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Looking beyond individual behaviour: a social practice theory approach to understanding consumer drop out in REKO

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Abstract

The current food system employs an industrialised model of agriculture that has been connected to climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation, and the erosion of rural livelihoods. It is characterized by a concentration of power in the companies involved in inputs and food trade, processing, and distribution, as well as retailing. All of this has led to decreased farmers' choice, power and economic livelihoods at the food production end, and decreased consumers' choice in the food consumption end of our food system. In 2013, an alternative food network called REKO emerged in Western Finland and has spread to Nordic countries and beyond. Using Facebook to facilitate sales, it connects farmers to consumers with no intermediaries. Finland, being the most mature market for REKO, has seen REKO peak, and is now facing challenges of getting consumers to come out on a regular basis. Using a social practice theory approach, this study explores why few consumers engage in REKO in the long run. The study was conducted using the REKO Vaasa circle as single holistic case study. Semi-structured interviews and shop-alongs were conducted with former REKO shoppers to understand the sociocultural meanings behind food consumption and how that interacts with the materiality of food provisioning and human agency. The study found that while REKO is an AFN in its conceptualisation, it is embedded with the overall food provisioning system with retail and the two entities continually interact to shape each other. Norms for how consumers shop are set by retailers, and retailers are influenced in their product offerings by REKO and have co-opted REKO offerings. Furthermore, competing life practices make it challenging to engage in the REKO shopping practice in the long run. As such, REKO needs to continually evolve and engage with consumers to main relevant and resilient. These findings can support other REKO circles as the model continues to grow and expand.

Acknowledgment

As someone that was embedded in alternative food networks in my previous hometown, I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to study REKO for my thesis. I have an interest in seeing alternative food networks succeed and it was great to be able to deep dive into REKO and understand the dynamics of this system.

In many ways, writing a thesis is a team effort. There have been so many people along this process that have supported me in my learning and making this research possible. Thank you to Thomas Snellman, for whom without REKO would not exist. You have infinite patience for my questions and was so generous in sharing your experiences. I am grateful to all research participants who took time out of their busy schedule to meet and share their experiences on REKO with me. Thank you to Christer Finne and your entire family for your teachings and letting me spend time on your farm. Thanks also goes out to all the people involved in the REKO Vaasa circle, especially the administrators, who volunteer their time to make direct farmer to consumer selling in Vaasa possible. I am grateful to my supervisor Geir Lieblein and rest of the Agroecology team for creating a program that allows learners to be curious and creative, and for giving us so much space to explore our own learnings. A huge thanks to Maria Ehrnström-Fuentes for supporting, challenging and educating throughout this entire thesis. You were so generous with your time, energy and knowledge even before signing on as a supervisor late in the process. I also need to thank my sister Cindy, who is a Word pro and helped with all my Word questions and problems. Finally, thank you to my friends, especially Kim, Idil, Florina, Kristin and Emily for so much emotional support and all the snacks.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Our current agri-food system is one that is increasingly specialized, industrialized and financialized, with a trend towards a consolidation of power in agriculture, food production, and food retailing (Clapp, 2016). This current model of food production creates a spatial and temporal disconnection to our food. Over 1.4 billion people in the world depend on food imports for food security (Porkka, Guillaume, Siebert, Schaphoff, & Kummu, 2017) and eating according to seasonal availability is no longer a restriction with imports and biotechnology (Oosterveer & Sonnenfeld, 2012).

This industrialized model of agriculture for food production has been connected to climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation and the erosion of rural livelihoods. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that total emissions in the food system accounts for 10.7 – 19.1% of net total greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity (IPCC, 2019). Intensive agriculture associated with the industrialised system has also contributed to desertification, eroded topsoil, depleted and contaminated aquifers, and loss in biodiversity (Scherr & McNeely, 2008).

The consolidation of power in our food system has resulted in the global prices for food and the conditions of global value chains being controlled by just a handful of companies (Clapp, 2016; Holt-Giménez & Shattuck, 2011; Howard, 2017; Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). This has led to a commodification of food, and what Clapp (2016) describes as the emergence of “middle spaces” in our world food economy. These middle spaces – the transnational companies (TNC) involved in inputs (seeds, chemicals, machinery), food trade and processing, and distribution – have decreased farmers’ choice, power and economic livelihoods at the food production end, and decreased consumers’ choice in the food consumption end of our food system. The TNCs involved in our food system not only puts a physical distance to our food for consumers, but a mental one as well, with consumers having little awareness of the ecological practices, social conditions and financial transactions involved in the food they purchase from grocery store shelf.

Consolidation is also happening at the grocery retail level. Clapp (2016) reports that in the EU, the top five retailers had over 60% dollar share of the grocery market in 13 member states in 2011. The high-level of consolidation puts a considerable amount of power in the hands of retailers. Consolidation in power allows retailers to influence market prices and consumer choice, set standards for suppliers, and shape regulations, institutions and norms (Clapp, 2016, pp. 117 - 122). In Finland, just two retailers, S Market and K Market, control 82.5% dollar share of the Finnish retail trade in 2018 (Finnish Grocery Trade Association, 2019). As such, farmers in Finland are in a weak position and have faced challenges to their livelihoods (Yle, 2019). For example, as noted by an article in the Lye, a report by Palermo Economic Research showed that lower price trends at store shelves have not impacted retailers' earnings, yet farmers have seen their income decline (Yle, 2018).

Alternative food networks are seen as a counter reaction to the industrial food system. AFNs participate as alternative food economies and are characterised to contribute to the strength and viability of local communities, have shorter supply chains, sustainable and environmentally sound agriculture practices, and an overall focus on food justice and ethical consumption (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Goodman, 2004, 2012; Kloppenburg et al., 1996; Maye, 2010; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006; Watts, Ilbery, & Maye, 2005; Whatmore, Stassart, & Renting, 2003).

REKO, from the Swedish words "real consumption" and meaning fair consumption in English (Maria Ehrnström-Fuentes & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2019), has emerged as an alternative food network (AFN) in Nordic countries and beyond (Thomas Snellman, 18 March 2019). REKO was started by Swedish speaking, Finnish farmer Thomas Snellman in Finland and was inspired by a form of community supported agriculture (CSA) in France called Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne (AMAP). The motivation to start REKO was to increase profitability for farmers, to create new markets and sales channels, and to support organic farming (Maria Ehrnström-Fuentes & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2019). Prior to REKO there was no way to purchase local food, or to purchase food directly from farmers. REKO was designed to sell with no intermediaries (Snellman, 18 March 2019).

REKO started in Ostrobothnia¹ (Pohjanmaa in Swedish), a region in Western Finland, in 2013 with two pilot REKO circles (also called rings), one in Jakobstad (Pietarsaari in Swedish) and one in Vaasa (Vasa in Swedish). The pilot started with the AMAP model, using contracts between farmers and consumers. However, interaction between farmers and consumers on a Facebook page set up to facilitate communication quickly evolved the CSA-based contract model to the one we see today. REKO now operates with no contracts and orders are conducted solely through Facebook groups managed by local administrator volunteers. The food pick-up takes place at a common public location, usually once a week or once every two weeks.

The pilot locations grew exponentially in its second year with the aid of social media, and quickly spread to the rest of Finland (see Appendix A for REKO coverage in Finland). Finland, being the most mature market for REKO, has seen the market peak, and is now facing challenges of getting consumers to come out on a regular basis. This thesis explores the reasons why consumers engage in REKO in the first place, and why they eventually drop out.

There is an abundance of AFN literature, however, REKO being a relatively new phenomenon, has limited pieces of published literature. There is a published book chapter on urban grassroots food distribution networks in Finland, in which REKO is part of (Hagolani-Albov, 2017). On REKO specific literature, there is a journal article on the perceptions and experiences on sustainability amongst REKO producers in Finland (M. J. Ehrnström-Fuentes, Piia; Jauho, Mikko, 2019) and another article dealing with social processes involved building a grassroots movement which uses REKO as a single embedded case study (Maria Ehrnström-Fuentes & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2019). The latter article deals with the boundary negotiations that takes place and highlights the challenges REKO administrators faced within those social processes. The two pieces of published REKO literature deals with two of the three key actors in REKO – the producers and the local REKO administrators. The literature on REKO to date has failed to account for the consumer experiences and their declining interest in REKO over time. Also, the impact of the retail trade on the overall functioning of REKO has not

¹ Both Finnish and Swedish are recognized as official languages in Finland. As such, names of regions and cities have both a Finnish and Swedish name. Throughout this thesis, the name that is used in the English language will be presented, with the alternate language presented in parenthesis.

been addressed. This research seeks to contribute with insights in this precise area.

Literature on consumer experiences in AFNs appear to be limited to reasons why consumers engage in such a network (Bougherara, Grolleau, & Mzoughi, 2009; Corsi, 2018; Cox et al., 2008; Flora, 2012). There is a prevalent challenge of consumer retention in AFNs (Helmer, 2019; Kane, Lohr, & Organic Farming Research, 1997). For example, in their study of U.S. CSAs, Kane and Lohr (1997) found that it is not uncommon to have 30% - 50% attrition rates in memberships. Despite this common challenge, there is little literature examining why consumers drop out. The limited literature available on AFN drop out are usually quantitative in nature, such as Galt's study on member retention in California CSAs (Galt, Bradley, Christensen, & Munden-Dixon, 2019). This study surveyed 1558 former and current CSA members in 111 CSAs and found that members' primary reason for leaving has to do with the composition of food in the share. While it seems that share customization would support this problem, there is paradox in that farm-level data showed no significant correlation between customization and retention. Qualitative studies would be better to understand the complexities underlying human behaviour and the multitude of human and non-human social agents involved in the attrition.

This thesis fills a research gap by qualitatively addressing the question of why consumers drop out of AFNs. Using a social practice approach, I aim to dive deep into the practice of food shopping at REKO, and the reasons for dropping out, as opposed to a positivist approach using quantitative data.

1.2 Research Purpose and Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this research is to understand why few consumers continue to use REKO on a long-term basis. Using the REKO Vaasa circle as qualitative single holistic case study, I examine why former consumers in the REKO Vaasa network no longer use REKO in the long run by employing ethnographic inspired qualitative research methods, including participant observation and consumer shop-alongs. For the purpose of this study, "drop out" is defined as a former shopper of the REKO Vaasa circle that has not shopped at REKO in the past nine months.²

² Please see 2.4 Sampling Plan for the rationale of this definition.

To address the research purpose, in thesis I aim to answer the following research question (RQ), as broken down into two components:

1. Why do few consumers stay in REKO on a long-term basis?
 - a. Why do consumers shop at the Vaasa REKO circle?
 - b. Why do consumers drop out of the Vaasa REKO circle?

Using social practice theory (SPT), or practice theory, as a conceptual framework, this research looks at the sociocultural meanings behind food and how that interacts with the materiality of food provisioning and human agency to understand consumer drop out in REKO.

While there is no coherent, singular practice theory, there are generally accepted origins of thought for the multiplicity of practice theories that exist (Halkier, 2013). As summarized by Halkier, practice theory notably draws from the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, and Michel Foucault. Contemporary practice theory is based heavily on the Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which theorises that an individual's embodied and ingrained disposition is shaped by a cumulation of different experiences and activity over time (Bourdieu, 1990). Giddens's structuration theory contributes to the area of individual agency and how one's ability to act is based on enabling and restraining societal structures (Giddens, 1984). Foucault expands on structuration theory by examining the relationship between the self and societal discourse in the regulation of social practices (Foucault, 1990).

A practice-based approach moves away from methodological individualism, where individual motivation is the primary explanation for a social phenomenon (Picavet, 2001). An individualist approach has been used to appeal to the moral responsibility of citizens/consumers to act in sustainable ways (Spaargaren, 2011). We can recognize this moral calling in contemporary calls for *flygskam* (fight shame), plastic reduction, and vegan diets.

An individualist approach can be problematic as it assumes individuals act rationally. It is also problematic because methodological individualism fails to account for the complexities of everyday life as a context for a behaviour (Halkier, 2013). Individual behaviour is seen as just the tip of the iceberg, with a variety of human and non-human

forces in relation to each other that influence reflective and unreflective action (Shove, 2012). In a practice-based approach, the nature and process of consumption are explained by an individual's interactions to a practice, rather than individually motivated behaviours (Warde, 2005).

Reckwitz (2002) defined a practice as a pattern of routinized behaviour made up of different elements, with each element important to the development of a practice:

“A ‘practice’...is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” (p. 249)

In practice theory the unit of enquiry is the practice itself, with the individual as carriers of the practice, “she or he is not only a carrier of patterns of bodily behaviour, but also of certain routinised ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Thus, practices as an entity have their own histories and patterns of development, and are distinct from their enactment and performance (Shove, 2012; Warde, 2005), by the individual carrier. In looking at how practices cumulate into social realities, it is important to look at dynamics of the various components of those practices and how they are carried out by the individual (Shove, 2012).

Practice theory has been applied to the area of consumption by authors Warde, Shove and Spaargaren. Mostly commonly, it has been used to understand sustainable consumption by understanding everyday inconspicuous practices, such as energy (Winther, 2015) and water use in homes (Hand, Shove, & Southerton, 2005). Using a practice approach, Hand, Shove, and Southerton examined how the practice of showering – a resource intensive routine – became a normative practice in the UK, by looking at the interactions of materiality (infrastructural, technological) and rhetorical and moral discourses of showering.

