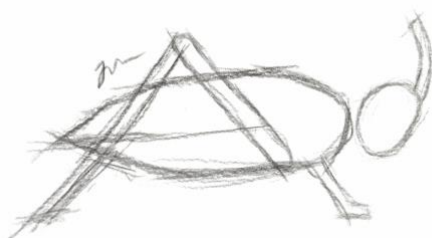




UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

**How to *bug* cultural change in food habits**

A qualitative study about introducing entomophagy to the Swedish food culture



**Bachelor Thesis in Marketing**

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*Illustration by*

*Jacob Varnauskas Mårtensson, 2018*

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It is time consuming to find a subject that is interesting yet not completely exhausted because it implies that one must really go outside the box that frames one's horizon. With this study, we wished to write about something we did not know much about and that we could discover through the process of our research. The purpose was to go deep; however, we started shallow with our near to nonexistent knowledge, and so the way to deepening our knowledge was long. Thus, we would never have made it very far if it was not for the people who helped us dig.

To all the respondents who in their own busy schedules made room for us and provided us with various thoughts and new perspectives. To our mentor, Ulrika Holmberg, who steered us right when we were lost in the complex world of culture.

This page is for you, thank you!

*Gothenburg, winter 2018*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this report is to provide a deeper understanding of how Swedish consumers relate to insects as food. Through a cultural analysis we aim to contribute to marketing insights of how to make consumers more willing to incorporate insects as part of their natural diets, and thereby promote sustainable food consumption. The theoretical background is based on prior research in the area of consumer behavior, globalization of culture, sustainable marketing and symbolic significance of products. In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative method with a cultural approach has been applied. The data constitutes nine in-depth interviews of consumers raised in Sweden, providing insights into the discursive practices within the cultural discourse.

In order to provide a deeper understanding of consumers' relation to entomophagy, the role of food is seemingly important to understand. Thus, we have identified three main roles that food play, which further are used as a symbol portraying a particular social identity. The different roles of food are *foodie*, *appearance* and *resistance*. Food according to someone in the *foodie* category, is a source of appreciation of the taste and the experience as a whole. In the second category, *appearance*, food plays a role of identity creation and the taste becomes secondary to whether the food is from "the right" brand or restaurant. Thirdly, food according to the *resistance* group plays the role of signaling resistance toward the mainstream and the norm. These roles have, in turn, subcategories that depend on the contextual background that somewhat varies among the respondents. These subcategories are further explained as each respondent's respective identity. The identities are *trend insensitive*, *trend sensitive*, *normative*, *adventurous* and *anti-normative*. These different subcategories classify how the creation of personal identity is made.

A great awareness of both the environment and health is found in our data. Seeing as ento food touches upon both these topics, there is an opportunity for it to take greater part of the debate as a first step towards normalization. The foodie group is believed to be the main target group, as food plays a great role of experience and enjoyment in their daily life. They search for and embrace novel foods, making them the group that would pay attention to an introduction of ento food. Further, subjective meanings are found among the consumers. Hence, there is also a risk associated with drawing strict and static borders between cultures as it may prevent the possibility of reaching the majority. Ignoring this would in turn hinder environmental protection that requires the society to move collectively in the same direction.

To conclude, the most successful aspect of marketing ento food is the balance between the unique and the common. Some identities are drawn to the exoticness of the unfamiliar while others are comfortable with the safety of the familiar. Thus, marketing activities needs to strive towards making entomophagy less dramatic without making it less interesting.

**Key words:** *Foodie, Appearance, Resistance, Cultural Identity, Cultural appropriation, Food Culture, Exposure, Entomophagy, Ento Food, Insects, Marketing*

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# 1. Introduction

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*In this first chapter, we will introduce the subject of this study, entomophagy. Starting off with where we find place for it in our society and in this way show its contemporary relevance. Following this, is a discussion of current research on the practice of eating insects and where there is a gap of knowledge that our study aims to fill. From this, the purpose and research questions are formulated and presented. Finally, the chapter ends with a presentation of the delimitations of the study.*

## 1.1 Background

One of the biggest challenges of today is climate change. Its consequences unfold at a tremendous pace and most of it is caused by how we as humans are eating and consuming (WWF, 2017). The balance of nature is displaced by the increase of greenhouse gases (2017). This disruption can already be observed through the rising numbers of wildfires, long periods of drought, and the islands and other areas of land that will soon be under the water surface due to rising sea levels. Further, 25 percent of the greenhouse gases are caused by forestry and agriculture, which is mainly used for the enormous productions of the meat industry (2017). Additionally, the United Nations estimate that population growth will not level off until we reach the end of the century, at which point the population is forecasted to have reached around 10-12 billion people (Rosling. H, Rosling.O & Rosling Rönnlund, 2018). These numbers, along with those of a rising middle class (FAO, 2013), indicate a critical need of new sources of food seeing as we already today are facing the problem of overusing our planet's resources.

Entomophagy has been defined as “the practice of eating insects” (FAO, 2013 p.1), and food made out of insects is called ento food. It has been suggested by the United Nations to work as a means towards fighting food scarcity and other challenges to sustainability, such as the harmful production of meat mentioned, and fresh water scarcity (2013). Today, at least two billion out of approximately 7,6 billion people in the world eat insects as part of their natural diet (2013). Evidently, the majority of the world's population lacks the availability of insects as food, or is unwilling to incorporate them into their diet. Established views and conditions like these are arguably challenging the goals of sustainability.

Research on entomophagy and its introduction to new markets is relatively new and limited yet progressing. The reason for the relative lack of research on the subject could be in part due to the strict regulations involved in the farming of insects along with the ambiguities of its impacts on both health and biodiversity. The national food agency in Sweden for example, called *Livsmedelsverket*, is very restrictive when it comes to novel foods and performs extensive controls to ascertain consumers' health and well-being (Livsmedelsverket, 2018). It does not allow the marketing of ento food as of now but the possibility is under thorough evaluation (FAO, 2013). However, in recent years, the 1 900 edible species of insects that

have been detected so far, (2013) have attracted increased attention and continues to do so. Some benefits with insects are that they are rich in protein and, in addition, if given 1 kilo of feed they produce 590 grams of food compared to a mere 100 grams gained from beef (2013). The interest may stem from the dissolving cultural boundaries that have been argued to be a result of globalization, which in turn increase the exposure to other cultures and their habits (Askegaard, Kjeldgaard & Arnould, 2009). Additionally, and perhaps foremost, the alarming and urgent challenge of sustainability has further accelerated interest.

Within the area of insects as food, we, the researchers of this study, see innovation and possibilities that may essentially contribute to saving the environment. Despite this, there is a conflict between environment and consumer behavior which makes this topic challenging, important, interesting and relevant for further study in hope of finding a solution for how to align consumer behavior with the goals of sustainability. Increased knowledge of how to change the stance towards entomophagy, and thereby enabling a desired alternative for protein on the market, would be of direct interest to marketers in the food industry primarily.

## **1.2 Problem Discussion**

A lot of the research made on the introduction of ento food into the Western market seemingly focus on the individual and consequently from an attitudinal perspective. House (2016) provides an extensive summary of the existing research on entomophagy. He mentions that a major share of reports investigates sensory perceptions related to insect foods, such as pointing at the reluctance being primarily due to disgust sensitivity or food neophobia, the fear of eating new or unfamiliar food. The literature, from this perspective, identifies various traits as affecting the receptiveness towards entomophagy. Some examples of people showing this receptiveness are consumers who show low disgust sensibility, are more prone to seek sensation, are male, those already familiar with eating insects and those having higher convenience orientation (2016). In a likewise manner, other results show consumer preference for processed insects rather than whole insects, presented in a familiar way or flavor. This preference is found similarly in all forms of animal consumption, because people do not want to be reminded that their food has once been a living creature (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2008). Others see patterns of willingness among those keen on substituting meat in general and among people concerned of their health or the environment. Furthermore, studies may also show rather contradicting results. A majority indicate that few are interested in eating insects for instance, while one American study opposes this by reporting 64 percent of its participants as being willing. Additionally, some find a positive relationship between youth and receptiveness while others do not. This according to House's interpretation of existing research (2016).

On the other hand, there is research within entomophagy that reaches beyond just the individual, taking into account the bigger cultural picture. The reasoning in this case is that food habits are affected by the cultural context. Findings show that aforementioned aspects, such as the familiarity of meals, are more effective than traits such as taste or fear of anything new (House, 2016). These findings of favoring familiarity are explained as being a result of

whether the food is perceived to be in accordance with the consumer's culture or not. The culture categorizes food as either right or wrong to eat, this stems from the fact that humans are omnivores who would eat anything if there were no rules (Engström, 2019, Jan 4). Thus, the ambiguity surrounding novel foods influence our perceived risk of trying it, as one does not know if the food is poisonous for instance. In addition, this explains why food that is considered traditional to some, is wrong to others and therefore perceived as "scary foods" (Gyimóthy et al., 2008). Although most cross-cultural consumer studies limit their primary reasoning to that of the individual and consumer psychology, there is one exemplified exception according to House (2016). Namely, Tan, Fischer, Tinchin, Stieger, Steenbekkers and van Trijp (2015), who aim at explaining the habits of eating insects as being, at least in part, a result of the socio-cultural context. The study identifies associations to insects as related to the participants' exposure to both edible and inedible insects. One example is that of inhabitants living in rural Thailand who were not willing to eat mealworms as they associated them with decaying matter, while the Dutch participants were more generally resistant due to the relatively nonexistent exposure in their culture (House, 2016). Other cultural studies show that aesthetic concerns can be a driving force behind the openness to and the consumption of food. Here, aesthetic refers to the increased role that style plays in food within today's western society, thus encouraging food to be consumed in order to create a certain self-image (Gyimóthy et al. 2008). Moreover, studies often show tendencies of early adopters to be the first to try and adopt scary or novel food, with the practice spreading gradually from them. This could be explained by the notion that they better cope with risks and have a more positive attitude toward changes than others (Rogers, 1995).

By shifting the focus away from people who are strongly resistant towards entomophagy and instead study those who are rather receptive, the result would potentially show who the willing consumer is. Knowledge, of the receptive consumer and how they view the practice, would be valuable in the quest for finding out how to market edible insects. Stock, Phillips, Campbell, and Murcott (2016), for example, suggest that the dimensions leading to the success of introducing entomophagy to the Western public are often several and dependent on each other. Additionally, these are found on a level above that of the individual, such as regulatory position of insect foods, supply, distribution, material properties and other aspects related to conventional food (House, 2016).

