute is a replacement, I have been vegan for all three years, before that I was a vegetarian on and off. I have always cooked, cooked a lot. And going vegetarian and vegan at that age was restricted me from cooking, because I couldn’t do more dishes. So, the replacement products that exist right now, are gateways to what I used to cook, and they allow me to bring for example, live up to my Polish heritage and cook Polish food, that I used to do and I can do” says, Marie (Focus Group 3). Replaceability of ABM with plant-based meat in *traditional* recipes gives a chance to consumers to perform cooking what and how they learned in their culinary culture and stored in her memory. This quotation shows how Marie gives importance to cook Polish food regarding her culinary heritage and food memory and how she is willing to perform cooking her traditional food. In this sense, as a *gateway* ingredient, plant-based meat satisfies her with letting her perform her authentic Polish dishes on one hand, on the other hand, it provides her to have more food options that she likes and she is familiar with as a Polish vegan.

### *Personally Signing the Meat*

“I do not like sausages because it is hard to do stuff with it. But you can marinate Quorn, you can change the flavor of it but not sausages because they have their own flavors” says, Emil (Interview). Emil does not like to have already flavored PBMs because he feels uncomfortable with since someone else flavored instead of him. He prefers making his own composition with his personal taste. But in his composition, he gives importance on the *rawness* of these ABM replacements so that he can use them in his preferred food recipes while cooking with his preferred ingredients or spices.

In the fieldwork, when I asked my two cook-along participants if they have personal flavoring for their dishes, especially for the ones with PBM. Mathilda said, it is very changeable for different dishes, but she usually has paprika powder and mushrooms. On the other hand, Ayla said: “I usually use sesame with these vegobullar, sesame has good protein and fat in it and you know these bullar are not that nutritious. Additionally, I put peas in everything, in vegobullar, next to fish and meat, but I think mushroom is more important for me in all dishes than peas, I have always mushroom in my fridge.”

Brillat-Savarin (2005) consider tastes with three aspects as “an apparatus for appreciating the flavor of food”, “a sensation that the organ impressed by savorous body excites within a common center”, and “as a material cause, taste is a property which a body has to impress the organ and to arouse a sensation” (p.16). In the first one, we put food in mouth and feel its taste, and in second if the taste is good for one trying it, taste becomes an adjective for the food in relation to her sensations, and lastly, to be able to find something tasty one needs to have a *taste understanding* directing food experiences for one and helps her to comment if the food tasty, e.g. delicious or not. Here, it is important to emphasize that having a *taste understanding* is closely related to various sociocultural factors and memories of food. Then, how may one cook *tasty* or, regarding the last aspect of taste, how may one cook *personalized* food with her taste understanding while cooking with plant-based meat?

People use what spices they are used to, usually from their food memories of cooking or eating. However, according to Schivelbusch (2005), using spices have also symbolic meaning behind our daily usages of them. For instance, salt is derived from the word of *salus* meaning health in Latin, was used as medication and gift to the gods (p.123). “Pepper together with salt, ..., was the chief means of preservation of keeping the meat of cattle, slaughtered in the fall, edible through winter”, “pepper frequently even took the place of gold as a means of payment”, and



some native herbs were used for making spoiled meat edible by poor people in the Middle Ages (p.125). More importantly, for now and then, spices create *cultural* and *sociological taste* in food and allow cooks and eaters to enjoy the dish with it through sensing.

Kaufmann (2010) says using spices and herbs are depended on individuals’ preferences and tastes, the usage of them is a way of touching food personally, but in an advanced personal touch, one’s changing an everyday food with “a hint of passion” (p.187). Relatedly, in both Mathilda’s and Ayla’s experiences, spices are inseparable from cooking process but they are used in accordance with dishes and their memories as Mathilda says. When I observed both participants’ cooking, they used salt and pepper as *taken-for-granted* for their dishes including plant-based meat. Doing so was easy for them since they have *food memories* of using these spices for either meat dishes or any others. However, when they use different ingredients including both spices and vegetables which they preferred to, they do these for different purposes in their performative cooking. They added spices and other ingredients, e.g. Ayla’s adding sesame, peas, and mushroom in her Spaghetti with plant-based meatballs regarding *nutrition enhancement* and Mathilda’s putting chili and paprika to flavor Korean food like she puts in other dishes of her. By doing so, like Kaufmann (2010) says they position these foods as *their food* with their individual preferences. They negotiate with additional ingredients they like and combines them with



Figure 14. Ayla’s personally signing her dish with sesame, peas, and mushrooms, Malmö. February 28, 2019

the main ones. In the negotiation of them in plant-based meat food, they check their *memories* if the new ingredient would make their food better or not in their *taste* sense. If they think these ingredients will not mess with the original recipe, then, they put *their signatures* through these ingredients (sesame, peas, mushroom, and chili, paprika) and *personalize* their food in accordance with their *taste* understandings and memories. All these show that PBM products’ being open to be flavored and mixed with other ingredients is quite important when it comes to their desires to sign their *meat* personally regarding to their taste understandings. Here, it is important to emphasize that either their taste understandings for food and their flavorings

reasons are based on their food memories that they adopted from their parent or from others and they might vary for every single food recipe.

## **Embodied Cooking**

“I learned to cook mostly by myself, from high school I cooked 80 percent of all my meals at home. But, in Sweden at younger ages we have cooking classes in school so I learned a bit there and also, I helped my mother while she was cooking sometimes” (Karl, Interview). In the fieldwork, I asked the informants how they learned to cook. Many answered as from their families, usually from their moms through cooking plays in their childhood and then in teenager years.

“I helped with cooking to my mom when I was a kid, some dishes like Bolognese, that I still do with plant-based meat”, says Mathilda. When I asked her how she cooks Bolognese with PBM, first she counts ingredients, and then she tells the whole process of cooking without looking at any recipe: First starting with frying onion, garlic, and grated carrots, and then adding Anamma färs [minced PBM], after when they are getting heated, adding crushed tomato sauce and tomato paste, later sugar or honey to sweet the sauce and wine or wine vinegar, with oregano, salt, pepper, chili, and finally adding some water.

“Memory is also a key concept to be considered as it connects the senses to skilled, embodied practices through the habits that Steinberg suggests require apprenticeship and repetition, and through the comparison necessary to judge the successful dish” (as cited in Sutton, 2006, p.88). Relatedly, Sutton’s participants refer their childhood as a period of cooking memories taking roots from and constituting *key touchstones* leading them *morally* preparing dishes in the future by means of duplicating the ones learned in their childhood (p.109). Regarding this, by parents’ cooking and eating at home with their kids who are in early ages makes the kids become used to cook and eat food in a particular way with particular ingredients and flavors how their parents are used to. In other words, they collect *embodied food memories* through their senses and body actions while cooking with their parents. Therefore, when they become older and cook, they re-perform the dishes *that* they learned from their parents and stored with their sensual cores and cooking actions stored in their *bodies*.

When everything is regarded in relation to Mathilda’s cooking, it is possible to say that in relation to Bolognese, she brings her *embodied memory* of cooking this dish with her mom from her childhood back. Moreover, she uses her body as a *repertoire* for cooking and then she re-performs this dish with the familiar ingredients and the stages of cooking like she explained

in the quotation. In relation to the usage of plant-based meat instead of animal-based one in Bolognese, she applies the same recipe with PBM while performing her *embodied memory* by her *sensing organs* like her hands and nose to get a similar dish that she has been used to. This shows that PBM might become a part of embodied cooking memory by just replacing ABM, therefore, consumers do not need to adopt new cooking actions, styles or recipes to cook it.

One does not necessarily learn all dishes that she knows in her childhood, she might adopt a new recipe as an embodied memory. Mathilda did not look at any recipes for her dish during



Figure 15. Mathilda's recipes coming from both family/friends and supermarket food magazines on the inner side of her kitchen cabinet's door, cook-along, Malmö. February 12, 2019

the cook-along, she used three different pans, one for boiling noodles, one for preparing sauce, and one for cooking plant-based meat with some vegetables. Even though she tried this beef-style strips from for *the first time* in her life, she was very confident through her this embodied performative cooking. I asked: “Do you check cookbooks or recipes for this dish?”, she answered: “I have a recipe wall [showing the cabinet door], I get them from markets, you know. Sometimes when I do a new dish, I look recipes online or here, but you know, you do stuff like you know...” and I asked further: “For this dish, how do you cook this Korean dish without checking

them?”, she said: “Yeah, first time if I looked recipe and second time maybe not.”