In the areas of food consumption, there is a growing call to use a sociological framework to understand the complexities involved in how food is consumed (Domaneschi, 2012; Fonte, 2013; Halkier, 2016; Neuman, 2019; Warde, 1997). A practice-based approach has been used by Halkier to study sustainable consumption amongst young Danish consumers ((2009, 2016) and by Domaneschi to (2012) to examine the practice of

commercial cooking in Northern Italy and how it's shaped by a complex mobilization of ecological, institutional and biographical resources. Most relevant to the thesis, Fonte (2013) uses a practice approach to examine how *Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS)*, an AFN in Italy, consisting of household buying groups sourcing from sustainable and ethical producers, can be scaled up. The focus on their study was to look at the dialectical relationship between reflective and routinised practices involved in practice of buying food in GAS.

As noted previously, there is no singular practice theory. For the purpose of this thesis, Elizabeth Shove's conceptualisation of practice theory will be used. In their dynamics of social practice, they have drawn from the works of Reckwitz and Schatzki and has distilled the elements of practice to the following:

- **Materials** – encompassing “things”, including objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body itself;
- **Competence** – includes forms of understanding, practical knowledge, embodied skills; and
- **Meaning** – comprises of values, norms and social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment.

For this thesis, under Shove's SPT framework, it is not the aim to understand the act of dropping out by understanding the individual consumer behaviour. Rather, it is to look at drop out from the perspective of food consumption, vis-avis food shopping, as a practice. Food shopping is a performance that is in constant negotiations with other daily practices, and requires navigations through the variety competing practices, life structures, norms, values and other sociocultural influences.

As the REKO model for food provisioning has expanded to other geographies in recent years (see Appendix A), what can other REKO circles learn from Vaasa on why consumer drop out of their practice of REKO shopping and on the overall resiliency of this type AFN? While there is a high volume of literature on alternative food networks as a movement to counteract the negative externalities of an industrialised and globalised food system, there is little research on the resiliency of these models. REKO, being a relatively new AFN, has limited published literature at the moment.

Thus, this thesis can serve a practical reference for growing number of REKO circles in Nordic countries and beyond, as well as contribute to AFN literature in the areas of understanding consumer's usage and drop out of such systems. Learnings from this study can help mitigate possible upcoming challenges on consumer drop out. In addition, it will add to the knowledge base of REKO as this phenomenon continues to be researched as it grows.

1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis is structured into four sections and they are summarized as follows.

Introduction – The introduction section provides my personal motivations for conducting this research and outlines the research purpose, the research questions that are to be answered, the research contributions of this thesis, and an outline of the structure of this thesis.

Research Design – This section outlines my choice of case study and the methods used to conduct the research. I discuss the data collection process and what was done to maintain research quality and adhere to research ethics. Also within this section I will go into the challenges and limitations for this study.

Results and Discussion – In this section I present and discuss the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged from research.

Conclusion – Finally, the conclusion section will summarize this research study. I will provide my reflections on the findings, challenges and limitations, and suggest possible next steps and research gaps in REKO.

2 Research Design

This research is a study on the decline of REKO Vaasa usership, by the means of empirical data gathered from a single holistic case study using a sample of REKO Vaasa consumers who are former REKO shoppers. This section of the thesis will outline the research design by describing the case study, the research timeline, the methods used, the data collection process and research quality and ethics.

2.1 Case Study

Yin (2009) indicates “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.” Case studies are the preferred method for research when it’s based on a current phenomenon within a real-life context, when the researcher has little control over the events and when “how” or “why” questions are being asked. As REKO circles are unfolding, growing, and maturing in real time, there is a complexity and richness to the events surrounding its existence that is best dealt with through a case study.

In this research I aim to understand why consumers shop at REKO and why they ultimately drop out. A case study format has the capacity to reveal the operational links of the various contextual factors and social processes that influence the joining and dropping out of REKO. AFN attrition research has normally been approached through a positivist approach using quantitative surveys, which would only limit the findings to frequencies or incidence of events, and not linkages.

2.1.1 Case Study Selection

I wanted to find a REKO circle that has gone through its various growth stages and has reached a point of stability. Vaasa REKO, being one of the oldest REKO circles operating, was a natural choice. Vaasa is also where I conducted my first research trip and established familiarity and contacts, which aided the research process.

For context, Vaasa is a mid-sized Finnish city, with a population of 67 552 at the end of 2018 (Statistics Finland, 2020). Considering there were 13 131 people in the REKO

Vaasa Facebook page on 31 March 2020, this represents 19%³ of Vaasa, which is a significant number. The education sector and energy sector are important part of Vaasa’s workforce. Vaasa is the home to five higher education institutions and 20% of the population is a university student (Vaasa, n.d). It is also home to EnergyVaasa, a Nordic Hub for energy technology.

An article in a Swedish language paper in Finland reported that interest in REKO overall has cooled across Finland, with some circles stable, and others experiencing decline. (Treier, 2019). Being a grassroots initiative run by volunteers concrete metrics on usage for REKO are unfortunately available. The decline in REKO Vaasa was synthesized through anecdotal evidence from REKO Vaasa local administrators and consumers. In 2017, the REKO Vaasa administrators held a public meeting to address the decline in traffic, indicating a decline happened before 2017.

A summary of the key events in REKO’s trajectory and how the structure of it changed over the years can be found in Appendix B.

2.2 Timeline of Research

This research was conducted throughout 2019 and is divided into four distinct phases is summarized in the below figure.



Figure 1 Timeline of Research

For a detailed description of the four research please see Appendix C.

³ It is likely that the REKO Vaasa Facebook group includes citizens from the surrounding area.

2.3 Research Methods

The research methods to gather background / contextual information and the empirical data for this case study are summarised below. For a full list of informants and consumer participants, please see Appendix D.

Table 1 Summary of Research Methods for Background / Context on Case Study

Research Method	Purpose	Sources	Phase
Participant Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand this model from a users' perspective • Provide inputs to the development of interview guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaasa REKO food deliveries • Vaasa REKO Facebook group activity • Workday with REKO producer 	2, 4
Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide background contextual data for the Vaasa REKO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REKO Founder Thomas Snellman • 2 current REKO Vaasa admins • 1 former REKO Vassa administrators • 2 REKO researchers • Workday with REKO producer 	2, 4

Table 2 Summary of Research Methods for Empirical Data for Case Study

Research Method	Purpose	Sources	Phase
Semi structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather a holistic view of the consumers' user experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 former Vaasa consumers (6 individuals, 1 duo) 	4
Participant Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To observe former consumers' food shopping habits and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery shop-alongs with 6 former Vaasa REKO consumers 	4

2.4 Sampling Plan

I used both purposive and snowball sampling to find my informants. Purposive sampling is used when the research question(s) require a certain criterion from their sample (Bryman, 2012, p. 422). For this research, I was specifically looking for former REKO Vaasa consumers who no longer shop there to form my definition of “drop out.”

Deciding on how to classify a consumer as someone who no longer shops at REKO required boundaries in order to maintain consistency in the purposive sample. For this study, I decided to select consumers who have not shopped at REKO for all of 2019. At the time of my study, this equated to nine months as my interviews with consumers took place in early October.

I intentionally chose October for my data collection visit, as opposed to earlier in the season, to ensure the passage of peak harvest for farms – a busy time for REKO. Had I done the field visit before the peak harvest, there was a possibility of recruiting seasonal shoppers into my sample. Conducting the research with consumers after the peak harvest season provided me with a clear cut off point for determining if a consumer has dropped out.

To find my purposive sample, I first reached out to people that I met from my first research trip that are embedded in REKO Vaasa. I also posted on a REKO Vaasa discussion page on Facebook to search for consumers that suited my criterion. This initial outreach yielded six participants, with a seventh participant obtained through snowball sampling.

Participants referred to me were contacted either through Facebook or email and were given a brief overview of the research. The participation criterion for drop out was used as a screener question before I moved forward with scheduling an in-person interview. All in-person interviews were scheduled through written communication and reconfirmed 24 hours before the interview either a phone call, text message or written correspondence.

Determining the number of participants to sample is always challenge. Bryman (2012) indicates that it is difficult to determine how many samples are required if the goal is to achieve a saturation of themes. In addition, there is, more or less, no criteria to

determine when saturation has been reached. Thus, the number really depends on the context, research objectives, research questions, one's methodological and epistemological perspective (Baker & Edwards, 2012). For this case, I was not aiming for a representative sample, nor for a full saturation of themes as individuals and individual behaviour was not the unit of analysis. The goal was to achieve depth in understanding the context and underlying material, meaning and competences and how they interact, converge and diverge to form the practice of shopping at REKO.

2.5 Data Collection

Empirical data from the consumers was collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation through grocery shop-alongs. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was for the participants to relate to me their experiences with REKO in their own words. The purpose of the shop-alongs was to get a holistic view of the consumers' food procurement process and to understand the contextual factors that are relevant to how they shop for food.

Interviews are one of the most important sources of information in a case. Rather than structured queries that are rigid, these interviews are more like conversations. The goal is to inquire into a certain subject matter (Yin, 2009). An interview guide was developed (Appendix E) with key questions that I was seeking answers to, however, as suggested by Bryman (2012, p. 212) the interview was approached more like conversations with a focus on building rapport with the consumers. The interviews were conducted either at the consumers work offices, their homes, or at a café they suggested. Having the interviews take place in a familiar setting for the interviewees helps support the validity of the data gathered (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

In total, 7 sets of consumers were interviewed: five individual females, two individual males, and 1 couple were interviewed. The interviews lasted between 44 minutes – 1 hr 56 min. All interviews conducted were recorded on my iPhone using the voice memo app, and then uploaded to my password protected computer and secured NMBU servers.

For each interview, I requested to tag along on one of their regular shopping trips during the week I was in in Vaasa. This request was proposed in my initial correspondence, and again requested at the interview. I indicated to the consumers that I wanted to join on a regular shopping trip that would have taken place during the week

even if I was not around as I wanted to observe a natural, typical occurrence. Thus, some of the shop-alongs took place on the same day of the interview, and some took place on separate days to suit the participant’s shopping routines. I was able to join shop-alongs with 6 out of 7 of the consumers.

To support a natural setting for the shop-alongs, I tried to conduct them after the interviews (which was possible for five out of six shop-alongs) and after a rapport had already been established. At the shop-alongs I observed the shopping process and asked questions about their shopping choices along the way. I also aimed to understand how their shopping trip fit into their other practices. The shopping trips were audio recorded using the voice memo app on my iPhone and photos of the purchases or a copy of the receipt was taken for documentation purposes.

A research journal, in the form of written notes and audio recordings of my thoughts, was kept document my reflections.

A summary of my research participants and basic demographic data is listed below.

Table 3 Consumer Research Participant Demographics

Consumer Research Participant Demographics				
Consumer	Shop-along?	Age	Kids < 18	Annual HH Income (€)
1	Y	32	3	75000 – 99999
2	Y	42	1	20000 – 34999
3	Y	47	1	75000 – 99999
4	Y	40	2	75000 – 74999
5	N	43	3	50000 – 74999
6 (couple)	Y	39 / 40	2	Over 1000000
7	Y	72	0	Under 20000

Consumer 7 is an outlier in the dataset, both in demographics and when they were an active user of REKO. All other research participants are in their 30's and 40's with above average incomes (with the exception of Consumer 2, who is a PhD student) and in households with children under 18. As sampling was not conducted to be representative of the population, Consumer 7 was kept in the data set.

2.6 Data Analysis

The interviews with the consumers were transcribed using software, and then quality checked by myself, and exported as MS Word documents. The grocery shopping trips with the consumers were not transcribed.

Content analysis was conducted on the consumer interviews, but not on the shop-along trips. The audio recordings for the shopping trips were listened to several times and reflection notes were made during the playback.

For the content analysis process, each consumer transcript was treated as a data document. I first reviewed the interview by listening and reading the interview transcript several times before I embarked on coding the data documents. The coding was manually done, with no software. Saldaña recommends a manual process for those that are new to coding and if the project scale is small enough to manage manually (2009, pp. 21-22). As this was my first timing coding, I decided to do it manually as I wanted to stay as close to the data and process as possible. I was also comfortable with the size of my sample to feel confident that it could be done manually. For a detail description of the coding process and sample coding documents see Appendix F.

2.7 Research Quality and Ethics

In this section I will discuss the steps and measures taken to ensure research quality and ethical integrity in the research process.

2.7.1 Research Quality

Yin indicates that rigour in social science research requires “fair presentation of empirical data” (2009). That being said, I believe it is important to acknowledge my ontological (my viewed reality) starting point for this research. As an agroecologist and

someone embedded in AFNs, my starting point will naturally be very different than someone with a different ontological view. For example, discussions on power structures in retail will be very different than someone with a neo-liberal capitalistic worldview.

Because of ontological differences, epistemology (how I view my reality) is of important consideration. Maxwell (1992) proposes a set of validity considerations in qualitative research to address how a viewed reality can be approached in different ways. Because of possible different approaches, research quality considerations need to be addressed to help protect against validity threats and alternatives interpretations. The five validity considerations Maxwell considers important include descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalisability, and evaluative validity. These considerations were used as I conducted my data analysis. For full details on how I applied these validity considerations, please see Appendix G.

2.7.2 Research Ethics

The data collection, processing and storage plan for this research was submitted and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and follows considerations for informed consent, data protection, and anonymity.

For the transparency of any conflict of interest, it should be noted that the secondary supervisor for this thesis, Maria Ehrnström-Fuentes, was an informant and key contact for this study. This potential conflict of interest is managed by ensuring there is an additional supervisor on this study (the primary supervisor) and advice was restricted to technical aspects of this thesis and not on any data analysis component.