The cultural approach of this study is in line with that taken by Moisander and Valtonen (2006), who argue that culture constitutes the frames of society, that are, in Western culture, mainly created through the market. In this way, marketing also plays an important role in culture as it affects consumers' availability and exposure to products, practices and to other cultures in general. Consumers, in turn, negotiate and recreate cultural discourse through discursive practices in the marketplace. This means that marketers, together with consumers, produce parts of the cultural worlds that in turn make up the marketplace (2006). From this, it can be concluded that culture and marketing are interdependent, continually affecting each other. This clearly implies that the understanding of entomophagy from a cultural perspective is crucial in the strive towards finding out how the practice, not yet introduced to the Swedish market, can eventually be produced and maintained through marketing.

We wish to fill the gap in the research on entomophagy by offering new perspectives in the context of cultural marketing. Perspectives are produced from culture through social interactions in locally specific systems of representations (Moisander et al., 2006). With reference to this, apart from the absence of a cultural perspective on entomophagy overall, a gap could be argued to exist on the local level as well, seeing as the existing cultural research focuses on the level of nations and comparisons between them. Thus, this novel perspective would contribute to existing knowledge in the field with new interpretations based on values, norms and role expectations specific to the group under study.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide a deeper understanding of how Swedish consumers relate to insects as food. Through cultural analysis we aim to contribute to marketing insights of how to make consumers more willing to incorporate insects as part of their natural diets, and thereby promote sustainable food consumption.

### **1.4 Research question**

- How do consumers negotiate their understanding of eating insects through cultural practices?
- How could entomophagy be more normalized?

### **1.5 Delimitations**

Research on entomophagy is ongoing and legislations within the European Union, including Sweden, are still seemingly loose and under development. In this manner, we recognize the uncertainties related to the practice of entomophagy, such as health effects, impact on the environment surrounding insect farms and the potential effect on biological diversity. However, the possible outcomes and consequences are outside of the scope of this thesis and will therefore not be taken into further consideration within this particular context.

Furthermore, a cultural perspective is chosen to frame the outer boundaries of this study. The reason for this is that food habits are seemingly rooted in one's culture as it is often inherited through generations. Furthermore, as the purpose is to examine what makes people willing to incorporate insects as part of their diet, a change in food culture is arguably, and hopefully, a long-lasting approach, as opposed to creating a temporary trend out of entomophagy for instance. Additionally, a cultural perspective is arguably the most relevant when studying the possibilities of future products that have not yet been introduced, as culture usually constitutes the very foundation from which novelties are either accepted or rejected.

Moreover, the population studied is limited to people raised in Sweden, who have, to some degree, been exposed to entomophagy by either having tasted insects or show a willingness to do so. The most important criteria here is that they have a clear image and a comprehensive



experience of Swedish food culture, meaning that they may have spent a few years abroad but have lived in Sweden for a majority of their lives. There are two main reasons for this. First of all, the geographic closeness facilitates our strive towards answering the research questions presented in this paper to the widest extent possible. Secondly, by focusing on consumers already receptive towards entomophagy, we hope to find out what perceptions they have along with an explanation for these perceptions, which in turn will contribute to the development and positioning of future marketing practices on the subject of entomophagy. Finally, our aim is not to generalize our findings to the whole Swedish population. Rather, to study the discursive practices that have led to the receptiveness of a specific group of consumers.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

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*The theory that frames this study will be presented in this chapter. The framework that follows, has been used foremost as a source of inspiration in the sense that the insights it contains provide new ways of collecting and interpreting the data at hand. Essentially, the theory facilitates the contextualizing of the data, which helps the understanding of the consumer's perception of ento food.*

### 2.1 Globalization breaks up cultural boundaries

Some argue that globalization is a homogenizing process, which destroy local cultures and instead make room for a way of living that is principally the same all over the world, as mentioned by Askegaard et al. (2009). On the contrary, these authors argue that globalization causes cultures to change. Globalization could be said to be the cause of the more dynamic character of culture. This is illustrated by the dissolving of boundaries between national cultures as the flows of technology, media, finance, mixed ethnicities and ideas move freely across the globe and instead create real and/or virtual “culturescapes” (2009). These are no longer limited by the physical landscape and its accompanying obstacles such as distance. The same authors further mention that, along with globalization comes access to other societies in the world, physical or at least visionary access. That is, people become aware of lifestyles, products and cultures they did not know of before. Through this availability, new desires are created and consumers reach beyond their intimate surroundings and find other ways to express themselves. In this sense, *globalization* makes them pay interest to other *local* cultures that may distinguish them from their own (2009). Additionally, instead of viewing culture as an eternal and immutable condition within which marketing and other practices are framed, it is suggested that influence runs both ways, allowing marketing to have an impact on culture, just as culture does on marketing. That is, culture and marketing shape each other to some extent. In this way, marketing is given a role of greater importance (Askegaard et al., 2009).

When arguing for standardization on the global level, the common logic is that brands and products themselves carry their own meaning, allowing them to speak for themselves and transfer their meaning onto the consumer. However, counterarguments point at local interpretations and consumers creating their own meanings of the brand. This results in new constructions of “cultures”. However, these are argued by some to be more of a choice rather than a subconscious framing of thoughts and actions and this leads to the idea of culture as reflexive. This means that actors, both marketers and consumers, are aware of cultures and try to monitor and adjust their ways to fit into an idealized image. This consciousness stimulates the new dynamic of culture (Askegaard et al., 2009). In a similar manner, the expression “glocalization” recognizes the possibility that the response to globalization can be both homogenization and heterogenization. This notion implies that globalization and localization can occur alongside each other, giving room for, as previously mentioned, new

various forms of mixed cultures, which by some have been conceptualized as “creolization” or “hybridization” (2009).

## **2.2 Cultural appropriation**

Cultural appropriation is described by Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006) as the reworking of cultural meanings by the youth market in order to fit in the local context. From the globalization of society, and the flows within the different scapes, it is shown how consumers, together with the consumer culture, are shaping the sociocultural reality. The ongoing process of diffusion and appropriation could be explained by the concept of “glocalization” mentioned earlier (Askegaard et al., 2009), as it implicates that global always becomes localized and local will be globalized (Kjeldgaard et al., 2006). Within the youth culture, Kjeldgaard and Askegaard found three different structures of where diversity of the locally embedded culture could be seen. In other words, within the same locality, culture is expressed in different ways. The first structure, *identity construction*, is a way of showing distance from what is considered to be mainstream in order to create a feeling of uniqueness. The second structure is *center-periphery*. Within the central consumptionscapes, consumption is given a central role in the understanding of other people, and from this gives meaning to the own position. This can be seen for example in the usage of a certain type of clothing style. While the periphery position, on the other hand, is the idea of how consumption has a less central role, mainly caused by a lack of accessibility and geographical position. Thirdly, *youth as a site of consumption* brings up the global youth cultural similarities. Similarities between what life is like for young people in other localities compared to the own, foster a feeling of self-worth. Hence, Kjeldgaard and Askegaard argue for how identity act as a framework of common differences in order to fulfill both the individual and collective identity (2006).

## **2.3 Symbolic significance and the relation between products and practices**

In their paper, Ingram, Shove and Watson explore “how designed artefacts shape and are shaped by the contexts in which they are used” (2007, p.4), similar to the concept of cultural appropriation. Models illustrating design processes are often linear, starting with the designing of the product which then leads to consumption, meaning that, traditionally, they end where consumption begins. However, from a consumer practices perspective, the reverse process is also true. That is, consumption practices, including their symbols and materials, give rise to new product opportunities. The two linear models mentioned, together form the cyclical model of design and consumption that indicates that consumer practices stimulate design, and vice versa (Ingram et al., 2007). Furthermore, Ingram et al. (2007) present several concepts that function as a structural base from which the authors study the symbolic meaning of physical objects and the relation between products and practices. However, these are rather considered individually than as a theoretical whole. Some of the relevant concepts are presented here.

The *acquisition* theme, from a sociological perspective, aims at explaining why consumers acquire products by considering what they are for, how they align with, and add to existing

meaning. A number of sociological accounts are suggested as driving elements behind the desire for novel products. These elements include social comparison which covers objects' signaling of status and identity, the creation of self-identity through the individual selection of goods and services, and finally mental stimulation and novelty that arises by trying new products or experiencing new flavors and thereby also avoiding boredom.

*Appropriation*, according to the study, focuses on the meaning consumers attach to products and practices and suggest that whatever meaning is attached depends on culture and situation. Moreover, one form of appropriation is exemplified through the cases where consumers are actively resistant toward the prescribed meanings of objects and instead alter them to fit their specific context (Ingram et al., 2007). This is in resemblance to a study of a hipster community by Cronin, McCarthy and Collins (2014), where the use of food is an expression of resistance towards mainstream consumption. Resistance is performed mainly through three different strategies. The first strategy is *decommodification practices*, which for example is to rip off the label of the product to free it from thoughts and qualities associated with it and restore it to an original state. The second strategy is called *brand choices and brand awareness*, where consumers in the hipster community especially avoid mass-market food brands for example. Last is the strategy of *vegetarian choices* where consumers in the hipster community takes resistance toward the whole meat industry to show a stand point and be part of the minority. Furthermore, the concept of collective resistance as a powerful signal to show the identity of a whole group is discussed (2014). Moreover, the report sheds light on the power of food as a symbol of identity since food is a necessity for life, which makes it even more pronounced as a resistance statement, especially when used as resistance for a whole community (2014). Additional examples of appropriation are observed in some of the literature on globalization, which in part discusses how global brands are appropriated in different ways depending on context and how foreign cultures are discovered and, in a similar way, altered to some extent to fit into new contexts (Askegaard et al., 2009).

The concept of *assembly* develops that of appropriation by asking how appropriation is carried out and what it results in. More specifically, it is about how consumers assemble tools and practices to fit an imagery of what they perceive to be the correct way of life. For example, one's perception of health influences and frames several different practices, such as a specific combination of products guiding which acquisitions are made.

The processes of establishing new objects and compositions, along with those leading to new expectations, are illuminated by the theme of *normalization* (Ingram et al., 2007). One of the views presented argue for the gradual spread of new products into society and that their eventual establishment is a result of people imitating one another. In this view, the notion of "early adopters" is found, where the only focus is how the introduction of the new product is carried out. An opposing view focuses instead on the relation between product and environment. The disperse of new products onto new grounds depends on how the products are differentiated to fit each new market. However, at the same time, as new products become normal, they may also affect the environment and challenge existing conventions. The three phases of a product's life begin with consumption of a trendy item driven by desire, then its

demand shifts to one of reason, driven by rationality and functionality, before finally achieving a state of monotony, where consumption is driven by routine rather than reason. Still, the reality is not always this straightforward as products may be appropriated differently and some may not succeed in entering and taking a hold of the market properly (2007).

The last concept is *practice*. In part, it constitutes of the other themes by offering a framework for investigating the integral relation between objects, images, and know-how. Some indicate that products are tools to enable various practices and that the products and practices affect and cause the development of each other. Moreover, people and things are viewed as carriers of practices. This essentially implies that objects are components of practice which generate social order by connecting people and their knowledge (Ingram et al., 2007).

