

**“LIKE AMBROSIA OF ANCIENT GREECE” –
CATEGORIZATION OF PULLED OATS
IN THE MARKETPLACE**

**Jyväskylä University
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JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

ABSTRACT

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Title "LIKE AMBROSIA OF ANCIENT GREECE" - CATEGORIZATION OF PULLED OATS IN THE MARKETPLACE	
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Abstract <p>The popularity of vegetarian food has increased in recent years due to for example health and environmental reasons. Mixing diets and the so-called flexitarianism have also become more common. Still, the categorization of plant-based food and alternative proteins is vague. With this thesis I aim to gain more understanding of the ambiguous categorization by conducting a case study about a product called Pulled Oats in the market of meat substitutes. Gold and Green Foods Ltd. launched Pulled Oats in 2015 after which several meanings have been associated to it. The study aims to answer the question 'how is Pulled Oats categorized', and more precisely how is it categorized in media and in the grocery retail.</p> <p>Firstly, the leading Finnish newspaper was studied to both understand the Pulled Oats phenomenon, its background and development, and make a collage of attributes used to describe Pulled Oats in media. Secondly, 12 interviews with retail personnel were conducted to gain insight about how the product is perceived in the retail sector. The usage of two key sources enabled understanding of the phenomenon and the categorization of the product from different angles. Finally, a thematic analysis was conducted.</p> <p>Categorization literature is not unanimous about the drivers, actors or ways of categorizing entities. Usually entities are categorized in resemblance to a prototypical product or based on a goal. Most recent literature suggests that categories take shape socially.</p> <p>This case study indicates that Pulled Oats has reached a prototypical position but has also been categorized on a goal-based manner, with two sub goals. Pulled Oats is seen as representative of its category and a way of reducing meat consumption as well as an additional food component for vegetarian diet. In conclusion, meat appears to be the common denominator stretching through the different dimensions of the categorization of Pulled Oats. Thus, the successful launch of new products or categories seems to benefit from affiliation with a different category that is more familiar to wider audiences.</p>	
Keywords market category, categorization, prototype, goal-based approach, Pulled Oats, meat substitute, plant-based protein	
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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Kasvisruuan suosio on ollut nousussa viime vuosien ajan. Sekasyönti ja niin kutsuttu fleksaus ovat myös yleistyneet. Syitä tähän voi etsiä esimerkiksi terveys- ja ympäristökysymyksistä. Kasvipöytäelintarvikkeiden ja vaihtoehtoisten proteiinien kategorisointi markkinoilla on kuitenkin epämääräistä. Tässä pro gradu -työssä tavoitteeni on laajentaa ymmärrystä tästä kategorisoinnista tapaustutkimuksen avulla: tapauksena uutuustuote nyhtökaura niin kutsutuilla lihankorvikemarkkinoilla. Gold and Green Foods toi nyhtökauran markkinoille vuonna 2015, minkä jälkeen sille on tuotettu moninaisia merkityksiä. Tämä tutkimus pyrkii vastaamaan kysymykseen, miten nyhtökaura on kategorisoitu markkinoilla, ja tarkemmin mediassa sekä päivittäistavarakaupan alalla.</p> <p>Tutkin Suomen johtavan sanomalehden artikkeleita, jotta ymmärtäisin tapahtumaketjua ja toimintaympäristöä ilmiön ympärillä ja pystyisin kokoamaan ominaisuuksien kollaasin nyhtökauraan liittyen. Haastattelin myös kahtatoista kauppiasta ja muuta ruokakaupan henkilöstöä ymmärtääkseni kuinka nyhtökauraa kategorisoidaan päivittäistavarakaupassa. Kahden aineiston käyttö mahdollisti kattavamman ymmärryksen luomisen nyhtökauran kategorisoinnista. Lopulta aineisto analysoitiin teemoittelevalla otteella.</p> <p>Kategorisoinnin ajureista, toimijoista tai tavoista ei ole täyttä yhteisymmärrystä kategoriakirjallisuudessa. Yleensä kategorisoitavat asiat luokitellaan niiden samankaltaisuuden perusteella mutta myös esimerkiksi jonkun tavoitteen perusteella. Uusin kirjallisuus toteaa, että kategoriat muodostuvat sosiaalisesti. Tässä tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että nyhtökauran kategorisointi jakautuu karkeasti ottaen sekä prototyyppiseen samanlaisuuteen että tavoiteperustaiseen kategorisointiin. Nyhtökaura on saavuttanut prototyyppisen aseman, mutta sen tavoiteperustainen kategorisointi jakautuu edelleen kahtia. Nyhtökaura nähdään sekä vastauksena tavoitteeseen vähentää lihankulutusta että vaihtoehtona kasvisruokavalion ruokiin. Yhteenvetona voi todeta, että läpi eri kategorisointitasojen yhteinen nimittäjä nyhtökauran kategorisoinnissa on liha. Näin ollen, jotta uudet tuotteet tai kategoriat saavuttaisivat suuren yleisön, ts. menestyisivät markkinalla, niille on kannattavaa muodostaa yhteys johonkin erilaiseen kategoriaan, joka on tutumpi suurelle yleisölle.</p>	
Asiasanat Markkinakategoria, kategorisointi, prototyyppi, tavoiteperustainen kategorisointi, nyhtökaura, lihankorvike, kasvipohjainen proteiini	
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopiston kirjasto	

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1 INTRODUCTION

This year in Finland this greyish-brown minced thing has become a mythic foodstuff, sought from shop to shop by consumers foaming at the mouth. Pulled Oats is like ambrosia of ancient Greece, food reserved for Gods that mere mortals can only nibble in their dreams. (Liimatainen, 17.9.2016)

The above quote from the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat aptly depicts the level of enthusiasm and the expectations laid down for a novel product called Pulled Oats in Finland in 2016. In a short period of time the “mythic foodstuff” has risen into general awareness. It has transformed from a product that was hyped but nearly never available to a product that is almost a stationary element of many Finns’ everyday meals. The foodstuff has its specialties: it is Finnish, it has a remarkably high protein quantity, and it contains oats. It is an entirely plant-based product in the market of so-called meat substitutes.

The nascent market and the media hype in conjunction with prevailing food consciousness, health and fitness trend and concern over the state of the environment make Pulled Oats an interesting phenomenon. It takes part in many consumption trends as well as the undercurrent of changes within the western world food culture.

In recent years the vegetarian options in grocery stores have grown in popularity. Thanks to the emergence of the new vegetarian products and the fairly rapid growth of the segment, several vegetarian options are scattered around different grocery store sections and in media several names are used for describing the group of products. It appears that the classification of the vegetable options seems to lag behind the development of the market category. To shed light on the logic behind the grouping of the items perceived as meat substitutes, I conduct a case study about Pulled Oats.

The motivations for this study lie in my personal interests as well as in the unprecedented publicity Pulled Oats has received. I am interested in exploring the changes in the food sector and in consumption habits in general. This combined with the vast environmental effect food bears builds interest towards the topic.

Regarding publicity, novel products are marketed and discussed in newspapers, this is nothing new. However, in the case of Pulled Oats the product received plenty of attention (winter 2015-2016) even before entering the market in reality (early summer 2016). I find it interesting how a vegetable product rose to such sudden favor of Finns and remained as the “mythic foodstuff” in the media for months. Especially because vegetarian products are traditionally perceived as inferior to meat products as the main component of a meal or dish in Finland (Katajajuuri & Pulkkinen, 2016), the situation creates an interesting research opportunity.

This thesis builds on research on categories and categorization in the organizational and management literature. The lens through which the Pulled Oats

phenomenon is studied was chosen because it provides conceptual tools to start breaking down and exploring the phenomenon in a qualitative manner.

The task I set out to study relates to exploring and creating understanding about the vague group of products called meat substitutes. There was only little prior knowledge, basically only the information received through media. Thus, this thesis aims to answer the following research question divided into two sub-questions:

How is Pulled Oats categorized?

- a) in media
- b) in retail

The media possesses a powerful role in shaping public opinion as well as a creator of meanings. The way how certain topics are covered and how the outlet writes or broadcasts about them create an understanding for the public about the issue. The retail sector on the other hand influences the everyday life of societies at the grassroots level as their outlets are the most common places where groceries are purchased. The influence or the acts of these actors in market categorization is not broadly studied (Durand, Granqvist, & Tyllström, 2017).

To begin the journey towards understanding the categorization, it is important to make sense of how the actors in the marketplace perceive the vegetarian and vegan products and their membership in different categories. In this thesis, Pulled Oats is used as a case to dig deeper into the understanding of the categorization of vegan and vegetarian food options from the viewpoint of media and retailers. This study will not cover the consumer perception nor the producers' and the industry's side even though they are interesting and prominent fields for future research. To shed light on the complexity around the phenomenon, meaning the launch of Pulled Oats to marketplace and to which aspects it taps on, Figure 1 demonstrates some of the upper level concepts that have a connection to the phenomenon. Most of the aspects are also covered to some extent in this thesis but the focus is not to exhaustively study the phenomenon in large as there are no resources to do so. This thesis focuses on the categorization actions of the media and retail that are both bolded in Figure 1.

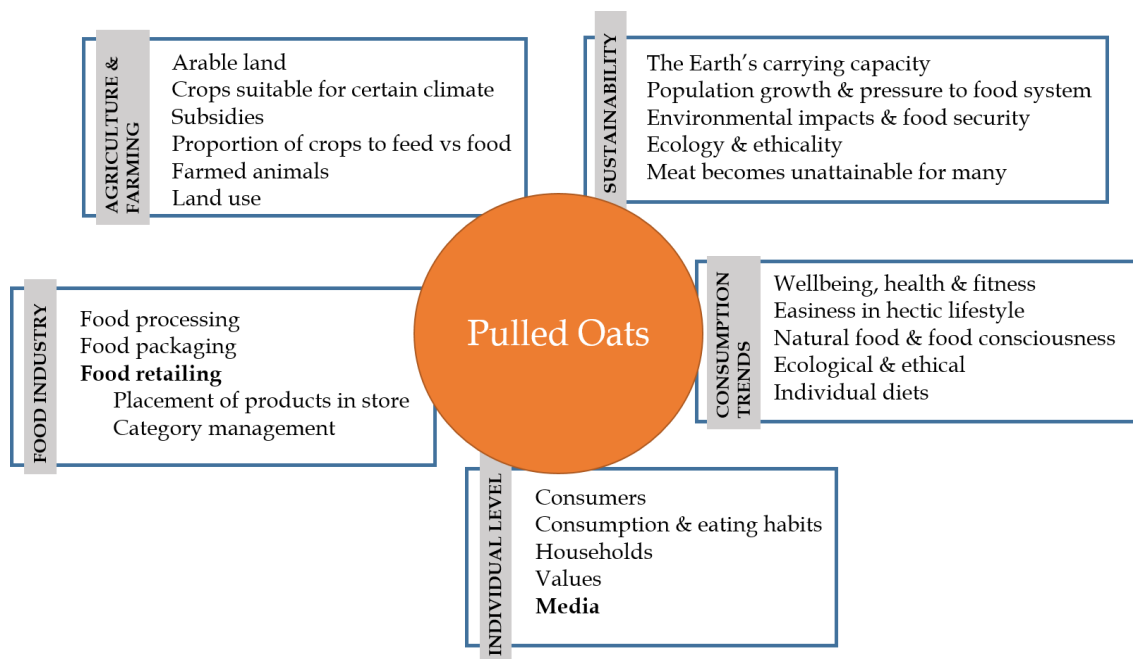


FIGURE 1 Aspects related to the studied phenomenon

Lately, more dietary options have emerged next to meat and vegetarian diets, and the “norms” are gradually being questioned. For example, a diet called flexitarianism has become popular. The name of the practice is a combination of the words ‘flexible’ and ‘vegetarian’ and it refers to a diet consisting of mostly vegetarian food but not excluding the occasional consumption of meat or fish (Derbyshire, 2017). It could be said that the flexitarian diet lies between the meat consuming and the meat avoiding (vegetarian and vegan) diets. People are increasingly aware of the health risks, environmental burden and animal welfare issues related to eating meat (Derbyshire, 2017). In general, people may not explicitly state that they are flexitarians but the current trend of decreasing the consumption of meat and replacing it with vegetable options implies that an increasing number of people transfer towards following some of the emerging diets. As the emerging eating habits may not fit into the existing silos anymore, the switch may predict larger changes within people’s consumption and eating habits as well as other incremental changes. Even though different diets are plentiful, and categorization within them can be detailed, like “lacto-ovo-vegetarian”, in this thesis the term flexitarianism is used to refer to a broad variation of degrees of vegetarianism that welcomes occasional meat-inclusive meals.

The importance of categories in the food and diet context is evident. For decades and decades all kinds of diets have classified food items and cooking ingredients into bad, good, healthy, neutral, unhealthy, useful for this or that situation and so forth. Categories are an essential tool for creating and conveying meanings and values as well as evaluating entities (Rosa, Porac, Runser-Spanjol, & Saxon, 1999). However, the new kind of eating habits, such as the aforementioned flexitarianism, create straddling and mixing of the customary categories. Straddling refers to the action where an organization or an offering is a member

in two or more categories at the same time. Mixing bears a meaning of combining existing categories to form new affiliations.

A convenient approach to examine Pulled Oats is market categorization. Market categories are a construction that enables the functioning of markets. Categories and categorization are present in our everyday lives. Categories are context-sensitive socially constructed knowledge structures (Granqvist & Ritvala, 2016) meaning that different situations and people create and shape them (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Categories make it easier to for example comprehend and handle large quantities of information (Vergne & Wry, 2014) because we can direct our focus only on certain features of an object (Durand et al., 2017).

Even though the terms and concepts related to categories and categorization are partly ambiguous, and the field is divided into many schools, the ruling view regarding the formation of categories has been similarity to other entities within a group (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). The family resemblance traces back to for example typology. More recently, also other views of categorization have been studied in the categories literature. One of these is the goal-based categorization in which the category is formed around a specific purpose or a goal (e.g. Barsalou, 1983; Durand & Paoletta, 2013). The theoretical framework is further discussed in chapter three.

The data of this thesis is collected through newspaper articles where Pulled Oats is mentioned and retailer interviews. I studied the leading newspaper Helsingin Sanomat to understand the Pulled Oats phenomenon, its background and development as well as the way how media categorizes the case product. The interviews with retail personnel provide insight about how the product is perceived in the retail sector. Two types of analysis is also conducted: content and thematic analysis. The usage of two key sources not only enables understanding of the phenomenon and the categorization of the product from different angles but contributes to better data triangulation.

This thesis is structured to guide the reader through relevant information related to the studied phenomena, the theoretical framework and the methodology to the findings and conclusions of this research. First, I will elaborate more on the background and the settings for Pulled Oats and its emergence to the market. In chapter three I will present the theoretical framework used in this thesis. Next, data and research methods are discussed in more detail. Chapter five presents the research findings in a layered manner. Finally, the discussion and conclusion chapters elaborate on the meaning of the findings, present some limitations of this thesis and avenues for future research.

2 THE EMERGENCE OF PULLED OATS

For several years now, consumer interest towards plant-based products has been on the rise, and the demand for alternatives for meat is increasing. Terms like “flexitarian”, “vegetarian” and “plant-based” have gained foothold in everyday discussions when people are looking for replacements for traditional meat-centered protein sources. Whether the reasons for that lie within taking care of one’s health, cutting back on meat consumption for ethical reasons or considering the environment, retail sector and producers have not missed the trend either.