3 Results and Discussion

This section will present a summary of the participating consumers and the themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged for the research question in this study.

3.1 Participating Consumers

In total seven consumers participated in this research; 6 single participants and one couple. Five out of seven of the participants were early adopters, having joined REKO at the very start, or during its first full year of operations in 2014.

It should be noted that Consumer 5 does not fit the research's criterion of "drop out" as they purchased strawberries once in 2019. There was a pre-screening process for all participants by e-mail and the definition of drop out was explained to the participants prior to inviting them to meet for an interview. Consumer 5 indicated that they qualify for the research, but it came out during the interview process that they did shop for strawberries once in 2019. I decided to keep this consumer in the data set as they were a heavy and regular user of the system. Heavy as defined in quantity purchase, and regular as defined by frequency. They purchased large quantities and fulfilled most of their food purchases at REKO, using the system 2x month. For all intense and purposes, they have dropped out of the system as REKO does not play a part in their life anymore.

Table 4 Summary of Consumer Research Participants' Shopping History

REKO Shopping History				
Consumer	Shop-along?	Start	Stop	REKO Frequency
1	Y	2013	2016	1x/ every 2 months
2	Y	2013	2016	Weekly
3	Y	2014	2018	Special occasions
4	Y	2014	2016	1x / month
5	N	2013	2016 ⁴	2x / month
6 (couple)	Y	2014	2014	Once
7	Y	2017	2018	Weekly

⁴ Purchased strawberries once in summer 2019

3.2 RQ 1a Themes & Categories

Five different themes emerged as factors that influenced why consumers shopped at REKO. They include the consumer's **Personal Ideology**, an **Awareness of REKO**, an availability of **REKO as an Alternative**, and properties that are inherent to the REKO model: the **Products** available and the **Shopping Experience** itself. Table 6 outlines these five themes and categories that emerged from the data. For a complete list of Themes, Categories as well as Subcategories for RQ 1a in one table, please see Appendix H.

Table 5 RQ 1a Themes and Categories

Themes	Categories
Personal Ideology	Attitudes Values Beliefs
The REKO Alternative	The concept Shift from retailers
Awareness	Viral communication Popularity
Products	Specialty products Grocery staples Trust
Shopping Experience	Romance Social

A process flow chart is used to show the temporal existence of REKO for the research participants – from pre-REKO times, to usage, to drop out. The flow chart shows the pre-existing conditions that influenced the trial of the REKO model, and the factors that influenced repeat usage.

The inherent properties of REKO, the Products and the Shopping Experience also appeared as themes for reasons why the consumers dropped out of REKO. Whereas the positive properties of these factors influenced their repeat patronage of REKO while

they were a user, the negative properties eventually contributed their drop out of the REKO system. To depict this overlap of these two themes, the process flowchart in the figure below shows a movement toward dropping out, as depicted by the blue area below.

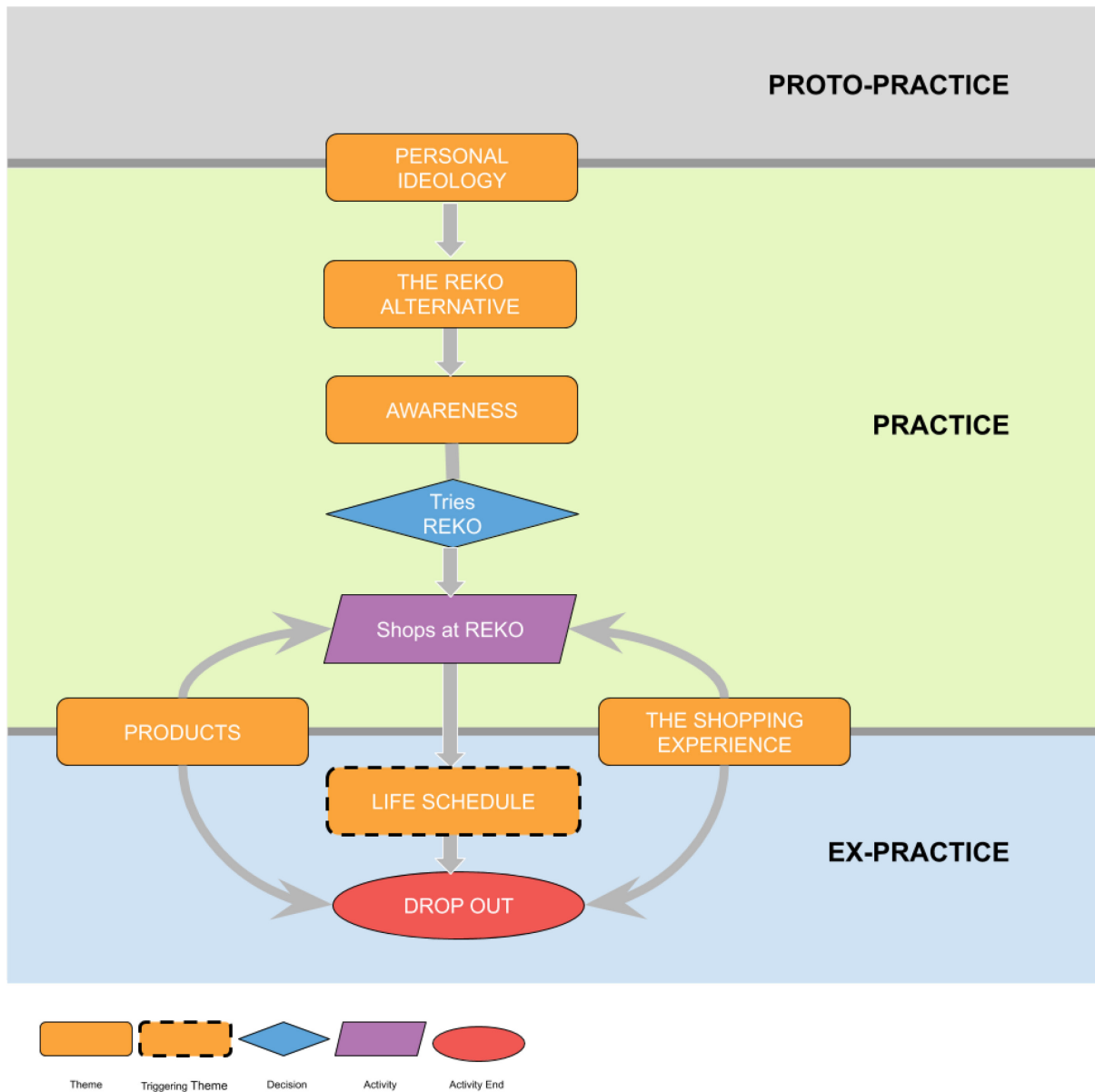


Figure 2 Shifting from Proto-practice to REKO practice

The following sections will now explore these themes in detail in relation to SPT.

3.2.1 Personal Ideology

Table 6 RQ 1a, Theme 1 Personal Ideology

Theme	Categories	Sub-categories
Personal Ideology	Attitudes	Be a “good” consumer
		Nationalism
		Reduce plastic
	Values	Eco-minded
		Localism
		Fairness
		Food resilience
	Beliefs	Food system change
		Retailer (S & K) power
Distrust in the conventional food system		
Trust in local production		
	Individual impact	

In SPT the unit of enquiry is the practice itself, with the individual as carriers of the practice, “she or he is not only a carrier of patterns of bodily behaviour, but also of certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Thus, practices have their own histories and patterns of development, and are distinct from their enactment and performance (Shove, 2012; Warde, 2005), by the individual carrier. In looking at how practices cumulate into social realities, it is important to look at dynamics of the various components of those practices and how they are carried out by the individual (Shove, 2012).

The individuals that shop at REKO, what type of meaning – that is, values and norms – and do they carry? It was found that personal ideology that is predisposed to alternative forms of food procurement existed among these consumers prior to REKO being introduced. This ideology is consistency with findings from Forssell & Lankoski (2015) that showed AFN consumers have non-conventional values and goals.

Their personal ideology was categorized into Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs (AVB). As these three concepts are intertwined in how they are expressed, I will discuss them together with examples of how these AVB are expressed in the consumers in this study.

In Bourdieu's concept of habitus, an individual's thoughts, actions, discernments and opinions are accumulated over time through their environment (Bourdieu, 1990). Thus, the consumers' personal ideology can be traced back to their backgrounds and histories. Consumer 6 had a prior history of subscribing to a box scheme and consumer 1 recalls that they "grew up with all animals, you can think about that you can have, and we were eating all products from them" (01 October 2019). They grew up in a self-sufficient manner not having to go to the shops with the exception of coffee, oil and salt. Consumer 7 also grew up on a family farm and ate food produced on the farm. Meanwhile, Consumer 3 had a history of supporting small food manufacturers gain distribution at retail. For some consumers, like Consumer 2, consuming food is a highly political act that a person's choice of how they procure their food can be an act of resistance to the power structures in the system. When asked about her experience with REKO she relayed:

I was looking for solutions where I could get locally produced, ecological food. For me food is also democracy, food is resilience. And food is where one of the points you can decide if you go a more along with the ruling the regime, the big chains, or if you do resistance. So, for me, it's all intertwined with both the ecological aspect, which is very important for me, but it's also about local sovereignty, like possibilities to actually earn a living without being tied to some of these bigger power holders.
(Consumer 2, 03 October 2019)

The discourse around AFN in Europe has been traditionally been around protecting agrarian communities and the quality turn of food, while the American discourse has been one of emancipation and political activism in the food system (Goodman & Goodman, 2009; Goodman, Goodman, DuPuis, & Routledge, 2014). REKO, being a system that grew through enthusiastic usership, sheds light that the discourse in Finland has perhaps shifted. Even without the strong political leanings of Consumer 2, the rest also expressed awareness of the hegemony of the retail system. There was a belief among the consumer that the food retailers have too much power and that a system change is required. These quotes expressed this belief:

It's better than there's not a lot of money going into Prisma. Rather, for the producers, I think they deserve it. (Consumer 6, 05 October 2019).

I really like this idea that you actually support the producer more than supporting the supermarkets. (Consumer 4, 03 October 2019).

I think it was that I wanted support the farmers. (Consumer 5, 04 October 2019).

There was also distrust in the conventional food system. For example, Consumer 7 talked about the honey in the supermarkets not being real honey, and the olive oil not being real olive oil. There was certainly a desire to have an alternative to the big chain supermarkets, but prior to REKO, there was no way to procure food directly from farmers.

The grocery shop-alongs in particular demonstrated the type of consumers these former REKO consumers are. Consumer 1 – 6 either brought their own reusable bag or purchased a paper bag if they forgot. There was a strong awareness to avoid plastic. Consumer 7 did not have the same aversion to plastic but does believe in the concept of reusing and picked up discarded plastic bags in the store.

Except for Consumer 1, who had a clear criteria of choosing organic when shopping organic as the criteria before local, all others had inconsistent applications of applying ecological dimensions to how they shop, choosing their products in an unreflective manner – sometimes they chose organic, sometimes not, but with no set criteria. However, most of the consumers were label readers and paid attention to the origins of the products they purchased. There was a strong propensity to shop local and for products that are Finnish. They felt it was important to support the Finnish economy and also had high trust in Finnish production, as noted by this consumer:

I don't think it's nice to buy stuff from very far away for the environment. It's not so good that we are getting stuff from, you know, Southern America, even if it's ecological, you know it's from very far away... I think we try to buy tomatoes from Närpes. Is close by to here. I mean, it's also important. the closer the better. (Consumer 6, 05 October 2019).

The strong showing of localness as an attribute appears to mirror trends in the U.S. where there has been a turn in preference for local over organics. Adams (2010) tracked consumer perceptions and willingness to pay for local and organic food since the 1980's

and found that there was a turn to local from organics from consumers since the 1990's. This was after certification of organics, which led to a dilution of organic's embedded values of small farms, sustainability, animal welfare and community support. With corporate co-optation of organics, Adams' argued that consumers' demands for local grew.

3.2.2 The REKO Alternative

Table 7 RQ 1a, Theme 2 The REKO Alternative

Theme	Category	Subcategories
The REKO Alternative	The concept	Philosophy of REKO Actualization of AVB Close to home / work Quality Organic
	Shift from Retailers	Support local farmers Short travelled food No middle men

The existence of REKO provided an alternative for shopping at somewhere other than conventional retail. The theme of REKO as an alternative was divided into two categories: the Concept of the REKO itself, and the Shift from Retailers.

Increasingly, consumers are demanding alternatives to placeless and faceless food of the industrialized system, which creates space for new forms of production that's based on relationships between consumers and producers (Goodman & Goodman, 2009; Kloppenburg et al., 1996). The access to alternative food provisioning is not stemmed from the lack of desire, but the power dynamics and system challenges in the industrialized food system (Reisch, Eberle, & Lorek, 2013).

Prior to of REKO, there were almost no ways to purchase food directly from farmers. According to a CSA report produced by Urgenci (Cóil, 2016), a worldwide network for CSAs, showed that some AFN activity did exist prior to REKO in Finland form of CSAs. However, there was no national network or efforts to share, collaborate or grow the movement and government support or policies for CSAs did not exist. As result, the

activity in CSAs was too small to be noticed in any significant way. The first CSA in Finland started in 2011 in Helsinki and at the time of the report in 2016, there were approximately 8-10 active CSAs in Finland.