Ingram et al. (2007) conclude their article by identifying some opportunities and challenges related to the above themes. One example is the suggestion to extend the model of design processes, mentioned in the beginning, to emphasize the design opportunities arising from consumer practice. Furthermore, they recognize that consumers, designers and producers are all involved in the co-production of practices, which give meaning to objects. Finally, they describe the role of objects as to "stabilize culture through use, competence, and know-how, as well as through exchange and display" (2007, p. 16).

## **2.4 Sustainable marketing**

With a growing knowledge on how today's production and consumption pattern negatively affect our planet, there is increased concern in finding new solutions to meet consumer demands in ways that do not harm the environment. Along with the growing world population (Rosling, H. et al., 2018), an increasing part of the world is entering what is described as consumer society (Dobers & Strannegård, 2005). This is one of the reasons for the rising (over)consumption and has led to endless alternatives of products and consumer choices. Consumers in today's society are becoming more and more fashion sensitive, highlighting the importance of aesthetics and design in the products and services consumed, including food. The choice of brands and products plays a part in creating personal image and identity, which makes aesthetics one of the main selling points. Empirical findings on this is found in the study by Gyimóthy et al. (2008) mentioned in chapter one. This way of consuming thereby shows that people today are consuming as a way of making themselves seen, not for the sake of consuming or a need for the products (Dobers et al., 2005). This tendency is alarming from a sustainability point of view, as it stimulates consumption even further.

However, this rise in consumption has led to the recognition of the importance of how products are promoted and designed to make the product appealing and noticeable compared to other alternatives. Therefore, design and aesthetics consumption are concepts of high importance both in order to sell a product or service but also if the goal is to convey a message or an initiative that is beneficial for the environment. Hence, design is seen as a

result of conscious decisions taken based on several dimensions when developing and planning a product (Dobers et al., 2005). Furthermore, the market shows an increase in aesthetic concerns among consumers, and a demand for brands which have succeeded in creating an image and feelings of legitimation and attraction, described by Czarniawska (2000) in the article of Dobers and Strannegård (2005). Thus, one of the main tasks for a marketer today is to infuse “meanings” into products, services and brands that are in line with the identity consumers wish to express.

Gordon, Carrigan and Hastings (2011) describe a few categories that are important for sustainable marketing, *green marketing* and *social marketing* being two of them. Green marketing is described to be an aim for companies to balance the need for profit with a wider need to protect the environment. *Green marketing* could be seen in how companies use recycled, biodegradable, or reduced packaging. Furthermore, green marketing is done throughout the whole supply chain and is also seen in ethical awareness such as Fairtrade and to produce product with less waste, with more responsible ways of promoting products and services. However, green marketing is not sufficient in itself and therefore needs to be complemented with other activities in order to reach the goal of sustainable marketing (Gordon et al., 2011). Another example of such an activity is *social marketing*, an effective strategy to use together with green marketing to encourage more sustainable practices. Social marketing is described by Gordon et al. (2011) to aim at changing people’s behavior for the benefit of society as a whole. Therefore, social marketing tries to encourage, motivate and empower a behavior both on a communal and personal level. Thus, it is important that marketers have a deeper understanding of what the motivational factors of the specific consumer group are in order to reach out in the best way possible and achieve the goal of a lasting behavioral change. In addition, social marketing is also something used in an upstream way to encourage governmental changes and law makers to adopt new policies to achieve both a communal and individual change.

### 3. Methodology

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*The aim of this chapter is to, as transparently and thoroughly as possible, present the process of our research. The whole process from the tasting of insects to the analysis of hours of interviews. Moreover, we will show our interpretation of the reality under study and reflect and evaluate on why we made the choices we did and the result of these choices.*

#### 3.1 Qualitative study

The phenomenon of culture is a complex issue, thus food habits as seen as at least partly affected by culture cannot be explained by one concrete variable or a clear cause-effect relation. Contextual conditions may be accounted for in quantitative studies, however, the models derived from such studies are by some considered to be lacking applicability in reality as they still do not account for all plausible variables involved (Moisander et al., 2006). In contrast, qualitative research is according to Flick (2014) an appropriate method when designing studies that aim to be receptive towards the complexities surrounding the objects under study. In studies like these the object of study, the interviewee in this case, is the starting-point from which the study is shaped (2014). This to ascertain the inclusion of any unexpected variables due to diverse perspectives or contexts for instance. That is, the everyday life and biography specific to each interviewee has been considered in order to attain a more complete picture of what may have led to their receptiveness towards entomophagy.

This strive towards acknowledging the complexity of the choices people make led us to the use of in-depth interviews. Moisander et al. (2006) argue for talks like these, meaning that interviewees are actively using available cultural resources to explain their social realities. Moreover, when telling about their perceptions and stories, people tend to sometimes borrow narratives from discursive resources that they find appropriate and which are available to them at the time (2006). In this way, the personal interviews are argued to be useful for the purpose of our study, as it examines the cultural meanings within the target group.

The research questions were initially phrased based on existing research and theories but were essentially used as guidance when framing the template for the interviews, thus, they were still open for rephrasing depending on the outcome of the data collection. In this way, the study depended on, and was shaped in great part from, the empirical material and in this sense, took the approach of inductive reasoning. The semi-structured interviews allowed for new and diverse perspectives to be found as the questions were mostly open ended (Flick, 2014) and later gave rise to the need for further theories that could help explain some of our findings. However, seeing as the interview guide was influenced by both the theoretical framework and, in addition, by our own assumptions about social reality (Moisander et al., 2006), this suggests a more deductive process. The final result is in this way rather a mix of inductive and deductive reasoning.

### 3.2 Collecting Data

Once we realized that a cultural approach was relatively rare on the topic of entomophagy, which in turn is not very extensive overall, we found our opportunity of contributing to the field. This cultural approach is seemingly of high relevance for the study of a practice not yet practiced. Thus, the empirical data have to rely to great extent on a study of the preconditions for the potential practice, which probably are well established yet at times rather implicit.

Following a summary of the research found on entomophagy, we continued by reading various theories with connections to culture and some more specifically on food. Some theories were picked out to help frame the formation of an interview guide to be used during each interview. To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, as a step towards meeting the ethical dilemmas associated with qualitative studies (Flick, 2014), they were given fictional names. In addition, this is thought to be more enjoyable and easier to read than naming them as respondent no. x for instance. Furthermore, the questions started out as rather broad about how the everyday life of the respondent is organized, in accordance with Moisander & Valtonen (2006). This gave room for the respondent to tell us about different aspects they otherwise might have dismissed as irrelevant, had the questions been more specific or targeted. In turn, it stimulated opportunities to find new interesting and relevant approaches to be examined further.

These questions were further developed during a visit to the *Disgusting Food Museum* in Malmö, Sweden, both from the information attained from the visit per se but also from the first interview of the study, with Anders, one of the directors of the museum. The museum showcases traditional food from cultures all over the world, with the aim of having as much real, or actual, food as possible and to present strictly informative descriptions of every dish in place. Some of the information given during this first interview contained Anders' observations of the visitors to the museum. These are based on his studying of, and conversations with, visitors. Thus, we acknowledge that this part of our data is based on his judgments and interpretations of what he has seen and heard. Apart from the information and perspectives we discovered from our visit and interview here, we also got the opportunity to taste some of the “disgusting” food, insects being one of them. The tasting and the experience as a whole was valuable in the sense that it has given us an additional level of empathy towards the subject.

In addition, the interview guide was successively evaluated and updated as new perspectives and interpretations emerged from the respondents we met. Moreover, we constantly reflected over each interview and aimed at improving our techniques as the process advanced (Flick, 2014). For instance, it took a few interviews before we started to find a satisfying balance between not influencing the respondent by posing explicit questions or expressing our stance in any way, and encouraging a conversation with reflections and new perspectives through dialogue.



In order to make the choice of respondents as relevant as possible we searched for people outside our respective networks, through Google searches, the national news on tv, Facebook groups concerning flexitarians, insect foods and sustainability. Our target population is Swedish people who have some connection to entomophagy, either through an interest and receptiveness to try insects, or having already done so. These criteria were used to receive new insights on the subject. Furthermore, it was a challenge to find volunteers and due to time constraints we decided to pick the last few respondents from within our network. All interviews were recorded and transcribed after having asked for permission and having explained the purpose to ensure that the study is based on informed consent (Flick, 2014). The interviews lasted for an average time of approximately 43 minutes each. Most interviews constituted a physical meeting between the respondent and both researchers. However, due to geographical distance, two interviews were conducted via phone and video call, respectively.

Furthermore, photographs of insects in various forms were shown to the respondents as a further step towards stimulating conversation. These captured insects as presented on a street market, on a fine dining plate and as a component of a candy bar. The fourth, and last, photograph portrayed amplified insects for the respondent to compare between, based on how tempting they looked.

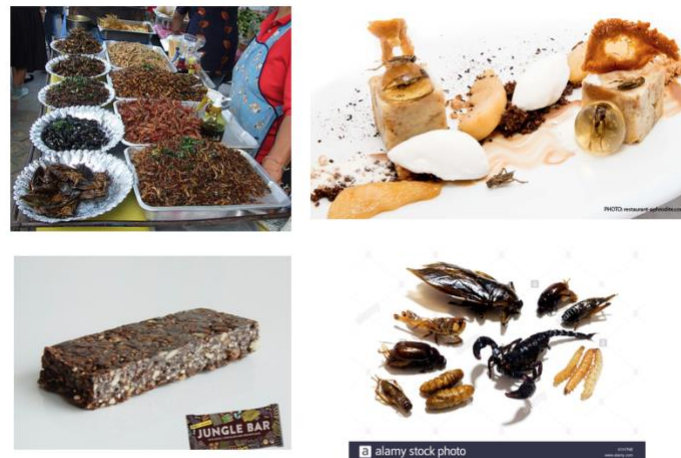


Figure 1: Portraying the pictures shown to the respondents during the interviews (appendices, p. 5).

This could be defined as a projective technique where the purpose is to bring forth an interest in the topic (Moisander et al., 2006). This is useful when talking about abstract issues, as entomophagy arguably is in the sense that we talk about a practice that in reality is, as of now, non-existent within the context of our research. We talk with people that have been exposed to entomophagy in some way; however, it is not a regularly occurring practice and is still surrounded by much ambiguity. Thus, the purpose of this technique is essentially to elucidate new perspectives and encourage cultural discourse by giving the respondent the space to interpret this novel concept completely on their own. Finally, during the third interview, the respondent provided us with the idea of the following phrase, “*Shellfish are the insects of the ocean*” (Christoffer). This phrase was then used at the end of each interview

that followed. We chose to do it at the end to not influence the rest of the talk. Using phrases like this could also be defined as a projective technique as it helps to produce cultural talk about a market place (Moisander et al., 2006). The various responses and interpretations were then compared to find differences and commonalities within the group that would indicate new perspectives of the cultural context (appendices, p. 22).