Traditionally, in the market understood as meat substitutes, the most visible protein sources have been items like soy-based tofu, wheat-gluten-based seitan or fungi-based Quorn. According to Euromonitor International, the global market for all kinds of meat alternatives from soy to fungi to insects was worth 1.8 billion dollars in 2015 and by 2020 it is estimated to reach 2.2 billion dollars (Forseell, 2016). In this chapter, one of the most hyped meat substitutes in Finland, and the case product of this thesis, is introduced.

In the Finnish market, Gold&Green® Pulled Oats® (‘Pulled Oats’ or ‘PO’ from hereinafter) is a new type of plant based food made of oats and beans that is also rich in protein (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.). Behind the new product is a Finnish startup called Gold&Green Foods Ltd., founded in April 2015 by Maija Itkonen, who became the CEO at the time, Reetta Kivelä, the CTO, and their third partner, Zhong-qing Jiang, the head of research. Their aim was to create an easy-to-use, non-allergenic, non-GMO product that will not contribute to the unsustainable mass production of meat but is a tasty vegan protein that has a “perfect” combination of amino acids. The founders envision that the product made of beans and oats will become a well-known everyday cooking ingredient. (Vasama, 2016.) Since August 2017, the Managing Director of Gold&Green Foods has been Tina Hansen (Paulig Group, 2017).

Pulled Oats and Gold & Green Foods have won several awards despite their short existence so far. Among other awards, Gold&Green Foods was nominated as the startup of the year already in 2015 and Reetta Kivelä was nominated as the Young Entrepreneurial Scientist of the year (Palkitut - nuori tutkijayrittäjä 2015, n.d.). In May 2017 the Nude flavor of Pulled Oats was voted as the Product of the year by the public in the Finnish Food and Drink Industries’ poll (Finnish Food and Drink Industries’ Federation, 2017). In addition, Reetta Kivelä was voted as the Finnish CTO of 2017 (Paulig Group, 2017).

Beside the nominations, Pulled Oats has been hitting the headlines in Finnish media especially during the year 2016 and raised a lot of interest among consumers and the marketplace. At first, Finland and Sweden will be the main market areas of Pulled Oats. In addition, more products made of the same protein combination are entering the market. One of the founders, Maija Itkonen, describes Gold&Green Foods primarily as a technology company that “develops innovative products based on the research data produced by its team and with the help of user-oriented design processes” (Food Business Review, 2016). As the

technology behind combining beans, peas and oats has got a patent (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., 2017), it implies the company will continue developing food technology even further.

2.1 Pulled Oats product

Besides oats, Pulled Oats contain broad beans (also known as fava or faba beans) and peas (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.). The ingredients are mixed together, heated and mechanically processed. The grounding and shearing process makes the mixture fiber-like but still preserves the qualities and the high amount of protein of the ingredients. (Lahtinen, 2016.) The detailed production process and the machinery used are a company secret, however (Vasama, 2016).

About 30% of Pulled Oats products is protein, 5-10 % carbohydrates, 5-10 % fat and 2-3 % fiber (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.; Vasama, 2016). A fifth of the product is oats, another fifth is pea protein, whereas some 11% consists of broad bean protein. Figure 2 shows the nutritional value of the unseasoned version of the product called Nude as of November 2017.



Ingredients:

Water, **oats 21% (oat bran, whole grain oat flour, oat protein)**, pea protein 21%, faba bean protein 11%, canola oil, iodised salt (0,5%).

Packed in a protective atmosphere. Storage under +6 °C.

Gold&Green® Pulled Oats® 240g NUDE

Nutritional Value / 100g

Energy...	865 kJ/207kcal
Fat...	5,0 g
of which saturated...	0,7 g
Carbohydrates...	9,2 g
of which sugars...	0,25 g
Fibre...	2,2 g
Protein...	29,8 g
Salt...	1,0 g
Iron (+1% of DRI*)...	5,8 mg
Potassium (17% of DRI*)...	340 mg
Beta-glucan...	1,1 %

*Daily Reference Intake

FIGURE 2 Pulled Oats Nude ingredients and nutritional values (image from Gold&Green Foods' website)

Pulled Oats can be consumed as is, but it is mainly an ingredient for preparing meals or components of meals like sauces, soups or oven dishes to mention a few (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.). Thus, Gold&Green Foods offers a semi-manufactured or a convenience food product that a consumer can add to their meal in the preparation phase without soaking, like soy (Lahtinen, 2016), or frying first, like mincemeat for example. In addition, the product comes in three flavors and additional seasonal flavors are introduced every now and then (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.).

Despite the fact that Pulled Oats often gets compared to other products containing ample protein like meat and soy Kivelä and Itkonen state that they didn't create a meat substitute by definition but a supplementary ingredient for cooking in general (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.; Kempas, 2017). They are devoted to creating food products especially from oats and beans because of the health benefits, favorable conditions for cultivation and providing additional protein sources (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.).

In autumn 2017, a bit more than two years after the company was founded and a bit more than one year after the first products entered the market, G&G underwent a brand renewal where the company image and Pulled Oats received a new look: "packages will be given a fresh visual appearance which portrays the growth story of the entire company" (Paulig Group, 2017). The product is currently offered in three flavors and occasional seasonal versions. Pulled Oats Nude is an unseasoned version, Pulled Oats Tomato is seasoned with tomato puree, balsamic vinegar and herbs, and Pulled Oats Monday is flavored with roasted onion, vegetable stock and herbs. One seasonal flavor, Pulled Oats Ginger contains ginger and coriander. (Gold and Green Foods Ltd., n.d.) In addition to Pulled Oats, Gold&Green Foods currently produces Nordic Oatballs in Monday and Meze flavors. Figure 3 pictures the new looks of the product in three of the flavors.



FIGURE 3 Examples of Pulled Oats packaging in three flavors

2.2 Market entry of Pulled Oats

Pulled Oats' entry to market was quite unusual, characterized by a major contrast between supply and demand, and an unforeseen hype around a food innovation. Briefly, the hype in social media began in late 2015 after which the traditional media caught up. By end of January 2016 the product was on everybody's lips - but only figuratively.

The product was introduced to market through initial tasting and sample sale events held at Stockmann Herkku high-end grocery store in Helsinki and other big cities in the first months of 2016. The sample lot in the January tasting event in Helsinki was sold out in 11 minutes. (Lahtinen, 2016.) In the early summer of 2016 the first stage of production capacity was ready, and Gold&Green Foods launched the product outside Helsinki area. Since then until early 2017, however, the product was not commonplace in many stores because the demand exceeded the supply manifold. The machinery used in the manufacturing was not ordinary which caused long waiting times before the production capacity could be increased (Vasama, 2016).

The turnover of Gold&Green Foods was 1.3 million euros in 2016, and all excess revenue was used for growth (Lassila, 2017). In August 2016 a company best known for roasted coffee, Paulig Group, bought a 51% share of the company and thus became the majority owner of the Gold&Green Foods (Lassila, 2017). Paulig, being the market leader in coffee in Finland and the Baltic countries, and a global company in the food sector (Oy Gustav Paulig Ab, n.d.), was able to provide the needed leverage for Gold&Green in terms of knowhow on growth and internationalization as well as resources for boosting the production and sourcing for equipment (Food Business Review, 2016). Despite the acquisitions, both parties have agreed that Gold&Green will remain as an independent startup (Food Business Review, 2016; Lassila, 2017).

Extensive media coverage and hype in social media did not subside and Pulled Oats remained a conversation topic most likely because of its availability, or still the lack of it. Reports about where Pulled Oats was sighted were posted frequently in Facebook groups like "Nyhtökauratutka" (Finnish for "Pulled Oats Radar", group created in summer 2016) and "Sipsikaljavegaanit" (a group for people sharing pictures and recipes of the so-called vegan comfort food). Frustrated consumers couldn't find the product anywhere in between the delivery dates and were disappointed in the hype that, to some, implied that the product would be abundantly available in stores once it is on the market. During spring 2017 the production reached a more stable state and Pulled Oats was seen in stores more often and for longer periods of time compared to the time of highest peak in demand.

As the company is aiming to grow and go international, the product packaging has stated 'Pulled Oats' in English since the beginning (Lassila, 2017). Their first step was to enter the market in Sweden in September 2017 by which time the manufacturing plant in Järvenpää, Finland, was at its full capacity providing

Pulled Oats for sale in all supermarket chains in Finland as well as Ica, Coop and Axafoods chains in Sweden. In the spring of 2018 a new manufacturing plant is said to open in Sweden enabling further expansion to Sweden and to European market. (Paulig Group, 2017.)

2.3 Finnish meat and vegetables consumption in brief

Despite the current vegetarian or flexitarian trend, statistics show that in Finland the consumption of meat continues to rise steadily as it has been since the 1950s. According to the Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE) Finns consumed approximately 29 kilograms of meat in 1950 and 81 kilograms of meat in 2016. The latter is a couple kilograms more than in 2015 when the consumption was approx. 79 kg per person (Natural Resources Institute Finland, 2017a). As seen in Figure 4, beef and pork consumption has stayed steady in the 2000s but the record-high consumption per capita occurred mainly due to increase in poultry consumption that grew from 22 kilograms per person in 2015 to 24 kilograms per person in 2016. In addition, the consumption of eggs increased as well. (Natural Resources Institute Finland, 2017b.)

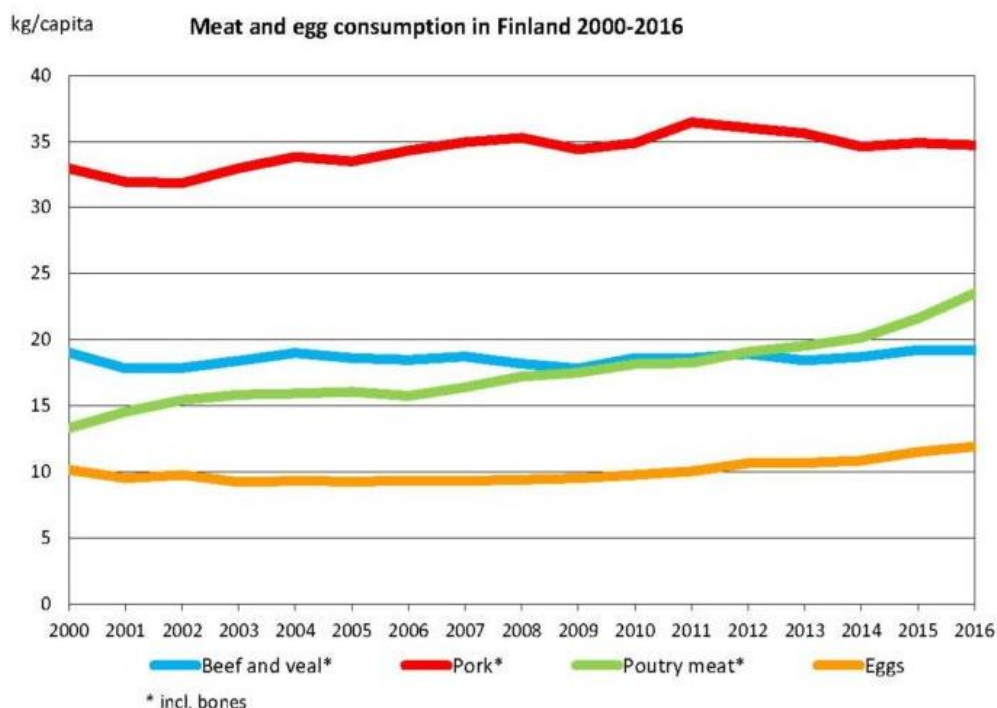


FIGURE 4 Meat and egg consumption in Finland 2000-2016. Source: Natural Resources Institute Finland

On the other hand, the consumption of fruit and vegetables is also increasing, and even though the amount consumed is not as high as meat consumption, the pace was faster than the increase in meat consumption in the period 2015-2016.

Increase in fresh fruit consumption was approximately five per cent reaching to ca. 60 kg per person per year. The consumption of fresh vegetables stayed in under 64 kg per person per year (including possible waste). (Natural Resources Institute Finland, 2017b.) Despite the increase in vegetables consumption and interest in replacing meat with vegetarian alternatives, the sales of plant-based alternatives is only four percent in comparison to the sales of mincemeat (Lassila, 2017).

Finnish alternatives to meat are gaining popularity fast even though the proportions compared to meat consumption are low. The suitability for cultivation and domestic nature of oats may be some of the reasons why for example meat substitutes and new products are being invented out of oats. Oats is also a familiar ingredient in Finnish households as for example oat porridge is a typical breakfast dish.

According to LUKE (as cited in Valtavaara, 2017), Oat is a suitable crop for cultivation in Finland because of the climate and long summer days. Finland was the third largest oat producers in the EU in 2016 and the fifth largest in the world in 2014. In addition Finland is the second largest exporter of oats. The cultivation area of the cereal has been increased in recent years even though most of the yield is used as animal feed. (Valtavaara, 2017.) Despite the favorable cultivation conditions and low utilization rate in food production only a third of oats goes into food production (Valtavaara, 2017). However, in general the cultivation conditions in Finland are harsher than in Central Europe which poses challenges to growing for example plant-based proteins on a larger scale (Lehtonen, 2016). On the other hand, the animal production is subsidized more in proportion to the cultivation of crops that could be used for example as meat substitutes (Lehtonen, 2016).

Even though the environmental impact of food is challenging to examine, studies say that food accounts for 40 percent of the negative environmental impacts and 20 percent of climate impact of consumption (Katajajuuri & Pulkkinen, 2016; Leminen, 2017). In the calculations not only the food consumption itself but also the entire life cycle from the use of natural resources to final disposal has an impact on the environment (Katajajuuri & Pulkkinen, 2016). Suggestions to reducing meat consumption are already given from official quarters. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has published a “meat guide” to educate and help people to transition towards using proteins that have smaller environmental impacts (Leminen, 2017). With the meat guide the WWF tries to encourage people to consume more environmentally sustainable products as well as to avoid products that burden the environment. Katajajuuri and Pulkkinen (2016) state that the impact of meat differs dramatically based on what kind of meat is used and how big the quantities are. The WWF guide states that meat consumption should decrease by 20% by the year 2030 to match the consumption levels of the early 2000s. Interestingly, in the guide they also list plant-based proteins that should be favored. These include legumes, soy products, Härkis (a type of plant-based protein/meat substitute made of broad beans) and Pulled Oats. (Leminen, 2017.)

The valuation of meat has its roots deep in the Finnish culture and in the times of scarcity when meat was a delicacy and dedicated for special occasions.

According to Pohjonen and Tapio (2016) traditionally meat entails attributes like strength, solemnity, masculinity and control over nature, attributes which have traditionally been valued highly. Vegetables on the other hand reflect lightness, casualness, femininity and harmony. Through history, meat has been scarce and expensive which kept the demand in check but the rising standard of living of the latter part of 1900s has made meat, and all the attractive attributes linked to it, available to everyone. However, as meat became part of everyday lives, it also faced criticism, decrease in valuation and status, and even though the consumption of meat is at its peak, there is a larger variety of views about meat than ever before. (Pohjolainen & Tapio, 2016, p. 129.) One reason why meat could be experienced as a pleasant thing is that the contemporary consumer is not as aware of the origins of the food as for example 60 years ago. Pohjolainen & Tapio (2016) assume that the increase in the demand of processed meat within the recent decades could be a sign of both the demand for fading out the animal origin and the ease of use. It appears that the consumers' relationship to meat is polarized because it is at the same time consumed more than ever but also frowned upon.