Material in SPT encompasses “things”, including objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body itself used to enact the practice (Shove, 2012). The concept of REKO provided the materiality that was needed to form a practice of shopping at this AFN. There are two components of the materiality of REKO that are notable. First, Facebook as the platform for connecting the consumers and producers and to facilitate the ordering process, and second the utilisation of public and private social spaces for the food exchange, and finally the actors involved in REKO.

Snellman noted that the use Facebook for REKO was a by-product of how the system was used by the customers and farmers. In a sense, the “system itself decided. My decision when we started it was to be like the French system” (Thomas Snellman, 18 March 2019). Snellman believes that the lack of need to build a tool or infrastructure are strategic benefits that REKO has over other AFNs. Facebook was already a material component of consumers’ lives and was a key part of the infrastructure for REKO.

The meeting place for the food pick-up is another important component for REKO. A social meeting place allowed the transaction to happen. As REKO does not have permanent infrastructure, the ability to use a public or private space for this exchange is an important material component for REKO to work. The consumers felt that REKO Vaasa was in a good location, either close to their home or work.

The three types of actors involved in REKO are the producers, the administrators and the consumers. Snellman recalled that getting producers to participate in REKO was challenging at first (Snellman, 18 March 2019). Selling direct to consumers was unfamiliar to Finnish farmers it and required personal convincing from Snellman for farmers to get involved. While there was little initial trust in the model, there was trust in Snellman through his prior work and reputation with farmers in the area. However, over time, the practice of shopping at REKO shifted and proliferated and attracted more farmers to participate.

The local administrators are also key to the REKO system. They are responsible for setting and up and administering the Facebook group, deciding and applying the criteria

for producers allowed into the circle, approving consumers into the Facebook page, and deciding and organising a time and location for the food deliveries (Administrator 1, 19 March 2019; Administrator 2, 06 October 2019; Administrator 3, 18 October 2019).

Without volunteers supplying the critical administrative functions for REKO, REKO would not exist.

Finally, the customers are the last set of actors required for REKO to exist. The system started with a small set of early adopters, about 30 consumers between Vaasa and Jakobstad (Snellman, 18 March 2019), but quickly grew exponentially as more carriers of the REKO shopping practice came on board.

The concept of REKO – direct to producer-to-consumer model of buying local food – was well received by the consumers. All the consumers had positive sentiments towards REKO, citing that they liked the overall concept and supported the overall philosophy. With REKO the consumers finally had a means to shop according to their personal ideology, as expressed by Consumer 3:

I was, in a way convinced by the sort of philosophy behind it, and it sort of resonated with my values in a way that I thought that this is a good thing. And it's right to support it. (Consumer 3, 02 October, 2019).

They talked about the high quality of the food and liked the idea of getting “something fresh and ecological and straight from the farmer” (Consumer 5, 04 October 2019). The consumers recognized that not everything at REKO was ecological, but the localness had a strong appeal.

REKO allowed the consumers the consumer to shift away from retailers. The consumers felt that the food at REKO was truly local. They recognized that even though some of the food in the shops were local, they believed that the local food in stores had likely travelled many kilometres to a central distribution point in Helsinki and made their way back. To the consumers, buying local food directly from a farmer meant that the food is as fresh as it can be, and the carbon footprint is minimized. They were happy for their money to go directly to farmers, rather than the middle spaces that exist between farmers and consumers.

3.2.3 Awareness

Table 8 RQ 1a, Theme 3 Awareness

Theme	Category	Subcategories
Awareness	Viral Communication	Newspapers Social Media Personal network
	Popularity	New / Hype / Exciting Busy (long line-ups)

An awareness of the system is key to trial of REKO. Awareness of REKO was generated into two main ways, through Viral Communications on REKO and through its Popularity. The viralness of REKO and its popularity was circular in nature, with one influencing and encouraging the development of the other.

Social networks are important reasons for why individuals end up carrying a practice (Shove, 2012). Communities and networks are significant for how new arrangements end up forming and how the practice gets diffused. Social networks formed by previous connections and interests are where existing carriers recruit new ones. Thus, new and emerging practices exploit these networks.

When REKO first started it got a high volume of coverage through traditional media vehicles such as newspapers, which helped to drive awareness of it. But personal social networks – in person and online – were important for encouraging other’s enacting their practice. For example, Consumer 3 was convinced to try REKO through the enthusiasm of a co-worker, noting her co-worker was a “fiery spirt” and her personal enthusiasm for REKO triggered her to try it out. However, it was the through the social networks on Facebook that really facilitated the diffusion of the REKO shopping practice in an exponential way.

At the beginning, there was a proliferation of Facebook shares, mentions and likes, and enthusiasm for the system by the initial carriers of the practice, which helped REKO gain new carriers. This helped the quick establishment and growth of REKO as engagement on Facebook affects algorithms, and in turn, the visibility of REKO on one’s newsfeed and notifications. As noted by Consumer 4 on the Facebook platform, “When

your friends are commenting, you pick it up, and then my friends will pick it up on it (October 2019). REKO quickly became a norm for alternative minded consumers.

Elements in a practice are constantly in flux and are constantly shaping each other. Through this flux practices are constantly forming, persisting, changing and disappearing. As noted by Shove, “people are unknowingly engaged in reproducing and enacting multiple and varied cycles of change, simultaneously shaping the lives of practices and being shaped by them” (2012, p. 77). The carriers’ practice of shopping at REKO, and their enthusiastic engagement with it and the resulting increase in popularity shows a dialectic nature between these realities. The increased popularity and resulting hype, led to intangible expressions of excitement and over this practice, and tangible expressions in the form of long line-ups and a social atmosphere at the food-up, which led to the growth of a community of practioners in REKO.

3.2.4 Products

Table 9 RQ 1a, Theme 4 Products

Theme	Category	Subcategories
Products	Specialty products	Products not available in stores Christmas products Homemade / handmade products
	Grocery staples	Fresh Vegetables “Brown” eggs Fresh fish High quality meat Summer berries / Strawberries
	Trust	Trust in local food Trust in product quality Trust admin vendor selection Trust in production practices

Once the consumer was engaged in the system, the products influenced their continued usage of the system. Two of the categories that emerged from this theme had to do with the type of products available at REKO, which were Specialty Products and Grocery Staples. The third category had to do with the product attribute, which was an overall Trust that the consumers had for REKO products.

Products, a physical item in REKO, is another element of materiality in the practice of shopping at REKO. This materiality serviced the REKO consumers in multiple ways. For Consumer 3, who was a seasonal REKO shopper, they liked REKO for its speciality products. They shopped at REKO during the Christmas season for the specialty, homemade products. These products were not available at regular grocery stores and they liked that these products were made by a real person in a small-scale way.

Consumer 3 explains:

I would never buy an industrially made casserole to put up on the Christmas table. But I would definitely buy some from a lady with a first name and last name standing in the kitchen. So it tastes homemade.
(Consumer 3, 02, October 2019).

Here, you can see that the Consumers' values – the personal connection to the food and an artisanal product – are embedded in the materiality of the product.

The frequent shoppers and heavier REKO shoppers tended used the system for their grocery staples, citing high quality (another embedded value) meats, vegetables, eggs, fish and local berries. A consumers' willingness to pay at AFNs are often superseded by shared values with the producers involved in AFNs; creating a value equation that includes consideration for the moral and ethical implications in production methods, farmers' livelihoods, and ecological respect (Whatmore et al., 2003). This is expressed by Consumer 4's willing ness to pay for food quality and local food:

I think you get fresher, at least for the vegetables, than what you get from the supermarkets. So, in that way, of course, it's nice, and also that it's local...I don't care that much about price, I would say, okay, of course, if it's way too much expensive, then I don't buy it. But still. Food is something that that comes spend a little bit extra.

Eggs appeared to a very important product to the REKO system, with consumers saying that it struck a good balance between value, quality and ethical production. In

particular, brown eggs were valued over white eggs, which were difficult to find at regular supermarkets. Eggs were an “easy” product to purchase – it’s a product that they know is always available and an item that is a part of their regular eating practices.

An important attribute for the REKO products was trust – trust in the administrators, trust in the production practices of the producers, and an overall trust in the product quality. The trust in product standards and quality are not through direct knowledge, but rather, delivered surrogately through the administrators and the farmers, and a social embeddedness with the system. The consumers were aware of how the REKO system works in that administrators act as gatekeepers to the producers that are allowed to sell in their REKO circle. They trust that there is a standardised vetting a process to ensure quality and ethical production practices. Trust to the farmers is granted through the social relationship and the farmers and the overall social embeddedness of the system.

Giddens describes trust as the “confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles ‘technical knowledge’” (Giddens, 1990, p. 33). Thus, trust is constructed from a socially-created human relationship between the consumers and farmers, with confidence that the products adhere to their values with incomplete knowledge.

AFNs are characterised by social embeddedness, defined by a set of strong interpersonal relationships between the producer and the end consumer (Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Sage, 2003). Sage indicates that a heterogenous set of social actors converge around the concept of “good food” and interact through principals of social-connectivity, reciprocity and trust – characteristics that provides the foundation for AFNs and as we can see is also expressed in REKO.

The fact the food is local also provides an element of trust for the carriers of the REKO shopping practitioner. However, this lack of reflexivity can make a consumer fall into the “local trap.” Born (2006), argues that scale is a social construct and that scale doesn’t exhibit inherent qualities. Thus, it is not possible to assume a larger scale food system is inherently less sustainable or socially just than a local system.

DuPuis and Goodman cautions against an emancipation of food that is based on a set of norms and imaginaries about place. Further, Jarosz notes that “Local food systems may employ industrialized production techniques, exploit farm workers and still produce organic food. ‘Local’ is a construct, and local food systems cannot be assumed to be uniformly ‘good’ or progressive, because they emerge from a complexity of contingent, place-based social, political and ecological processes.” However, arguably, the unreflective trust for localness helped to drive the practice of shopping REKO as it is a model of food distribution based on the localisation of food. All the food at Vaasa REKO, as explained by Administrator 2, is sourced from a 100km radius from Vaasa (with exceptions given to products not available in that 100km boundary. This trust was also found by Hagolani-Albov and Halvorson (2017) in their study of REKO as urban grassroots food distribution in Finland, where they found consumers found REKO bringing back trust to the food buying process to be a benefit of shopping there.

3.2.5 The Shopping Experience

Table 10 RQ 1a, The Shopping Experience

Theme	Category	Subcategories
Shopping Experience	Romance	Instagrammable Quaint Market feel A face to your food Worth it
	Social	Social community gathering Face-to-face with producers Visible Facebook communication Learn about products / production

Like products, the shopping experience at REKO contributed to their usage of the system. Two categories emerged from this theme, the first one being the Romance of shopping at REKO, and the second one being the Social nature of this model.

The ways the various elements of REKO interact, both social and material, creates a shopping experience that is unlike shopping at retail. There was a clear distinction from consumers that REKO is not like shopping at the supermarket. They closely linked it as

an experience, something that has higher meaning than just food procurement. There a romance to shopping at REKO – the market feel, the quaintness of it and having a face to who produce your food. One consumer mentioned that all the REKO experiences and food always seemed “Instagrammable.” Even the line-ups, which were seen as being “worth it” and added to the experience. Consumer 3 recalled a particularly memorable experience of standing in line in the cold to pick up their food for Christmas:

The first time I bought things before Christmas, and everyone wanted their fish. The lines were so long, and it was freezing, and I was wearing too little. I felt like being in the Soviet Union. And I was going to get some amazing fish going through all this struggle, but it's also that it makes it memorable, even though it's, it's such a crazy experience. (Consumer 3, 02 October 2020)

Here we see how the popularity of REKO – shaped by the carriers interacting with the materiality of Facebook – and the materiality of a temporary infrastructure that was quaint and market-like in nature interacting with materiality of the bodies involved in REKO, resulted in social-material context that could be deemed miserable otherwise into an experience that was memorable. Similarly, in their study of CSA, Thompson (2007) found that the inconveniences inherent in CSAs were seen as enchanted moral virtues. For example, they found that the CSA members gained sense of enchantment by the physicality of helping on the farm and getting dirty in the soil. Helping out was not seen as unwanted, physical labour, but rather a part of the experience of participating in a CSA.

Consumer 3, being a season shopper, did recognised that they saw quaintness in REKO because they were not a regular shopper, noting “if you do it every week, I don't know if it's so interesting.” (02 October 2019).

The social aspect of REKO was also a big benefit of this method of food shopping. The consumers described REKO as a social gathering – seeing people in line that they haven't seen for years. They liked being able to deal with the producers directly, either at the food pick-up or on Facebook, and thought that it was “much more personal than going to shelf, and in a big hole, and not knowing anybody” (Consumer 7, 04 October 2019). Having a “face” to your food has certainly been found to be a key attribute of other AFNs (Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Sage, 2003).

The social aspect also extended virtually. They appreciated having a forum to ask questions and interact with the farmers. They cited the importance of learning about production practices, especially important as the consumers appeared to be aware that not every producer can be certified organic (fees, administration, bureaucracy), but can still practice in a way that adheres to their values. For example, Consumer 6 had this to say about the social experience:

I think it's nice when I can ask about the products and they know about them. There's this service that you get. And it's better that there's not a lot of money going into Prisma. Rather, for the producers, as I think they deserve it. And they can tell you that these products may not be ecological, but they are almost ecological, and can tell us other nice qualities about the products. (Consumer 6, 05 October 2019)

3.3 The Making of a REKO Shopping Practice

Using a SPT approach to answer the question of why consumers shop at REKO, I am essentially looking at how consumers became carriers of practice, and by extension, looking at how the practice of shopping at REKO was formed. Using Shove, Prantzer and Watson (2012)'s conceptualization of social practice theory, I looked at the three elements involved in the formation of a REKO shopping practice: material, competence, and meaning, and mapped the themes that emerged from the study onto these elements.