Name	Age	Gender	Tried Insects	Disgust factor	Key findings	Category
Anders	30+	M	Yes	- Ethics when it comes to treatment of animals	Well-travelled. Director of the Disgusting Food Museum.	Trend insensitive
Alvin	20+	M	Yes	- Jelly-like texture and the lack of taste	Altruistic. Curiosity for insects stems from consciousness of sustainability issues.	Anti-normative
Christoffer	30+	M	Yes	- Ethics when it comes to treatment of animals	Peruvian family. "Shellfish are the insects of the ocean".	Adventurous
Marianne	60+	F	Yes	-Bad taste & modified foods (eg antibiotics)	Works within the Swedish food industry. "Eat to live or live to eat"	Trend sensitive
Erik	20+	M	Yes	- "Gooney" texture repels	Dumpster diver. Developed a method for eating food that tastes or smells bad.	Anti-normative
Karolina	40+	F	No	-Sensitive for smell	Curiosity for other cultures "Stockholm's vegetarian"/flexitarian	Trend sensitive
Gabriel	20+	M	No	-When texture does not meet expectations	Traditional. Observant of his surroundings.	Normative
Olle	30+	M	No	- Ethics when it comes to treatment of animals	Appreciates the excitement of trying new things Perceives insects to be an unexploited resource.	Trend insensitive
Sofia	20+	F	No	-“Gooney” and hairy-texture	aesthetic, well-travelled	Trend Sensitive

Table 1: Showing an overview of respondents and key findings (appendices, p. 6).

### 3.2.1 Secondary Data

In accordance with Flick (2014), existing theoretical literature was used as a stepping stone, which provided us with insights that enabled us to put our subject into context. To further familiarize ourselves with the subject of entomophagy, empirical literature has been examined. The theoretical and empirical literature is used to contextualize the observations extrapolated from our data (Flick, 2014). Further, with the aim of creating a broader understanding of entomophagy we have listened to radio shows, followed the news and made observations in Facebook groups related to food choices. These steps were crucial for structuring the rest of the process and for formulating all the questions used for our data collection.

### 3.2.2 Primary Data

The empirical data is based on in-depth interviews. The main reason for this is because interviews like these are argued to provide rich and detailed information (Flick, 2014). From this follows the ability to understand the complex processes of the markets and social life (Moisander et al., 2006). The questions for all nine respondents were open-ended, rather than

polar “yes” or “no” questions, allowing interviewees to answer freely. The purpose of this was to get the respondent to reflect more, allowing for unique and novel perspectives. Moreover, the order of the questions asked were not fixed and new ones were developed successively, which brought a better flow to the conversation (Flick, 2014).

As already mentioned, we started the collection of primary data by interviewing one of the founders of the *Disgusting Food Museum*. The interview took place at the museum and lasted 20 minutes. This first interview was for inspirational purposes mainly. We wanted to receive more insight into the subject as the practice is relatively new in the Western society and marketing insects as food is not yet allowed in Sweden. The interview brought forth new perspectives and provided a great overview on the subject as the respondent was knowledgeable within the area of “disgusting food” stemming from his interest and research in preparing for the opening of the museum. Additionally, the interviewee had talked to many of the visitors about their experience of the museum and provided us with several points of view which came to influence our interview guide that we used for the rest of the interviews. First of all, this information and bird’s-eye view is of great value when conducting a study on a subject that is relatively unexplored. Secondly, an overview like this is valuable for a perspective as complex as culture that includes a great deal of interrelated elements (Moisander et al., 2006).

All interviews were carried out in Swedish since the study is limited to Swedish consumers. We expected it to be more comfortable in this way for the interviewees to respond in their mother tongue. This, in turn, is assumed to be beneficial for our research in the sense that it is easier to find consumers who are willing to talk to us if the language barrier is removed. Additionally, by making the interviewees feel more comfortable we expected to stimulate more engagement in their answers and deeper reflections in our conversations with them. The challenge with this is that any quotes used from the interviews are translated after our judgment of their meaning, and so we acknowledge that other possible interpretations might get lost in translation. Similarly, particular words used in Swedish that we, as native speakers, might find descriptive and useful may be difficult to translate into English. Finally, more generally, the transcriptions cannot be read by curious non-Swedish speakers. Our wish was to make this study available for a greater audience by writing it in English but still get as exhaustive answers and thoughts as possible for our data, which led to the conclusion that a mix of Swedish interviews and remaining parts in English is the best solution.

In selecting our respondents, our intentions were to find people who came from different backgrounds (occupations, age etc.), and who were seemingly random and had no relation to each other. The purpose was to find different perspectives between respondents and different from us as researchers. By having diverse perspectives, it is easier to look at the data objectively by de-familiarizing oneself from the data (Moisander et al., 2006). Everyone is indeed raised in Sweden and thus has a lot in common, however, we avoided to ask friends at the university for instance who has been taught the same way of thinking as we have. The result became a mix of total strangers and people within and in connection to our network. That is, we interviewed a couple of people who were relatively close to us, which may be

problematic in some ways. When interviewing a person one knows, it is easier to jump to conclusions of what they are saying since one possess a lot of information about the person already before the interview. Information that might be useful as a source of data for the analysis. First of all, this was kept in mind during those interviews since we were aware of it from the beginning. Second, we avoided this particular problem by having both of us as researchers present. Meaning that for every interview, at least one of us was a stranger to the respondent. The semi-structured interviews allowed for rather spontaneous questions to take place, raised by new perspectives given during the interview (Flick, 2014). In this sense, the presence of two interviewers came to be valuable since both continuously analyzed the conversation, from their respective approaches, and thereby more questions came to mind and resulted in more diversified answers. Moreover, we perceive that the interviews we had with people we know in fact turned out better in some ways than the others. First of all, both researchers and respondent were more comfortable, which made room for a more relaxed conversation. Furthermore, in these cases, we were more prone to questioning the respondents' answers when we did not understand or searched for more. Thus, we perceived these to provide more in-depth data.

Two of the interviews were conducted via phone and video call due to geographical distances. Our experience of this is that it is more difficult to interview someone in this manner since it feels less personal, which may have consequences on how deep the conversation could get. Additionally, we perceived another consequence of this to be that the conversation became rather rushed and so these talks were seemingly not as contemplative as the others. This applies to the phone call in particular where the absence of an image of the other person eliminated the potential of reading facial expressions and body gestures making it more difficult to interpret the answers. Moreover, it made the silence more uncomfortable which together with the occasional poor reception led to an urge to fill the moments with rushed questions, possibly leaving less room for contemplation. Further, this acknowledges the possibility that the respondent might have experienced discomfort as well, which would lead to a shallower conversation that prevents the goal of in-depth interviews (Flick, 2014).

### **3.3 Analyzing Data**

We began the processing of our data by deciding which codes would help us interpret our data, codes that showed how members of the group made use of symbols to make sense of themselves, others and social relations (Moisander et al., 2006). In the coding sheet, each column represents one respondent and each row corresponds to different codes (appendices, p. 22). The codes were to some extent guided by the theories presented in chapter two of this study, from which some concepts were used and the remaining codes were phrased as they emerged in the transcriptions. As we analyzed our findings, we realized that we needed to complement the theory chapter with further theory to help explain some of the responses we received during our interviews in order to give them some justification. Further, each transcribed interview was scanned for code words, such as "familiarity", and recorded in the sheet under respective respondent. In this manner, a broad overview of the data was achieved, which improved our ability to search for patterns but also deviations. It allowed for

comparison between respondents' answers and also for categorization of various quotes (Flick, 2014). To further improve our understanding, the transcriptions were reread and discussed several times. In addition to the coding sheet, discussions and interpretations were written down continuously in the margin of the transcriptions (appendices, p. 7-21). We focused on analyzing every response, even those not responding to our code words. The purpose was to better understand the cultural discourses that guide and constrain the respondents' everyday lives (Moisander et al., 2006). However, one of the limitations of this method could be seen in the difficulties of comparing the result when using many codes and to sort out which codes that are most relevant for the study (Flick, 2014).

Finally, in the interpretation phase, the most persistent findings led to the identification of three different main roles given to food, namely foodie, appearance and resistance. The pattern that this categorization generated made the understanding of implicit and explicit dimensions easier (Flick, 2014). Further it generated the structure of our analysis, presented in more detail in chapter four. The interpretations made in this study have references to literature on qualitative research by Flick (2014), cultural research by Moisander et al. (2006), to the theoretical framework in chapter two, the collected data and our own pre-understandings, such as experiences and cultural background. These various frameworks bring forward certain interpretations and at the same time block the availability of other (Moisander et al., 2006). To further exemplify, there is a risk of confirmation bias as these pre-understandings may cause us to look for certain evidence that confirms our preexisting beliefs. This is something that may affect the validity of the study since the findings could be argued to be a result from a social construction instead of a study of reality (Flick, 2014). On the other hand, it is argued that in cultural research the focus is on social reality which cannot be compiled into one single truth, rather, it depends on the perspective taken (Moisander et al., 2006). In this way, different perspectives are embraced. The influence of our pre-understandings on our interpretations may, in addition, decrease the reliability. However, similar findings in previous research on entomophagy suggest some degree of reliability (Flick, 2014).

### **3.4 Limitations**

Being a qualitative study based on a deeper understanding of a specific and still quite unexplored topic, the target group of people suitable for the research is narrowed down. This may result in a relatively low number of respondents, which could be seen as a limitation. Thus, a qualitative approach does not allow for the generalization of the findings to a bigger population (Flick, 2014). On the other hand, the aim of a cultural approach is to understand how people give meaning to their own and others' practices (Moisander et al., 2006). This would suggest that the lack of generalizability is not of great concern in this context. Instead Moisander et al. (2006) present the idea of naturalistic generalization, which means that the cultural researcher contributes with an exhaustive narrative of their study in order to give the reader the opportunity to experience it themselves and create their own understanding (2006). Furthermore, entomophagy is a topic which is novel to most and therefore often not reflected on to any greater extent, which could lead to the interviewer being perceived as directing the

conversation, and in turn the answers, to some degree. As a measure to avoid this, the interview questions were carefully chosen to depict rewarding information while not being too explicit or polar. On the other hand, the lack of pre-understandings and earlier reflections on the part of the respondents may be argued to stimulate more honest responses as they will constitute of a more intuitive character. This, in turn, would indicate answers that reflect the cultural context as the lack of knowledge cause the respondents to grasp the discursive resources that they perceive to be appropriate.