In this subchapter I briefly discussed the Finnish meat and vegetable consumption, the cultivation conditions in Finland and the background for the appreciation of meat in the society. These in addition to the previous subchapters about Pulled Oats build the backdrop for the topic of this thesis: the categorization of Pulled Oats in the marketplace. Next, the theoretical framework about categories and categorization is presented.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Market categories and why they matter

Categories and categorization are present in our everyday lives in many ways. They are an important way of creating common logic in the social world by classifying items into groups (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Categories are context-sensitive socially constructed knowledge structures (Granqvist & Ritvala, 2016) meaning that different situations have an effect in shaping them and that we all take part in creating and remodeling them (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Categories make it easier to for example comprehend and handle large quantities of information (Vergne & Wry, 2014) because we can direct our focus only on certain features of an object (Durand et al., 2017). For example movie genres are categories: They make it easier for us to choose what kind of movie to watch, help us understand what kind of movies exist, and give us a hint about what type of a movie we are going to watch if a comedy or a thriller is on.

Market categories are similar structures as categories in general except that they occur between organizations and their audiences. First I would like to go through certain key terminology regarding market categorization. Categories are closely related to for example *audience*, *category boundaries*, *category membership* and *category straddling*. A category's *audience* is for example a certain group of consumers shopping for groceries in a certain supermarket. To simplify, the role of audience is to make sense and perceive the meanings and values conveyed through categories whereas actors take more actively part in creating categories. Different audience members may have a different level of knowledge and prior experience which is why they perceive categories differently, too. Also the audience, e.g. the general public, relies heavily on authoritative media and their expert journalists in receiving information about a certain sector, forming their view about for example the 'meat substitutes' (Vergne & Wry, 2014).

The boundaries of a category define what is inside and what is outside the category (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Category boundaries can be seen distinguishing different categories from others. However, categorical boundaries may differ according to the audience to whom the categorization is presented. This is because categories are context sensitive. Category boundaries are described by the list of attributes that entities within the category must have - i.e. category members must have correlating attributes.

Defining if an entity, object or an offering of an organization belongs to a category is a matter of *category membership*. Usually an entity is a member of a certain category if it is perceived to comply with the category boundaries and be focused enough in its endeavors (Vergne & Wry, 2014). In the literature on categories there is still some level of debate who at the end decides whether an item falls within the category boundaries and is focused enough, and is thus a member

of a certain category (Vergne & Wry, 2014). However, several actors like producers, intermediaries (like media for example) and audiences are involved in categorization. One single common perception about an entity or an organization among audience members may never exist (Vergne & Wry, 2014) but it is good to remember that the interpretation of category membership may vary across contexts. Also, partial membership exists, and in that case an entity possesses only some of the category attributes and is not entirely focused in its offerings (if it is a producer).

The action where an organization or an offering is a member in two or more categories at the same time is called *category straddling*. Category straddling may have an effect on evaluation and valuation of the entity that straddles. In the categorization literature the effect is mostly seen negative as the company that straddles categories is perceived unfocused (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Straddling categories may be perceived confusing by the audience and thus lead to sanctions. The sanctions occur for example in the form of decreasing sales or lowered appreciation.

To understand the meaning of market categories they can be thought of as an infrastructure that enables markets to operate (Khaire, 2017). Markets act as an arena for commercial exchange (Rosa et al., 1999), and within that arena market categories divide the exchangeable goods, services and the operating organizations into groups based on different attributes. A producer needs categories to be able to group the items they are producing around certain attributes that a buyer wants. Consumers appreciate categories in their daily life going through grocery store aisles trying to find the right kind of tomato sauce for a certain dish they are going to prepare.

However, what separates the different categories is not always clear. Even though it is not an exhaustive list, some of the key elements related to categories are the entity or entities to be categorized, actors and their role around and within the categorization process, and the context in which categorization happens (Durand et al., 2017). Basically anything can be categorized from products to services to organizations. In this thesis the focus is on the product called Pulled Oats but in general the object to be categorized could be any product or company or such.

Actors on the other hand used to be very strictly defined: an organization manufacturing products is a producer and customers are the audience. According to current research, the actors' roles are not entirely fixed anymore but each of them still has an effect on the categorization process (Durand et al., 2017). Some of the actors, like producers, have more financial gains at stake in the categorization process than others but they are not the only ones to create meaning and value in the market (Khaire, 2017). Lastly, the context in which an object is categorized is central and affects categorization. Categorization is not stable and it evolves over time. Categorization of entities among different actors, in different temporal and for example cultural contexts may vary significantly because ultimately categories convey meanings and value (Durand et al., 2017).

Categories research is important to organizational scholars in a theoretical sense and to companies in a strategic sense (Khaire, 2017). In the academic

world, market category studies can be claimed a fairly young management research area even though category studies have existed for about 40 years already (Durand et al., 2017). Categories research combines knowledge from different disciplines like sociology, organizational studies, strategy and management. Even though the definition and boundaries of the research area are still somewhat vague (Vergne & Wry, 2014), two predominant bodies of research can be distinguished based on literature: categorization as a social and categorization as a cognitive process (Durand et al., 2017). Durand et al. (2017) explain that the cognitive approach has been prevalent for the past 15 years whereas recent research shows evidence more in favor of the social approach. However, as there are less studies about the social side, and more about the cognitive, both of them are needed to form a clearer picture about categorization.

As categories organize markets, the membership in a certain category and how different actors perceive it is important to companies in many ways (Rosa et al., 1999). For example it affects companies' performance, resources, competition between them and the emergence of new markets (Granqvist, Grodal, & Woolley, 2013). If a company is affiliated with a certain market label, i.e. a descriptive signification of a category such as "nanotechnology" or "conventional food", its audience and stakeholders have expectations about the company but it may also provide better resources to conduct business if a company or its offering is affiliated with a certain field (Granqvist et al., 2013; Granqvist & Ritvala, 2016). The expectations lead to actions or, in the worst case scenario, to sanctions (Durand et al., 2017).

3.2 How is categorization done

In essence, categorization is about grouping together things to convey meanings to a certain audience (Durand et al., 2017). According to Granqvist and Ritvala (2016) in earlier research categorization was seen to be driven only by the similarity to items exemplifying the category, or prototypes. Barsalou (1983) introduced a complementary concept to categorization: goal-based approach where entities are categorized based on whether they fulfill certain needs or help achieve goals. However, from the entity-centered view the scholars have gradually shifted towards a view where categorization happens in interaction. Recent studies show that categorization is a social process (Durand et al., 2017) influenced by the past experience and knowledge of the actors, context of the categorization and temporality (Durand et al., 2017). All in all, categories are not stagnant and stable everlasting structures but products of interaction among several parties who engage in the marketplace.

The theoretical framework of this thesis builds on the prototype and goal-based views. Their differences are summarized in Table 1. However, the contemporary nature of the social facet is acknowledged and briefly discussed at the end of this chapter.

TABLE 1 Two different models of the categorization process
(Adapted from Durand & Paoella, 2013, p. 1106)

	Prototype-based categories	Goal-derived categories
Approach	Similarity-based view.	Goal-based view.
Direction of information processing	From the object's features to the audience.	From the audience to the object's features.
Mechanism	Object's features contain information and act as a stimulus. Audience members respond by comparing the features to an abstract prototype.	Audience members define a specific goal. Object's features that fulfil this goal will associate the object with the goal-derived category.
Category membership	Objects that look like the prototype which defines the category.	Objects that support the achievement of a common goal.
Example	If an animal has a beak, feathers and wings, it is a bird. Hence, robins, penguins, and chickens are birds.	Birds are edible, so they are food. Hence, chickens are 'better' birds than penguins or than robins.
Application to organization	For an organization or a firm, being prototypical brings about advantages in terms of acceptability, competence, and comprehensibility.	Audiences pursue goals in assessing organizations. For an organization, categorical membership depends on whether it fulfils these goals.
Limits	Interchangeable audience members who always react in the same way to the same stimulus.	Instability of categories.

Prototypicality in categorization

An item's similarity to other items in its perceived category is one of the key aspects that guide categorization (Granqvist & Ritvala, 2016). As Durand and Paoella describe in their article with a hint of exaggeration:

Items belong to a category if they exhibit those features – any that do not exhibit them are not category members. Thus, the Oxford English Dictionary defines a chair as 'a separate seat for one person, typically with a back and four legs' – so any piece of furniture that fits squarely within this definition belongs to the category 'chair', but types of chair that present distinctive characteristics (e.g. deckchairs, wheelchairs, three legged chairs, etc.) are not category members – even though we would recognize them as variants of the concept of 'chair'. (2013, p. 1102-1103)

We do know that many types of chairs exist but it could be said that the Oxford Dictionary definition is an exemplar stored in our minds against which we assess other objects and evaluate if they are similar or different to it (Durand et al., 2017). That is, in simplistic terms, how we define whether an entity is part of a category.

In terms of categories these stored exemplars are called prototypes. An item or a firm may gain the status of a prototype, meaning it becomes a representative

of its category, in many ways. Vergne and Wry (2014) distinguish different definitions for a category prototype from the literature: the oldest, the most representative, the most salient, the average and the abstract representation. In favor of a prototype being the oldest or the first entity entering the category is the origin of the term 'prototype': in ancient Greek it refers to 'original'. The initiators of the prototype approach, Rosch and Mervis (1975), composed another description widely used in the literature even today: "[a prototype is] the most representative or central member of a category in the eyes of a given audience". Some schools of researchers, however, interpret the representativeness as being the average member of the category. Others perceive it as the most noticeable member and for some it is an abstract presentation of the ideal attributes and features of the prototype of a given category (Vergne & Wry, 2014).

The prototype product or firm becomes a reference point for category membership making surrounding entities want to mimic its features to be part of the established category (Kovács & Hannan, 2010). The audience compares the attributes of the entity to be categorized to the prototype. However, firms also pursue differentiation in the market which means they need to balance their category membership (in order to be recognized as a way of satisfying certain needs) with sufficient amount of differentiation (not to appear as a copy) (Kovács & Hannan, 2010).

Categorization based on prototypical similarity relies on actors' previous knowledge about items in a certain category and the attributes of the prototypical object (Durand et al., 2017). However, like in the chair case described by Durand and Paoletta above, it is not necessarily always straightforward. Actors need to have a broader knowledge base than just the description of a 'chair'. That being said, actors may have other incentives for categorization than simply recognizing the similarity to a known exemplar. Prototypicality in the categories literature is usually based on similarity in terms of observable features like size and material (Durand et al., 2017) whereas in practice categories tend to be abstract or a mixture of tangible and abstract attributes. Moreover, categories reform and are being reframed by audiences and other actors over time and in different contexts (2013, p. 1102-1103). Thus, prototypicality provides a useful starting point but an insufficient definition for categorization. For this reason, the goal-based approach is discussed next.

Goal-based approach in categorization

In addition to evaluating the resemblance to a prototypical product of a category, categorization may also be conducted based on goals. In general, people find their way towards certain categories when they have a need to fulfill. The audience (e.g. consumers) may have an objective about cooking an Asian dish, hence, they buy the coconut cream, not the single cream even though those could both resemble a prototypical idea of a liquid thickener in a dish. On the other hand, an individual may personally aim to eat healthy and in that case he or she might have chosen a light version single cream. Goals are thus usually predetermined and they may origin from personal or situational aims (Ratneshwar et al., 2001, as cited in Durand & Paoletta, 2013).

What people know, what they have experienced and how they see the world varies. Thus, it should not be assumed that all audience members (e.g. the general public), all producers and all intermediaries (e.g. media) think, experience or act alike. Clear prototypes of categories may be inbuilt in all actors' memories but complex situational contexts may bring out unexpected affiliations to categories. For example Barsalou presents a spot-on example of an ad hoc category: "things to stand on to change a light bulb" (as cited in Durand & Paoletta, 2013, p. 1108). To fulfill the need to change a lightbulb one could use different objects from a three-legged stool to sofa even though they do not possess many similarities in prototypical features between them. The different objects are still classified together because they help the person to achieve his or her goal (Durand & Paoletta, 2013).

In contrast to the prototype approach of categorization where common features and similarity compose a category, the goal-derived categorization process stems from the goal that an audience member has defined and the ideal solution of how to reach that goal. Thus, goal-derived categories are not necessarily as fixed as prototypical categories because usually the goals are context sensitive whereas categorization based on prototypicality leans on already-known exemplars of an object's features (Barsalou, 1983).

Categorization as a social process.

It could be said that categorization is comparative by nature as different objects are compared and evaluated whether they belong inside or outside the category borders (Durand et al., 2017). However, some organizations or objects span categories by entering to another category, mixing categories or expanding their offerings to an unfamiliar category. This kind of category straddling makes the evaluation process of an entity more challenging as it is harder for the audience members to understand what the organizations means or tries to convey (Durand et al., 2017). Thus, the deviating organization or an item may be neglected or doubted by the audience if straddling occurs. In this sense, in theory, categorization as a prototype-based process encourages producers to respect categorical boundaries and stick to items resembling the prototype of the category. In contrast, ad hoc goal-based categories would not be encouraged as they depend highly on the context and may group unexpected items together.

In reality, various aspects influence category membership. Durand, Granqvist and Tyllström (2017) suggest it is time to move past the mere assumption that categorization is only a cognitive process of an audience member. They advocate that categories build on social interaction,

Durand et al. (2017) summarize five central elements in the existing literature related to categorization as a social process. Firstly, the authors identify the importance of (1) actors. Their past experience, knowledge, objectives and what they are interested in all create a basis for evaluating and creating meanings for objects to be categorized. It could be said that all actors engage with and experience categories and categorization differently even though in the past it has been common to assume the opposite in literature. Different actor groups used to be

seen more homogenous in their evaluation of entities to be categorized according to the authors.

Secondly, the researchers' list (2) the entity to be categorized as a key element in categorization. In the prototypical view categories are formed based on similar "physical" elements, like size, other observable features and attributes, whereas the social approach emphasizes also abstract and symbolic features created in interaction. Thirdly, a relevant element for categorization are (3) the acts of categorization. These are, according to Durand et al. (2017), for example labeling objects and communicating about those. Despite basically all actors engaging in acts of categorization, the researchers acknowledge that categories research hasn't dealt much with what are the exact acts of categorization.

Fourth, (4) the context in which categorization happens is crucial. When classifying objects, situations, experiences and meanings affect categorization. Thus also categories are institutional. They are born in a certain setting, culture or environment where certain things are allowed and certain other things aren't. For example this thesis builds on the western, and more precisely the Finnish culture where the Pulled Oats phenomenon takes place.

Lastly, time is of essence also in categorization as the fifth element is (5) temporality and the time-related nature of categories. Because the emergence, settling, changing and evanescence of market categories takes time, they are most ambiguous and take shape in the early stages of development.

In summary, categories are formed both in cognitive processes and in social interaction between different actors. Actors are producers, consumers, analysts, and anybody who are involved in the sphere of influence of the certain firm, organization, and entity or object to be categorized. Prototypical similarity, i.e. an item's resemblance to an exemplar of a given category, guides actors' categorization. The ability of an item or an entity to fulfill one's goal is also a way to categorize. All in all, the different categorization methods are intertwined and context-related.

3.3 Category management in retail

In simplified terms, retailing is a process where products are bought from a producer or a manufacturer with the intention of selling them forward to the final customer. Nowadays retailing is less static, however. Retailers have evolved into complex companies that may organize and manage their own value chains rather than only working as middlemen. (Zentes, Morschett, & Schramm-Klein, 2011.)