Practices exist because of the interdependencies of material, competence, and meaning (ibid). As such, practices exist when elements are linked, but the elements can also exist on its own without linkages, known as proto-practice. It is only when elements join that practices are enacted.

In proto-practice, the consumers had a personal ideology that was non-mainstream that pre-disposed them to shopping at a system such as REKO, but no materiality to link it to. Their attitudes, values and beliefs, which leaned towards localism, environmentalism and a belief on the imbalance of power in the food provisioning system. This ideology provided the meaning necessary to engage in REKO.

However, it was not just this set of consumer's personal ideology that added meaning to REKO. Normatively, the environment was ripe for a model such as REKO. In 2012, prior to the start of REKO, organic agricultural products grew by 24% (Salonen,

Fredriksson, Järvinen, Korteniemi, & Danielsson, 2014). At that time, Finland was also showing a leaning towards fair production and consumption habits, with fair trade growing in Finland by 48%, versus globally by 21% (Fairtrade International, 2013). So, it's not only that these consumers had these values, it was also socially common to have them.

In looking at materiality, I looked at the three main forms of material contributions to the REKO system: Facebook, and the social space designated for the food pick-up, and the producers participating in REKO. Many other forms of material contributed to REKO, including the REKO administrators, the car that the consumers used for the food pick, cash used to pay for the items, the computer/mobile phone that they used for the ordering, but here I am examining the critical ones that was required for REKO exists.

Facebook provided a pre-existing infrastructure for the REKO platform, which provided an ease for REKO to be set-up. For that to work, practices surrounding Facebook and Internet usage had to exist. The common social space for the food pick-up had to be available for the actual food exchange. Finally, the main set of material in the practice of REKO shopping are the three actors involved in REKO – the producers, the local administrators and the consumers. These three sets of materials came together to create an infrastructure for REKO to exist, and for practices surrounding REKO to be formed.

Like material, there are a multitude of competence required to use the REKO system. For example, the knowledge of how to use a computer and Facebook and the knowledge in how to pick-up your order. For the formation of the REKO shopping practice, I looked at in the overall system, due to its concept of the relocalisation of food, and trust in the products, through an outsource of competence to local administrators and farmers. This trust, gained through social embeddedness of REKO is common in AFNs (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Jarosz, 2008; Sage, 2003).

With the creation of the REKO system, the missing materiality of the practice of shopping at REKO is now in place. Consumers, the carriers of practice, carried out the performance of shopping at REKO, however, it is the interactions of these elements that shape, form and carry out the trajectories of REKO as social practice. The dialectic between how these elements interact stabilised REKO shopping as a practice, and

REKO grew as awareness grew and more carriers were recruited into the practice. All of this created a shopping experience that was desirable for the individual consumers.

3.4 Research Question 1b Themes & Categories

Six different themes emerged as factors that influenced why consumers dropped out of the Vaasa REKO circle. They include the consumer's **Life Schedule**, a **Dominant Retail System**, the **Products** available, the **Shopping Experience** and **Reduced Popularity** of the system. Emerging from this is also the theme where the consumer feels **Personal Agency** for dropping out. For a complete list of Themes, Categories as well as Subcategories for RQ 2 in one table, please see Appendix H.

Table 11 RQ 1b, Theme 1 Life Schedule

Themes	Categories
Life Schedule	Life changes Stress Planning
Dominant Retail system	Physical store locations REKO and "REKO-like" Products Other products Trust
The Shopping Experience	Ordering Pick-up Payment
Products	Packaging Food waste Pricing Selection
Reduced Popularity	Facebook Media Vendors
Personal Agency	My fault My burden

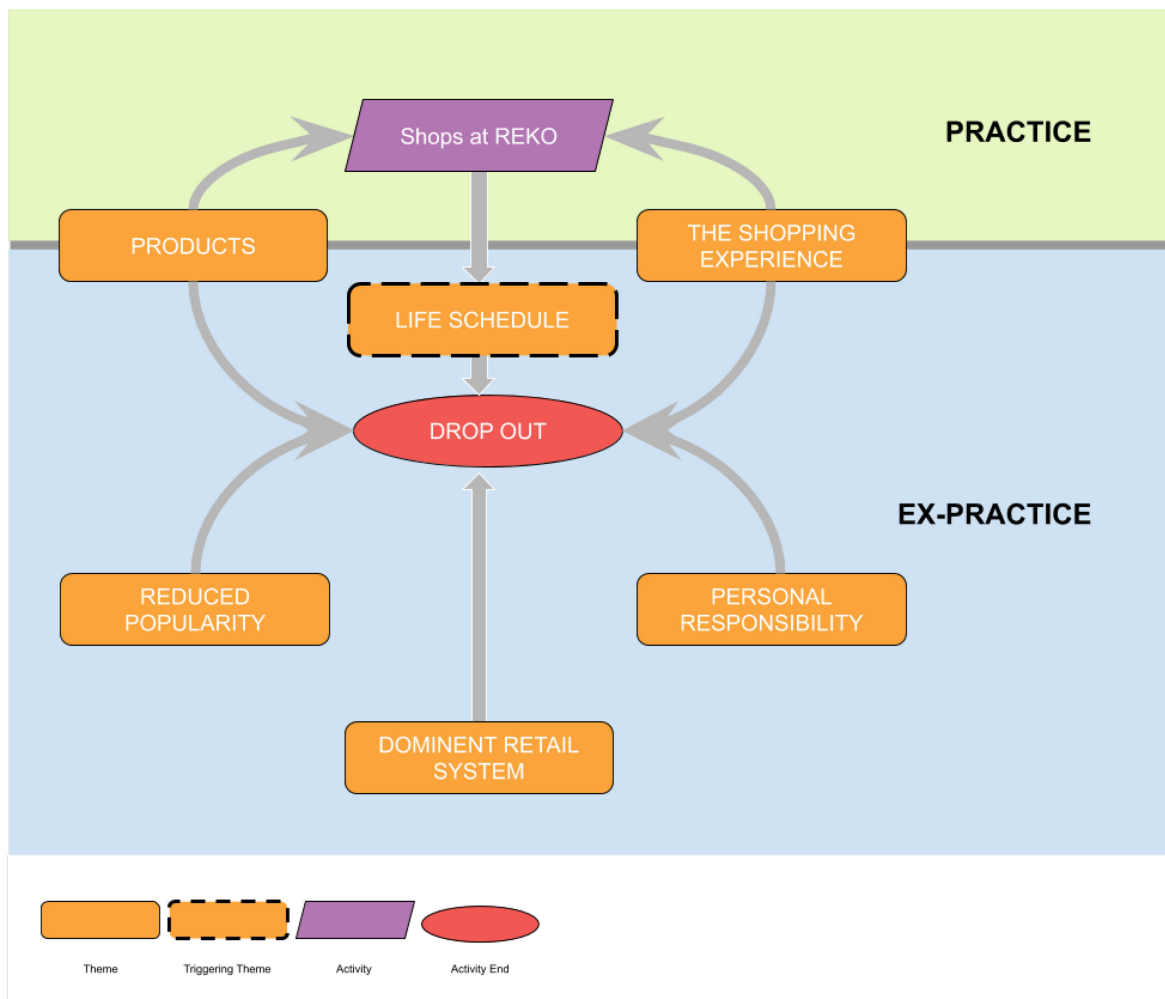


Figure 3 Shifting REKO Practice to Ex-practice

Like sub-question 1, a process flow chart shows the elements shifting from practice to ex-practice. The flow chart can be seen as an extension of the process flow used to illustrate the elements that interacted to for the creation of the REKO shopping practice. As Products and the Shopping Experience emerged as themes for both research question, they overlap for both the practice and ex-practice.

For all consumers interviewed, the drop out was not a conscious decision. In fact, Consumer 3 still considers themselves a consumer, even though they fit the technical definition of drop out used in this study. They have not shopped at REKO for all of 2019, but they consider themselves a REKO shopper. They said “in my mindset, I’m still REKO buyer, But just not in practice... It’s not that I got disappointed in it or something

like that and decided that I will not no longer shop. It just sort of failed to happen.” (Consumer 3, 02 October 2019). However, they do feel that they will shop at REKO again one day. Dropping out, for all consumers interviewed, was something that gradually faded from their shopping habits.

The following sections will now explore these themes in detail in relation to SPT.

3.4.1 Life Schedule

Table 12 RQ 1b, Theme 1 Life Schedule

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Life Schedule	Life changes	Family changes
		Changes to work
		Less income
	Stress	Limited time
		Hectic schedule
		Busy work
		Busy family
	Planning	Intentional activity
		Just-in-time shopping for meals
Requires an extra stop		
Not a regular FB user		

The consumers’ life schedules emerged as a theme for why consumers dropped out of REKO. Within this theme, there were three categories, Life Changes, Stress, and the need to conduct Planning around REKO.

While there was an accumulation of factors that contributed to the drop out of REKO, there does appear to be one category within in particular that triggered the drop out. Major life change such as the birth of a baby for Consumer 1 & 4 impacted the consumer’s life schedule in a way that REKO was no longer practical. The research participants also cited changes to their work schedule or their partner’s work schedule made it difficult to use REKO.

Consumer 4 recalled:

When we got our first kid, it changed little bit. And also, my fiancé has this evening work at her dance studio quite often. At some point, she had courses every Thursday. I had to be home with the kids.

For consumer 7, it wasn't so much a change in life schedule, but a change in materiality in the form of reduced money and finances that prevented them for shopping at REKO. In addition, the REKO pick-ups on Thursday conflicted with another life priority.

The consumers talked about the stress in their lives and the challenges of balancing work and family and how everything just seems busier and more stressful. Consumer 1 said the ordering process can be time consuming – taking them 45 min to place orders. They said this is 45 min that takes them away from other priorities or time they could've spent with their kids.

The planning required with REKO was also challenging. The REKO system is one that requires reflexivity, as advance planning due to the set pick-up time. A busy and stressful lifestyle appears to the norm of the modern lifestyle. A system that requires planning in a busy lifestyle is sometimes just too much, as described by Consumer 2:

I'm trying to really start understanding how to down shift my schedules, because I actually think that REKO is a very good thing. And I think that it's crazy that I live a life that I can't even plan for one shopping trip a week (Consumer 2, 03 October 2019)

Consumer 1 talked about the last minute of today's culture and on the challenges of planning:

The problem now, what I see is that it's just the one-hour window. That's a problem for today's people. Because we are last minute now. Not everybody. It's not just me. All of us, also the producer." (Consumer 1, 01 October 2019)

Routinisation in a practice occurs engagement in a practice is "based on the tacit knowledge through practical consciousness and procedures in practices are taken for granted (Giddens, 1984). In contrast, a reflexivity takes place with understandings, procedures and engagements are explicit and require reflection. Shopping at REKO at is an intentional practice that requires reflexivity, and takes requires time, energy on a week-to-week basis, making an unstable practice over time.

Some stated that they're just not planners by nature, preferring to do just-in-time shopping. They do small grocery shopping trips, just picking up items as required. Meals are decided at the last minute and the fridge is replenished as things run out. The consumers also cited the challenges of anticipating what would be required for the week. With REKO, there was no "spontaneity."

Even for the planners, REKO was challenging. Consumer 4 is really into cooking and always has specific items in mind, which REKO cannot always fulfil. Meanwhile, Consumer 7 has scheduled shopping trips, always on the weekends to accommodate their work and life rhythm.

For those that are not regular Facebook users, hopping on the system needs to be intentional and thought out. They need to remember REKO and remember to place an order in time each week.

Overall, there appears to fragility to the REKO system as its usage is subject to life changes and life rhythms. There is a lack of flexibility with when the food can be picked-up, although the administrators tried to address that by adding a second pick-up point at Minimani in Autumn of 2017. However, this addition still only restricted REKO to once a week.

3.4.2 Dominant Retail System

Table 13 RQ 1b, Theme 2 Dominant Retail System

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Dominant Retail System	Physical store locations	Convenient hours Close to home & work Other services (liquor store, bank, etc)
	REKO and "REKO-like" Products	Same REKO products Local products Ecological products
	Other products	Choices Full breadth of household products

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
		Buy out of habit
	Trust	Comparable quality to REKO Products are good

The Dominant Retail system for food shopping emerged as a theme, with four categories: Physical Store Locations, REKO and “REKO like” Products, Other Products, and Trust.

Before I get into discussing the categories, it is fruitful to understand the structure of the retail system in Finland, and the historical and geographical context that shaped it to be what it is today. Finland is the most northern EU country, with a population just over 5.5 million in 2019 (Statistics Finland, 2019), it is the third most sparsely populated country in Europe with 18 people/km² (Eurostat, 2018). It’s northern geography, harsh winter climates and sparse population has played a role in shaping their grocery retail trade.

Like other sparsely populated Nordic countries, the Finnish grocery trade has focused on centralisation of procurement and logistics and the development of chain stores to drive volume and cost efficiency. In the last 25 years, a trend of population migration to urban growth centres, changing norms of increased use of cars for grocery shopping trips and neoliberal policies (Clapp, 2016) has led to a further consolidation at the retail level, with the number of market stores decreasing from 10 000 to under 3 000 (Finnish Grocery Trade Association, 2019). Furthermore, consistent with global trends, there is a movement towards hypermarkets (grocery stores combined with department stores) and large sized grocery stores, with the largest sized stores (about 30% of stores) making up 81% of the all grocery sales (ibid).