The empirical data on which this study is based consist of personal interviews only. According to Moisander et al. (2006), this might pose a disadvantage as data collection through multiple methods often facilitate in putting the analysis in a context. Moreover, it is argued that a variety of sources would help emphasize the complexity of cultural issues in particular, as evidence of these oftentimes can be identified within various practices and constellations which cannot be shown from only one source. Although our first interview functioned as a source of many perspectives that facilitated the contextualizing of the study, further improvements can be made, as suggested above. One way of reducing the limitations of solely relying on interviews would be to arrange focus groups. This would, among other things, make the participants under study more involved in the creation of the cultural talk according to Moisander et al. (2006), as they themselves lead the conversation and the researcher takes on a more passive role similar to a moderator of a debate.

To conclude, our study is limited by the theoretical framework, the selection of respondents, the interview guide and the number of other circumstances that have shaped our assumptions and thereby our research method and interpretations of its outcome. In this way, our presumptions, on which the conclusions are based, in some sense become self-validating as pointed out by Moisander et al. (2006).

## 4. Result and Discussion

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*In this chapter, we will introduce the findings from our data collection together with a successive analysis of them. We will start with more general observations, mostly based on the data from our first interview with the museum director, we will present an overview and explanation of our main findings with the use of a model that has been derived from them. Further on, in each subchapter, we will dig deeper within each category of the model to provide our understandings of the data, to then finally present findings not included in the model, yet important.*

### 4.1 Implicit and explicit norms within the cultural context

*“Had we called it, The Sustainability exhibit, or The Unusual Foods Museum, or such, no one would’ve come. Disgust, on the contrary, is interesting and fun. It’s a bit like slowing down to watch an accident on the highway. You want to look at it, it’s exciting, a bit thrilling, but you want to keep it on a safe distance.” - Anders*

The above citation is from the first interview with one of the founders of the *Disgusting Food Museum*, Anders. The respondent talks about the reasoning behind the name of the museum and compares it with an accident that people stop to watch out of curiosity and excitement. This suggests that people are attracted to scary, or out of the ordinary, things. Furthermore, the respondent talks about the importance of exposing people to new things in an informative and objective way. The implications that follow from this are that people cannot be persuaded to try scary food. Rather, marketing should be descriptive and encouraging in an implicit manner. This is argued to be the key to long-lasting change of practices. Further, these examples are in line with the concept of social marketing mentioned in the theoretical framework, in which the aim is to influence consumer behavior without explicitly telling consumers what to do (Gordon et al., 2011). Furthermore, Anders made other interesting remarks both when observing the behavior of visitors and from talking to them. Based on Anders’ conclusions, many visitors were quick to judge initially. Consumers in the Swedish market seem to react with resistance and disgust as a first intuitive reaction when it comes to insects as food. From analyzing our data, we found that this first reaction matched with the answers from our interviews. However, after their visit, visitors left with a seemingly more positive outlook. Moreover, the museum consists of one single room and visiting times often last for two to three hours, which further indicates an interest and attentiveness among visitors.

As the purpose of this study is to provide a deeper understanding of how Swedish consumers relate to food, insights into the cultural context that can help explain the instinctive reaction of disgust is of high relevance. In order to find any links to how this common reaction has been created, the role of food to different consumers is seemingly important to understand. Thus, from the analysis of our data, we have identified three different roles that food play, which further are used as a symbol portraying a particular social identity. The different roles

of food are *foodie*, *appearance* and *resistance*, which are shown in the upper part of the figure below. These three main categories show the meaning food plays in the person's life. Food according to someone in the *foodie* category is a source of genuine interest and an appreciation of the flavors together with the experience as a whole. In the second category, *appearance*, food plays more a role of identity creation and hence the taste becomes secondary to whether the food is from “the right” brand or restaurant. Thirdly, food according to people in the *resistance* group plays the role of signaling resistance toward the mainstream and the norm. Many times it signifies being part of a minority group through its expression of personal values of a bigger cause, such as fighting for the environment and the welfare of society at large.

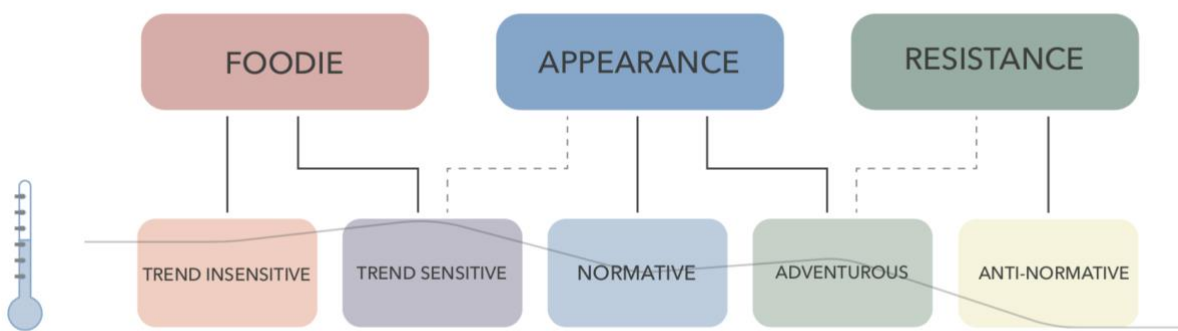


Figure 2: Showing the different roles that are given to food; foodie, appearance and resistance. Then, in the lower row of the figure, the different identities are presented. The grey line crossing the lower row illustrates how much taste is valued by each identity, the taste levels are shown by the thermometer to the left. This model is derived from our own interpretations of the data we have collected in this study.

These roles have, in turn, various subcategories that depend on the contextual background that, to some extent, varies among the respondents of our target group. These subcategories are further explained as each respondent’s respective identity. As seen in the second row in the figure above, the identities are *trend insensitive*, *trend sensitive*, *normative*, *adventurous* and *anti-normative*. The variations between the identities have been interpreted with some guidance from the theoretical framework. These different subcategories classify how the creation of personal identity is made. Subcategories connected to the main category, or the role of food, with a solid line imply a strong bond meaning that it is the main role of food for the identity in question. To exemplify, for both the *trend insensitive* and *sensitive* identity, the main role of food is foodie, namely a genuine interest in food. Furthermore, people who are classified as *trend sensitive* also show some concern, however less than to the foodie role, of how their food choice affect their appearance. This secondary role of food is illustrated by a dashed line. The dashed line is also seen from *adventurous* to resistance, this because they show signs of taking resistance toward the mainstream to some degree.



The wavy, grey line, crossing the subcategories, shows how important the taste is to each group of consumers based on what we call the *taste thermometer*, seen to the left. As seen in the figure, the *trend sensitive* identity taste the most out of any other group and thus reaches the top of the thermometer. The *anti-normative* identity is found on the opposite end of the scale and does not care about taste at all since they essentially view food as merely a necessary means for survival. Hence, the role of taste is indicative of different identities and thereby is important to have in mind in order to reach the target group in a successful way.

## 4.2 Foodie

*“I love food, it is important to me.” - Karolina*

In the context of our study, foodie is defined as someone who associates food with pleasure and finds interest in new combinations of food. Taste is of highest importance to all members in this group. To sit down for dinner is a prioritized experience and a pleasant opportunity for social gathering.

### 4.2.1 Trend insensitive

*“But then, there’s some sort of phobia for insects to some degree./.../ Something that creeps, it’s something there I think, intuitively, that feels a bit. Uncomfortable.” - Olle*

*“I truly meant it when I said earlier that I’m an omnivore. I have one brother, a brother who went on a road trip, on this road trip they drove by a roadkill, a deer, and just went out to take, [one of them was a] hunter, they just took one of the legs from this roadkill and apparently it was so tasty. I told them that I would have loved to be a part of that experience.” - Olle*

The *trend insensitive* group could illustratively be explained as early adopters, who are not afraid of tasting novel foods. Rather, they are even tempted by food that is disgusting seen from the context in question, as exemplified by Olle above. He talks about there being a phobia for insects, yet, at the same time he clearly expresses that he wants to taste insects. This *trend insensitive* identity enjoys food, yet, at the same time they are intrigued by things that are a bit uncomfortable. This is also in line with what Olle’s anecdote about the roadkill portrays. This evidence, that they have the courage and curiosity for trying novel foods make them comparable with early adopters (Rogers, 1995). Furthermore, the food of their choice is not affected much by social surroundings other than for inspirational purposes and thus they are insensitive to trends. They do not worry much about the image they portray to others and are not eager to fit the norm. This makes people in the *insensitive* group good for the introduction of new products, which further is in line with the concept of normalization and how products can go from unknown to familiar when introduced and differentiated to the local market in the right way (Ingram et al., 2007). This means that the group of *insensitive* foodies would be seen as a target group in the introduction and first phase of the product’s

life cycle. However, the insensitives are arguably somewhat extreme and sometimes too extreme for the others to follow. This extreme group is therefore expected to, at times, be too early for the other consumers to consider following them. The subjective meaning to the others would at that early stage be associated with something extreme and fearful. Moreover, the meaning might change from when the early adopters first start using the product till it is adopted by the culture at large. For example, an *insensitive* person might be triggered by the idea of farming their own insects and eating them whole, while others might try it first when the ento food has developed to a processed component in granola. As Anders mention below, food is seen more as an adventure - a great way to explore the world and new cultures.

*“Didn’t matter where it was, we always went, or asked the taxi driver to take us to his favourite restaurant, the place where he always goes, so we could try their food. So, no five-star places or all-inclusive, ever, just the local food, and it’s such a great way to explore the world.” – Anders*

In addition, as seen in the model, the taste line is not as high as in the *trend sensitive* group, this since this group is more adventurous and not as sensitive toward textures or flavors but more toward ethical issues. Still, the *insensitive* group is argued to enjoy taste as much as the *sensitive* identity; however, they do not let the fear of bad taste hinder them from trying out something new and thus, taste is not as governing over food choice as for the later. However, many Swedish consumers do have an intuitive sense of disgust towards insects and one of the reasons why is that they lack exposure. More precisely, lack of exposure of insects in the context of food.

*“...it could maybe also be some sort of association to maggots from cadaver? And from that, feel some sort of disgust? /.. It’s something with worms and maggots that makes you think of something that is dead and, in one way or another, bad.” – Olle*

Among the respondents, several mention how their associations to insects are related to where they have seen them in their close surroundings, as in the case of Olle seen above. In these surroundings, insects are considered vermins as they are seen when ants invade people’s homes or when maggots are circulating rotten food or dead animals, or even corpses, for instance. These are very strongly negative associations, which is interesting as they are considerably far from something we would perceive to be edible.

In accordance with the concept of globalization described by Askeegard et al. (2009), one of the ways in which cultures and perspectives could change is from globalization. This, partly due to the discovery that exposure of an object generates associations of that object to that particular context. Take for example bugs in Sweden. They are seemingly most often seen crawling in dirty places such as under a stone or under old furnitures left out in the garden. Meanwhile, bugs in Asia are perhaps rather found in abundance at ordinary street food markets, for instance, and more often seen as a natural source of food. This could further be meaningful in order to understand how the group of foodies tend to view cultural differences as exciting. The main commonalities found within this group is that they are all well-traveled

and thus have been exposed to cultures that practice and enjoy ento food, which has arguably extended their frame of associations. This finding is further justified by the notion that cultures are not eternal (Askegaard et al., 2009) as new impressions, like the ones our respondents have gained, influence and develop their discursive practices and thereby the cultural discourse.