Categories not only refer to categorization literature or movie genres but they are also an integral part of the operations in the retail sector. According to the ECR (as cited in Zentes et al., 2011, pp. 237) category management is a process between a retailer and a supplier where the product categories are managed as strategic business units. The aim is to achieve better results through delivering added value for customers (Kukkonen, 2008, pp. 53). ECR stands for Efficient Consumer Response and it builds on several strategies and standard operating

practices that enable retailers and suppliers to collaborate to satisfy consumer needs more efficiently (Zentes et al., 2011, pp. 366). A consulting company The Partnering Group first introduced the term category management in the middle of the 1990s after which it has become the standard industry process as it enables simple transfer of knowledge between retailers and suppliers (Zentes et al., 2011, pp. 237).

The terms and concepts of category management in retail are not similar to the terms and concepts of categorization in the management literature. The categories literature aims at studying categories and categorization per se whereas the retail category management is a practical business process to managing the selection of goods. The both facets recognize the meaning and value creating element of categorization – the research from a theoretical viewpoint studying for example symbolic management (Granqvist et al., 2013) and the retail sector from a practical viewpoint building product categories as independent business units. Thus, it could be said that category management in retail is one practical example of an organized categorization process.

Even though simplified versions of the category management process have been developed over time, the basic process includes eight steps. The overview of the category management steps can be seen in Figure 5. In essence, category management is a comprehensive process that includes analysis, planning, management, guidance and execution to manage entire product categories instead of single brands (Kukkonen, 2008, pp. 54; Timonen, 2001, pp. 8). The idea of category management is to adjust supply and to establish, assess and plan the category carefully in order to offer consumers the right products, at the right price, at the right time and at the right place (Kukkonen, 2008, pp. 54). However, despite the standardized processes, understanding consumer behavior and local differences in demand are also important in category management (Timonen, 2001, pp. 8).



FIGURE 5 The Category Management process as pictured in Zentes et al., 2011

There are many levels to category management from assortments and selections to categories and stock-keeping units. The most popular criteria used to describe the total product offering of a retailer, i.e. the product range, are the width and the depth of the assortment.

Category or product category, sometimes also known as product line, is a group of products or services within the assortment that is clearly distinguishable. Categories ought to include products that consumers think are alike or can replace each other in fulfilling the consumer needs (Rämö, 2011, pp. 215). Categories often have one or several sub-categories to split the category into manageable parts. Assortment refers to the different product categories a store offers consumers (Rämö, 2011, pp. 16). These can be for example dairy products, flours and sports shoes. The number of product categories reveal how wide the assortment is. The width (or breadth) of an assortment can be narrow, wide or something in between (Zentes et al., 2011, pp. 237). The number of options within one product category, however, is called the depth of the assortment, or selection (Rämö, 2011; Zentes et al., 2011). The depth varies in a scale from shallow to deep also depending on the number of sub-categories. In the lowest level of detail there are single products, also known as stock-keeping units (Zentes et al., 2011, pp. 227). Figure 6 showcases the difference between a category, a sub-category, a product, assortment width, and assortment depth. In this thesis, to avoid confusion between the concepts, the following terms are used:

- product to describe a single product, for example a certain loaf of bread,
- (product) category to explain a group of products that answer to a similar consumer need, for example 'breads',
- sub-category to describe the groups of similar, alike or interchangeable products, for example 'rye breads'
- assortment width to describe how wide the assortment is, i.e. how many different categories there are in the assortment and
- assortment depth to describe the different options within one category.

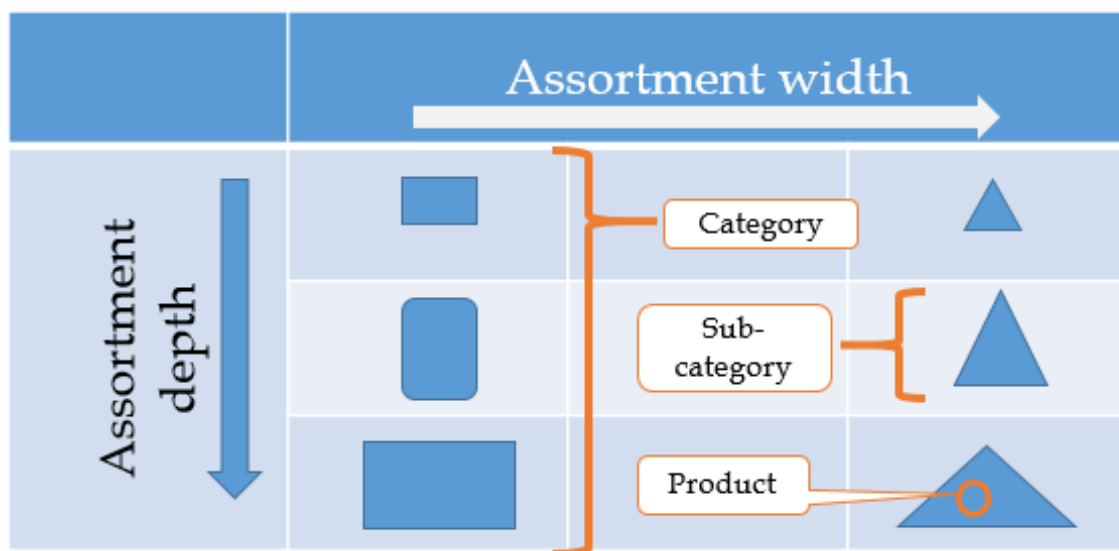


FIGURE 6 Assortment width and assortment depth

For example supermarkets offer a wide range of products, in other words they usually carry a wide and a comparatively deep assortment as they offer food, daily consumer goods and even clothes and home décor items. However, a specialty store may offer a narrow but deep assortment of particular products for example in women's fashion. Small corner stores or kiosks, however, have a fairly narrow and shallow assortment as they may not even have the physical space to offer several kinds of products. Wide assortments are usually appealing to many target groups as there is a little something for everyone. Deep assortment usually covers various price and quality levels as well (Zentes et al., 2011).

4 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data collection

This study aims at understanding how Pulled Oats is categorized. Understanding a novel phenomenon requires qualitative methods, and for this reason the primary data for this thesis was collected through semi-structured interviews with personnel from retail sector and secondary data from newspaper articles referring to Pulled Oats. Using the two sets of data not only contributes to triangulation but also to answering the research questions. Through the data from Helsingin Sanomat I aim to find out how the categorization is done in media. With the interview data I aim to find out how the categorization is done in the retail sector. I decided to exclude consumers from this study primarily because of the lack of resources to acquiring a large and comprehensive enough sample of consumer insight. The most accessible consumer group for me would have been the students at the University of Jyväskylä. However, I considered this unreliable because students and young people tend to embrace new trends and products which could have distorted the results.

Secondly, the retail sector and media provide a more interesting field for research as they operate as gatekeepers for the phenomenon. In other words, these actors may enable or hinder the emergence of products and phenomena because they are the providers and distributors of information as well as goods. Also, the role of these actors in market categorization activities is a less studied arena. Even though trends arise from the interplay of consumers, retail and media, among others, I concentrate in this thesis on media and retailers and how they perceive the categorization of Pulled Oats.

4.1.1 Selecting the media outlet and collecting the data

Due to resource constraints only one media outlet was chosen to be studied. In the selection of the outlet some criteria were used. The media had to be accessible, well-established and more like a general and neutral consumer media outlet than for example an interest-related magazine or a trade publication. The newspaper Helsingin Sanomat (HS) was chosen for the study because it is the largest daily newspaper circulation-wise (Media Audit Finland Oy, 2015) in Finland and they publish also online. The newspaper covers issues and phenomena nationwide but as the name suggests it originates and is located in Helsinki. Thus, however, for example restaurant interviews cover only restaurants operating within the greater Helsinki area. The capital area centered nature was not seen as a problem because the study does not concentrate only on local issues like events or restaurant reviews.

From the newspaper, all articles mentioning Pulled Oats were collected. The media data covered 18 months between January 2016 and June 2017, totaling 132

articles. There were no prior articles mentioning Pulled Oats in Helsingin Sanomat, hence, the data collection was started from January 2016.

The data from HS were accessed through search function on the newspaper's website. Search word *nyhtökaur**, Finnish for 'pulled oat*', was used because the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat is published in Finnish. The search revealed 132 different articles, news pieces, columns, opinions, recipes and other stories. Because some of the articles were for subscribers only, I used my personal subscriber credentials to access all the possible articles mentioning Pulled Oats. The pieces ranged from news pieces, articles, editorials, comments, recipes, and blog posts from the newspaper's food blogger etc. In this thesis all those pieces are called articles to simplify the terminology.

4.1.2 Selecting the interviewees

The interviews were conducted between February and June 2017. In total 12 interviews were conducted, and the titles of the interviewees ranged from storekeepers (the retailers) and store managers to availability managers and assortment Vice Presidents. The first ten storekeepers and managers were interviewed in winter 2017 in Jyväskylä region in Central Finland and one in Helsinki. There were two conditions for a retailer qualifying to be interviewed: they had to have Pulled Oats in sale in their store, and they had to work in a managerial level, i.e. as storekeeper, owner or manager of some sort in their store or supermarket. My understanding was that these people know the phenomenon the best at the grocery trade grass root level as well as have insight about the assortment and selection management.

However, during the interviews it turned out that not all of the store staff were able to influence the categorization nor the placement of the products. Especially in large chains the product category is already inbuilt into the barcode of the product before even enters the store. Thus, the last two interviews were conducted in June 2017 through Skype with employees working in the chain management of the two largest retail organizations Kesko and S Group to acquire some insight related to categorization in the management level. Kesko and S Group cover approximately 85% of the grocery retail market in Finland (Nielsen Finland, 2017, as cited in Finnish Grocery Trade Association, 2017).

The additional interviews were important because they brought in the views of the chain management and provided information on how the two main retail store chains organize their assortments and classify products that are distributed to sale across the country. Both chains have stores nearly everywhere in Finland, and thus conducting most of interviews with representatives from the largest chains is suitable for the context of this thesis.

TABLE 2 Overview of interviewees and interview dates

	Interviewee position	Store size	Chain	Date
1	Storekeeper	M	K	16.2.2017
2	Storekeeper	S	K	17.2.2017
3	Availability manager	M	S	24.2.2017
4	Procurement and Marketing	S / Chain mgmt	Priv.	8.3.2017
5	Storekeeper	L	K	10.3.2017
6	Hypermarket manager	L	S	17.3.2017
7	Storekeeper	S	M	20.3.2017
8	Storekeeper	L	K	22.3.2017
9	Store manager	M	S	22.3.2017
10	Hypermarket manager	L	S	23.3.2017
11	Vice President, Assortment and Pricing, Fresh Foods	Chain mgmt	S	9.6.2017
12	Sales and Purchasing Manager	Chain mgmt	K	21.6.2017

Table 2 lists the interviewees' positions, what is the approximate size of their store or whether they work for the grocery retail chain management, which chain are they part of and the dates of the interviews. The interviewees were chosen from stores of different sizes to ensure that the responses are as extensive as possible even though only limited resources were available for conducting the interviews. Moreover, the interviewees represent evenly the two largest chains Kesko and S Group. However, to make the group of interviewees more diverse, two interviewees were chosen from outside the largest chains. The interviewee number 4 works for the management of a small high-end grocery store taking care of purchases and marketing. They currently operate two small grocery shops, a grocery delivery service and a small-scale institutional catering service in Helsinki area and they are not part of a chain, thus marked as "private" in the Chain column in the Table. In addition, interviewee number 7 operates her own grocery store within the M chain that is owned by the store owners instead of the chain management.

In Finland there is a nearly oligopolistic position in the grocery trade between S Group and Kesko retailing organizations. S Group is a retailing cooperative with more than 1600 outlets in Finland. The S Group operates in several markets from groceries to gas stations to hotel and restaurant services. The Group comprises of SOK Corporation (The Central Finnish Cooperative Society), subsidiaries and twenty regional cooperatives that are independently responsible for their business operations. The SOK is owned by the cooperatives and the subsidiaries, and the cooperatives are owned by their members, i.e. the owner-customers who have paid the membership fee. SOK is the central firm in S Group provid-

ing procurement, expert and support services for the cooperatives as well as developing strategy and the various chains within the S Group. The grocery trade of S Group consists of four supermarket chains: the small-sized Sale and Alepa stores for everyday groceries, medium to large-sized S-market supermarkets providing a larger selection of goods and often additional services, and Prisma hypermarkets with the largest selection and a variety of additional services. (S Group, n.d.)

Kesko Corporation on the other hand is a retailing conglomerate with more than 1900 outlets in Finland operating in the grocery trade, the building and technical trade and the car trade. The K Group is formed by Kesko and the K-retailers who are independent retailer entrepreneurs. (Kesko, 2018.)

The K-retailers run the Kesko grocery trade under the chain business model. Kesko provides the K Group centralized purchasing, selection management and logistic services as well as chain concept and store site network development. Within the grocery trade, the four K-food store chains are Neste K, a small corner store subsumed in a service station; K-Market, a small to medium-sized neighborhood store for everyday groceries; K-Supermarket, a medium to large-sized grocery store and K-Citymarket hypermarket with the largest selection and additional services. (Kesko, 2017.)

4.2 Case study

This thesis builds around a case. Case study focuses on a particular case (or cases) that can be an individual, a group, a situation or an organization, among others, in the social world. Case studies consider the context of the case as well (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) suggest that case studies cannot be conducted out of their context because cases exist within a specific social and physical settings (as cited in Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 151). Usually multiple data collection methods are used in case studies. The research approach may involve quantitative and qualitative data collection even though some researchers consider case studies only qualitative (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Case study in itself is not a single research method but a research strategy which may include several methods of conducting research such as interviews (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Furthermore, Yin (2009) states that there is no one specific definition for case study but it is a suitable strategy for e.g. contemporary studies exploring the social world where the boundaries of the phenomenon are not entirely clear. Characteristic to case studies is that they include empirical investigation, contemporary phenomenon, real life context and various sources of evidence (Yin, 2009).

The purpose of this study is exploratory, and the idea is to make sense of what is happening in a new situation within the food sector with the plant-based proteins and meat substitutes through the case product Pulled Oats. Thus, the degree of flexibility of the research design in this study is fairly high. Case study

as a research strategy is part of the flexible research designs (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and is thus suitable for this study. Basically anything can be considered as a case. Examining Pulled Oats as a case may shed light also onto the bigger picture of the changes happening in the food sector.

Case study research has been criticized in the academia as well. For example generalizability has proven to be an issue because only one or a few cases are studied (Farquhar, 2012). However, the aim is not to conduct a generalizable study per se but to explore a phenomenon in its context and in depth (Farquhar, 2012). In addition, the lack of triangulation may produce questionable results in case studies as well as other type of research (Yin, 2009). In this thesis, even though generalizability is not the main aim, the data has been collected in a transparent manner and the process has been reported. Also, it is acknowledged that the results of this thesis consider the Finnish context and the certain market within the food sector only and may not reflect the situation in other countries or contexts. In terms of triangulation, the data has been gathered from two separate sources and with two different collection methods. Thus, it could be said that the findings are strengthened because the data provides viewpoints to the matter from different angles (Farquhar, 2012). Next, the semi-structured interviews are discussed in more detail.

4.3 Semi-structured interviews

The primary data, in other words the data collected for the purposes of conducting this particular study, was collected through retailer interviews. The key with interviewing lies with asking good questions that will eventually uncover insight about the research question but without asking the research question directly.

Several interview styles exist based on what is the most suitable option for the research in question. Fully structured interviews include a set of questions determined beforehand and is fairly close to survey questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews follow a certain predetermined pattern or themes but are flexible for additional questions and discussion during the interview. Unstructured interviews only present the general topic but the discussion flows freely around this area of interest. (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 285.)