“Cooking from a recipe assumes a certain amount of embodied memor[ies] and taste” [of previous cooks] says, Sutton (2006, p.97). Planning of how to cook *in advance* or *while cooking* is crucial to complete the whole performative cooking practice. Recipes online, in cookbooks, family/friend notebooks, or in food magazines are helpful to accelerate cooking and some quality guarantee for dishes to ones particularly applying them (*see Figure 15*). Recipes are the results of others' experiences which become as *interindividual* food messages. People apply them while respecting and regarding others' experiences and memories in their cooking to get similar results. However, what if one performs these without looking the written recipes, what

if one has adopted them as *embodied cooking memories* or *embodied recipes*? “What might it mean to speak of cooking memory as residing not in our heads, but in our hands?” asks Sutton and Hernandez (2003, p.31). Here, I approach slightly different from Sutton and Hernandez and argue that embodied cooking memories are not only stored in hands but also in cook’s other sensing organs which are *eyes, tongue, nose, hands, and ears*.

How does Mathilda experience cooking through her *embodied food memory* then? When PBM is considered, the senses are in the play through her senses Mathilda feels it is possible to cook the Korean dish with this plant-based beef product as mentioned in her intentional shopping. When she enters her kitchen and cooks, she starts to reenact with her body memories of cooking this and similar other dishes. That makes her performing her cooking without checking any recipes, just trusting her *embodied memory* of cooking as *embodied repertoire* or *recipe* in a sense. For instance, she does not use any measurements while cooking the sauce of the dish. She does not keep cooking time for the dish including PBM, which only needs to be cooked for 8 minutes indeed. She cooks PBM approximately half hour with other ingredients instead and adds boiling sauce slowly but continuously to the pan.



Figure 16. Mathilda adds sugar to her sauce to make it sweeter, cook-along, Malmö. February 12, 2019



Figure 17. Mathilda mixes corn starch and water in a glass to make the sauce thicker, cook-along, Malmö. February 12, 2019



Figure 18. Mathilda adds the half-thickened sauce into the main dish with PBM, cook-along, Malmö. February 12, 2019

Everything looks correct in the beginning but her experiencing problems with the boiling sauce shows that not always embodied cooking repertoire gives the best result. She tries to make her sauce sweet and a bit thicker. She randomly adds sugar to her sauce as seen *Figure 16*, and then she randomly puts water and majsstivelse [corn starch in English] and mixes with a spoon in a glass in *Figure 17*, and adds half of it slowly into her sauce but after waiting for some minutes she says:

“I think nothing is happening (she smiles)” by looking carefully at the sauce, then she grabs the glass again and adds all of it and says “maybe, it will take some time” (she mixes the sauce in the pot). Since the sauce is one of the important components of this dish, she puts some from the boiling sauce to the main cooking pan with PBM in *Figure 18*. As seen, she uses her body as *repertoire* for cooking and as a *measurement* for ingredients. Based on this, she performs cooking without looking her *recipe wall* or *cookbooks*. She cooks plant-based beef strips with Korean BBQ sauce with rice noodles without stopping or concerning about the dish just like in a *harmony* and *flow*. Throughout the all process, except for the sauce of the dish and its thickening measurement, she does not experience problem with the dish including PBM, she just cooks how she is *bodily* used to without looking and following the written food recipes.

Why are all these important in this chapter? Regarding the thesis aim, it is showed what happens when PBM is used for cooking within three sections called *convenient cooking*, *cooking memory*, and *embodied cooking*. It is revealed that when plant-based meat products enter to consumers’ kitchens in various forms such as *prepared* or *raw* with similar shapes, textures, and flavors of ABM all these affect the performativity of cooking. While some likes quick cooking with the prepared ones and does not miss hours at their kitchen thanks to these plant-based meat products, which are like *prepared* ABM products, the others give importance of composing their food in details, and therefore, *rawish* ones help them to put more effort into cooking how they wish. As a simulacrum of ABM, plant-based meat also contributes cooking in relation to consumers’ cooking memories when they would like to cook similar dishes that they are used to cooking with ABM. In this case, these products take place in accustomed dishes, traditional food recipes, and personalized dishes through flavoring. Lastly, they easily replace ABM in consumers’ *embodied food recipes*, enhances their performative cooking through the sensing organs, and make performative cooking comfortable.

## 6. Eating

“Man feeds not only on proteins, fats, carbohydrates, but also on symbols, myths, fantasies”  
(Fischler, 1980, p.937).

How do we eat food? We eat food either individually or collectively, with hands and fingers or by means of knife and fork. Some prefers to eat quickly while sitting at couch and watching TV, some grabs prepared food like street food while standing. On the other hand, very commonly, some spends time on prepare family meals, set tables, and bring members around a table to socialize and share food and news. Additionally, for special social occasions like

birthday, graduation, marriage, anniversary, traditional or religious day celebrations some either arranges a bigger meal to enjoy occasions at their homes or go out and eat fancy dinners at restaurants.

Most of the time, a table is where the performative practice of eating is accepted and expected. It is the stage where people eat their food at and chat with each other while looking into their eyes, their hands, and their eating. At this stage, served food creates and preserves *the meaning of eating together* by sharing food and helps eaters to reenact with *memories of food shares*. Eating at table with others is a *collective* performing of eating, which every individual needs to consider their behaviors with regarding certain unwritten rules of eating at table such as dressing appropriately regarding the importance of occasion to show respect to others, interacting with food how it is expected. Eating is not only social in this sense but also sensual with the served food, in this thesis, food with plant-based meat. Therefore, in this chapter I will analyze the sensory and social dimensions of eating it.

### **Setting the Table: Sensory Dimensions of Eating**

“I love meat substitutes, they make people vegan easier because people already love meat, they eat pretty much the same but changing meat with meat substitutes” says Chef Per (Interview). Similarly, Burcu mentions how people are used to eat *meat* and they compare PBM with ABM in terms of color, softness, juiciness that they are familiar in their eating habits. Supportively, Emma states that she likes Anamma färs because it is kind of minced meat and the texture and taste of it are good for her (Interview).

Paterson (2018) says that “[n]ot simply depositing food into our mouths, eating involves a whole series of sensory events prior to swallowing including smell, sight (whether it appears appetizing or appealing or not), the texture of food (so-called “mouthfeel”), and of course, the taste (p.110)”. When looked at what is common among the three participants given above, it is possible to point out how sensual cores are valuable for consumer experience of PBM in relation to ABM. Like I mentioned in the cooking chapter, the adaptability, with participants’ words, replaceability function of PBM with its similar sensory properties with ABM is very crucial to understand what happens when consumers *take* plant-based meat products to their bodies by eating. To understand the effects of them in eating it will be beneficial to get *eating* as a series of complex sensory events while experiencing food like Paterson mentions and therefore analyze different sensual dimensions of PBM within performative eating practice.

*Serving the Ideal Plate of Douglas with PBM*

*Meat* has a special place in meals for proper food consumption. Vegan Marie expresses her feelings about having *meat* on the plate: “For me it has like a component on the plate. But the Western plate consists of potatoes, meat and vegetables. It is important for me that you have it on the plate not only soy beans thrown on the plate... It has a meaning for me that the dish is full with some substitutes looking like meat” (Focus Group 3). She touches upon PBM does not only occur as *protein intake* on the plate but it also *culturally* completes the plate since people are used to have ABM on their plates next to carbs and vegetables for many centuries.

What Marie says is important since the image of *meat* with other ingredients makes a meal whole for her.