The grocery retail trade in Finland had sales of sales approximately 18.2 billion euros in 2018. It is highly consolidated, operating in a duopolistic manner, with just two domestic retailers, S Group and K Group, dominating dollar share of the market. They have a combined share of 82.5% of the market, with S Group leading at 46.4% and K Group with 38.1%. Lidl, a German based discount chain, entered the Finnish market in 2002 is in third place and has a 9.6% dollar share.

The S Group (Prisma, S-market and Sale/Alepa) operates on a platform of breadth of products and services and lower prices, while the K Group (Citymarket, K-supermarket, K-market, K-extra) differentiates itself with a goal of quality leadership and neighbourhood coverage through independent stores (OECD, 2014, p. 121).

The retail hegemony of the supermarkets means that many of the norms and consumer expectations for food shopping, whether it be access, pricing, production selection, or operating hours are set the dominant retail player.

The supermarkets that the consumers used regularly were located on the route of the consumers used to get to or from home and work. The consumers interviewed had a variety of preference for shopping. For example, Consumer 7 always did a big shopping trip on the weekends, whereas consumers 3 and 5 would pick up items almost daily on the way home from work. Consumer 4 would sometimes shop late in the evening after their young children were already in bed, while Consumer 1 would pick up items on the way to childcare. Consumer 6, being a pensioner, had more flexibility. Consumer 2 used Lidl for their go-to store but would also do fill-in or emergency trips at their local K supermarket. A physical store location with long hours allowed the consumers to shop in a way that met their schedules.

The consumers all had different shopping patterns, set by the temporal norms of other practices in their lives – whether it be work schedules, childcare schedules or the schedule of other personal obligations. Practices with a fixed location with a set daily schedule tend to be an anchor, with all other activities scheduling around it (Southerton, 2006). Furthermore, the practice of their food shopping is shaped with other practices in their lives. For example, a cooking practice that is based on spontaneous meals resulted in just-in-time shopping, and a practice of planned meals shaped a shopping practice that was more schedule and regular.

Not having a physical store location greatly challenged continued usage of REKO. The long hours of the retailers gave the consumers flexibility of when to shop and was able to meet their needs at any times. Often, these retailers are combined with other services, such as banks and liquor stores, which added to the convenience of shopping at these retailers. While on my shopping trip with Consumer 4, they pick picked a bottle of wine before dinner at the liquor store located inside of the Prisma. Halkier (2013) found that sustainable consumption practices are usually established by the organization of various

other practices.

The foodscape in Vaasa has changed since REKO started, which facilitated the transition to going back to shopping at retail only. Retailers took note of what REKO was doing. Since REKO had been introduced, the consumers noticed that retailers started to carry more local products. The same products that you can find at REKO also started showing up at retailers, often at a lower price point. For some consumers, such as Consumer 1 and 7, this made a difference:

When you see one producer that has the same price at REKO, and the same price in PRISMA – for the same thing, the same product – many said, ‘well, why do I need them to go to the REKO?’ (Consumer 1, 01 October 2019)

[With REKO] You know you will get good quality. I have nothing to complain on the quality. It is very good. But if it is higher than Prisma, why should I go to REKO. Because we don't have much money. (Consumer 07, 04 October 2019)

For others, such as Consumer 3, it was not so much the price that made a difference for them but the convenience of being able to find the products at shops. They were happy that the producers got additional points of distribution as a result of REKO.

“I don't know if it makes a big difference for me, where I get it, but in a way, I'm happy for them that they have multiple channels. They're not just reliant on one, that they have also said that if they have the capacity to deliver also these bigger quantities.” (Consumer 3, 02 October 2019)

AFNs are seen to be in direct opposition with the conventional food system, but in actuality, it operates more as a system alongside the conventional system (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015; Goodman, 2004; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Jarosz, 2008). The producers in AFNs they often have to diversify their distribution and dip in and dip out of AFNs and participate in traditional retail as well (Ilbery & Maye, 2005), as we have seen here.

Traditionally, products from AFNs were sold exclusively in alternative food networks, but as consumer demand for these products grow, traditional retail has encroached onto this market space (Maye & Kirwan, 2010). Torjusen, Lieblein, and Vittersø (2008) and Renting, Marsden, and Banks (2003) points out that AFN products, such as organics, is moving away from one of its original foundational principles of locality, to one that is

industrialised, and participates alongside conventional food in the global food system.

There was also an increase of organic products available at stores at this time, which was important for this set of consumers. Although it's difficult to say if this can be solely attributed to REKO as consumer demand and awareness for ecological products was growing in tandem to REKO, with organic products at retail growing 90% in the 2010's. Since 2010, the organic sales in retail stores grew 90% (Pro Luomu, 2018).

Consumer 2 was conscious that having an alternate source for quality products made it easier to not shop at REKO:

I'm a person who lives in a very developed society, I can get anything I want, anytime I want. So obviously, we have to take this perspective as well. And if this would be my only time to get quality products, obviously, I would put much more effort. (Consumer 2, 03 October 2019)

The majority of the consumers shopped at hyper markets are large sized supermarkets, providing a breadth of products beyond just food. Household goods, clothing, housewares, beauty products are a part of many grocery stores. It allowed them to get everyone in one place. Even for the consumers who use to shop mainly at REKO for their food needs still had to visit a regular grocery store. Consumer 7 said, "So why go two places when you can get everything from one place?" (04 October 2020).

Even for the consumers who use to shop mainly at REKO for their food needs still had to visit a regular grocery store. Therefore, shopping at REKO was always an incremental part of their lives.

The consumers also talked about shopping out of habit – buying the same items and the same brands at the same grocery store and the ease of having the stability and availability of their usual repertoire of products at grocery stores.

3.4.3 The Shopping Experience

Table 14 RQ 1b, Theme 3 The Shopping Experience

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
The Shopping Experience	Ordering	Time consuming Facebook interface Producers run out
	Pick-up	Need to be organized Restrictive Incongruent with need Conflicting priorities Requires car Long lines Cold & dark
	Payment	Cash ATM infrastructure Mobile pay

The shopping experience is a theme that appeared in why consumers shop at REKO but also contributes to why consumers eventually dropped out of REKO. The positive attributes of the shopping experience contributed to their usage of the system, whereas the negative aspects made REKO a challenging practice to maintain. The challenging aspects of the REKO experience is divided into three categories: Ordering, Pick-up and Payment.

For some consumers, in particular the ones who use REKO regularly and / or placed big orders, they found the ordering experience quite tedious and time consuming. The Facebook interface is not a natural place for e-commerce. The consumers need to scroll through the page and sometimes posts are hidden, missed or chronologically misplaced. This challenge is compounded by the fact that producers post at different times during the week, making it challenging to put in all your orders at once. Orders are thus done in piecemeal basis. For consumers that are not on Facebook regularly, they are usually only on the system once a week just to place the order. Producers also run out of products, so the timing of when you get on the system matters, but sometimes it can be a matter of luck as you don't know when the producers will be posting.

The food pick-up also presented challenges. The consumers cited the need to be very organized prior to pick-up. They need to have all their orders noted in order to make sure they don't miss a pick-up.

The restricted food delivery window was challenging. The consumers cited it was too short, making it difficult to make it there. Consumer 5 talked about the need to run out of work for the pick-up, adding to the stress of her day. Only being able to pick-up once a week was also challenging, as it can conflict with other life priorities. Thus, REKO practice is constant conflict with other practices.

Shove, Pantzar and Watson (Shove, 2012) says that practices can exist as bundles – that is, practices are enacted together spatially and temporally. Interactions takes place between practices located spatially together, and sequence and synchronization happen when practices are interconnected temporally (Shove, 2012, pp. 84 - 87). For the consumer interviewed, REKO more often than not was an isolated practice, not connected spatially or temporally to other life practices. This made it challenging for the REKO practice to be reproduced in the long run.

The need for a car was mentioned many times. As going to REKO was a big deal (Consumer 5), they felt it was necessary to order in large quantities to make the trip worth it. Several (Consumer 3, 4, 7) said not having a car or access to a car impacted them not being able to use REKO. Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) notes that the things used for various practices in one's life are often shared, thus requiring a negotiation of resources between practices.

Consumer 5 had access to a car, but they biked to work and talked about the inconvenience of having to make an extra stop at home if they were to do a REKO food pick-up. In their study of the environmental practices of young Danish consumers, Halkier (2016) found that young Danish consumers would carry out environmentally friendly activities if they are a part of an embodied routine, for example, if local vegetables were already available at a market nearby to them. REKO shopping, not being a part of an embodied routine made it difficult for the practice to persist.

With REKO only being available once a week, it conflicted with other priorities and it doesn't always line-up with need. For example, for Consumer 1:

I'm out of milk today. REKO is on Thursday. So should I order today? Buy something now? Should I buy one litre? I don't know." (Consumer 1, 01 October 2019).

The long line-ups can be quaint occasionally, it can also have its toll. Especially since Vaasa is in a high latitude where the food delivery happens after sunset for about a third of the year. Standing in long lines in the dark, cold, and rain was no uncommon and came up consistently in the interviews.

Despite Mobile Pay being available in Finland, it is not widely used. REKO remains a cash-based system, and the lack of cash was mentioned consistently by the consumers. The cash-based system means the food pick-up requires an additional stop at an ATM, which are scarce these days. Kaserntorget, the main site of pick-up for all the consumers interviewed, not have ATMs within convenient reach. Consumer 7 discussed how the cash-based system made REKO challenging for them:

I am a member of Prisma. I have also a bank card from Prisma, so you just show the card. But that is not possibility in in REKO, you have to pay cash, and I don't have much cash. I have to go on take the cash before I go. (Consumer 7, 04 October 2019).

3.4.4 Products

Table 15 RQ 1b, Theme 3 Products

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Products	Packaging	Big sizes
		Pre-packaged
	Pricing	Too expensive
		Same product cheaper at store
Premium products		
Food waste	Challenges with using everything up	
Selection	Inconsistent producers	
	Inconsistent product offerings	

Similar to the shopping experience, Products is also a theme that showed up as an emergent property for why consumers shopped at REKO. Within this theme, four categories emerged: Packaging, Pricing Food, Waste and Selection.

Some consumers talked about challenge with how the products are packaged. The sizing at REKO was too big, in particular the cuts of meat. Some items, such as vegetables, are pre-packaged, which creates an issue with plastic waste, which are not congruent with these consumer's values, and also does not allow the consumers to select items like they are used to in a store.

Some of the consumers are price sensitive and indicated the REKO was an expensive place to shop. Even the consumers that are not price sensitive talked about the larger packaging sizes, especially of meats, which can create price points that can be alarming at first, but reasonable when divided out to cost per unit. Consumer 1 and 7 talked about REKO being a place for premium products only, with consumer 7 mentioning highland cattle, which they thought were trendy and outreach for the average REKO shopper.

What is not so good for me in REKO is they have a very high-quality expensive meat. And the it is 30 or 50 euro a kilo. And of course, I can never buy it. It's expensive. I think it is really good. But it is not what I try to get. I am a pensioner I have to get something that I can afford to eat (Consumer 6, 04 October 2019)

Food waste is also a challenge, due to the large sizes of the food items, and sometimes self-pressure to purchase in large quantities to make the excursion to shop at REKO worth it. As the food at REKO is fresh (i.e. not packaged and highly processed), there is the need to use up the purchases.

The consumers mentioned that there is an inconsistency in the producers who show up at REKO and an inconsistency in product offerings. In the latter, they are not talking about natural inconsistencies that arise out of seasonal eating that a part of the REKO model, but rather an inconsistency in availability of what's on offer each week, making the planning of eating and meals difficult.

3.4.5 Reduced Popularity

Table 16 RQ 1b, Theme 5 Reduced Popularity

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Reduced Popularity	Facebook	Notifications Newsfeed Friends' activity
	Media	Media coverage
	Vendors	Favourite vendors gone Less vendors

Under the Reduced Popularity Theme, three categories emerged: Facebook, the Media and the Vendors.

REKO is still operating every week in Vaasa, but it no longer drives the same large crowds and long line-ups. When someone reduces their usage of REKO, the Facebook algorithms adjust what one sees on their newsfeeds and notifications. The consumers mentioned seeing less REKO posts in general, in addition to seeing less posts from their friends. Facebook thus acts as a double edge sword – it had the capability to greatly influence a community of REKO practitioners, but it also has the capability to contribute to REKO practitioners leaving.

In addition to seeing less of REKO on their newsfeed, there was no longer the same media coverage during the start and at the height of REKO.

With the reduced popularity, some producers started to drop out. The consumers noted that some of their favourite producers were no longer showing up. This created a circular problem where there are less producers, making it less enticing for the consumers, and less consumers makes it less worthwhile for the producers to show up. Again, we are seeing a dialectic between the various elements of the REKO shaping the practice. The carriers' engagement with the practice continually enhance or diminish the meaning assigned to a practice, leading to shifts in the practice trajectory. In this case, reduced enactment by the carriers have led a shift in the how the material elements (producers) of the practice gets engaged, and this in turn affects the meaning that the REKO practice embodies for the carriers.