The less structured interviewing methods are suitable for flexible research designs (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 286). In this thesis, the interviews were conducted using the semi-structured type of interviewing as it was the most suitable option giving structure to the interviews but also enabling flexibility. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer prepares a list of topics or themes and questions before the interviews. The topics and questions constructed for this study can be found from Appendix 1. Altogether 12 questions were formulated around four topics. During the interviews the interviewer can rearrange the order of the questions on the go, change the exact wording of a question, and adjust the time and attention given to each question (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 290). Based on the interviewee's willingness to talk more about a certain topic or if he

or she covers certain questions already while answering to previous ones, the interviewer is able to flexibly jump over or rearrange the sequencing of the questions. The sequence of the interview question, i.e. the way how the interview flows, usually build on introduction, "warm-up", the main topics and questions, "cool-off" and closure (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 290). In semi-structured interviews the topics are listed beforehand because those are the key issues the interviewer wants answers to, and they guide the interview situation.

Because of the different level of interests and the interviewees' willingness to answer questions, the sequence and attention given to each question varied from interview to interview. During the interviews I acknowledges the importance of flexibility but also found it challenging. While the conversation floated freely, it was sometimes challenging to recognize which topics the interviewee had already covered.

As semi-structured interviews have a large variety of the degree of structure, it has to be noted that no semi-structured interview is the same. In the interviewing process for this thesis I aimed at following the question template in each interview not to miss any relevant answers. However, towards the end of the interviews, I realized that being more flexible with the sequencing of the questions helped me and the interviewee relax a bit more. Also, I acknowledge the fact that I practiced my interviewing skills for the first time. Hence, the first three to five interviews were conducted in a more structured way and with the rest I started following the flow of the discussion more rather than strictly sticking to the order of the questions in the template. In the last six to seven interviews I was also more familiar with the process of interviewing as well as the topics and questions which made it easier to increase the flexibility.

The semi-structured interviews are suitable in situations where the researcher is very involved with the research process, for example when the researcher is also the interviewer, like in this study. This closeness has its advantages and disadvantages as the researcher receives the first-hand knowledge but also may affect the interviewing situations. I as an interviewer was able to ask follow-up questions from the interviewees directly if I noticed I needed more information on a topic. However, sometimes I assumed the interviewee had covered a question while answering to another question but in fact, I later found out, I should have still clarified on some details.

As Robson and McCartan (2016) state it is challenging to avoid biases with interviews. Body language, standardization and the time-consuming nature of interviews may affect the reliability of the data gathered. The researcher may affect the interviewee through body language but on the other hand the interviewee may emphasize or underline something he or she says by using body language. This may provide rich data but is challenging for the researcher to capture. (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 286.)

The semi-structured interview is not an easy data-gathering option as it lacks standardization which may affect reliability (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 286). However, in this thesis the question template was followed in each interview even though not in numerical order each time. In this sense, the interviews

could be repeated as long as the interviewees would still work in the same positions. However, the nature of this study is time sensitive and contemporary which makes it unlikely that the same results could be obtained at any later point in time.

Arranging the interviews, conducting them, transcribing the recordings of the interviews and finally analyzing the data requires a great deal of resources (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 287). Because so many phases are involved, the risk of misconception rises. However, careful planning is important in conducting interviews. However, regarding this study, I acknowledge the existence of the possibility that I have influenced the primary data collected. Naturally I aimed at deviating from anything that might direct the informants in any way (for example the broader thesis topic was only discussed after the interviews not to reveal the presumptions of the categorization of Pulled Oats to the informants). All in all, weighing the pros and cons of interviews, it could be said that the semi-structured interviews were the best method for acquiring the primary data for this thesis.

4.4 Qualitative data analysis

To analyze the data gathered and collected for the purposes of this thesis the means of qualitative research are used. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) the qualitative analysis can be roughly divided into two approaches. On one hand, there may be a distinct theory guiding the analysis and on the other hand the analysis is not guided by a theory, but a variety of theoretical approaches may be applied to in the analysis phase (pp. 103). The analysis in this thesis follows the latter approach where the data itself is the starting point for the analysis but later on in the analysis the established patterns, i.e. the theoretical framework, is brought in as a guiding view. Moreover, the data and the theory take turns in the analysis process and the deduction logic is referred to as abduction. However, the abductive reasoning is said to be based on inductive reasoning to which the theory is added to support the conclusions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, pp. 113).

In this chapter, the analysis methods are described starting from the content analysis and proceeding to the thematic analysis. Even though the data is qualitative by nature the content analysis is conducted partly quantitatively to get an overview of the content of the text documents as well as the frequency of certain attributes. The content analysis then supports the thematic analysis.

4.4.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is a useful way of analyzing qualitative data in text documents. Text is considered in a broad sense in content analysis taking into account for example images, symbols and even works of art (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 350). In its most simplified form, content analysis is a way of reordering the data

by classifying it into relevant groups and counting the occurrences of the groups (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, pp. 105).

Content analysis, as any method, has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include the fact that the researcher can basically observe the data without affecting it herself. However, in this thesis, the other part of the data was collected using the means of interviewing which makes an exception to the previously mentioned advantage. While interviewing, the researcher may influence the respondent, and thus this may possibly hinder the reliability of the research. In this study, it was communicated to the interviewees in the beginning of each interview that they don't need to disclose anything they should not or do not want to, for example regarding company secrets or from their employer's viewpoints. The interviewees also represented themselves in the interviews and even though many of them represent the grocery chain they work for it is understood that they are expert only in their own stores or fields and not necessarily in the chain management businesses.

Another advantage in content analysis is the possibility to replicate the study as the material is in a static format. Both the articles collected from the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat and the transcripts of the interviews are saved on word processing documents. However, one disadvantage of content analysis is that even though for example in this case the media data are available, they are publicly available only partially. Some of the articles collected for the purposes of this thesis were for subscribers only and required subscriber credentials for access. Also, the HS articles are written for a certain purpose: some are recipes of new dishes while some are restaurant reviews. This may distort the results to some degree. To overcome the partiality of the data in the case of this thesis, the interviews were conducted to collect another set of data.

4.4.2 Thematic analysis

Both content and thematic analysis are ways of analyzing qualitative data. They aim at breaking down the data and grouping it according to different aspects (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, pp. 105). Thematic analysis resembles the classification in content analysis but it takes the analysis one step deeper by putting more emphasis on content of the themes.

The interesting and relevant chunks of text are distinguished and marked by so-called codes (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, pp. 105). No one exact way of coding exists (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, pp. 105) and basically anything in the data can be given a label because those chunks of text are showcasing something in the material (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp. 463).

The process of thematic coding in this study follows the path identified for example by Robson and McCartan (2016). The first phase is to familiarize with the data by reading and rereading it after transcribing it. Next the initial codes are generated. In this thesis the initial codes were related to for example the ways how Pulled Oats was described in different articles and by different interviewees. After the initial themes the theoretical framework was brought in to support the analysis. The third phase is about identifying themes. In this study, the themes

were constructed around the prototypical and goal-based categorization of Pulled Oats. In other words, different passages exemplifying either categorization model were coded. Lastly the data was “reconstructed” based on the thematic networks which then enabled the interpretation.

Even though for this type of exploratory case study the thematic analysis method brought valuable insight, there are critiques to this kind of thematic analysis. The way how the coding is done and how the themes are constructed depends on the researcher and how he or she has read and interpreted the data. Naturally, the researcher should avoid making any conclusions or including his or her own opinions in the research phase. And, as there are also other ways of conducting a qualitative analysis, the conclusions drawn from the abductive reasoning may be questioned by other schools of analysis methodology (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, pp. 133).

5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section will cover the research findings and the analyses conducted in qualitative manner. To provide an overview of the characteristics of the data, the content analysis was first conducted. This method describes the data by quantifying the occurrences of certain items in the data. In this case, expressions describing Pulled Oats and the things it was compared to were coded and the occurrences were counted.

Secondly, to provide more than a mere overview and description of the data, the thematic analysis was conducted. Chapters 5.3 and 5.4 are structured into two overarching themes recognized through the thematic analysis. Grouping together similarities in the categorization of Pulled Oats throughout the media data revealed several subthemes which together comprise these overarching themes. Even though the analysis in this study is not based on a theory like in deductive reasoning, the theoretical framework of prototypical and goal-based categorization orientations is however used to support the interpretation of the findings. The categorization in retail is discussed separately in chapter 5.5.

The media data covering 132 articles from 18 months period was a key source to understanding the background and the development of the Pulled Oats phenomenon. It also provided a great deal of material for interpreting the categorization of Pulled Oats in the general discussion in the marketplace. The 12 retailer interviews shed light to understanding the categorization and category management in the grocery trade. In that regard, to make sense of the large data sets, the two-tier analysis, that is, the content and thematic analyses, was required. Even though both data sets give insight about the categorization of Pulled Oats in the marketplace, they approach the phenomenon from different angles. Thus, it was important to separate the presentation of the results as well.

The findings in this chapter are supported with excerpts from both the Helsingin Sanomat articles and the interviews. To help the reader and to maintain transparency, the quotes are marked according to where they appeared. The excerpts from Helsingin Sanomat articles are marked with the name of the journalist and the publication date of the article to make it easier for anyone willing to refer back to the original versions from the HS website. The release dates, titles of the articles and the names of the authors of the HS articles quoted in this thesis are listed in Appendix 2. The interview quotations are assigned an interview number from one to twelve (1-12) according to the interview in question. The Interview numbers with other details can be found from Table 2 in chapter 4. The Finnish transcriptions of the interviews are available upon request as there is no space to attach the 87 pages of transcriptions in the appendices of this document. However, it should be noted that the data exists in Finnish only, and the excerpts are translated from Finnish to English. The translations are made as directly as possible while maintaining the original tone and meaning of the quotations.

This chapter about the research findings proceeds from a simplistic quantitative representation of the data to a deeper qualitative analysis about the ways

how Pulled Oats seems to be categorized in the marketplace. The chapter is divided into several subchapters to help the reader follow the advancement of the analyses. First, the characteristics and statistics of both the media and the interview data are presented. Second, the attributes of Pulled oats are described and visualization of both the media and the interview data is provided. Third, findings from the media data about Pulled Oats as the exemplar of its category are presented and fourth the evidence about the goal-based categorization of Pulled Oats is introduced. Finally, the categorization in retail is discussed.

5.1 Data characteristics

This chapter will give an overview of the characteristics of both the primary interview data and secondary data from the published articles. The results are presented in a numerical and proportionate manner because the aim is to describe the frequencies and occurrences of different aspects of the data and thus shed light on the extent of the phenomenon and how it is covered in the media and by the interviewees.

Majority of the 132 articles from Helsingin Sanomat (106 to be exact) were published between May 2016 and February 2017. The peak months in articles mentioning Pulled Oats were August 2016 (14 articles) and December 2016 (21 articles). February 2016 was the only month in the range during which no articles mentioning Pulled Oats were published. Figure 7 pictures the occurrence of the articles chronologically per each month within the study range.

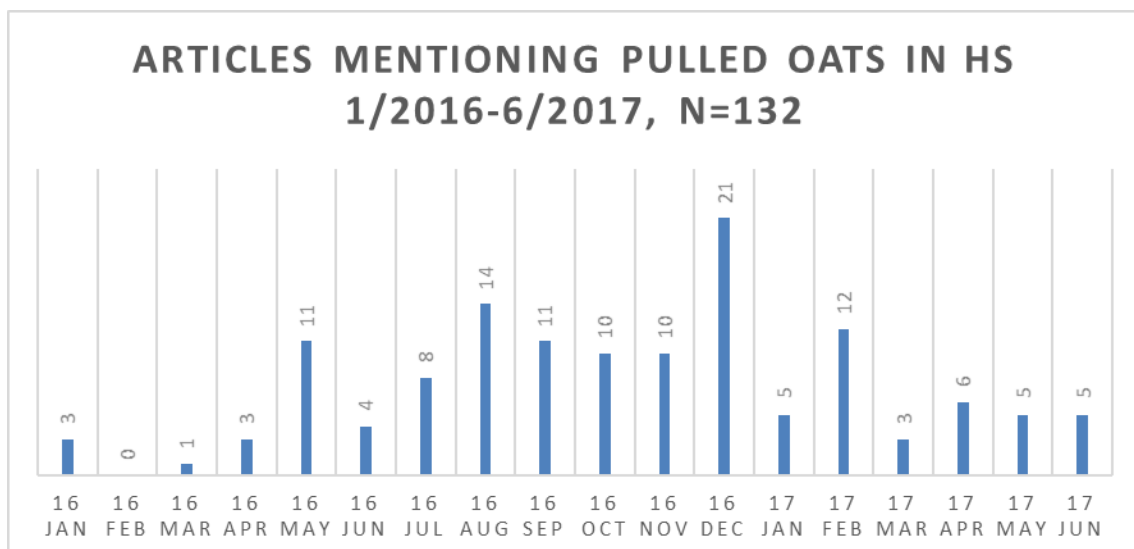


FIGURE 7 Number of articles mentioning Pulled Oats in Helsingin Sanomat between Jan 1st, 2016, and Jun 30th, 2017

The articles ranged from restaurant reviews to news stories, articles, columns and editorials. To avoid confusion between the types of the texts, all the pieces mentioning Pulled Oats are called articles in this thesis. The largest proportion of the articles (35) appeared in HS Food section (HS Ruoka in Finnish) including cook book reviews, columns, recipes and food trend articles. Three editorials that mentioned Pulled Oats were published. Also, three opinion section articles occurred within the time frame. 14 of the articles presented or reviewed restaurants, most of them were restaurants where Pulled Oats was served. Events, such as the Presidential Independence Day Reception 2016 and Flow festival 2016, where Pulled Oats was served were covered in 13 articles. Under the section about the economy (HS Talous) altogether 10 articles were published. In the domestic news section (HS Kotimaa) 13 articles were published that mentioned Pulled Oats. The rest of the articles were scattered among other sections like the sections about life (HS Elämä), wellbeing (HS Hyvinvointi), people (HS Ihmiset), culture (HS Kulttuuri) and music (HS Music). The list below displays the above-explained overview in numbers of articles mentioning Pulled Oats in each section of the newspaper during the study period:

- 35 HS Food (HS Ruoka)
- 13 HS Domestic (HS Kotimaa)
- 10 HS Economy (HS Talous)
- 14 restaurant reviews
- 13 articles covering events
- 3 editorials
- 3 opinions
- 41 articles scattered around other sections

The retailer interviews were conducted between January and June 2017. The interviewed people were chosen because they held a managerial or owner positions in local grocery stores and supermarkets in Jyväskylä, Central Finland and that their stores sold Pulled Oats during the time of the interviews. As Finland stretches to a large area I was not able to conduct the interviews in a geographically comprehensive manner. However, there are two main retail chains in Finland, Kesko and S group, that dominate approximately 85% of the market (Nielsen Finland, 2017, as cited in Finnish Grocery Trade Association, 2017), which is why a level of reliability is still ensured by interviewing mainly representatives from the largest chains. In the big picture, despite the local assortments and campaigns, the two retail chains operate in a similar manner all around Finland as they follow their chain business models. To create some dispersion, however, I also interviewed two representatives from other grocery stores: one from M chain (0.6% market share in Finland) and one from an independent retailer operating three grocery stores in Helsinki. Representatives from the third largest grocery chain, Lidl (9.3% market share), were not interviewed because at the time of the interviews Pulled Oats was not yet on sale in Lidl stores.