*“So there was especially a lot of grasshoppers, which makes you think of how they are something we just do not make use of. Whilst you have them right here, they are tiny and full of nutrition. Meanwhile, you have these plants, x centimeters away, which only contain nutrition in the small part of the grain which you can eat./.../ So, well, I got a feeling of how it could be an unexploited resource.” - Olle*

Here Olle is telling us about how it came to his mind, when working on the Swedish fields during one summer, what an enormous amount of small bugs that could be seen as a resource. Instead, we dismiss their use in the Western society. This willingness of making choices which are good for the planet and making use of the resources available are in line with the concept of green marketing (Gordon et al., 2011). Moreover, a willingness of making environmentally friendly choices is seen as a common ground for all respondents.

#### **4.2.2 Trend Sensitive**

A *trend sensitive* person is here defined as someone who finds inspiration from trends and are curious to try them. Moreover, they are up to date about what other foodies adopt, including their social sphere and influential people such as well-known chefs, and in a sense they would be classified as falling within the group of early minority (Rogers, 1995). They show awareness of brands and trust in “experts”, implying some cautiousness as they prefer to have someone else that they trust to try it before them. This is something Sofia mentioned during our interview.

*“I would probably have to get it served, or get it at a restaurant, or home at some friend’s house, before I would dare to cook it myself.” - Sofia*

When talking to Sofia, it is clear how she appreciates novel experiences, both when it comes to the choice of restaurant or recipes but also when deciding where to travel next. Although, it still has to be somewhat in line with what she is familiar with and has been exposed to earlier. This desire for novelties is in line with the globalization of our society that brings about both physical and visionary access to other cultures and lifestyles (Askegaard et al., 2009). Sofia mentioned more than once how she is actively searching for new experiences.

*“When I do cook, I like to cook something new, this even if it is a common dish, but that you still try to find a new recipe or some new ingredient or such.” - Sofia*

One of the main commonalities identified among the foodie group is how they all are well-traveled and hence have been exposed to several cultures. With this exposure to other cultures, a greater amount of products and practices become familiar and thus less scary to

try. Instead it is rather seen as a source of inspiration. One aspect that differentiates the *trend sensitive* from the *trend insensitive* identity when it comes to traveling, is how the *trend sensitive* group portray dissatisfaction when traveling to a place where the food is perceived to be restricted. This could partly be explained by the tendency towards risk aversion that the *sensitive* identity portrays. According to this identity, food, or cultures overall, that are too different from their own instigate an ambiguity about how to eat and what to eat which discourage this group. Seeing as the taste and social experience are crucial for the *trend sensitives*, too much ambiguity is essentially numbing and restrains them from trying out. This can be illustrated in comparison to the *trend insensitive* identity, who appreciate tasty food but are willing to risk trying something that tastes bad as the risk in itself stimulates a sense of excitement. Marianne, one of the *trend sensitives*, explains this from one experience she had a few years ago in Egypt.

*“So it was, you know, it was the first time I had traveled to a country where I felt that you couldn’t go out to dinner and eat whatever you wanted. I thought it was a bit difficult. I felt restricted and it actually removed a part of the experience.” - Marianne*

The exposure to novel cultures and places could also partly be connected to the acquisition theme and how different foods are linked to different meanings and social status (Ingram et al., 2007). The choice of food and brands are made based on the willingness to signal a certain status or identity. This is one explanation to why the model has a dashed line from the *trend sensitive* group to the concept of appearance, since *trend sensitives* to some degree base their decisions on the status given to the brand or product as a step towards creating their self-image.

*“It was a bit cool with Japan over all. That is Japanese culture, that they are so wonderfully nerdy within various areas that in some way is seen as fancy. It is the technological part and the music, and uhm, also the culture and the dance ././ I think Japan in itself is such high status that I think influences us.” - Karolina*

When talking to Karolina, she provided a clear example of how this social status could be seen in foods from other cultures, Japan in particular. Here she talks about what potentially were the success factors when introducing Sushi to Sweden. Further on, Karolina suggests that one way for insects to succeed in entering the Swedish market would be if it was introduced by the right people in the right context. In this way, an experience could be created around the insect food. She exemplifies this further by a scenario, that all of a sudden it would come to our knowledge that the Japanese are crumbling grasshoppers on their Miso soup for instance. Again, this illustrates the importance of where the introduction comes from, or from whom, for the consumer to start negotiate the potential inclusion of entomophagy into their cultural practices. According to Karolina, the Japanese culture is something the Swedish people admire and associate with status. Sofia continues in the same lines, emphasizing the importance of an introduction that inspires rather than persuades.

*“I think you need a good, or a clear introduction, and not this feeling of being forced /.../ I could experience a few years ago, when it came to vegetarian food, that if you did not follow a vegetarian diet then you should be ashamed almost, no but just that people shouldn't tell people what people should eat, it should be more of a natural source of inspiration” -Sofia*

Sofia is also talking about how an introduction of insects has to be free from persuasion in order to have her change her practices. Taking this one step further one could see a connection to how this way of introducing insects is aligned with what Gordon et al. (2011) describe as social marketing. Swedes would need the introduction to be inspirational rather than persuasive, something that both Karolina and Sofia mention as a main factor for success. In addition, Sofia points out the importance of aesthetics when it comes to the design of a product in order for her to feel a desire for it. This increased consciousness of aesthetics is in line with what Dobers et al. (2005) mention. Products need to be designed in a way that signals the meanings that the consumer seeks to express and the identity they wish to belong to. Sofia suggested the following idea of a desirable design.

*“You just see the outlines of them, that they are single-colored, and, well innovative, a little fun and not too basic./.../ a package that looks luxurious, it is hard to describe what luxurious is, but something that is stylistically pure.” - Sofia*

### **4.3 Appearance**

Those who see food as something to use for creating their appearance are well aware of the social norms in society and focus on how they are perceived by others. This seems to lead to self-awareness and an eagerness to make the surroundings understand them and their identity. People in this group are well aware of how to act in order to construct a certain identity and they find several symbols or tools that can either aid or hinder them to achieve this identity.

#### **4.3.1 Normative**

*“Oh, I forgot to add salt, but it doesn't matter because I'm the only one who's eating it”  
- Gabriel*

A *normative* person is here defined as someone who possess a clear imagery of what is correct and what is wrong, they strive towards being correct and not to stand out from the crowd. Perhaps in relation to this, they show less interest in food as a source of pleasure and cares more about what is the norm than their own personal taste. In other words, taste is not that important as long as they are not cooking for others than themselves, as indicated by Gabriel. Thus, the *normative* identity is placed around the middle of the taste thermometer indicating that taste steers their food choice to some extent but not greatly.

Furthermore, the *normative* identity appear to be observant of how others interact and learns from these observations.

*“If I would heat up a Billys [pan pizza] and bring with me to school it would be really weird, then people would look at you. /.../ There’s sort of a frame of things that you consider to be normal to bring with you in your lunch box.” - Gabriel*

When talking to Gabriel, it seems as though many explanations of what is weird is connected to how it is perceived by others and in this way, other people’s reactions serve as instructions, or guidelines, for what food he chooses to bring to school. As he mentions above, the framework within which his choices are made is constructed out of what is considered normal and thus restricts him from making certain ”abnormal” choices. Food seems, in this way, to be chosen based on social comparison as mentioned by Ingram et al. (2007). According to the *normative* group, food is a considerable signal of whether you are normal or not. Further, as not being normal suggests an alienation from the *normative* group, this distinction of normal and abnormal is seemingly harsh and could explain the immense concern of how others look at you. More concrete examples of what is considered normal in this group seems to be properly home made food, often meat. The aspect of proper cooking could possibly symbolize some sort of status as it suggests a balance and order in one’s life, in the sense that it requires some knowledge, skills, ability, time and the monetary resources to cook and purchase proper food.

*“It isn’t actually Swedish Husmanskost, we didn’t eat potato dumplings and blood bread and that stuff. But dishes that were made more Swedish somehow. Very classic, google recipes and some classic pots show up, that kind of food.” - Gabriel*

Repeatedly, several respondents mention the Swedish word *Husmanskost*, which refers to the more traditional food in Sweden. Food that is seemingly not affected to greater extent by other cultures as it has been around since before globalization or, according to others, has become so common that its origin is not reflected upon. *Husmanskost* is described by some of the respondents as, for example, a meal often including a piece of meat, pots, sauce, potatoes and something that is “ordinary” and “solid”. However, what respondents include in this food category varies, from blood bread to more contemporarily common food in Swedish homes like rice and pasta which others would not include as it is more closely related to Asian and Italian cuisines. The later, the so called fusion food, is however so common in Swedish homes that its origin is not given any further reflection. Investigating the differences in the definition of *Husmanskost* further, the *normative* group appear to explain it as more traditional and old-fashioned food such as potato dumpling filled with pork, as seen in the citation above. This could be seen as reflecting the relatively protected horizons the *normative* group has, seeing as there is no apparent curiosity on novel foods and thus no intentional exposure to it. At the same time, a young, educated man like Gabriel is probably aware of other cultures and exposed to them frequently, for example from the travels in Europe that he mentions, and so the availability of exploring cultures exists, yet, it does not interest him. He mentions how he has been to restaurants in France where they have had escargot on the menu but he has chosen the beef because “*why risk anything*” (Gabriel). He adds that he has not tried anything that he considers weird, further showing his contentment with the normal. We see how the *normative* identity is aware of cultures and try to monitor

their ways to fit into an idealized image (Askegaard et al., 2009). However, these cultures are not appropriated and instead focus on fitting into the local culture.

*“[I keep eating meat] because I have a hard time coming up with dishes that don’t include, or has a large component of meat in it. /.../ Even if there exist so many vegetarian options or other types of proteins, meat is what I’ve grown up with and also cooked for a long period, so it’s comfortable. If I would change to another protein source it would require more thought from me /.../ more stuff that you don’t usually use. More of what I don’t feel comfortable with. I don’t know vegetarian food that well.” - Gabriel*

Further, the *normatives* are rather careful of eating unknown foods, and comfortable with the traditional. This could arguably be explained by the safety connected to the known and familiar as it lacks surprises and in that sense is risk-free. Additionally, there is an absence in the traditional of the risk-related to being the first in the group to try something and the possibility of exposing oneself to others’ judgmental looks or comments. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the choices made and the perceptions a person has are influenced by the identity they wish to create. In the context of Gabriel, vegetarian food choices are unfamiliar and novel, which are symbols that are not in line with the pursuit of the *normative* identity and thus not of his priority. On the contrary, as we saw in Sofia’s quote previously, *not* choosing a vegetarian would instead be associated with ignorance which would not align with her strive towards being identified as trendy and aware.