However, we can see that meaning can constantly shift. The REKO consumers' ideology have not changed despite the reduced popularity. This is evident by a blog post shared on the Sustaining Roots blog (Ehrnström-Fuentes, 2017): There was bumper crop of cauliflower in Finland the summer of 2017. The bumper crop resulted in low prices and a local farmer was going to let the cauliflower stay on the fields, as it was not worth harvesting. When on one of the REKO Vaasa admins heard about this, they mobilised and arrange to have the farmer sell their cauliflower at REKO directly to consumers. The farmer was reluctant at first, but after some convincing, he agreed. Framed as the “Rescue the cauliflower-campaign,” this mobilisation created so much buzz that a post on Facebook generated orders for 600kg in a couple of hours. So many orders came through that orders were cut off.

This cauliflower campaign is important to highlight as it shows carriers engagement with a practice can shift and meaning can wax and wane.

3.4.6 Personal Agency

Table 17 RQ 1b, Theme 6 Personal Agency

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Personal Responsibility	My fault	“Not REKO’s fault” Guilt Shame Sadness
	My burden	System change required Same people every week

A sense of Personal Responsibility for dropping out emerged as a theme among the consumers interviewed. This personal responsibility is divided into two categories: My fault and My Burden.

How this personal responsibility manifested depended on the type of consumer they were. Some of the consumers identified that it was their own fault that they dropped out. This is despite them talking extensively about structural issues in their life and society that makes it challenging for them to continue REKO during their interviews.

Consumer 6 said this in relation to the challenges of fitting REKO into their lives in a busy household with two children:

It feels like it's easier to go to Prisma. That's the thing. It's a good cause. And I would like to go there. You know, that's the ideal world. But how things are right now it's just the easiest way that I want to choose....I think still, it's very positive. I'm ashamed that I'm not going there. It's like, according to my beliefs, and my values. I would be the person who would go there. Definitely I'm being a Finn now, but I think it's only my own fault. I'm only blaming myself. (Consumer 6, 05 October 2019)

Consumer 5 felt sadness that they were no longer shopping at REKO and hopes that REKO can still continue. They worry about how long producers can still show up week after week if the number of consumers continue to decline.

For the consumers that I categorised as system changers / change makers, they didn't feel so much that it was "my fault," but rather their responsibility manifested as "my burden." The word "burden" is how I used to describe their feelings of responsibility to support the system in hopes that it continues to grow and flourish. Consumer 1 shopped at REKO to

"Just keep on supporting this way of shopping. I wanted it to get bigger to get more producers, more consumers and I wanted to support that. That it would continue. But this was exactly what I was falling out of."
(Consumer 1, 01 October 2019)

Consumer 2 showed up week after week because they believed had believed REKO was a way for system change. But then they see the same people coming out every week and they eventually felt a sense of burn out. At the beginning of REKO, Consumer 2 was so enthusiastic about REKO that they offered to support their co-workers' usage of the system by purchasing eggs for them. They said:

There was this woman who had really nice eggs, good eggs. I would of tell all my working mates 'I can get all these eggs for a very nice price. Do you want me to bring some sometimes?' I would bring ten of these. And then I was like, okay, it's not really my job to bring affordable, fresh eggs, for everybody here. They can shop at REKO themselves...You always have the same people turn out. And in the end, we're going to have our little fishpond here.

A practice's reproduction, its consistency and its longevity ultimately depend on the commitment of the individuals who are carriers of a practice (Shove, 2012). Depending on the carriers' commitment, "some practices become more deeply anchored and embedded in society while others disappear" (ibid. p.64). This commitment is based on a variety of contextual factors – shifting values, beliefs, norms, changing competencies and their interaction with the material world, as well as negotiation with other practices. There been many factors that have shaped the disappearance of the REKO as shopping practice for these consumers – busy life schedules, the convenience of the supermarket, the inconvenience of the REKO shopping experience, and the decreased popularity of REKO, which keeps it from being top of mind like it once was. Yet, the individualist approach to sustainable consumption, and the resulting sense of guilt, sadness and shame to drop out is striking, but also not surprising given the discourse on consumer to take moral responsibility of citizens/consumers to act in sustainable way (Spaargaren, 2011).

3.5 The Unmaking of a REKO Shopping Practice

In my second research sub-question I am aiming to find out why formers consumers at REKO Vaasa dropped out. Under a SPT lens, I am answering this question by looking at how the REKO shopping practice failed to continue to be enacted by the consumers, the carriers of the practice. How did REKO shopping move from practice to an ex-practice? How did the links between material, competence, and meaning get broken? Several themes emerged to change the interdependencies between these elements.

In the theme of Life Schedule, I found that life changes, such the birth of a baby or a change in work schedules, triggered the drop out as new, and competing practices emerged in the consumers lives. Modern busy lifestyles with their overwhelming sense of stress made it difficult to get to REKO for food pick-up. The practice of REKO is a reflective one, which requires time and energy, which does not fit into a stressful lifestyle.

REKO is an AFN in its conceptualisation, but it is embedded with the overall food provisioning system with retail. These two entities are continually interacting and are shaping and transforming each other. For example, retailers have been influenced by the product offerings at REKO and have started to carry and promote more local and

organic foods since REKO's inception., thus co-opting one of REKO's once unique advantages. Norms for how consumers shop are set by retailers and consumers are to a food provisioning system that can accommodate the complexity of their lives and can better accommodate and complement competing practices.

The shopping experience has been challenging for consumers as the limited pick-up window for food does not align spatially and temporally to the other practices' consumers' lives. With products, see that retailers have created an environment where a plethora of choice exists, whether it be in size or packaging or other variants. The cost of food is compared to supermarkets, indicating that again supermarkets are setting the norms for what is considered to be of good value. The consumers often shopped out of habit, that is, their practice at retail is routinised, buying the same items and the same brands at the same grocery store. A retail shop can support this type of shopping, where as a REKO cannot.

As REKO reduces in popularity its meaning shifts and impacts the how the consumers, the carriers of the practice engage with the system. The consumers expressed a sense of sadness, guilt and shame for no longer shopping at REKO. They have attributed their drop out to their own personal agency. However, using a SPT approach, we can see how many interdependencies are play, both human and non-human factors, and social, cultural and structural factors all shape life path of a REKO shopping practice.

Even though some REKO consumers have dropped out, the cauliflower campaign demonstrated that meaning for REKO can come back. Thus, it is important for the REKO entity to continually engage consumers.

4 Conclusion

REKO is an alternative food network that has seen much growth in Finland and has impacted the foodscape in a significant way since its introduction in 2013. As a direct-to-consumer model of food provisioning, it has allowed widespread access of local food to consumers all across Finland. However, since its rapid growth, it has experienced declines in consumer usership. There is limited REKO literature published to date, and none of it addresses the consumer perspective and their experiences with REKO. With this study I aimed to address this gap by trying to understand why few consumers continue to use REKO in the long run. This study uses a social practice approach, which looks to beyond individual behaviour to understand the drop out. In social practice theory, the individual is not the unit of enquiry. The enquiry is food shopping as a practice and how that is shaped by human agency and the material structures, values, norms, knowledge and know how that are embedded it.

The study found that while REKO is an AFN in its conceptualisation, it is embedded with the overall food provisioning system with retail and the two entities continually interact. Norms for how consumers shop are set by retailers, and retailers are influenced in their product offerings by REKO, allowing retail to co-opt REKO offerings.

Furthermore, competing life practices makes it challenging for consumers, the carriers of REKO shopping practice, to engage in REKO in the long run. As such, REKO needs to continually evolve and engage with consumers to main relevant and resilient. These findings can support other REKO circles as the model continues to grow and expand.

Challenges encountered in this study include conducting research in a foreign setting in which I was not embedded, which made it difficult to find research participants. Social practice theory was a useful approach to understand the intricacies how practices are formed, but I found that it did not fully account for the role of emotions in the formation and transition of practices. Throughout the participants' engagement with REKO there were feelings of excitement and happiness, as well as sadness, shame and guilt. SPT had limitations on how these feelings could be incorporated.

As REKO continues to grow and mature in other geographies, it would useful to understand if the dynamics experienced in Vaasa is unique, or if it is time and space dependent.

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APPENDIX A Countries with REKO

A.1 Finland

There are 2016 REKO circles in Finland as of January 16, 2020 (aitojamakuja.fi, 2019)



Figure A-1 REKO circles in Finland

A.2 REKO Around the World

At the time of this research, REKO is in nine countries, with the highest penetration in Nordic countries, in particular Sweden and Norway. As of September 2019, there were between 140 – 150 circles and 350 000 members in Sweden (Hushållningssällskapets). In Norway, based on a Google MyMap maintained by the NBS, there were 84 circles across the country (Norsk Bonde og Småbrukalag, January 31, 2020). In Sweden, REKO is supported by the Hushållningssällskapets through the Swedish Board of Agriculture. In Norway, REKO is supported by the Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders Union. Both of these organizations facilitate and promote the establishment of new circles through training and recruitment of volunteers, and overall marketing support for the concept. In the remaining countries, REKO has yet to grow exponentially.

Table A-1 Countries with REKO

2013	REKO starts in Finland
2014 – 2015	Rapid expansion of REKO to rest of Finland
2016	REKO starts in Sweden,
2017	REKO starts Norway, South Africa
2018	REKO starts in Denmark, Iceland, Italy
2019	REKO starts in Canada, Ireland

APPENDIX B Key Events in REKO Vaasa Trajectory

Table B-1 Key Events in REKO Vaasa Trajectory

Timing	Key Event	Pick-up location	REKO pick-up duration (min)
January 2013	Meeting on REKO concept	n/a	n/a
July 2013	REKO Vassa starts using AMAP contract model	Old Vaasa: YA - Vocational College of Ostrobothnia	60
Fall 2013	REKO quickly evolved from AMAP contract model to current Facebook model	Old Vaasa: YA - Vocational College of Ostrobothnia	30 – 60 ⁵
Summer 2014	REKO Vasa moves to Kaserntorget	Vaasa: Kaserntorget	30
Spring 2015	REKO Vasa increases delivery time window	Vaasa Kaserntorget	60
Autumn 2017	REKO Vaasa adds a second delivery location to Minimani	Vassa: Kaserntorget Minimani	30 30

⁵ REKO's trajectory was provided by Administrator 3, who has been a REKO Vaasa from the very start. They do not recall the pick-up duration for Fall 2013, but believes it was 30 min in the winter and 60 min the balance of the year.

APPENDIX C Summary of Research Phases

This research was conducted in four phases and they are summarized below.

Phase 1 took place between January – March 2019 and included preliminary research on REKO through desk research. This desk research was important to get a good understanding of how REKO fits into existing AFN theory and also to establish and build the relationships required for this study. Vaasa was chosen to be the site of the field visit because it had easy access to Thomas Snellman and two researchers that have already done extensive research on REKO in Finland.

Phase 2 of the research consisted of a field visit to Vaasa that took place between 17 - 22 March, 2019. The objective of this trip was exploratory in nature – it was mainly to learn about the REKO model, to observe, listen, and reflect on the current state of this phenomenon. Having a strong background and contextual knowledge of my research topic helps support my case analysis and the quality of empirical data gathering in the future phase of my research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Yin, 2009). This trip also helped me understand the research gaps in REKO, refined my research purpose and develop my research questions. During this trip I conducted semi-structured interviews with Thomas Snellman and two REKO researchers, one of which also had a dual role as a former administrator for REKO Vaasa, conducted participant observation of the two food deliveries and conducted casual, on the spot interviews with several producers. I also got the opportunity to spend a workday on a family vegetable farm that was one of the first producers to sign on to the REKO concept. The interviews were recorded on my iPhone and field notes and a reflection journal was kept.

Phase 3 took place between March – September 2019. In this phase the research purpose and questions were refined. Planning for a second trip to Vaasa to engage with former REKO consumers took place during this time.

Phase 4 of the consisted of a second field visit to Vaasa and took place between September 30 – October 7, 2019. The purpose of this trip was primarily to collect empirical data with consumers; however, I took the opportunity to conduct semi-structured interviews with current administrators as well for additional contextual

information. I was able to connect with two current administrators on this trip, one which was available for an in-person interview during my time in Vaasa, and another which was interviewed by Skype two weeks later.

APPENDIX D Summary of Informants and Consumer Participants Interviews

Table D-1 Informant Interviews

REKO Actor	Code	Interview Date	Location	Interview Length
REKO founder	Thomas Snellman	18 March 2019	Airbnb in Mustasaari	2 hr 2 min
Producer	Farmer 1	20 March 2019	Producers' Famer	4 hr 10 min (combined with work day)
Local administrator	Administrator 1	19 March 2019	Informant's office	1 hr 32 min
Local administrator	Administrator 2	06 October 2019	Espresso House Vaasa	1 hr 33 min
Local administrator	Administrator 3	18 October 2019	Skype	26 min
REKO Researcher	Researcher 1	19 March 2019	Informant's office	1 hr 32 min
REKO Researcher	Researcher 2	19 March 2019	Informant's office	57 min

Table D-2 Consumer Participant Interviews

Consumer Participant	Code	Interview Date	Location	Interview Length
1	Consumer 1	01 October 2019	Bock's Corner	1 hr 56 min
2	Consumer 2	03 October 2019	Café Oskar	46 min
3	Consumer 3	02 October 2019	Informant's office	44 min
4	Consumer 4	03 October 2019	Ravintola 1h+k	1 hr 14 min (combined with shop-along)
5	Consumer 5	04 October 2019	Informant's office	47 min
6 (couple)	Consumer 6	05 October 2019	Informant's house	1 hr 5 min
7	Consumer 7	04 October 2019	Informant's house	1 hr 17 min

Table D-3 Consumer Participant Shop-alongs

Consumer Participant	Code	Shopping Date	Location	Shopping Trip Length
1	Consumer 1	04 October 2019	S Market Gerby	28 min
2	Consumer 2	04 October 2019	K Market Klemetinkatu	29 min
3	Consumer 3	02 October 2019	Informant's office	30 min
4	Consumer 4	03 October 2019	Prisma	1 hr 14 min (combined with interview)
5	Consumer 5	n/a	n/a	n/a
6 (couple)	Consumer 6	05 October 2019	Prisma	59 min
7	Consumer 7	04 October 2019	Prisma	39 min

APPENDIX E Semi Structured Interview Guide

E.1 Research Objective

To understand why so few consumers engage in shopping in REKO in the long run.