Table 2 in chapter 4 presents the positions of the informants, the grocery chains their stores are part of, the approximate sizes of their stores and the interview dates. All the interviewees from the Kesko chain, except the informant from

the chain management, worked as retailer entrepreneurs, in other words as shopkeepers who own their store but work under the chain business model. The interviewees from S Group stores were different kinds of managers as their business model is not built on independent entrepreneurs. The interviewee from M chain was also an owner of her store whereas the interviewee from the private grocery store was responsible for purchases and marketing for the grocery store operating two shops and an online service in Helsinki.

The interviews took into account different sized stores. Different focus areas and selections of goods is commonplace to stores of different sizes because small stores usually serve everyday grocery needs and have less physical space to display items whereas larger stores may offer a variety of services and a large assortment of goods. Store types are usually also defined based on size but also the extent of the store's selection of goods and price level have an effect (Kukkonen, 2008, p. 28). In terms of store types and sizes, for this thesis, the interest lies in hypermarkets, supermarkets, markets and convenience stores because the interviews concentrated on those store types. Altogether three interviews were related to small-sized markets and convenience stores, three to medium-sized supermarkets and four to large hypermarkets. The two interviewees who operate outside the largest chains happened to both represent small-size stores.

According to the Finnish Grocery Trade Association ("Myymälätyypit," n.d.), hypermarkets are larger than 2 500 m² and concentrate on daily consumer goods and groceries. In this thesis they are considered as the large-sized (L) stores. Groceries, however, account for less than half of the entire surface area. Finnish examples include Prisma and Citymarket. The size of supermarkets and/or markets range from 400 square meters to 2 499 square meters. In Finland, these include for example K-Supermarket and S-Market, which in this study were labelled as medium-sized (M) stores. Convenience stores and small markets are usually less than 400m² in area and serve consumers at a close proximity within their neighborhood. In this thesis they are considered as small-sized (S) stores. (Finnish Grocery Trade Association, n.d..)

In different store types, the selections and assortments as well as the level of different services are different. Hypermarkets may carry 15 000 - 20 000 products whereas supermarkets have approximately 8 000-10 000 products and markets 4 500-6 000 products. Convenience stores offer something around 3 000 products (Kukkonen, 2008, p. 29-30). However, despite the sizes of the interviewees' stores, they all had managed to include Pulled Oats in their selection of goods, which in itself is already a signal about the particularity of the product.

The next chapter paves the way for further analysis describing the attributes related to Pulled Oats in media and in the retailer interviews.

5.2 Attributes linked to Pulled Oats

Continuing on the content analysis, this chapter explores the different ways of how Pulled Oats is described in the data. This type of inspection enabled the author to distinguish terms and concepts attached to Pulled Oats, and thus laying a foundation for the more thematic analysis. Observing the categorization of certain objects often requires understanding of ways how in general the object is perceived. In this case I found it relevant to find out what Pulled Oats is said to be (like), what it is not (like) and what it is compared to. However, while going through the media texts and the retailer interview transcripts to discover the describing attributes, I soon realized the ambiguous nature of this kind of analysis. It was not always clear whether an expression describes Pulled Oats, the vegetarian foods or for example plant-based proteins in general. Thus, I chose to select only the clearest descriptive expressions related to Pulled Oats: What is it? What is it like? What are the attributes and characteristics it is explicitly said to have? The following chapters will explain these observations underlined with excerpts from the data.

5.2.1 Pulled Oats' attributes in media data

In this part of the content analysis, the attributes clearly referring to PO were gathered. In practice, as the HS articles were stored in a word processing program, the search function was used to highlight the word “nyhtökaura” (Pulled Oats in Finnish) to be able to spot the describing words and phrases that referred to Pulled Oats next to or very close to the highlighted word. Below is an example of such sentence where PO is given attributes like “domestic”, “vegetarian food” and “innovation”. In the following quote, the word Pulled Oats is intentionally marked in bold and the attributes are marked in italics to depict the practical process of searching for the word ‘nyhtökaura’ and finding the descriptive expressions and attributes next to it:

*“The Finnish vegetarian food innovation **Pulled Oats** becomes more widely available for consumers during May [...].” (Leminen, 7.5.2016.)*

Within the 132 HS articles Pulled Oats was described in many ways meaning that a variety of attributes were attached to it. Altogether 108 descriptive expressions were collected, then listed and saved in a spreadsheet. In the spreadsheet the attributes were merged into thirteen attribute groups based on the similarity of the meaning of the descriptive expressions. All the attributes did not fit clearly into any of the attribute groups which is why they were left out as single occurrence attributes. Table 3 lists the attribute groups and the single occurrence attributes. It must be noted, however, that the number of attributes found does not correlate with the number of articles because for example in some articles no descriptive words of Pulled Oats were used and in some articles it was described using many describing words and phrases.

TABLE 3 Attributes of Pulled Oats in media

Attribute group	Occurrence
Plant-based product/protein	29
Meat substitute	17
Finnish/domestic	8
Novelty/new product	8
Meat alternative	6
A hit (product)	6
Protein-rich	6
Easy to use	5
Received attention	4
Trend/fashionable	4
Advancer of Veggie trend	2
Healthy	2
Processed product	2
Single occurrence attributes	
Key ingredient in vegan kitchen	1
Grocery stores' favorite	1
Refrigerated product	1
Good product	1
Versatile	1
Environmentally friendly	1
Endangered protein	1
Unique	1
Pulled texture	1

Plant-based-related naming was most commonly used as it occurred 29 times. The second most common attribute for Pulled Oats was meat substitute with 17 mentions. Also 'meat alternative' was used six times, so altogether expressions directly linking Pulled Oats to replacing meat or being an alternative to it occurred 23 times. Next in line were descriptions about a domestic or Finnish product (8). Also, eight times Pulled Oats was described as a new product or a novelty.

Figure 8 shows the chronological examination of the two most common attribute groups (meat-related and plant-based) linked to Pulled Oats. It reveals no clear anomalies between them. Pulled Oats has been called both meat substitute and meat alternative as well as vegetable or plant-based protein product regularly during the study period. Only during August 2016 and June 2017 there were small gaps between the two ways of naming the product. In August 2016 four articles out of the published 14 articles referred to Pulled Oats as meat substitute whereas only one article referred to the product as vegetarian product. In June 2017 the roles had switched as three from the five published articles referred to Pulled Oats as vegetarian protein while no articles used expressions related to meat when describing the product. Rest of the articles in any of the gap months did not use descriptive expressions clearly defining Pulled Oats.

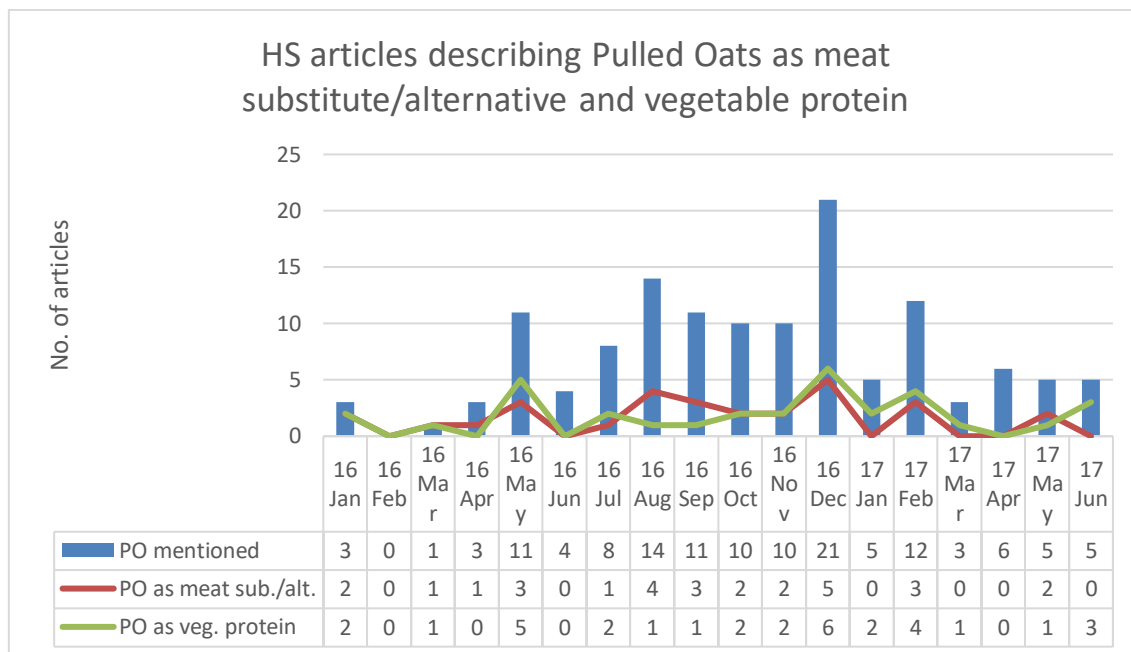


FIGURE 8 Chronological presentation of Pulled Oats described as meat substitute and plant protein

In late summer of 2016, however, the market was expanding as other plant-based proteins were launched including Valio's MiFu and Verso Foods' Härkis. Thus, it may be the effect of the expansion of the category that shifted the naming slightly. In nearly all other months than August 2016 Pulled Oats was more often named as vegetable protein primarily. However, a pattern of using several attributes and descriptive expressions exists throughout the entire time frame. It was not uncommon to come across descriptive phrases where both meat and plant-based were mentioned. For example, "Pulled Oats is a vegetable protein product made out of oats, broad beans and peas that can be even described as vegetable mincemeat" (editorial, 13.1.2016).

In addition to attributes associated with Pulled Oats, also comparing expressions were collected during the content analysis. Basically, I searched for words, expressions and phrases that compared or paralleled Pulled Oats with something and presented alternatives or substitutes for Pulled Oats. The sentences comparing Pulled Oats to something were mostly composed around the words "is like": "Pulled Oats is like..." or "Pulled Oats and other plant-based proteins like Härkis..." The intention behind this kind of analysis was to recognize what kinds of items seem to share attributes with Pulled Oats, what is perceived to be used in a similar manner as Pulled Oats and what is it that perceivably would be used instead of Pulled Oats.

Table 4 showcases the comparisons found. The most common comparison was another plant-based protein product used as meat substitute called Härkis. Härkis occurred 23 times out of the 51 times Pulled Oats was clearly compared to something. Härkis is a product of Verso Food Ltd made from Finnish broad beans. It entered the market in September 2016.

TABLE 4 Comparisons of Pulled Oats in media

Pulled Oats compared to in Helsingin Sanomat	Frequency
Härkis	23
Overcooked, pulled meat (beef or pork)	12
Chicken	8
Soy products (strips or mince)	7
Mincemeat	7
Tofu	5
Legumes (especially broad beans)	5
Seitan	3
MiFu	3
Tempeh	3
Quorn	2
Meat	2
Single occurrence comparisons	
Oat snacks	1
Ham and/or turkey strips (cold cuts)	1
Oat drink	1
Oat bread	1
Tabasco	1
Oumph	1
Ambrosia of ancient Greece	1
Nokia	1
Oatmeal	1
Pokémon	1
[Food made of] Insects	1
Tuna	1
Vegan products	1
Vegetable pastry (Vihis in Finnish)	1
Oat powder (Puhtikaura)	1

The second most common reference to Pulled Oats was overcooked and pulled meat (beef or pork) with 12 occurrences. Next to that quite evenly are chicken, soy products (more specifically soy strips and “mince soy”). Both tofu and legumes were compared to Pulled Oats five times within the HS articles. Two or three times references include seitan (a wheat-based vegetable protein), MiFu (dairy-based protein food, one of the newcomers in the market), Tempeh (fermented soy protein food), Quorn (protein product derived from a type of fungus) and meat in general.

As can be seen from the table above, there are a great deal of items PO is compared to. The different comparisons are scattered and only a handful of comparisons appear more than five times within the entire media data. Some items and foods were compared to Pulled Oats only one time. References like oats, oat snacks, Oumph (soy-based vegetable protein) and cold cuts made sense considering the texture, ingredients and the purpose of use of Pulled Oats. However,

similarities in for example use purposes, texture and composition can be identified among Pulled Oats and the comparisons. Among others, for example attributes like 'plant-based' and 'protein rich' could apply to Härkis and legumes of the comparisons Table. From among the more peculiar comparisons I found the expressions about ambrosia (quotation available at the very beginning of this paper) and Pokémon most unusual:

"Quite some enthusiasm, sometimes it feels like Pulled Oats is Finland's own Pokémon that's been hunted like crazy", says Maija Itkonen, the CEO of company Gold&Green Foods that is behind the product. (Sneck, 28.7.2016)

The expression about ambrosia was highlighted in the beginning of this thesis and in the name of this study because it is not only an intriguing example of the versatile ways how PO is described in the marketplace but also as an expression of the unique and partly controversial position the product has achieved. In comparison to conventional plant-based proteins it has reached such a hype that it is referred to as the "food of Gods".

One reason for the high number of versatile comparisons may simply be the popularity of the topic in the media. Article releases about Pulled Oats or mentions about Pulled Oats in articles were abundant which may have caused a tendency to try and describe the product in innovative ways. On the other hand, it also suggests that the product is still ambiguous and requires a great deal of comparison points to give the audience a variety of interfaces to formulate an understanding of the product.

5.2.2 Pulled Oats' attributes in interviews

From the 12 interviews altogether 41 descriptive expressions were found. The attributes were collected in a similar fashion as the media data attributes: first the word "nyhtökaura", Pulled Oats in Finnish, was highlighted using the search function of a word processing program where the HS articles were stored after which descriptive attributes, adjectives and other expressions that were clearly recognizable were spotted next to or close by the highlighted word. The 41 attributes found were listed and saved in a spreadsheet after which it was easier to group them into respective attribute groups. The number of attributes does not correlate with the number of the interviews because most of the interviewees described the product in more than one word or expression. As with the media data, also some of the descriptive expressions in the interviews did not clearly belong to any of the attribute groups and they were left out from the grouping as single occurrence attributes. Table 5 lists the attributes found from the interview data.

TABLE 5 Attributes of PO in interviews

Attribute group	Occurrence
Meat substitute	7
Plant-based protein / option	5
Meat-like	5
Meat alternative	5
Innovation	4
Great product /praised product	3
Protein source	2
Single occurrence attributes	
Domestic	1
Meatless option	1
Basic ingredient	1
Dry	1
Easy to use	1
Ethical	1
Ecological	1

In most cases Pulled Oats was described as meat substitute (with seven references). These descriptions included expressions like “Pulled Oats is a meat substitute” and “it is used to substitute meat”. Plant-based option or protein, meat-like and alternative to meat were used to describe Pulled Oats five times each. Referring to a plant-based option the interviewees used terms like “plant-based protein”, “plant-based protein product” and “vegetarian option”. Meat-like attributes were described by the interviewees as, among others, “meat-like texture”, “resembles pulled pork” and “can be used the same way as meat”. Expressions like “it is a good alternative to meat” and “meat alternative” were used to describe Pulled Oats as an option to meat. Fifth most commonly, Pulled Oats was said to be an innovation altogether four times in the interviews. Three and two times Pulled Oats was referred to as a great product (e.g. “superb product” and “it is a hit”) and a protein source (e.g. “great protein source”). Finally, for example domestic, ethical and ecological were mentioned only once.

Furthermore, ten out of 12 interviewees refer to meat in some way when they describe Pulled Oats. Thus, only two do not directly refer to any meat products or describe Pulled Oats in relation to meat during their interviews. Seven out of 12 interviewees refer to PO as meat substitute, five say it is an alternative to meat and five describe it being similar as meat or some specific product like mincemeat. Moreover, five of the interviewees call the product in some ways being from plant origin. The Table below (Table 6) showcases the distribution of the top five descriptive attributes between the interviewees.