Figure 19. Somi Igbene [@somiigbene]. (January 28, 2019). Screenshot of the user’s post about serving Oumph with sides [Public Instagram Account]. Retrieved May 10, 2019 from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BtMG0cAhtDT/>



Figure 20. Mathilda’s *Ideal Plate*, eat-along, Malmö. February 12,

Neither only soy beans nor fried plant-based meat alone on plates is not enough to have a proper dish, therefore, for her, they need to complete each other in serving. Serving plant-based meat is similar with serving ABM, which creates a feeling of familiarity and safety for a meal when they are on the plates thanks to the shape, texture, and appearance. Douglas (1975) explains different food variations including animal-

based meat, but she particularly emphasizes the variation of *JTA* as an *ideal* one including flesh, cereal, and vegetables (p.253):

Components of *the ideal plate*: J (flesh), T (cereal), A (vegetables)

Variations: JTA, JA, JT, J

Regarding the Instagram post with a meal photo with pulled Oumph, a Sweden-based plant-based meat product in *Figure 19*, and Mathilda’s plate in *Figure 20*. It is possible to say that

either of this Instagram user or Mathilda serve their food with PBM regarding Douglas’s combination of animal protein, here *PBM* in both, cereals rice in Instagram user’s dish and rice noodles in Mathilda’s, and vegetables in both, which are located in bowls. Therefore, these PBM products, regarding Oumph and plant-based beef strips, function just like ABM in these bowls as part of the *ideal combination* and it goes *good* with the other two accustomed components which are cereals and vegetables.

As mentioned before, consumers do not always replace but also use plant-based meat as another type of food in dishes; however, its different shapes affect serving meals, while some shapes are more convenient to serve as a dish, some are not. “With this product [pointing to vegobullar], it is like meatball shape, it feels like you already have a dish so if you just make rice or pasta next to it, it gives you full competence when you eat. But this vegofärs feels like you have to cook more, it can be an ingredient of something, it doesn’t feel like dish”. In our eat-along Ayla served food *everything together* on the top of each other like Mathilda does, which can be seen in *Figure 21*. She also followed Douglas’s *ideal plate* formula in a sense but she put all together in a pan mixed and served to the plates like this. In relation to serving PBM she was more interested in the *shape* of these plant-based meatballs, which make her feel the food more *compact* than minced plant-based meat.



*Figure 21.* Ayla serves the dish with mixing all ingredients in a pan, cook-along, Malmö. February 28, 2019

As mentioned earlier, Ayla does not replace them instead of ABM since they are not enough *identical* to be ABM for her, but she uses them as other type of food looking like ABM meatballs which gives some type of trust to her to cook and eat them with spaghetti and other vegetables. Another participant mentions something similar: “It is the shape that people accept sometimes, for instance, vegan sausages, people are used to consume sausages, that makes people accept vegan sausages” (Hans, Interview). In this case, both participants they do not see them as *replacement* of ABM but they are positive about the products shapes in cooking pans, on plates, and in stomachs since they are familiar with this shape since their childhood. Therefore, even though there are different purposes while serving plant-based meat products



as replacement or another type of food, what is important here that consumers do not have any challenges when it comes to serving PBM because of them easily and perfectly replacing ABM on their ideal plates next to vegetables and cereals.

### *Sensing Meat in Its Historical Context through Memories*

“I went to Max [Burger] they have these nuggets but they are not chicken. I got them because I was ... it was like almost due to nostalgic reason and as soon as I bit and I spit it out directly, it was, in the texture it was too similar to chicken nugget. It was like maybe due to something I remember, I just had many breakdowns of like, did I just eat, these chicken nuggets” (Zoe, Focus Group 2).

Warde (2016) mentions that we get our habitations from repetitions of bodily motions and practices, therefore, we get food habits from repetitive everyday eating practices with its complicated process including different actions like looking, smelling, tasting, in mouth, chewing, swallowing, and ingesting. Therefore, he says, “the bodily techniques of eating, including sensory responses of taste as well as the manipulation of the fork, are probably similar, laid down in a procedural memory through countless repetitions” and many of these are learned in childhood (pp. 130-132). In relation to him, Seremetakis (1994) examines memory in details in relation to senses and says memory cannot be only thought subjectively; it is culturally rooted in the societies and it is conveyed through objects with embodied practices and semantically loaded objects. Additionally, senses are of great importance of making memory by sensing, recording, saving, bringing back memory and conveying it (p.9).

Regarding Zoe’s narrative, the *chewiness* of ABM, which was recorded as memory cores in relation to her previous tragic memories, basically disturbs her when she got a bite from vegan nuggets. She cannot finish eating these products due to two reasons. The first, she finds these products very similar with ABM according to her food memory. And the second, regarding her tragic memories with her pet that she was forced to eat by her family, she associates this product in relation to their past context, in other words, she associates these products with her chicken’s dead body since the sensual cores match perfectly when they are similar.

Food designers Strummerer and Hablesreiter (2014) explain “A 60 percent of four feelings during eating coming out of the consistency of the products so it is what we feel in our mouth, we feel temperature, we feel the texture and so on” (martin hablesreiter, 3:08). Texture is another crucial issue when it comes to eating memories of *meat* and it is closely related to

chewing. Then, what is chewiness? “Chewing is a physiological act that varies over time. Chewing is a technique and procedure of the body” (Warde, 2016, p.74). Regarding this, in the research, it is found that while some consumers like *similar* chewiness of ABM in plant-based products, some just do not.

“I tried Quorn before becoming a vegan and Oumph, I didn’t like... I stopped eating meat in 1993, we had beans then, not meat alternatives. First time I tried after 10 years, in 2003, the structure was not good for me. It feels like muscle fibers when I chewed first time. ... I have memory of it, it was really similar to chicken breast for me, Quorn fillet, I could not eat it” (Lilly, Interview). In her first time with PBM, Lilly tries Quorn, her chewing something similar to ABM chicken muscles did not go well for her. With referring to how Zoe experienced with the texture of Max Burgers’ nuggets, it is possible to say that Lilly has a similar experience with the texture and chewiness of Quorn and Oumph products. As previously mentioned, Lilly also had a tragic pet story which is quite similar with Zoe’s, she had her pets to play with but then she was forced to eat her baby lamb on her plate. In relation to chewiness dimension of the products that she tasted, she says that she felt muscle fibers when she chewed Quorn product and found it similar with chicken breast. Thus, this similar chewiness disturbed like Zoe. She did not want to eat something similar, with her saying, animal muscles, and she eventually never ate them again.

Plant-based meats’ having similar chewiness with animal-based meat does not always appear negatively when different consumers’ sensual cores are regarded. “I see meat as just as a protein resource of fuel for my body. ... Sure, some meat-based products and dishes can taste amazing with the texture and taste, I have done and tried the vegan model of them with fake meat, they were great as well” (William, Focus Group 3). William identifies himself as *freegan* (*free vegan*), he says he is not freegan due to emotional relations with animals but more environmental reasons, he is not disturbed by the texture of PBM which is similar with ABM because he is not disgusted by the taste and texture of ABM. He just prefers to eat plant-based meat because of ABM’s high environmental cost and but also industrialized animal farming. Additionally, Anna says sometimes she misses the structure and texture of ABM even though she is a vegan and she eats some plant-based burger at a restaurant where they cook them *too real* (Interview). In relation to her PBM hamburger experience similar to an ABM one, she is not disturbed since her food memories about the taste of ABM is positive, according to her, the taste of it is delicious but the resource of ABM is wrong. Therefore, comparing to Zoe and Lilly, this similar taste does not disturb her even though she is a vegan.

“It is close to tuna but it is not tuna, it is like cat food. It just smells like fish, fish, and oil. Well, the real, fresh tuna doesn’t smell but I approve this tuna thing, it is delicious!” Marta says after



Figure 22. Some plant-based meat products were served in Focus Group 2, Lund. September 20, 2018

taking a bite from it (Focus Group 2). In close interaction with eating plant-based meat, consumers are tended to compare them with ABM ones since they know how they look and taste. The quotation taken from Focus Group 2 with PBM tasting experiment shows that sensual memory cores of ABM in these products also might be welcoming for consumers (see Figure 22). Relatedly, omnivore Marta liked tuna because of, with Seremetakis’s (1994) words, its *recorded tastes*, in the context here, the recorded taste of tuna in her body through senses. According to her, even though the product was not that successful in general, its taste made her approve the plant-based tuna product and finish it on her plate. In relation to all analyses, when consumers *sense* these PBM products, a four-stage *sensual memory* flow regarding the sensory and historical multiplicity approach of Seremetakis (1994, p.9) actually occurs in an order:

1. When one experiences a food object with senses, here a PBM, she brings back previous sensual experience with the similar food object, here, the previous object is ABM since the PBM is the simulacrum of it.
2. She compares her previous experience with the recent *similar* food object by means of reflecting upon the recorded senses for this object in her food memory to decide to keep eating it or not.