To most of the groups identified in our data, more traditional types of food is seemingly not very exciting in its rather conventional ways of not being influenced by exotic spices nor adapted to trends or the rising awareness of environment and the like. Karolina, who has been categorized into the *trend sensitive* identity, clarifies that she would not serve her guests Husmanskost, which is rather suggestive for how the two identities of *trend sensitive* and *normative* can be distinguished. As opposed to the *normative* group, the *trend sensitives* do not find traditional food to be something to serve to their guests. This indicates that Husmanskost would not be favorable for their desired appearance, which may be due to the fact of its relatively static development of not following the trends that are important to the *trend sensitive* group.

#### **4.3.2 Adventurous**

In the same manner as the *trend sensitive* identity, the *adventurous* identity finds Husmanskost to be unattractive as it, in its conventional ways, is less exciting than other food cultures. Our findings suggest that Husman functions as a symbol, or synonym for the norm, in this way. It could be said to function as a benchmark from which people distance themselves. As in the examples of *the trend sensitive* and particularly the *adventurous* identity, who both more or less are conscious when it comes to their appearance and finds the standard, or status quo, to be uneventful and boring. On the contrary, this benchmark is rather a point of excellence for the *normative* identity, on which they aim to remain at or reach for. In this way, both identities belonging to the appearance category are seemingly greatly aware

of the norm, the difference is how they value it and thereby relate their own identity in regard to it.

*“If you haven’t noticed, I like extreme stuff, fun trips that are different. I try, on a daily basis, to eat different food...” - Christoffer*

The above citation is taken from the interview with Christoffer in which words like “extreme”, “different” and “boring” are recurring throughout the conversation. Still, the respondent seems to have the urge to more explicitly state their attraction towards things that are out of the ordinary. Further, he seems to be intent on making sure that people place him in the correct identity as he repeatedly mentions these words and finally asks if we have understood him and who he is or wants to be perceived as. This example illustrates that the role that food plays for the *adventurous* identity is mainly that of a symbol for appearance. It is, in other words, important how one appears in the eyes of the people within one’s social sphere. Christoffer mentions further:

*“I always try to pick a plate that I have never tried before/.../, I try to never pick the same plate as the other person because I think it is boring.” - Christoffer*

The choice of food appears, from the citation above, to be an expression of one’s identity. Food is in this way a practice through which identity is created. According to Christoffer, it is boring to not try new dishes and it is rather apparent that he does not want to belong to the category of, in his words, the boring identity. Again, if considering the norm to be the benchmark, by using words like extreme, the *adventurous* identity place themselves at the very end of the spectrum, as far away from the norm as possible. This is in line with the identity construction structure discussed by Kjeldgaard et al. (2006), where the identity of uniqueness is created by distancing oneself from the mainstream and the normal.

*“Husmanskost is not really my thing. I like Asian more or Latin, African, I find that sort to be much more exciting” - Christoffer*

Several answers during the interview with Christoffer, such as the one above, indicate that food is being utilized as a symbol of not being like everybody else and something that can be used to stand out from the crowd. Parallels could be drawn between the citation above, for instance, and the availability that follows globalization. In accordance with the theory on globalization, Christoffer finds ways of using other local food cultures, such as the Latin cuisine, to distinguish himself from the context of Swedish food culture that he refers to as less exciting (Askegaard et al., 2009). Furthermore, Christoffer says that he loves food which, as with the *trend insensitive* identity, may influence his curiosity in novel and exotic cuisines, as he seems to enjoy the experience food brings. This sense of enjoyment places him above the middle on the taste thermometer. The *adventurous* identity’s primary concern for how food affects their appearance prevent them from reaching the top of the scale.

In the following citation, Christoffer talks about one of the pictures we showed during the



interview. The picture of a so called “Jungle Bar” containing crickets and chocolate.

*“My prejudices would say a bit more healthy, people that go to the gym/.../ It [the cricket bar] looks damn boring, I would never buy this unless I was pretentious and wanted to post it on Instagram” - Christoffer*

This reaction, proposedly, indicate further that food plays a significant role in saying something about the practices of others. Food is even revealing of one’s and other’s identities. From the four pictures shown during the interviews, this picture was the only one discarded by Christoffer and the reason is not that it looks scary or disgusting to indulge. Rather, the discouraging aspect of the insect bar is that he associates it with an uninteresting identity that he does not want to be lumped together with. As with the other identities within the appearance category, we see that objects, food in this case, is used as symbols for identity. The objects are rather strictly influenced by the identity of pursuit as they, according to the appearance category, enables social comparison.

#### **4.4 Resistance**

*“I eat to get full” -Erik*

For the *anti-normative* identity, an active stance against the mainstream and the norm can be identified. Food choice is derived from a resistance towards the consumption culture. Thus, food is strictly functional and is seen as a means to a greater end rather than enjoyment. Additionally, none of the respondents in this category have been raised in a family where the interest in food has been particularly apparent and the respondents themselves show clearly in their talk about food that they still do not enjoy it.

##### **4.4.1 Anti-normative**

*“I have also developed a method to eat things that don’t taste good, or that smell bad”  
-Erik*

One of the respondents, Erik, is a dumpster diver, which means that he finds most of his food in containers outside supermarkets and alike. Moreover, he has developed a method to be able to eat bad tasting food, suggesting that food is a means utilized for something else than pleasure. These acts are signs related to the concept of resistance, where food is used as a means of distancing oneself from the dominant consumer culture (Cronin et al., 2014). The dumpster diving and Erik’s appeal towards a different approach to life, as he mentions during our conversation, could more specifically be seen as an example of a decommodification practice strategy, also mentioned by Cronin et al. (2014). This, in the sense that he demonstrates his independence from the market by looking for food outside of the typical marketplace. In addition, this can be explained as a form of appropriation where the prescribed meaning of food is altered (Ingram et al., 2007).

*“I’d like people to see who I am and what I eat in this case/.../ I rather hold back maybe because people would think that I am too disgusting” - Erik*

Erik shows awareness about how his practices may be perceived and that it is not in line with social norms, rather he crosses these lines by defying them. These interpretations are based on examples such as the citation above and also how the respondent’s mother sometimes claims his behavior to be shabby. He, self-consciously, decides to keep some aspects of his behavior to himself since he is aware of that it is perceived by others as weird compared to societal standards. In this way, his food choice works as a symbol for resistance towards the market and consumption society in general. In his individual selection of food, Erik could be said to create a self-identity (Ingram et al., 2007) as he, despite the awareness of how weird he is perceived by others, continues to do things in his own way.

*“[There exists] without doubt a social influence partly due to the time we are experiencing/.../, what responsibility one has but also the people in school, it’s very easy to find a mutual understanding and it is not rare to meet a vegan in the class.” -Alvin*

Another respondent within this identity category is Alvin. He follows a vegetarian diet and is, in a similar way to Erik, not very interested in his own enjoyment of food. The vegetarian diet has been present in his surroundings, both among family, friends and have in addition been served as an option during his earlier years in school. The impact from social surroundings is evident during the interview as the vegetarian or vegan diet is common within this context. A mutual understanding among Alvin’s friends is mentioned and may indicate a sense of belonging to a group, in which the vegetarian diet symbolizes an expression for shared values and the food acts as part of the formation of a collective identity (Cronin et al., 2014). These are values of moral character, such as animal treatment and sustainability. Moreover, Alvin’s vegetarian choice seems to be of similar ideas and strategy as those presented in chapter two, namely a symbol for showing belonging to a minority and for taking a stance against the meat industry. Finally, he further distinguishes himself and his collective identity by calling everyone else meat eaters, *köttisar* in Swedish. Thereby, food is clearly a signal for various identity categories, and is used to distinguish groups of people. Further categorizations of identities like these are seen in the conversations with for example Christoffer and Karolina, who identify themselves as *fake vegetarian* and *Stockholm vegetarian*, respectively. The words are used as synonyms and portrays an identity that tries to follow a vegetarian diet but is willing to loosen the restrictions if they are served meat.

*“For me, it is mainly about making sure that I eat nutritious food but it doesn’t have to be exaggaratingly tasty. I feel that I’m not too picky with that.” - Alvin*

Again, as with Erik, the taste of the food is not the primary concern for Alvin either. Not only is food a symbol but it has practical implications on overcoming moral problems as it is considered better for animals and the environment to eat a plant-based diet. The citation above along with the use of words like amino acids and an interest in entomophagy that started with an Internet search for nutritious food that is also environmentally friendly, Alvin

shows great concern for nutrients and the purpose of food is to feed his body rather than himself. This may be considered a rather altruistic approach that is seen in Erik as well, however, not among the other respondents. Evidently, the *anti-normative* identity ends up in the bottom of the taste thermometer as taste does not steer the choice of food in any way.

#### **4.5 Common grounds between the roles of foodie, appearance and resistance**

The illustration of the different main roles given to food, and the identity categories the different roles correspond to, are based on the most persistent findings in our data. These categorizations are, however, not strictly impenetrable and conclusive. A *trend sensitive* person may very well show signs of resistance, for instance, yet will not end up there if they show stronger concern towards the taste of food and adhering to trends. This is further exemplified below.

Cronin et al. (2014) mention three different main strategies for demonstrating a resistance with the use of food. As mentioned previously, Alvin and Erik show tendencies of using the strategies of *vegetarian choices* and *decommodification practices*, respectively. The third strategy is that of *brand choices and brand awareness* (2004). In the context of our data, in similarity to Cronin et al. (2004), we observe a strong awareness and trust towards brands. This awareness, however, is not used as part of a resistance, rather brand choices are made to reflect an image of the consumer that fits to the identity they wish to be associated with. In the case of Gabriel, for example, a strive towards fitting into the norm can be seen. This, through the use of products and brands that are perceived to be normal and which, to some extent, are associated to status. In addition, a seemingly strong brand awareness can be seen in the interview with Sofia. For her, brands are associated with a certain quality and brands that are perceived to be of higher quality and more specialized, or niched, are primarily chosen. According to our interpretation, these criteria can be related to her perceived strive to be seen as a foodie who to some degree also wish to choose products that are morally defensible. The latter correspond, to some extent, to the example of resistance towards mass-market food brands (2014), and in this sense Sofia shows tendencies of resistance. However, these tendencies are not as strong as those of Alvin and Erik, who rely completely on food as a functional tool whereas Sofia prioritize and appreciates food as a source of pleasure and experience.

A second aspect that appear to cut across the different roles of food is the status associated with health.

*“If I buy it [candy] on a tuesday /.../ then maybe you would be a bit ashamed because, I shouldn't, but I couldn't resist the craving for it” -Gabriel*

As we have seen before, Gabriel clearly states his perception of the norms in society. Indicating in the citation above that there are apparent rules for when it is allowed to eat unhealthy foods and not. It is evident from the talk with him that candy belongs to the weekends for instance. Further evidence of the importance of health is found in the

interviews with Marianne, Karolina and Sofia. All three women mention an upbringing where the food oftentimes had an element of healthy in it, for example it was always served with a salad.