TABLE 6 Description of Pulled Oats in interviews

Interviewee	Meat substitute	Plant-based	Meat-like	Meat alternative	Innovation
1		*			*
2	*			*	
3	*				
4	*				
5				*	
6	*	*	*	*	*
7	*		*		
8	*		*	*	*
9			*		
10	*	*	*		
11		*			*
12		*		*	

Consequently, several interviewees describe Pulled Oats using more than one attribute. Hence, the co-naming seems to be more common than using only one way to explain what the product is like. However, references to substituting, resembling or being an alternative to meat as well as references to vegetarian food are most common. For example, interviewee number 4 from the private grocery store describes the reasons why they took the product in their selection, and showcases many of the attributes listed in the tables above:

Well, so it was like very interesting new product and innovation so [...] before it even had come to stores it was hyped in media and social media like so much so yes we saw immediately that this is like the kind of product that we must have 'cos it was anyway domestic. Okay, it's like very processed product but anyhow [it is] like a meat substitute that like still tastes good so we saw that it has a huge potential [...]. (Interview 4)

Regarding the retail chain management interviewees, the Sales and Purchasing Manager for fish and meat from Kesko describes the product as “vegetarian based or oat-based, like, protein, so a good alternative to meat” (Interview 12), whereas the S group Assortments and Pricing Vice President from the retail chain management says Pulled Oats is “easy to use, like, vegetable protein product that is suitable for everyone” (Interview 11). Together these interviewees are in the minority for not using the term ‘meat substitute’ per se. Seven out of ten informants from the grass root grocery store level referred to PO distinctively as ‘meat substitute’ whereas only three out of those ten explicitly named PO as ‘plant based’. So even though the interviews do not resemble an exhaustive sample of the managerial level employees of the grocery chains, the data provides some evidence of difference among the descriptive words used between the managerial and the store level personnel.

The next two chapters will present the media data through thematic analysis. In contrast to the content analysis, the thematic analysis consists of broader and less mechanical way of viewing the findings and thus digs deeper into the analysis of the data. The retail interviews are analyzed thematically in chapter 5.5.

5.3 Pulled Oats as a prototype of its category

Throughout the media data Pulled Oats was described and characterized in various ways. Examples of that and about the occurrences of the references of Pulled Oats to meat substitute and plant-based protein and such can be found from chapter 5.2.1. Looking through the thematic lens, however, the results can be seen in a different light. After coding the passages for the content analysis, mechanically listing and counting labels found next to the word 'Pulled Oats' in the media texts, I noticed patterns that correlate with the theoretical framework of prototypicality and goal-based categorization.

Some of the disconnected attributes listed described the product in relation to its features, to other products, or to the market of meat substitutes and plant-based proteins. Other attributes on the other hand seemed to describe the reasons and ways of how and why Pulled Oats was used or should be used. This revelation made it possible to continue the analysis down the thematic path. In this chapter, the findings from the media data related to Pulled Oats as the exemplar, or prototype, of its category are presented. In the next chapter, the aspects related to the goal-oriented categorization in the media data are brought forward.

The prototype-based categorization became a theme emerging from the media data because three justifying subthemes were discovered: *Observable features and attributes of PO*, *Oldest representative of category* and *linkages to other similar products*. These subthemes were classified under the prototypicality theme because they resemble many of the aspects related to the definition of a prototype in the categorization literature. The definitions include the oldest or the first entrant to the category, the most representative item of the category, the average member of the category, the most salient member of the category and an abstract representation of the prototype (Vergne & Wry, 2014). Still, the acknowledged common factor lies within family resemblance and similarity. To be able to evaluate those aspects previous knowledge about the object need to be acquired. Next, the observable features of PO presented in the HS articles are discussed.

5.3.1 Observable features and attributes of PO

Considering the features of Pulled Oats, the data provided information about the ingredients of the product, texture, nutritional values and ways of handling the product, to mention a few. In addition, the descriptive expressions and attributes listed in chapter 5.2.1 contribute to and enforce the prototypical nature of Pulled Oats. Some of them are clearly observable features while others are simply features of the product. Nevertheless, all these aspects define what the product is, which in itself is important for categorization. Without knowing what the object to be categorized is like, it is challenging to place it into any category. Prototypicality also builds on the family resemblance where often items share similar features in order to be a member of a certain category.

Many passages were coded related to the ingredients of the product. In terms of the ingredients within Pulled Oats and the nutritional values the articles

were, naturally, largely unanimous as those aspects must be listed on product packaging. The product was described as the combination of different legumes or broad beans and oats that were mixed together to make the product.

Pulled oats is a vegetable protein prepared from oats and legumes. In the ready product there are 13-14 percent oats, 13-14 percent pea protein and 8-9 percent broad bean protein. (Leminen, 7.5.2016)

The descriptions of the texture and other such physical characteristics were at times very elaborate in the HS articles:

When uncooked, the appearance of Pulled Oats resembles overcooked meat or canned tuna. It is fiber-like dubiously shaped hash. What comes to mind is overcooked, pulled meat that would have been stored in the refrigerator overnight. When examined cold, straight from the package, the smell of neither of the products [flavors] is not very tempting. The characteristic smell of oats comes up the best from the cold Pulled Oats and it creates a bread-like aroma. (Leminen, 7.5.2016)

Nutritional values were presented by describing the amounts of for example proteins, carbohydrates and fats. In the following excerpt also the different flavors are mentioned.

Pulled Oats does not contain additives or other E-codes. The flavors for the already seasoned options come from real tomatoes, bell peppers and ginger. There are three flavor options. Pulled Oats contains 30 percent protein, 5-10 percent carbohydrates depending on the flavor, 5-10 also fat and 2-3 percent fiber. (Vasama, 1.5.2016)

Additionally, also the easiness to use Pulled Oats came up in many excerpts describing the product.

Using Pulled Oats was very easy. It was only mixed with the hot sauce and let to warm up. (Leminen, 7.5.2016)

Pulled Oats is a new product [...] that is easy to prepare for everyday meals. (Pääkkönen, 13.5.2016)

On the other hand expectations were so high after all the hype around Pulled Oats that hardly anything could have fulfilled them. But the texture was good. And it sure was easy to use. (Kemppainen, 3.12.2016)

5.3.2 Oldest representative of category

In this thesis the meat substitute market is understood in large context to include also plenty of plant-based proteins because the terms are used interchangeably within the data as well. In many cases PO was described as or it was implied that it was the first one to break through in the meat substitutes market. In this sense, it correlates with the notion from the categories literature suggesting that the prototypical object of a category may be the oldest one.

By November 2016 the other novel plant-based proteins had already entered the market and thus proper points of comparison existed for PO from that

point of time onwards. However, products meeting the needs for filling the plates with plant-based protein are not a novel invention. In fact, tofu and other soy products have been around for a long time and are distinct part of people's diet in many parts of the world. In Finland, on the other hand, the selection of tofu and soy products has mostly only served the needs of vegetarians and vegans.

In the following excerpts it is implied that PO was the first entrant of the category and thus at the time the oldest, hence the most representative item of its category:

This year vegetarian food has emerged stronger than ever. First, Pulled Oats showed up in stores, then the broad bean product Härkis. (Ala-Risku, 31.10.2016)

In Finland the boom for products substituting meat was kicked off by Pulled Oats, a product that entered the market earlier this year. It has similar features to Härkis and MiFu [a dairy-based meat substitute] but the protein concentration is approximately twofold. (Nalbantoglu, 26.8.2016)

However, not everybody agreed on the prototypical status of Pulled oats. For example, managerial personnel from S Group interviewed in Helsingin Sanomat acknowledged the special status of Pulled Oats but would not admit it is the only driver of the increase in the popularity of the vegetable products. Also, for example a blogger and shopkeeper interviewed by the newspaper abstains from declaring Pulled Oats as the only advancer of the market:

Elina Innanen, 29, blogger of the popular Chocochili vegan food blog and the entrepreneur of Vegekauppa [vegetarian and vegan store] in Turku does not believe that Pulled Oats is alone responsible of the increased popularity of vegetable proteins. "I think what has happened rather is that Pulled Oats happened to hit the right time. In our store we don't even sell Pulled Oats but all other veggie proteins are moving really well at the moment", she says. (Bäckgren, 29.7.2016)

Ambiguity exists elsewhere also. How easily does the role as a prototype product of a category change according to availability and sales figures? Because of the difficulties in their production capacity Gold & Green Foods was not able to meet the demand whereas the manufacturer of Härkis, Verso Food, was able to supply as much as was demanded. This market situation created a slight mismatch regarding the prototypicality of the category. Pulled Oats was the first entrant to the market but it was practically not available for consumers north of Helsinki for some six months. Härkis on the other hand entered the market after PO but with a product that was largely available since day one. The contradiction is shown in the next quote where PO is said to be a success story but the "spearhead of the market" however is Härkis.

Out of this year's novel foodstuffs the vegetable pastry, Vihis, and Pulled Oats were successes, and in August Härkis, the spearhead of the market, entered the vegetable protein market. Härkis has even slid past the stir fry chicken [in sales]. (Pallaste, 2.12.2016)

Even though Härkis conquered the market in an economical sense, Pulled Oats was still referred to as the main product of the market in relation to many other meat substituting products. The next chapter elaborates more on this.

5.3.3 Linkages to other similar products

Certain kinds of groupings within the media data depicted prototypicality of Pulled Oats. Articles where for example all new and current plant-based proteins were listed enforced the category. As similar products were grouped and listed in an article it implies to the audience that they are classified together. In addition, Pulled Oats was often mentioned first or second in these lists, and the way of using the other products was often described alike with the usage of Pulled Oats. For example, this quote lifts PO up on a podium, sort of as an example of all the rest: "That is also why I salute Pulled Oats and other meat substitutes with joy: they bring the world forward." (Ahola, 11.9.2016) It seems that Pulled Oats was the one product all other similar products refer to in most cases in the HS articles:

In addition to Pulled Oats numerous other products like tofu, mince soy and soy strips, seitan, tempeh and Quorn that are suitable for substituting meat can be found from the shelves of grocery stores. (Bäckgren, 29.7.2016)

The ways of using Pulled Oats were described in many articles that presented the new plant-based proteins. The usage descriptions of the other plant-based proteins contained similarities to the ways of use of Pulled Oats. The easiness of use mentioned in chapter 5.3.1 seems to be one of the determining factors for belonging to the meat substitute and/or plant-based market in general according to the articles published in Helsingin Sanomat. As the lifestyle of today is and becomes more and more hectic, people are looking for easy and quick but nutritious, healthy and environmentally and ethically conscious food to fill their stomachs.

The current year [2016] has brought to stores several meat substitutes of which the latest are Valio's Mifu food grains that are made of milk and the Finnish broad bean product Härkis. Verso Food introduced Härkis yesterday, Wednesday, and Valio launched Mifu today, Thursday. Both products enter the stores in the beginning of September. Earlier this year also domestic Pulled Oats of Gold&Green and the Swedish soy protein product Oumph entered the market. What is common to the new meat substitutes is that they are easy to use. There is necessarily no need to season, marinade or pre-prepare them because the products are simply added to the food or heated up. (Leminen, 25.8.2016)

The previously mentioned blogger and entrepreneur from Turku lists optional foods that can be used instead of Pulled Oats.

If one is planning to prepare the trendy Pulled Oats burger and Pulled Oats cannot be found in stores, Innanen gives a tip: "Soy strips have the similar mild taste as Pulled Oats so I would use those. The strips can be cooked, teared to a pulled-like texture, seasoned and fried on a pan. It'll also become a lot cheaper than Pulled Oats", she says. (Bäckgren, 29.7.2016)

Being easy to use, not needing a marinade or soaking, a protein source that can be added into a dish at the final phase of cooking – there seems to be several common factors in the ways how the methods of using plant-based meat substitutes are described. Most of the descriptions seemed to emerge already during the launch of Pulled Oats, i.e. before the other popular products like Hårkis entered the market. In similar fashion as with the first entrant to the market factor, towards the end of the articles in the data set, the prototype-like status of PO was slightly unbalanced by Hårkis that was more widely available in stores. By the time, however, Pulled Oats had potentially already created a standard in the way of using the novel plant-based meat substitutes.

All in all, Pulled Oats seems to be the representative product of its category in many ways. It seems to be the most salient member of the category based on many of the HS articles because it is often the first or among the first meat substitutes referred to when giving examples of the category. Also, it appears as the first entrant, i.e. the oldest novel meat substitute in the market. However, this takes us to the question what actually constitutes as the market of the new meat substitutes. Compared to the pre-existing products that can be used to substitute meat, for example tofu, soy strips or mince soy, it seems that at least the domestic origin and the easiness of use have made a difference between those meat substitutes and the novel meat substitutes in which PO belongs to. Why has Pulled Oats been primarily compared with meat, meat products and Hårkis, and not with tofu? It seems that new products require reference points not only from within their own new category but also from different, more established categories that are known to wider audiences. I will discuss this issue further in chapter 6.

Pulled Oats appears as a prototype also because of its relationship to other plant-based proteins. In some media texts it appears as the average kind of product or at least it is presented among many other similar products as an equal and a reference point. Nevertheless, Pulled Oats is not an abstract representation because it is an actual existing product. Also, it is hard to say whether the audience has even developed an abstract representation of meat substitutes because there seems to be so many attributes that these kind of products ought to possess.

In addition to the several attributes related to PO, it is attached to several objectives. Next, the goal-based categorization is discussed.

5.4 The goal-based categorization of Pulled Oats

This section will cover the evidence found from the media data regarding the categorization of Pulled Oats in a goal-oriented manner. Based on the media data it appears that the goal-based categorization of Pulled Oats can be divided into two strategies: related to meat, especially decreasing the consumption of meat,

and related to vegetarian or plant-based eating, especially to the emerging alternatives for vegetarian diet. The goals related to meat look at meat as the starting point for the formation of goals whereas the plant-based goals are derived from advancing and promoting vegetarian diet or offering alternatives to other plant-based proteins. This chapter is divided according to the presentation of those two ways of categorization. The opinions presented are supported with quotes from the media data.

In the categorization literature goals are predetermined based on personal and situational goals (Ratneshwar et al., 2001, as cited in Durand & Paoletta, 2013). Based on the empirical data of this thesis, I would add one more layer: goals that are beyond the needs of one person and concern societies, the humankind or even the entire planet. In short, within the meat goal and the plant-based goal there are both personal (e.g. aiming to eat healthy) and situational (e.g. aiming to prepare the meal fast) goals as well as the wider objectives. The broader upper-level goals aiming to for example save the world and the food supply of the planet Earth are called universal goals in this thesis.

5.4.1 Decreasing meat consumption goal

Pulled oats gets referred to meat and linked to meat consumption very often in the data. The decreasing meat goal builds on evidence from the media data about substituting and replacing meat, personal and situational goals as well as the universal ethical and ecological goals. However, the common factor for all the findings is the linkage to meat and the aim of cutting back on the consumption. That is why the goal is named broadly to refer to decreasing meat.

A movement around replacing and substituting meat seems to be on the rise or to some extent already existing. This is endorsed by the articles in HS where not only the journalists suggest that in their texts but also the interviewed experts seem to state that. In the articles mentioning Pulled Oats the meat consumption habits are discussed often. Replacing and substituting meat appears as a notable goal in itself like in the following quotes.