3. She saves this new experience with its sense cores in her food memory.
4. She interacts with it when it is needed next time like it happens in the stage number one.

Similarly, Deborah says (2005): “Memory is embodied, often recalled via the sensations of taste and smell... The taste, smell, and texture of food can therefore serve to trigger memories of previous food events and experiences around food, while memory can serve to delimit food preferences and choices based on experiences” (p.320). In the fieldwork, for Swedish and Danish consumers I observed that leverpastej [liver pate in English] is very memorable, three participants with different diets including, freegan/flexi-vegan (William), omnivore (Liana), and vegan (Oscar) mentioned how they were used to eating this product with their families and how they consume plant-based version of it: “When I was like eating meat I liked leverpastej, I am from Denmark and we put it in the oven. So, it is really hot and you put the package in the middle. Then you eat it with our black rye bread. Very Danish tradition, but actually I think actually there are vegan ones now. I didn’t like the French pastej, I like the Danish more, it is more, it is rawer with bits and pieces, they have a vegan of it but they do not have the skin. When we put real chicken one in the oven, it becomes crispy on the top and you know, you do not put vegan one in oven and it is not crispy like the former” (William, Focus Group 3). On the other hand, Swedish Oscar says: “Leverpastej [liverwurst in English], oh, it is freaking good, it is made of beans. It is like brownish like leverpastej but doesn’t really taste but I can say it tastes better!” Similarly, Liana mentions how she was used to eating and she still buys them sometime.

Most interestingly, vegan Oscar and freegan William know how animal-based leverpastej looks, feels, smells, and tastes to some extent. With regarding his Danish heritage, William memorizes this animal-based one more desirable than the vegan since the second does not respond every single sensual detail in his food memory like the crispy top, which he gained through consuming it with his family in Denmark. On the other hand, Swedish Oscar, argued that the vegan one is better than what he remembers as leverpastej from his food memories with its sense cores. By showing this difference I emphasize that the previously recorded animal-based meat products, are not always *the desired ones* in relation to their different sensory memories and different associations with the taste like in William’s example. Therefore, sometimes when they compare animal-based meat products with plant-based ones, some consumers can prefer the second since, according to them, they taste *better*.

## Me(e)a)t to Festive: Social Dimensions of Eating

“Animals feed themselves; men eat; but only wise men know the art of eating” (Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, as cited in Korsmeyer, 2005, p.2).

Eating together is a way to *reassure intimacy* at table with other eaters, usually family or friends, and food at table provides the act of share among eaters and keeps everyone at table around itself (Kaufmann, 2010, p.240). Falk (1994) says “the bond between the eaters at the table created by sharing (communion or food) not by exchange” (p.20). Additionally, Fischler (2011) mentions *commensality*, meaning eating food with others at the same table with a sense of food sharing with individual involvement (pp. 529, 533). Based on this and the thesis theoretical framework, sharing food will be taken into consideration as a *food ritual* where people get involved and become *social* with others while having a common food share spirit which is obtained by every person through interacting with the same food at the same time. Regarding Fischler’s term *commensality*, this collective eating includes culturally accepted food, consumption rules, and patterns by people. Even though commensality helps to create bonding among eaters and sharing the same food with others, which “makes one become more like that food” and then “those sharing the same food become more like each other”, at get-togethers around the same food is not always inclusive, but also exclusive for those not taking part of it (p.533).

*Meat* is not only for protein intake but also for enhancing social dimensions of eating and sharing food together. For Lupton (1996) meat is a symbol of family ties, passions, and sacred powers, while for Orlove (1994) it is a social marker including sociality, vitality, hierarchy and identity. Therefore, meat is a *ritual food* with different cultural connotations and *meat-eating* is a collective cultural performance of food rituals including religious, non-religious days, festivals, and others like birthdays, marriages, or funerals, and even regular family meals. Therefore, it is a part of people’s food memories through its sensual cores and meat-sharing moments and experiences with others.

### *Commensality and Meat Share at Specific Occasions*

What happens when one refuses to eat animal-based meat at a table where everyone eats it? What happens when another type of *meat* sourced from plants occur at tables next to it? “I feel included with them [referring to PBM], when we have grill with my family. I don’t want to be a burden for anyone, I don’t want to be a strange vegan at the table” (Anna, Interview). Grilling or barbecuing is one of the meat-related *food rituals*, usually happens at gardens or at picnics.

In such a ritual, there is one or two grill head(s) to perform cooking to share meat with others who are performance audiences or co-performers i.e. guests or family members and relatives. In such an environment, meat is an inseparable food item since the ritual of meat-eating would not occur without it. When this is the case, if some people, who do not want to eat ABM, but would like to enjoy eating meat in the same way how others do might be glad when there is also PBM on the grill. Anna’s situation is a good example to understand the situation of an excluded person from meat-eating rituals due to being vegan before and after PBM. Regarding her narrative, she benefits from eating the similar with others thanks to PBM and most importantly, she benefits from her becoming a part of meat-eating commensality by consuming a product, which just looks, tastes, and smells like ABM. She emphasizes, before these plant-based products she was the strange at the table with another type of food like vegan soup, pasta, salad or whatever, which made her excluded from *meat-eating* with others. Obviously, this shows how she feels good by becoming like others with eating the similar Fischler (2011), thanks to plant-based meat products in such *meat-eating rituals*.

When it is a religious day or a special day to food share such as Christmas, the research informants expressed that they are happy to have PBM at the table. Oscar implies the one of the problems of being vegetarian and vegan as not being able to attend and relate the self with others who eat ABM while the ritual of meat-eating occurs. Moreover, he argues that as a vegan PBM products help him to attend such cultural events comfortably and he adds: “If there are meat alternatives and then I don’t miss out on like Christmas table ... just like... It is not exactly the same but it is close enough and it is getting closer...” (Focus Group 2). The reasoning of him to eat them at special occasions is explicit, these products are *close enough* to enjoy the occasion with others while attending to the common meat-share ritual. But what happens with PBM more here?

At this table it becomes *commensality provider* and replace or takes place next to ABM meat with its ABM-like taste, texture, and appearance for the ones who do not want to eat ABM but something similar. Therefore, some like Oscar, who does not want to get ABM, eat PBM as, with Baudrillard’s words, a simulacrum, the copy of ABM without the original (Chandler, 2002, pp.80-81). By doing so, these products hide the absence of ABM on their plates and pretend as ABM at tables to preserve commensality and common meat-share in such special occasions. In this case, it is not important to eat from exactly the same, but it is important to perform meat-eating in a similar way with others. Shortly, PBMs co-exist with ABMs at tables to include everyone for meat-eating ritual.

Another commensality experience comes from Mathilda: “My family had guests last Christmas, then, my mom cooked Boeuf Bourguignon for them, you know, the French food. She prepared the same dish for me but with Oumph instead. I felt good, it was like..., I could also get potatoes, and other ingredients, I got what they had with same ingredients and same looking but with Oumph. ... Then, my aunt said even she didn’t know it was different meat”. This quotation shows that she had the same dish with PBM instead of ABM, she shared the *same* food appearance and similar taste with her guests. She attended the common food share and became a part of commensality at dinner through interacting with her food including PBM and sides like potatoes like how others did.

Food share and commensality do not always occur when ABM is replaced with PBM for the ones who refuse to eat ABM but also for omnivores. “That is what I like with meat alternatives, I can share food with others who don’t like vegetarian food with only vegetables. I wish they were better and cheaper ones, then, I could share them with more people” (Emil, Interview). From Emil’s perspective PBM is a good to share with his friends and family who have different diets. What is special with PBM is that it is already a *common food item* with being inclusive for different diets, it is just like to middle point to *me(e)(a)t for everyone*. Moreover, he emphasizes how it may be satisfying even for some omnivores, who do not like only greens, thanks to its similar taste and texture with ABM. Based on this, he sees PBM products as *commensality providers* from another angle, he thinks that PBM includes commensality as an *added value* in itself, while regarding Anna’s, Oscar’s and Mathilda’s experiences, in which PBM were *commensality provider* next to ABM at tables.