*“The awareness of food has increased, concerning healthy food, but that’s a general trend everywhere.” - Marianne*

Marianne clearly expresses the same trend as we observe within our group. How come that Gabriel, categorized as belonging to the traditional identity, also seems to show concern of whether he appears healthy? According to earlier analysis, he is rather comfortable with the more conventional practices and does not wish to stand out. An explanation could be that to be healthy is not only a trend, but it has become the norm. Even though people show *more* awareness when it comes to healthy food, as Marianne mentions, this does not exclude the notion that the norm already exists. This could be exemplified through a Swedish word, that we perceive to be common to the majority of the Swedish population, which is called *Lördagsgodis*. It is directly translated to “Saturday Candy” and suggests that you should eat candy on Saturdays but not on any other day of the week, similarly to what Gabriel expressed above. If we would scrutinize how the two different identities here, *trend sensitive* and *normative*, talks about healthy food we find some potential differences. The *trend sensitives* talk about it more as a natural part of their diet while Gabriel focuses more about its associations to rules and the social consequences it may lead to if these rules are broken. This reflects their respective identities well, as the *trend sensitive* identity adapts relatively effortlessly to trends while the *normative* is disturbed by new trends as they imply more rules. Common between these two identities is their view of food as a symbol for their appearance and status, as theorized by Ingram et. al (2007). In this way, the desire to appear healthy would suggest that being healthy also signals status, as status is something both show concerns about.

Another aspect that seems to be rather independent of the main roles of food is the reason behind the desire for new things and experiences.

*“/.../ that you are scared, or that you in some way have some characteristic of becoming restless. Maybe that you even could define traveling as to experience something new. You often know what to expect in Sweden, an ordinary day I mean, what is expected or so. You will rarely be surprised.” -Sofia*

The drive behind the desire for new practices seems to be characterized by the stimulation it generates. In addition, acquiring new things is in this way an attempt at avoiding boredom, the same explanation as we have seen in the work of Ingram et al. (2007). Moreover, this fear can be identified in the conversations with Olle, Anders and Erik as well, suggesting some sort of common ground between the different groups of foodie and resistance. Erik mentions for instance his fear of routines and habits and strive to collect experiences, which he considers enrich his life and builds on his personality.

The only few that do not show any clear desire for novel objects and practices are Alvin and Gabriel. Gabriel, who has been categorized as belonging to the *normative* identity, rather show content with what is at hand and as mentioned, he has never tasted something that he himself considers weird. That is, he is not stimulated by novelties, as opposed to the majority. In similar manner, neither Alvin show any particular desire for, or stimulation by, new experiences per se. Instead, he is satisfied by new experiences or ways of living if beneficial for the environment, which is also his reason for paying interest to the novel food of insects. When distinguishing the respondent group like this, in one part that is thrilled by novelty and one that is not, another pattern that coincides with this division can be found. That is, those afraid of boredom are those who have traveled more than the others, especially more outside of Europe. Those that are rather content, Gabriel and Alvin, have not traveled as much. Gabriel has for instance never been outside of Europe. This finding, if not a mere coincidence, could be explained by referencing to the theory on globalization (Askegaard et al., 2009). In this case, the aspect of increased traveling facilitated through globalization, have exposed the first group to other cultures in a way that the later has not experienced. This exposure and first-hand experience of other cultures could arguably have lead to better understanding of other cultures' practices. The increased understanding may result in less ambiguity when it comes to how to adopt these practices on your own, potentially diminishing perceived obstacles, and additionally awakening new desires that in turn may cause the own practices to appear as dull.

*"... one is maybe on a too far distance from the production of food today /.../ [Several years ago] you grew up in an environment where the food sources were right next to you and then it wasn't very strange to utilize what was at hand. Now you can pick whatever you desire, at whatever time you desire." -Erik*

Erik's thoughts further illustrates how exposure affects what food one chooses to eat and what food one desires to eat. He talks about why traditional Swedish foods such as blood pudding have maybe become less popular and suggest the above, that is, due to our distance from our livestock today we have become less receptive towards eating such food. This could be reflected on further and thus could be related to post-industrialist societies, such as Sweden, where technology has advanced tremendously over a long period of time, which in turn has led to urbanization and this perceived distance from the animals we eat. In this way, the reason we have started to dislike this type of food, if this is the case in the population at large, is due to our lack of exposure to it. In that sense, the disgust towards eating insects is due to the same reason, exposure, or the lack thereof. This could also be part of the explanation to why some cultures eat insects. In fact, according to UN reports, entomophagy is more often practiced within cultures that have a tropical climate where insects are more abundant and bigger, that is, where the exposure to them is greater (FAO, 2013).

## 5. Conclusion

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From our findings it is evident that food is given various roles and is used as a symbol subjective to one's identity, within a greater, highly influential, social context. In this way, culture is expressed, in part through consumption and therefore products are given great importance. This implies that a balance is required between the unique and the common.

If we consider the *trend insensitive* identity to be the "role model", the target group for marketing, it could be argued that they in similar ways as early adopters would facilitate the introduction of ento food. However, the practices that the *insensitives* are willing to adopt may sometimes be *too* extreme for the other identities to follow. If the marketing of insects is moulded around this identity it may never pick up the rest of the consumers. Ento food would in this case be introduced in what others consider an extreme form, for example whole insects and sometimes even alive ones. Other practices introduced in relation to the product could be instructions for how to farm insects on your own and also how to harvest them. The risk associated with this is that the majority would instead be discouraged or even frightened. This way of marketing stands in contrast to what the culture at large would be receptive towards. It could be argued that it might reach even the *adventurous* and *anti-normative* identities. Although, we believe that the *adventurous* person would taste it as a way of adding to the creation of their identity but would not, in this case, incorporate insects in their daily diet. *Anti-normatives* are argued to follow the *insensitives*, they would do it for environmental and nutritious benefits associated with entomophagy. Apart from the perspective of whether the practice is too extreme or not, it is crucial for the spread of the marketing that the role model is perceived by the majority to have status. Status is one of the main selling points for the *trend sensitive* and *normative* identity.

From another perspective, the *trend sensitive* identity is instead seen as the target group. This identity has previously been compared to an early minority as they show curiosity for novel foods and experiences. However, the search for novelties is somewhat restricted by their risk aversion, which in turn is influenced by their exposure. They rely on others which means that they need someone who is associated to status and/or expertise to introduce it to them. The marketing of insects could then be based on a presentation of insects as part of a concept, for example crumbling insects over the Miso soup as suggested by our respondent Karolina. This would both be part of a concept and stem from the Japanese culture which is considered to be associated with status. Other entrances to this market would be related to brands and/or product forms that are appreciated due to its associations to quality and aesthetic appeal. The aesthetic aspect of packaging is of great importance to the *trend sensitive* and also the *normative* identity. From this perspective, the second important aspect for the success of ento food is the form it is presented in. It is here suggested that the insects are processed and constitutes a component of the product, such as roasted crickets as a component of granola. This way of familiarizing insects would be a prosperous introduction of ento food, but could later on lead to the introduction of more fresh insects and similar practices to those presented to the early adopters. Evidently, a successive introduction is appropriate for such an

unfamiliar food practice, as entomophagy is to the cultural context in question, in order to reach out to as many consumers as possible.

We believe that the foodie group is the main target group as food according to them plays a great role of experience and enjoyment in their daily life. This is the group that would be willing to negotiate their understanding of entomophagy to fit into their discursive practices and thus would pay proper attention to an introduction of ento food. The *normative* would, based on our findings, not take the initiative to try ento food. Rather, they would need someone else to take the lead and once it has become more established, they would follow.

It can be concluded that there exists different subjective meanings in the groups of consumers, which will guide how the marketing activities are constructed. Products and practices are interpreted in various ways and are given different meanings. There is a risk associated with drawing strict and static borders between cultures as it may prevent the possibility of reaching the majority. Ignoring this would in turn hinder the environmental protection that requires the society to move collectively in the same direction.

Common to every member of the group under study, is the perception that insects as food is very unfamiliar and to most even scary. The practice is not categorized as belonging to food and is considered wrong in the existing food culture. Perhaps contributing to this fear are the strict food regulations by Livsmedelsverket in Sweden. The institutional rejection might influence the group's understanding of insects as dangerous. In addition, the associations to vermins brought by the restricted exposure that the Swedish consumers have, further adds to this understanding.

In order to normalize entomophagy, improved knowledge is necessary. A great awareness of both the environment and health is found in our data. People are actively engaged in the societal debate on these topics and seeing as ento food touches upon both facets of this discussion, we see an opportunity for entomophagy to take greater part of the debate. This would require a greater understanding and increased knowledge on the practice and possibly shedding more light on current research. With increased discussion and attention, the norm is believed to be influenced, both implicitly and explicitly. Further steps to increase knowledge and thereby normalizing entomophagy would be to see insects not as an entity but categorized into different species. In similar ways as mushrooms are categorized as edible or non-edible with the help of different traits, for example brighter colors indicate poisonous mushrooms, insects could be differentiated as well. This is thought to be helpful in overcoming food neophobia as the ambiguity is reduced.

To conclude, the most successful aspect in the marketing of ento food is the balance between the unique and the common. Some identities are drawn to the exoticness of the unfamiliar while others are comfortable with the safety of the familiar. Thus, marketing activities needs to strive towards making entomophagy less dramatic without making it less interesting.

## 6. Future research

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We have some proposals for future studies that can be carried out given a longer period of time which would make it possible for a bigger set of data to be collected.

One aspect that crossed our minds during the research process is that Swedish students are served lunch throughout their whole education. This is rather unique compared to other cultures which may have an influence on the food culture that would be interesting to study further. This could perhaps be studied based on a qualitative study comparing different nations.

In a couple of our interviews we find traces of the fear of eating insects as they may be unhealthy or carry diseases. In addition, several respondents' answers reveal that they would be more prone to eating insects in Sweden than anywhere else. This suggests an immense trust in institutions, such as the national food agency Livsmedelsverket. Which in turn, for the time being, has forbidden the marketing of insects as food which may influence consumers' perception of entomophagy. Further, Livsmedelsverket and its strict rules and recommendations could be seen as reflecting and representative of the perceived risk aversion among the members of this group. Thus, we argue that this, more institutionalized approach, might be a fundamental aspects to be considered and examined further in future research. This would add to a broader cultural framework, an explanation of the cultural discourse within which consumers act, that may be useful to balance the findings of our study. An appropriate study for reaching a broader population would be based on a quantitative method, such as an online survey that would contribute to generalization of the findings and perhaps a more theoretical base as it would try to answers why instead of how marketplace phenomena take place.



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