1. Why do consumers drop out of REKO in the long run?
 - a. Why do consumers shop at the Vaasa REKO circle?
 - b. Why do consumers drop out of the Vaasa REKO circle?

E.2 REKO Drop Out Consumer Interview Guide

- Start by thanking the participants for taking the time to participate in this study.
- Explain the purpose of the study and how the data will be used.
- Obtain consent to proceed with the interview (oral or written).
- Obtain consent for using a recording device.

Warm Up Questions

1. How is your day going so far?
2. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about how you first heard about REKO and your experience there?
2. What made you want to shop there?
3. What type of products would you buy there?
4. How did your REKO purchases complement your other food purchases?
(Objective: try to find out how much of their food purchases were made in REKO, why they choose to purchase what they did at REKO, and why they chose to purchase other products in regular stores.)
5. What type of products did you wish was available at REKO, but were not?
6. When you use to shop at REKO, how often would you go?

7. When you were shopping at REKO, what reminded you to purchase at REKO in any given week?
8. What did you like about shopping at REKO?
9. Did you have any challenges with shopping at REKO. If yes, what were they?
10. How far did you have to travel to get to your REKO?
11. How many years did you shop at REKO and when did you stop shopping there?
12. What were the reasons why you stopped shopping at REKO? (Probe for conscious choice or gradual attrition)
13. Do you have any plans to shop at REKO again?
14. Are there any changes in REKO that would make you shop there again?
15. Are there any changes in your life that would make you shop there again?
16. How do you feel about REKO today?
17. Has REKO changed how you shop today? If yes. How?

APPENDIX F Coding Process

I conducted first cycle coding using each line as my unit of analysis, using the track changes function in Word. I employed Initial Coding, using a combination of In Vivo coding, descriptive coding and value coding (Saldaña, 2009). A spreadsheet for each data document was created in Excel. A macro was created to extract all the tracked changes from the data document, i.e. the codes, and then copied and pasted into a column in the spreadsheet labelled "Initial Coding". I also added a column called "Context" beside the codes so I can quickly reference the context at hand. For example, Facebook came up a lot as we were discussing the initial awareness of REKO, but also came up in discussions on the usage of the system.

After all my interviews were coded, I did several iterations of first cycle coding to consolidate and further summarise the initial codes from all the interviews and added the final codes into a column called "new consolidated code." The new consolidated was then assigned to a section – Background, Research Question 1, or Research Question 2.

Through the sorting function in Excel, I was able to analyse the code by research question and by context. From here, the second cycle coding was conducted and patterns, and subsequently themes, categories and subcategories emerged. The relationships between the themes were then mapped out on paper, and then digitally drawn on the computer.

F.1 Sample Coding Documents

F.1.1 Sample Data Document

Con3. 1:42 I was working at the [REDACTED]. And I think it was my colleagues. You mentioned [REDACTED]. I think [REDACTED] probably had something to do with it and the professor Okay. So I think they were, they were involved in something that or they had maybe sort of observed that this is something, this is a thing, and they were interested in also sort of from an academic point of view, right, that's when I was when I sort of picked it up, there is something like this. But I think it wasn't until I started working here, and I came in contact with [REDACTED] with the real real, let's say the fiery spirit, this this topic that she really sort of her sort of personal enthusiasm really sort of triggered that, you know, I should actually not just, you know, look it up. But also, you know, go there, and and check it out and see what they have. So she may, she's probably to blame that I sort of joined the Facebook group to begin with sort of out of curiosity, and then then also to sort of go in and buy something. That's what it is. So in a way, it was kind of like, curious curiosity, towards a phenomenon that was a little bit new and interesting. But then also, of course, I, I was, in a way convinced by the sort of philosophy behind it, and it sort of resonated with with my values in a way that that I thought that they are, this is a this is a good thing. And it's right to do support. Yeah. And alternative system in that sense.	Amy Lam	COLLEAGUES
	Amy Lam	Colleagues INVOLVED
	Amy Lam	Colleagues interested
	Amy Lam	Inspired by FIERY spirty
	Amy Lam	TRIGGERED by PERSONAL
	Amy Lam	Motivated to start
	Amy Lam	CHECK IT OUT
	Amy Lam	FACEBOOK
	Amy Lam	Joined out of CURIOSITY
	Amy Lam	Curiosity, then purchased.
	Amy Lam	NEW AND INTERESTING
	Amy Lam	CONVINCED BY PHILOSOPPHY
	Amy Lam	RESONATED WITH VALUES
	Amy Lam	THIS IS A GOOD THING
	Amy Lam	RIGHT TO DO SUPPORT (belief)
Con3 3:40 five years ago, five years ago?	Amy Lam	Started 5 years ago
Amy 3:43 Five years ago, pretty early on in the REKO system.. Yeah, when he first started here, in 2013.	Amy Lam	Not a regular purchaser
	Amy Lam	Special occasion
	Amy Lam	Christmas
	Amy Lam	Mid-summer
	Amy Lam	Festive
	Amy Lam	Want something EXTRAORDINARY
	Amy Lam	Meal that's not the usual
	Amy Lam	Planned meal
	Amy Lam	Orchestrated meal
	Amy Lam	SIGNIFICANT meal

F.1.2 Sample Excel Code Tracking

3	Initial Coding	New Consolidated Code	Context	Section	Themes	Category	Subcategory
10	REKO buyer in MINDSET	Buyer in mindset	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Attitudes	Liked the overall concept
11	NOT REKO buyer in PRACTICE	Not buyer in practice	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Attitudes	Liked the overall concept
12	No conscious REKO disappointment	No conscious REKO disappointment	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Attitudes	Liked the overall concept
13	CONVINCED BY PHILOSOPHY	Supports philosophy	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Attitudes	Supports philosophy
14	RESONATED WITH VALUES	Resonates with values	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Be a "good" consumer
15	THIS IS A GOOD THING	Believes REKO is good	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Attitudes	Liked the overall concept
16	RIGHT TO SUPPORT	Right thing to do to support	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Be a "good" consumer
17	Origin of food	Know where food comes from	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Support local farmers
18	Feels good from farmer	Direct from farmer	Feelings about REKO	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Support local farmers
19	Buy when want to feel like "GOOD"	Be a good consumer	REKO usage	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Be a "good" consumer
20	BASIC PHILOSOPHY appeals to me	Supports philosophy	Personal feelings	RQ1	Personal ideology	Attitudes	Supports philosophy
21	CUTTING UNNECESSARY STEPS IN DIS	Direct from farmer	Personal feelings	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Support local farmers
22	FARMERS GET DECENT PRICE	Fair compensation to farmers	Personal feelings	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Support local farmers
23	ENSURE DIRECT SALE	Direct from farmer	Personal feelings	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Support local farmers
24	Weak bargaining power and position	Supports farmer	Personal feelings	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Support local farmers
25	Started 5 years ago	Started 5 years ago	REKO usage	Background	-	-	-
26	Not a regular purchaser	Not a regular shopper	REKO usage	Background	-	-	-
27	Special occasion	Special occasion	REKO usage	Background	-	-	-
28	Favours system that supports direct	Direct from farmer	Personal feelings	RQ1	Personal ideology	Values	Buy direct from farmer

APPENDIX G Data Validity Considerations

Research quality considerations was applied during my data analysis process to help address validity threats and alternatives interpretations to the data. I applied Maxwell's five validity considerations Maxwell considers important include descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalisability, and evaluative validity (Maxwell, 1992). These were used for considerations and checkpoints as I conducted my data analysis.

Descriptive validity refers to factual accuracy in the representation of the data and that the words and actions of the research participants are not misrepresented. Descriptive validity can be strengthened through a rigour in documentation. For this research, I used audio recordings, photos and field notes as my sources of objective documentation.

Interpretive validity is a bit trickier as it applies a researcher's critical comprehension of the intentions, beliefs, thoughts of feelings of what the participants said or did. As competences and values are a part Social Practice Theory, a degree of my interpretation of what I feel are values and belief of the participants was required. To support interpretive validity, I used In Vivo coding whenever possible (coding the data in the participants own words) and back up my findings with quotes from the participants. When that wasn't possible, I backed up my interpretation of my participants' competence or values with concrete examples. For example, their value for environmentalism can be demonstrated with their practice of bringing a reusable bag when we went grocery shopping together, or their practice of using a bicycle as their main mode of transportation.

Theoretical validity refers to the appropriateness of theory used to frame the researcher's findings (Maxwell, 1992). They include the concepts or categories that the theory uses and the relationships that are accepted to exist among these concepts. I chose Social Practical Theory as my conceptual lens as it is a well-documented approach to addressing the value-action gap of social change. The value-action gap refers a situation where an individual express desire for something but fail to act on that desire. In this thesis I looked at the social shift of food consumption from conventional retail to REKO, an alternative food network. This shift can be argued to have shown success due to consumer desire and demands. However, over time, we have seen a value-action gap from these same

consumers through a decline in REKO usage in Vaasa.

Generalisability refers to the extent to which the findings in the research can extend temporally or specially to other persons, community, or institutions other than those directly studied.

Generalisability normally assumes the findings are useful for similar context, rather than on a sampling that will produce statistical validity (ibid). Maxwell further distinguishes between internal and external generalisability. Internal generalisability refers to ability to generalise within the community, group or institution studied to the person, events or settings were not directly observed or interviewed. In this case, internal generalisability would refer to the REKO Vaasa. External generalisability would refer to the ability to generalise to other REKO circle. In this case, it would refer to generalisability to other REKO circles. According to Maxwell, internal generalisability is far more important than external generalisability for most qualitative researchers as external generalisability is rarely claimed.

In this case study, as consumers are not the unit of enquiry, I am not looking to generalise the data to other consumers internal or external to the Vaasa REKO. Rather, I am looking at the practice of REKO consumption, and looking for looking social-cultural and material dynamics that influenced the shopping practice. The generalisability for this study would extend to the assumption that the dynamics uncovered for this set of consumers is also relevant to the REKO Vaasa community at large.

The last category of generalisability is evaluative validity, which is taking an evaluative stance on the data and using the researcher's own thoughts, opinions and situation as data itself. This is avoided by using a strict coding and analysis method to ensure only what participants said and did is used as data.

APPENDIX H Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories

H.1 Themes, Categories, and Sub-categories for RQ 1a

Table H-1 Why do consumers shop at REKO Vaasa

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
Personal Ideology	Attitudes	Be a “good” consumer Nationalism Reduce plastic
	Values	Eco-minded Localism Fairness Food resilience
	Beliefs	Food system change Retailers (S & K) power Distrust in the conventional food system Trust in local production Individual impact
The REKO Alternative	The concept	Philosophy of REKO Actualization of AVB Close to home / work Quality Organic
	Shift from Retailers	Support local farmers Short travelled food No middle men

Appendix H Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
Awareness	Viral Communication	Newspapers Social Media Personal network
	Popularity	New / Hype / Exciting Busy (long line-ups)
Products	Specialty products	Products not available in stores Christmas products Homemade / handmade products
	Grocery staples	Fresh Vegetables “Brown” eggs Fresh fish High quality meat Summer berries / Strawberries
	Trust	Trust in product quality Trust admin vendor selection Trust in production practices
Shopping Experience	Romance	Instagrammable Quaint Market feel A face to your food Worth it
	Social	Social community gathering Face-to-face with producers Visible Facebook communication Learn about products / production

H.2 Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories for RQ 1b

Table H-2 Why do consumers drop out of REKO Vaasa

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Life Schedule	Life changes	Family changes Changes to work Less income
	Stress	Limited time Hectic schedule Busy work Busy family
	Planning	Intentional activity Just-in-time shopping for meals Requires an extra stop Not a regular FB user
Dominant Retail system	Physical store locations	Convenient hours Close to home & work Other services (liquor store, bank, etc)
	REKO and “REKO-like” Products	Same REKO products Local products Ecological products
	Other products	Choices Household products Buy out of habit
	Trust	Comparable quality to REKO Products are good
The Shopping Experience	Ordering	Time consuming Facebook interface Producers run out
	Pick-up	Need to be organized Restrictive

Appendix H Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
		Incongruent with need Conflicting priorities Requires car Long lines Cold & dark
	Payment	Cash ATM infrastructure Mobile pay
Products	Packaging	Big sizes Pre-packaged
	Pricing	Too expensive Same product cheaper at store Premium products
	Food waste	Challenges with using everything up
	Selection	Inconsistent producers Inconsistent product offerings
Reduced Popularity	Facebook	Reduced notifications Algorithms impact newsfeed Reduced friends activity
	Media	Less media coverage
	Vendors	Favourite vendors gone Less vendors
Personal Agency	My fault	“Not REKO’s fault” Guilt Shame
	My burden	System change Same supporters



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