### *Enhancement and Remembrance of Interpersonal Food Memories*

“We remember the cake at a wedding, the first time we tasted alcohol, or the last Christmas meal with an aging grandparent or family member” says Appadurai and he relates consumption and embodiment with time regarding rituals or rites like births, deaths, marriages, and religious festivals. Food is a part of either feasting or fasting and whole meals are as “forms of celebration”. Moreover, “our beliefs, our lives are punctuated by deeply personal memories of associations between a rite of passage or religious event and the consumption of food” (as cited in Paterson, 2018, pp.112-113). Additionally, Sutton (2011) says: “I argue that ritual feasting or mundane food exchanges can create lasting memory impressions, particularly when cultivated through narratives of past exchanges” (p.160). As a reason and a result of *commensality*, meat is a celebration food item in different occasions for many centuries, it is

an important cultural food item that people bond and socialize around it (Fox, 2014, p.20). Here, it is important to say that consumers do not only eat ABM and PBM but also remember related food memories and even create the new ones through the consumption of them as well. At these occasions, e.g. Christmas, people come together, they remember their food memories via sensing the food in front of them and produce new ones by means of socializing around food, especially meat, to remember these in the future.

Samuel *remembers* when I ask if he has barbecued PBM with his friends. He says: “I attend to nation invitations in Lund, they serve both meat and meat alternatives together. But barbecue, first time, I had with friends in the Netherlands and then in Italy. Eating meat, it was nice to share the atmosphere by similar food” (Interview). The last part of the quotation indicates that his friends had ABM while he had PBM, even though he did not eat exactly the same, he explains his feelings positive about this type of meat-share. The thing I would like to draw attention upon is different, his barbecue occasion as his food memory and then his remembrance it when I asked to understand how PBM takes place in food memories. He remembers his three different experiences that he does not give too much details about, he remembers plant and animal-based meats on the grill, enjoying the moment of meat-share with his friends in both Netherlands and Italy and he expresses how it was good to share atmosphere by eating similar food. As seen here, PBM do not only enhance their tables but also their food share memories for long term.

Regarding Samuel’s quotation, for the ones excluded from the table due to their ABM-free vegan, vegetarian, or other eating diets PBM helps them to make *good* food, particularly *meat*, share memories. For instance, at such occasions, consumers prepare the same-looking food from different resources and they grill PBM sausages next to ABM sausages and socialize around the concept of barbecuing while building *good* memories in these occasions. Like Hans says they reduce the tension in food while sharing because “there is *meat* for everyone” at such occasions thanks to PBMs (Interview).

What Hans says above is very crucial to understand how *hosts* are also affected by the existence of plant-based meat as a replacement of ABM. Food providing at social occasions, as a part of hospitality, is not a basic issue, it has a great importance of pleasing guests by thinking about them through the served food.



*His bread, his ale were finest of the fine*  
*And no one had a better stock of wine*  
*His house was never short of bake-meat pies*  
*Of fish and flesh, and these in such supplies*  
*It positively snowed with meat and drink*

(Geoffrey Chaucher, 1340-1400, as cited in Paston-Williams, 1993, p.12)

“The medieval and early Tudor emphasis on hospitality as both a social duty and a means of displaying one’s power, meant that everyone, whether rich or poor, took pride in giving the best they could afford to all their visitors” (Paston-Williams, 1993, p.63). Hospitality has a long history in the civilization of human, it is a criterion to be a good [land]lord now and then. In our modern [land]lordship regarding social meetings around food it is vital to emphasize how one, as a modern landlord, is supposed to provide different but good dishes which might appeal different guests with various diets to show her respect and recognition to guests and of course to consolidate her position in her social network. In relation to all these explanations, here, I would like to draw attention to three different issues of the existence of PBM at tables from modern landlords’ perspectives, which are creating a common ground for all guests, assuring enough good food to them and having meat democracy at the table.

“I think two weeks ago, me and some friends made tacos here, there were some friends who don’t eat meat. It was good to serve that Anamma färs [a plant-based minced meat] instead of normal meat. It is not like they [referring to ABM eaters] felt that they have to have another option” says Mathilda. As a landlord, Mathilda finds this PBM satisfying as an inclusive meat product that creates a common ground. Moreover, she ensures that both ABM eaters and other guests with animal-free diets can eat from this food and enjoy her PBM tacos at her table.

“Especially when I am at home with my family and grandparents, they always cook meat alternatives for me because they say “you need to eat something than patotes and vegetables”. For them it is like some real food, I always get them when I am at home” (Maria, Focus Group 2). Maria’s grandparents do not consider vegetables as real or, in other words, enough nutritious food, therefore, when she goes home back, as the main landlords of the home, they cook PBM products for her. It is not very obvious, however, based on what Maria implies, her grandparents and other family members find these products similar with ABM in terms of their

appearance, texture, and taste. Therefore, they perceive them as some type of real food which is nutritious to serve and feed Maria since according to them real food is something like ABM. Based on their behaviors mentioned by Maria, it is not hard to guess that these landlords know their one of the hospitality duties very well, which is assuring the guest getting enough (nutritious) food with good taste. Therefore, in this case, for them serving PBM becomes better than serving just vegetables. Relatedly, doing so makes them *good landlords* but especially serving symbolically prestigious (some type of) meat makes them good landlords according to sociocultural connotations, traditions and food memories. Furthermore, now and then, this is just like a *precondition* of being a good [land]lord mentioned in the Chaucer’s poem given above.

“These products provide a democracy at the table, when you have them at table then you also show your guests that you thought about them beforehand and fixed food for them because you respect their food preferences and lifestyles by doing so, moreover, not everyone needs to eat normal meat. They also build a bridge between vegan and vegetarian people and me, an emotional bridge when I eat the same thing with them. ... As you know, vegans do not have many choices, these products create a common ground for eating outside with vegan friends as well. ... When I invite friends including vegans and vegetarians for special occasions, I think these are necessary, for instance, when we have a barbecue party, as a host, I buy vegan burger or sausages” (Ayla, Eat-Along).

Sennet (2003) explains the synonyms of respect as status, prestige, recognition, honor, and dignity (p.49). Here, I would like to share three of them with more details to explain what happens when hosts serve PBM at their occasions. Status shows a person’s hierarchical position in the society while prestige refers to emotions arising from status among others (p.53). Additionally, recognition, based on Habermas’ approach, means “respecting the views of those whose interests lead them to disagree” (p.55). Regarding the quotation above, landlord Ayla shows respect to her guests with thinking about them beforehand and prepare PBM in accordance with their eating preferences. By doing so, she, as an ABM eater, preserves *meat democracy* at her table with having both ABM and PBM. She shows her recognition to her guests who do not want to eat ABM but still make them attend this meat-share ritual via PBM. She even goes further and says this makes her thinking about her friends, empathizes with them in the case of not finding available ABM-free food options. Based on this, she expresses how these friends of her are actually excluded when there is a *meat-share ritual* without PBM, especially for special occasions. Regarding these, she shows her respect to her guests by being

sensitive and thoughtful about their different meat preferences and she puts PBM next to ABM and support *meat democracy* at her table.

This chapter shows that there are sensory and social dimensions of plant-based meat in performative practice of eating. In the former, it is showed how PBM becomes a part of plates regarding Douglas’s ideal plate in serving, how the consumption of it is affected with senses in relation to ABM’s historical context positively and negatively. Moreover, in the social dimensions, it is found that these products contribute to sharing festive or ritualistic food, particularly meat, with others in meat-eating social-gatherings and create a commensality by eating the similar. Furthermore, this decreases the tension for both the host and guest for *meat-eating rituals* and enhances collective eating experience while helping to first remember the old food share memories and then create new *memories* with including the people previously excluded from meat-eating ritual because of their animal-free diets. Finally, it is explained that with the existence of plant-based meats at table, a *meat democracy* is created for everyone.

## 7. Concluding Discussion

This thesis is a product of my personal interest in plant-based meat that I brought to study as a research subject in academia. Differently from my project called Meatless Future, in this thesis my main aim was to understand the effects of consumers’ interactions with PBM in their three daily food performative food practices which are shopping, cooking, and eating. With its cultural analytical frame, research aim and questions, combined theoretical framework including semiotics, performative practices, (embodied) memory, myths and rituals, and other theoretical concepts, and finally, next to the accustomed research methods and strategies, its method of shop, cook, eat-along inspired and combined from participant observation and go-along methods, this thesis has intended to contribute to the understanding of a rapidly growing phenomenon, which has not deserved much attention in previous research.

To frame the discussion, I will refer back to my research questions and answer them regarding the findings. Why, when, where, and how do people consume PBM products? The analysis shows that people consume these products in relation to their positional and intentional reasons. In positional shopping people shop them based on food politics issues like saving the environment, personal health, and animal rights by voting with their wallets. Plant-based meat is similar with ABM in terms of physical and sensual characteristics such as taste and texture. When this is the case, these similarities of PBM are not always appreciated by consumers, instead, they might turn into the shortcomings of plant-based meat products for some

consumers. Regarding animal-welfare, some claim that both the term meat in PBM and the sensual dimensions of it recall their bad memories of animal-based meat in relation to animal slaughter. For instance, some do not like ABM due to this, therefore, they do not like PBM either because of the similar of it. Such consumers shop less similar PBM products based on their meat memories with sensual aspects. In intentional shopping, people shop them because of their personal motivations including their tastes and cooking purposes such as replacing ABM with these plant-based meats when they want to consume less ABM, re-experiencing dishes including ABM with replacing it with PBM in their animal-meat free diets or adopting them as another new food product. Relatedly, based on findings, a recommendation network of plant-based meat was presented to show why they shop particular products. The findings show that consumers are affected by the components of this network including family/friends/celebrities, social media, embodied experiences of others/ themselves, and scientific facts/ other additional factor while deciding on a particular plant-based meat product.

Majority of research participants consume these products when they do not want to eat animal-based meat but something similar while the minority buys them when they want to eat something different because they accept them being totally different from animal-based meat. They either consume them at their home, at special occasions, and at restaurants either collectively or individually. When it comes to how they consume, they perform them quickly or putting effort and spend time on cooking with them to compose their food while some shops them prepared from big burger chains or restaurants.

What affects consumers’ interactions with PBM during shopping, cooking, and eating performative practices in relation to animal-based meat (ABM)? What role do food memories take in the consumption of PBM in relation to ABM? This study shows that consumers’ replacing animal-based meat with plant-based one which have similar textures, smells, tastes, and appearances, have both negative and positive impacts regarding (embodied) food memories with sensual cores of ABM in all these three performative practices. For instance, for the ones like Zoe, who do not like the sensual properties of animal-based meat in relation to previous memories, it is important to consume PBM with less similarities with ABM. However, for the ones who like the sensual aspects of ABM, there is no obstacle for interacting with any PBM during these daily practices.

Since I touched upon shopping above and I will expand eating discussion below with these effects, here, I prefer to focus on cooking findings regarding the given research questions.

Based on the analysis of consumer data it is identified that plant-based meat products are helpful to create original or traditional dishes by replacing ABM with its sensual properties. This indeed gives an opportunity to consumers, who have animal-free diets but like the taste of ABM, to cook different recipes than they were used to before. In this sense, it is found that cooking memories of ABM affect cooking PBM positively, make consumers’ performative cooking easier, and leads them to even cook being able to use their embodied memories, without checking any recipes. Therefore, these PBM products, particularly the rawish ones, allow consumers to enhance their cooking and sign their dishes how they desire so.

Related to the third question, some drivers and obstacles of consumers’ usages of plant-based meat are identified in these three daily practices. For shopping the previously mentioned positional and intentional dimensions constitute both drivers and obstacles differently from consumer to consumer. In cooking, memory, senses, and performativity of these products during cooking are the main points where consumers are challenged and encouraged to keep consuming them. A prepared plant-based meat product can become both driver and obstacle for consumers during cooking practices. It is a driver for quick cooks who do not want to lose time on cooking, and it is an obstacle for detailed performative cooking for some. As mentioned above, the rawness of them matters and affects positively to cook different dishes including traditional or international ones. In relation to eating, some products’ similar properties with ABM become barriers for consumption, especially for the ones like Zoe and Lilly. But for others liking this taste, the familiarity between serving plant-based meat and animal-based meat as a part of the ideal plate next to cereals and vegetables becomes a motivation to adopt them into every day consumption.

Regarding social dimensions of eating as positive contributions for the consumption, plant-based meat products create commensality at tables by bringing people with animal-free diets back and making them eat similar food like others at food rituals like special dinners, celebrations, and similar. Therefore, it enhances social gatherings and interpersonal communication among people around meat-share ritualistic activity, by doing so, it helps to remember and also create interpersonal food share memories. Finally, the analysis shows that these products develop meat democracy and respect to guests with different diets when they are put next to animal-based ones. Relatedly, they decrease the tension for everyone including modern lords, i.e. hosts, who would like to guarantee their guests having fun and good food.

When all is taken into consideration, it is possible to say that most of the time plant-based meat is performed in accordance to how consumers are used to with ABM in these three everyday practices. The (embodied) memories and sensual cores of ABM create a familiar food experience for the consumption of PBM in these everyday practices. Therefore, consumers do not have big challenges when it comes to shop, cook, and eat them thanks to consumers' previous meat-eating habits. Eventually, like Oscar says, these products are not the same but *close enough* to perform these practices properly and fulfill the gap of animal-based meat functionally. Moreover, they make consumers with diet restrictions a member of a (temporary) eating community at occasions culturally shaped around meat-eating, for instance, during Christmas. With all aspects mentioned above plant-based meat becomes culturally important by entering people's everyday lives and eventually by becoming an important part of their daily food practices. As seen, all these findings were in line with the aim of the thesis, which was to identify and understand the effects of consumers' interactions with PBM in daily food practices of shopping, cooking, and eating. However, what do all these cultural insights say to us in relation to the semiotic discussion of (plant-based) meat in relation to the theory of memory and ritual?

PBM, as a simulacrum and replacement of animal-based meat, is resourced from plants and produced with similar physical characteristics of ABM. Regarding ABM its consumption as masculinity dominated with its hunting and slaughtering connotations, contradictorily, plant-based appears as feminine since it is made of plants, which is associated with the nature and peace. Therefore, plant-based meat promises to liberate the term of meat from animals by imitating ABM in the taste. I perceive this as a feminist rebellion against the thousands of years old animal exploitation for food. In relation to this, I think there is a need to discriminate them as *animal-based meat* and *plant-based meat* since they have different cultural connotations in food history such as ABM with bloodiness, animal torture and slaughter, and their dead bodies and PBM with plants, environmentally friendly, and animal-cruelty free.

In relation to this, the EP's decision, which is banning the use of meat terms if the product does not include edible parts of animals since when they are used for PBM this confuses consumers (!) (Boffey, 2019), becomes interesting. Based on my fieldwork, I would say there was no confusion among the participants for these products when they purchase them with the name of meat with plant-based labels. Additionally, it is observed that naming these products as meat does not create any problem for consumers in their daily food practices. Regarding the semiotic discussion: I repeat the question, what makes meat meat, being resourced from animals? No.

With the findings given above, in a more fundamental level, this cultural analytical thesis shows that we name things, *how we are used to naming them in relation to our (embodied) memories and sensual cores, how we are used to performing them in our daily practices, and how we consume them at special occasions like food sharing rituals and eating together with*



Figure 23. P3nyheter [@p3nyheter]. (April 4, 2019). A screenshot of a plant-based sausage photo with a text which means “This is not a sausage” in English [Public Instagram Profile]. Retrieved May 10, 2019 from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv1W4DbjJQW/>

*others while crating memories around things.* Regarding these, there is no reason not to call them as *meat* and use meat names such as sausages, hamburgers, beef strips for PBM products since they function as meat how ABM does in cooking pots and in consumers’ mouths. Furthermore, based on the performativity and functionality aspects of these products, they are definitely meat.

Besides all, regarding Wolpa (2016), one might even ask what if the concept of meatness is not related to animal-flesh, and what if the ideal meat in relation to resources, is plant-based meat indeed. I would like to conclude the discussion with referring what I asked when I saw them first time at aisles in Sweden: now, I ask to decision-makers and other stakeholders, with pointing to the screenshot given in *Figure 23*: “isn’t it a sausage”, if it is not, what is it then?

## 8. Applicability of Findings

“Ethnography is keenly suited to design, because it speaks to personal experience and intuition. Designers must draw heavily upon such personal knowledge to express their creativity. Good ethnography can inspire good design” (Reese, as cited in O’Dell & Willim, 2011, p.27).

Firstly, this thesis aims to provide cultural insights with its findings to various stakeholders including food designers, developers, producers, and law-makers. Regarding consumers profiles, without saying, the findings valuable to the food industry, particularly for the plant-based meat food category, primarily in Sweden and Denmark. Also, this thesis may be of great value for other countries’ food industries having interest in this product category with its findings regarding the general aspects of culturally landed values of PBM. Moreover, the research findings can be used by me and other colleagues, with Fayard & Van Mannen’s (2015) words, as *cultural translators* to develop understandings about plant-based meat category for different stakeholders. In this research consumers’ three performative everyday practices with plant-based meat are examined and the drivers and obstacles of its consumption in relation to ABM are disclosed, which I believe it will be valuable for both policy-makers and practitioners. Furthermore, Belasco (2008) says “[w]e redesign peoples’ values, not their gizmos, to meet the challenges of feeding the future” (p.118). Therefore, regarding what Belasco (2008) says, this thesis directly contributes to design future PBM products while developing the current ones at the supermarkets in the ways that people would like to consume. And the research brought in another angle and emphasized that PBM needs to be produced regarding the *cultural* and *performative* aspects of consumers’ everyday interactions with it.

Secondly, based on the analysis, this research comes up with a suggestion for policy-makers regarding their concerns of food quality. If a resource, plant or animal body, is important to regulate food products to increase or keep the quality of them in a recommended level, then, they might use the terms of *animal-based* and *plant-based* meat like I used in this thesis to discriminate the resources from each other. By doing so, their job might become easier to regulate both ABM and PBM with their own regulations. For instance, they might regulate PBM’s high saturated fat and salt levels in the products or sustainable production including the sustainability of energy, ingredient, and production. By doing so, they might solve the real consumer problems of PBM instead of discussing what is *real meat* or not. Even though the decision the EP made will be applied, it is obvious that it is hard to change consumers’ naming



them as *meat*, *hamburgers*, *burgers*, and *sausages* since the semiotic and products’ performativity in their daily lives are in play with their shape, texture, appearance, smell, and taste. In this sense, I recommend the authorities to reconsider their decisions regarding consumers and these relevant aspects. Additionally, I invite everyone to rethink about the term of meat itself because meat needs to be liberated from animals. I suggest this due to that masculine hegemony curated the dominance over animals which were feminized and hunted and exploited their bodies as food for thousands of years. Based on this, I believe that with plant-based meat, this would be possible, to liberate the term of meat from animal cruelty while having plant-based meat for our cultural food practices.

Finally, this thesis fills the gaps about the effects of consumers’ interactions with plant-based meat in three everyday food practices which are shopping, cooking, and eating with a cultural analytical perspective. Therefore, with its findings based on ethnographic research, it provides consumer insights for such an important food object for the society while opening up new research gaps and raises further questions about plant-based meat in academia. Here, I would like to share some relevant questions for further researches: How will new memories be constructed by plant-based meat products? What are the other disregarded sociocultural practices that plant-based meat exists and how does it make sense and value to consumers in them? How do embodied memories and senses take roles in these new practices?

Moreover, how will lab-grown meat affect all these relations when it will enter to supermarkets in the following years? As known, it is a product of genetic technology, but cell-wise, it is resourced from animals. How will lab-grown meat affect these consumers’ everyday lives in comparison to PBM and ABM? And, when this is the case, how will policy-makers examine this new product as meat or as something else in relation to the different cultural dimensions of it?

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## References in Author's Possession

### Interviews

Anna (16.09.2018)

Birgitta (22.09.2018)

Burcu (19.09.2018)

Ella (24.09.2018)

Emil (04.10.2018)

Hans (13.09.2018)

Karen (19.09.2018)

Karl (10.09.2018)

Liana (04.10.2018)

Lilly (13.09.2018)

Lucas (13.09.2018)

Samuel (20.09.2018)

Sigrid (20.09.2018)

Per (21.09.2018)

**Focus Group 1 (19.09.2018)**

Clara

Joseph

Patricia

**Focus Group 2 (20.09.2018)**

Maria

Marta

Oscar

Zoe

**Focus Group 3 (21.09.2018)**

Greta

Ibrahim

Lars

Marie

William

**Shop, Cook, Eat-Alongs**

Ayla (28.02.2019)

Mathilda (12.02.2019)

## 10. Appendices

### Appendix A: Participant Profiles

Informants	Age	Orginally From	Residence Country	Food Preference	M/F	Profession	Research Methods
Clara	25	UK	Denmark	Vegetarian (occasionally eat fish)	F	Student	Focus Group 1
Joseph	28	USA	Denmark	Omnivore	M	Student	Focus Group 1
Patricia	26	USA	Denmark	Omnivore	F	Student	Focus Group 1
Maria	25	Germany	Sweden	Vegetarian	F	Student	Focus Group 2
Marta	31	Romania	Sweden	Omnivore	F	Student	Focus Group 2
Oscar	27	Sweden	Sweden	Vegan	M	Student	Focus Group 2
Zoe	28	USA	Sweden	Vegetarian	F	Student	Focus Group 2
Greta	25	Italy	Sweden	Gluten Free	F	Student	Focus Group 3
Ibrahim	35	Germany	Sweden	Omnivore	M	Worker	Focus Group 3
Lars	26	Sweden	Sweden	Omnivore	M	Student	Focus Group 3
Marie	27	Georgia	Sweden	Vegetarian	F	Worker	Focus Group 3
William	25	Denmark	Sweden	Flexi-vegan	M	Entrepreneur	Focus Group 3
Ayla	30	Turkey	Sweden	Omnivore	F	Student	Shop, Cook, Eat-Along
Mathilda	25	Sweden	Sweden	Vegetarian (eats fish sometime)	F	Student	Shop, Cook, Eat-Along
Anna	26	Sweden	Sweden	Vegan (flexi-vegan)	F	Lawyer	Interview
Birgitta	28	Sweden	Sweden	Omnivore	F	Student	Interview
Burcu	25	Turkey	Denmark	Omnivore	F	Student	Interview
Ella	49	Sweden	Sweden	Flexitarian	F	Chef	Interview
Emil	28	Sweden	Sweden	Flexitarian	M	Librarian	Interview
Hans	48	Sweden	Sweden	Omnivore	M	Lecturer	Interview
Karen	25	USA	Denmark	Omnivore	F	Student	Interview
Karl	28	Sweden	Sweden	Omnivore	M	Lawyer	Interview
Lilly	38	Sweden	Sweden	Vegan	F	Coordinator	Interview
Liana	30	Sweden	Sweden	Omnivore	F	Librarian	Interview
Lucas	51	Sweden	Sweden	Vegan	M	Lecturer	Interview
Samuel	22	Italy	Sweden	Vegetarian	M	Student	Interview
Sigrid	24	Sweden	Sweden	Vegetarian	F	Student	Interview
Per	27	Sweden	Sweden	Vegan	M	Vego Chef	Interview

### Appendix B: Interview Guide

Name:

Age:

Profession:

Consumer Segment:

Date/Time/Place:

Originally From/ Residence Country:

#### Consumer Profile Questions

1. What eating style do you have? Vegans, Vegetarians, Flexiterians, Omnivore Consumer? If you are flexitarian, could you describe the term of flexitarian?
2. The story of eating vegan, vegetarian or flexitarian. What triggered you to eat this way?
3. What is meat for you? Could you describe it? Why meat is important for the society? (Probe: related to culture and family, value of meat)
4. If s/he is a meat-eater participant, do you think if there is a direct relationship between eating healthy or sustainable and eating vegetarian or vegan?
5. Do you consume meat alternatives (MA), in other words, plant-based meat products? What do you think about them? Why do you consume?
6. Vegan, vegetarian products, where do you buy them from? Markets or small markets? Do you buy online?
7. If you have good meat alternatives, would you consider to change real meat with meat alternatives? How could you stop or eat less meat? Is there anything that could make you eat less meat eating or stopping?
8. Have you heard about lab-made meat? What do you think about lab-made meat?
9. What kind of ingredients and labels are important for you while doing grocery shopping in general and why? Which ones do you trust? How the labels of organic, plant-based, free froms and locally produced are important for you?

### **Healthy Eating Definition with Sustainability**

10. Do you care about healthy eating? What is healthy food for you? What should healthy food include? How should it be produced?
11. Can you tell me some of your own healthy principles? Probe: to understand the healthy ingredients/ actions
12. When you are shopping food do you think about the environment and sustainability on a wider scale? Do you relate buying healthy food to helping to save the environment?
13. Do you give importance about animal welfare while shopping and eating?

### **Influencers in (Healthy) Eating**

14. Who affects your eating style? Mum, social media figures, doctors? Who inspires you for food recipes for MA? Could you give me some account names to me? Probe: Instagram and Facebook

15. Do you follow website like blogs or forums for food and life style? Names?

16. What do you know about the recent meat alternative trends? How do you get information about the latest trends related to (healthy) eating?

17. Are you registered in any social media groups in regards to eating vegan, vegetarian or flexitarian or the consumption of meat alternatives? Names?

18. Do you use any specific application to find MA products or find food recipes for MA?

### **Thoughts about lab-made meat and meat alternatives**

#### **(A. Their Needs -managing daily diet)**

19. How often do you consume MA (for all type of eaters)? When do you consume them usually? If you don't consume them at all or little, why? What are the barriers for your consumption?

20. How do you use meat alternatives; do you use them as ingredients while cooking? Or do you buy prepared ones like warm-up products or Oumph Pizza? Do you find cooking with meat alternatives healthier than consuming the prepared ones? And why?

21. Do you find them sustainable and healthy (plant-based, meat free, protein intake)? No/ Yes: Why/ Why Not? (Why do you eat then?)

22. If you find unhealthy, why? And why do you keep consuming it?

23. Do you have any expectations related to 'sustainable meat alternatives' to the producer companies? Different recipes, flavors, packaging, principles like transparency etc. (Expectation)

#### **(B. Acceptance of Ingredient and Packaging)**

24. What are the reasons to accept meat alternatives? How do they help you on daily basis?

25. Which ingredient is more acceptable in MA? What ingredients and labels do you look at while buying meat alternatives? Which ones you don't buy? Do you give importance on plant-based label?

26. What do you think about lab-made meat which is made of cells from cows without killing? Would you consider to eat it? Who needs that? How do you feel about it?

27. How do you find their packaging? Is there MA producer any company giving importance on recycling of packages? And where did you learn from this?

**(C. Understanding- Understanding of Benefits)**

28.(V-V-F) What do you think if I say MA and culture meat (lab-made meat) are sustainable meat alternatives for long term comparing to real meat production and consumption?

29.(Meat-eaters) If I say MA and cultured meat are more sustainable and show it with scientific data, would you consider replace real meat with them?

30.Physical: Which nutrition benefits are important for you for MA and in general? What gains from them?

31. There are many restaurants serving vegetarian and vegan food including plant-based meat like burgers, sausages, tacos with minced meat in Sweden and Denmark. How do you consider about this? How are the prices?

32. Do you do BBQ with MA? How do you feel when you have BBQ with your friends who aren't vegan or vegetarian? How do you feel? Do you enjoy?

33. Do you like the idea of eating meat without damaging the environment and the animals? Do you miss the taste of real meat? Is it the reason of your MA consumption? Would you eat cultured meat if you find it tastier?

**(D. Trust & Product Mapping)**

34. What meat alternative brands and companies do you like to buy and why? Probe: Organic, local, good taste, good to add as ingredient while cooking, plant based etc.

35. Which type of MA do you use usually? Chicken, hamburger, minced meat, meatballs? Could you give their names?

### **Their Frustrations about MA**

36. What kind of difficulties and frustrations do you have related to your eating habit?

### **Society Awareness**

37. Do you think that people in Nordic countries are aware of environmental problems and animal slaughter nowadays comparing to previous decade? Do you think they give enough importance on them? If so how?

### **Their Suggestions**

38. Do you have any suggestion for ‘sustainable meat alternatives’ to the producer companies to develop them better?

39. How do you feel about eating MA with meat taste, smell and meat texture? Is it ethical from your perspective? Would you rather have other meat alternatives which don’t taste meat? E.g.: bean burgers

### **Food Science & Technology and the Views of Processed Food in relation to Meat Alternatives and Lab-made Meat**

40. What is your relationship with food science? How do you feel about this?

41. How do you perceive food science and technology in relation to meat alternatives?

42. Do you know how these products produced? How does that make you feel? And why? Is it important to you, why? Could you tell me what differences do you see between processing the real meat and processing plant-based meat? Which one is better?

43. If you buy processed food what do you look at, what is your motivation to buy? Do you think minced real meat healthier than the vegan meat one? Why? Probe: the important criteria in processing assessment

## **Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Guide (19.09.2018, 20.09.2018 and 21.09.2018 Focus Groups)**

### **First Session: Plant-based Meat**

1. What is meat? Story of participants’ eating styles.

2. Why do you eat MA? How often? If you don’t consume why not?



- 3.If some finds the taste and smell of PBM are disturbing, if the ones with very real taste?
- 4.Do you check ingredients of MA? Ingredient Acceptance? Which labels do they look at?
- 5.They are plant-based, how do you perceive this, are they healthy?.
- 6.If I say they are more sustainable scientifically than real meat? Would you replace real meat with them?
- 7.Which brands of MA do you buy and why do you trust them?
- 8.When do you eat PBM and why? Are there practical reasons behind that?
- 9.Expectations, Suggestions: packaging, taste, differently designed products ...
- 10.What is your perception about processed food in relation to PBM?
- 11.Who are influencing you for eating and cooking PBM? Are they members of social groups on Facebook or do they follow people on Instagram?
- 12.Are you becoming flexitarian in different circumstances, for instance, to be included at an common eating moment?
13. What do these products provide you in, for instance, BBQ parties, family dinners etc.?

### **Second Session: Lab-made Meat**

- 1.What are your perception about lab-made meat?
- 2.Is it sustainable, if so from your perspective, would you eat it?
3. What do you think about food science and technology how do you feel about it in relation to both plant-based meat and lab made meat?
- 4.Did/do you like eating meat? If so, how could this affect your preferences for lab-made meat?
- 5.Do you like eating meat alternatives including PBM and lab-made meat without damaging the environment and animals?
- 6.What are your ethical concern about MA and lab-made meat?
- 7.Is it something that vegans and vegetarians can eat? Why?

## **Appendix D: Shop-Along, Cook-Along and Go-Along Guide (12.02.2019 and 28.02.2019)**

### **Shopping**

1. Do you eat meat why or why not?
2. Why do you eat PBM? How do you know them?
3. What affects your shopping in general and in relation to PBM?
4. Is there someone/something affecting your consumption of PBM? What knowledge affects your shopping of these products?
5. How do you decide to buy a particular PBM brand?
6. What kind of PBM do you buy such as more prepared meatballs or minced meat? And what is the reason?
7. How often do you shop PBM from this section?

**Observation Detail:** How does she decide to buy A product but not B? Does s/he check the products being raw or more cooked?

**Observation Detail:** How does she find the section for PBM at the market? Is it a repetitive behavior of shopping?

### **Cooking**

1. How do you know cooking? Cookbooks, Mam's or Family Member's Recipe or just know you learned when you were watching your parents/ elders? (embodiment cooking experience?)
2. How do you cook PBM? What kind of dishes do you with it?
3. Do you cook certain dishes always or change recipes all the time?
4. Could you share three dishes that you often cook with PBM?
5. Could you share three dishes that you often cook with PBM?
6. Does she replace or accept these products as another type of products?
7. How can you be sure that it works/goes good in your recipe?

8. How does it smell and taste? (While s/he cooks, smells food)
9. How differs when you warm it when you cook it? Is there any difference?
10. What kind of recipes do you use usually international or x country recipes if you use PBM?
11. Do you use particular ingredients such as some spices, hot chili etc. (as personal signature)?

**Observation Detail:** How does s/he interact with kitchen as space?

**Observation Detail:** How does she use tools while cooking? Does she have any difficulties to cook PBM while using tools?

### **Eating**

1. What do you feel while you are eating this food including PBM, does it remind you something?
2. What does PBM provide at table?
3. Are they appropriate to share with others (in special days)?
4. What is tasty for you? Is this food with PBM tasty for you?
5. What makes this food for you bodily and psychologically?

**Observation Detail:** How does she eat it? Are there any difficulties while using cutlery for instance?

**Observation Detail:** Does this product need new eating behaviors?