A prefix from the trendy pulled pork has been brought in to the name to emphasize that the product replaces meat. (Editorial, 13.1.2016)

According to him [Ari Akseli, the head of the grocery trade in Kesko] the new products have made more and more mixed eaters to replace meat with vegetable protein from time to time. For example the hit product Pulled Oats is being ripped off the hands and there is not yet enough supply to answer the high demand. (Huutilainen, 2.7.2016)

Some of the goals to reducing meat in one's diet seem to relate to personal issues. The pursuit of healthy eating and for example the aspects of taste and mouthfeel are attached to PO. The following quote aptly presents PO as one of the best opportunities for "meat eaters" to replace meat in their diet.

The problem with the meat replacers and substitutes has been the fact that their taste does not meet the expectations of meat eaters. Pulled Oats that is substituting meat gets very close to the kind of taste and mouthfeel that a meat eater expects from food. There is no longer need to replace the absent taste with the ideology. Crossing this threshold was the change that revolutionized the demand of the product. (Editorial, 2.9.2016)

The so called situational goals can be found for example from the recipes where Pulled Oats is an ingredient. Pulled Oats may not be the main ingredient in a recipe but often is referred to close to the end of the cooking instructions as a way to replace the animal-based protein used in the dish. Thus, the recipe offers an ad hoc category for those who wish to try the recipe without meat and at the same time contributes to shaking the existing practices.

In the vegetarian version beef is switched to Härkis or Pulled Oats. They soak up the curry flavors like a sponge and their texture is already similar than of beef that has been simmered for hours. (Kaapro, 20.2.2017)

The meat-related universal goals cover societal, ethical and ecological goals. It almost seems that a great deal of pressure is loaded on Pulled Oats in the media because terms like “the new Nokia” are used. For example an article published on May 1st, 2016, asks whether “this meat substitute [Pulled Oats] is the new mincemeat and the savior of the climate?” (Vasama). Climate and the environment were clearly represented in the media data, and an apt example can be seen below.

At the same time it [Pulled Oats] is an answer to the concern about climate change, the environment and the food supply of the planet. Meat consumption grows in an incomprehensible manner alongside the economic growth of China and other developing countries. (Vasama, 1.5.2016)

It almost seems that in the media consumers are offered a list of reasons why Pulled Oats should be used. From these reasons consumers can then formulate their own understanding on the pressing matters of the world and why meat should be avoided and/or why the proportion of plant-based foods should be increased in their diet. These then become their goals for categorizing Pulled Oats. Consumers and other actors in the society clearly have multilevel goals related to eating. In short, Pulled Oats is categorized broadly as means to an end of decreasing the amount of meat consumed.

5.4.2 Variation for vegetarian diet goal

The findings from the data suggest that in addition to the decreasing meat goal Pulled Oats is also affiliated with the advancement of vegetarian diet. It is seen as an additional option in the vegetarian protein food category as well as an easy-to-use plant-based ingredient for everyday cooking. In an article discussing the food trends, the food culture professor from the University of Helsinki, Johanna Mäkelä, provides an apt remark on the reasons behind the popularity of the vegetarian diet currently:

For example the justifications for low-carb diet were based on the wellbeing of the individual. Vegetarian diet is justified not only with the health aspect but also two other things: ecological sustainability and ethical questions related to farmed animals. [...] "The Paris climate agreement was adopted last year. Maybe that has somehow woken people up to think about what we eat in terms of sustainability. Health, sustainability and ethicality are themes in the general discussion anyway. And vegetarian eating is a thing where all these themes are in a crossroads." (Ala-Risku, 31.10.2016)

In the aforementioned article Pulled Oats was also touched upon: "According to Mäkelä, Pulled Oats makes the Finnish vegetarian food discussion special" (Ala-Risku, 31.10.2016). The statements of the food culture professor are in the core of the vegetable and plant-based goal categorization. Opposite to the meat goals, the vegetarian goals start from the prior intention of having vegetarian food on one's plate, not replacing meat per se. For example, even the creators of Pulled Oats had vegetarian-related goals: they have not tried to imitate the taste of any meat (Vasama, 2016) and they have been missing a vegetarian equivalent for the every-day mincemeat:

Maija Itkonen and Reetta Kivelä were wondering why a tasty vegetarian alternative for mincemeat that would serve busy every-day cooks cannot be found from the market. As a result, they invented Pulled Oats. (Kallionpää, 12.1.2016)

From the producer viewpoint there were a few more business goals visible in the data. For example the producers of Pulled Oats at Gold&Green explicitly state that they aim to go international with Pulled Oats and thus have marketed it with the English name since the beginning. Also, their ideology of Pulled Oats as a technology-led innovation provides a platform for an entire selection to be built around the product. Also investors, restaurants, cook book authors and publishers, and retail have built business goals around Pulled Oats which refines and redefines the category even further. However, even though these business goals are presented in and perceived to belong under the vegetarian variation goal, it cannot be clearly distinguished from the data whether the main goal for the business is to substitute meat or offer vegetarian options because businesses tend to concentrate on the business goals. "The team is creating a whole product family around Pulled Oats." (Kallionpää, 12.1.2016)

In addition to the producers' goals, Pulled Oats is seen as an easy-to-use addition to the vegetarian protein options. It "is a welcome addition next to imported soy and domestic broad bean products" (editorial, 13.1.2016). PO appears as domestic and fast-cooked alternative for other plant-based proteins. However, in general those products would serve the vegans and vegetarians but the data suggests that not only those consumer groups are interested in vegetarian food.

Pulled Oats can be used to replace for example mincemeat, chicken or tuna in everyday cooking. For vegetarians it offers domestic variation beside imported soy, seitan and Quorn. (Vasama, 1.5.2016)

In the present-day context increasing the amount of vegetarian food in their diet appears to be “allowed” for the masses and it is acknowledged in the media data as well. Not only people who are following a special vegetarian or vegan diet are interested in Pulled Oats. Some see Pulled Oats as a way of decreasing their environmental burden whereas some affiliate it with the health and fitness trend or even the protein trend. Also animal rights and animal welfare are the most important reason for some to consume Pulled Oats. However, these are universal goals that do not necessarily fit in either the decreasing meat goal or the vegetarian advancement goal. Still, as the demand and consumption in the everyday groceries is the largest, they sell the most and also cause the most burden on the environment. The head of the consumer society research center at the University of Helsinki, Piia Jallinoja, summarizes this notion in the quote below.

According to Jallinoja the change will be first visible in everyday meals that are prepared fast. Pulled Oats and beans will overtake the mincemeat and stir fry chicken of the weeknights more easily than the Christmas ham. “And from the ecological viewpoint especially the weekdays’ meals matter the most.” (Pelli, 7.11.2016)

The vegetarian variation goals seem to intertwine but the mixing does not appear to have a negative effect. It seems that PO is often presented at the crossroads of many of these trends and values, and not as the solution for fulfilling one single “goal” regarding the vegetarian theme. Perhaps people’s choices are not scrutinized as harshly anymore as they might have been a decade or two ago. In short, people are freer to attach different meanings to their consumption choices as before. If one’s predetermined goal was to cook Pulled Oats as a meat substitute it is as accepted as if one chose to do it as an alternative to tofu.

5.5 Categorization of Pulled Oats in the grocery trade

The retail chains use category management to manage and analyze the sales of certain products, product groups and larger wholes. The categories are strategic entities (Kukkonen, 2008) and category managers take care of the categories they are responsible for, adjust the assortment according to demand and supply and make orders according to previous sales. Nowadays, however, the work is highly automated with the help of databases and systems that calculate the inventory.

To find out how Pulled Oats was categorized in retail, I interviewed representatives from the grocery trade. I aimed at finding out where PO was placed in the store and why. During the interviews the real extent of category management in retail started to unravel which meant that understanding the category management system became important as well.

Based on the interviews it seems there are different practices in the placement of Pulled Oats in stores. As ten of the 12 interviewees work in an actual store, their answers were used to compile Table 7 where the locations of PO in stores are specified. In four of the interviewees’ stores PO was placed next to meat products or processed meat products. Meat products are prepared from meat but

processed with different methods to make the product preserve better and longer (Marja-Leena Ovaskainen, 2016, pp. 39). These include for example sausages and pizza topping ham slices. “We have it [Pulled Oats] there where the frankfurter sausages and sausages and sliced ham and the likes are.” (Interview 9).

TABLE 7 The placement of Pulled Oats in interviewees' stores

Location in store	No. of stores
Meat products	4
Vegetarian shelf	3
Convenience food	2
Mobile container	1

Three out of the ten interviewees who work in stores say Pulled Oats is placed in special vegetarian shelves (‘vegehyllly’ was the Finnish term used by the interviewees) in their store. These include only Kesko stores because K Group launched a veggie section trial in 2016 (Kesko, 2016). During the time of the interviews the vegetarian sections were a novel concept and only some stores had already built those vegetarian sections. In K Group’s press release (2016) they explain the reason for establishing the veggie sections to be the rising demand of vegetarian products and the will to make vegetarian products better available to all consumers. The location of the veggie sections in the store is next to meat and meat products aisles, the release says. According to the release, this way even consumers who are not familiar with vegetarian products have a chance to find the products compared to if they were scattered around the store as before (Kesko, 2016).

Well, at the moment we have created a separate veggie shelf within particularly the convenience food section where the ready meals are, so there all the veggie foods can be found from the same cupboard. [...] As we have it here in a way that the ready meals switch quite smoothly to packaged meat and poultry and fish and so in a way they all are on the same wall. But the reason we have collected the veggie ready meals together is that it’s not separately then for example with the mincemeat or with poultry. (Interview 1)

Two of the interviewees state Pulled Oats is placed in their convenience food or ready meals section. These two were small-sized stores not part of the largest chains. Because PO requires to be stored refrigerated, the smaller stores won’t have resources or the physical space to put up a special vegetarian section. Thus, small store owners had solved the placement issue by storing it next to convenience food that also needs refrigeration.

It [Pulled Oats] is actually [placed] right when you enter the store and start going around so next to fruit and veg but in the so called ready meals shelf. [...] So alternatively after, like, next to meat [products]. [...] We don’t have such veggie shelf but there are those veggie products in many product categories and they are placed there among those categories but there is a veggie option in many things. [...] Because there are already so many of those [vegetarian products] they’d need a really big

space if all the veggies were put together, and then the temperatures and all. [...] One would need a really big store that one could do such thing. (Interview 7)

One store kept Pulled Oats in a mobile fridge container during the time of the interviews because of the varying availability of the product. The department manager had decided not to clear out shelf space for the product until it is steadily available.

There are no instructions for S-Markets on that [the placement of Pulled Oats] but for example just now the new display guidelines were released for Härkis so I'm quite sure Pulled Oats would be next to that. And now this sounds crazy but they are next to bacons but there will be a large separate section where all the meatless options will then be. So they would be centralized in that way so that people who want them can find them from one place. [...] The fact that it is placed next to bacons has nothing to do with this but that just happens to be the place where these meatless options are assigned to in the planograms. At the moment we have, because we get it so infrequently, so I have decided that we don't have a [designated] space for it in the shelves at the moment but when we get it we sell it directly from our end-of-shelf containers [...] which is simply so that we don't have the empty part of the shelf there all week long because we really have a need for that space. (Interview 3)

In addition to the grocery store personnel interviews, I interviewed two representatives from the chain management of the two largest retail chains. According to the chain management, the both chains segment Pulled Oats with meat products. The official classification is based on a specific spot, or a branch, in the so-called product category tree. The process of including a novel product in an assortment and assigning a "branch" for new products consists of several steps including many professionals. Because of the complexity of the process I was not able to familiarize with the details of the fundamental logic of product categorization in retail chains within the scope and the resources of this thesis. However, the 12 interviews did reveal both similarities and differences in the categorization of Pulled Oats in the grocery trade level.

Despite the similar official classification of the chains, the placement in stores varied between the two largest chains as discussed above. Generally, in S group, PO was placed next to processed meat products and in Kesko most of the store owners had created a separate vegetarian shelf where also Pulled Oats was found.

The chain management personnel also revealed that the function, the purpose of use, defines the location for the products in their stores. Goods with similar using purpose are generally placed in the same aisle, shelf or part of shelf. In S Group the function of Pulled Oats is seen similar to e.g. bacon and pizza topping ham slices, in other words meat products: the product is cooked, doesn't (necessarily) need frying and can be added to food during the cooking phase or even eaten cold. Thus, in S group stores PO is placed next to meat products because there one finds equivalent products in the sense of how they are used. However, the chain management person didn't link Pulled Oats to meat during the interview.

In Kesko, Pulled Oats was commonly placed in separate vegetarian shelves despite the official classification related to meat. Thus, being a vegetarian product

seems to be its main function in the Kesko stores. In the vegetarian section there are products from different product categories like ready meals, snacks and plant-based proteins but the common factor is that they are all made without using ingredients from animal origin. The Kesko management interviewee, on the other hand, does refer to the meat substituting function of Pulled Oats.

In summary, large Kesko stores use vegetarian shelves frequently and place Pulled Oats there but in their product category tree PO is placed in the meat branch. The categorization follows a different kind of logic than in S Group where the categorization seems to be the same from the product category tree to the store shelves. Private and small chain retailers place the product next to convenience food because of practical reasons related to shelf life. However, the official product tree categorization of the small chains were not looked into.

Regarding the store sizes, in a nutshell, the large-sized stores seem to be able to build the veggie shelves and reorganize their selection more freely whereas for smaller sized stores it is unusual. However, Kesko makes an exception here as they had put up veggie sections in their small, medium and large-sized stores. Small stores, as explained by the owner of the M market, find it hard to build a separate veggie section because of the limitations of the physical space. Not only the different storage temperatures of these kinds of products but also the challenge of what to include in the veggie shelves hinder the collection of vegetarian items into separate section in small stores.

In addition to the interviews, in January 2018 I contacted the management interviewees again related to the official segmentation of Pulled Oats in their chains. I enquired whether the branch in their product category tree was still the same for Pulled Oats, meaning whether the product still resided in the meat or meat products branch. At the time the segmentation was unchanged and the interviewees repeated the reasons for the categorization: a separate category did not exist for these kind of plant-based meat substitutes, and thus PO was located with meat products possessing a similar use purpose. However, the interviewee from S Group informed me that they have been planning an own branch for the aforementioned products. The change to the official segmentation “will be executed in pursuance of a next upcoming larger operation” (Interviewee 12, personal communication, January 26, 2018). The operations the large retailers make in their category management systems may not be visible to consumers. Nonetheless, the creation of a new product category tree branch requires changes in the category management systems as each product category is managed as its own strategic entity (Zentes et al., 2011). A conclusion could be drawn that the sales or the demand of the certain products have been high enough to be separated into their own category. In addition it is a signal of recognition which also legitimizes the position of the market category.

6 DISCUSSION

The research findings were presented through several steps starting from the general characteristics of the data to a deeper thematic analysis. It became clear that there is no unanimous way of categorizing Pulled Oats in the marketplace. However, this is not very surprising because there are several actors involved in the phenomena around Pulled Oats.

The key actors include the producer, the intermediaries like media and retailers and consumers. The producer's view and the consumer side were scoped out from this present study because the categorization activities of the intermediaries were a niche less explored, and thus drew attention. Media and the retail sector influence market categories in their own quarters but are not seen as actors actively involved in categorization of offerings. The linkage is admittedly slightly vague as these actors do not directly have their reputation at stake, unlike the producers for example, related to categorization of goods in the marketplace. Perhaps that is exactly why the retail and the media have been given a leeway in the categorization studies previously. Nevertheless, as two fundamental societal actors the media and the retail sector are prone to take part in the categorization of offerings. This study provided insight about how these two parties are categorizing Pulled Oats in practice. Next, I am going to discuss the results as a whole. First, I will revisit the research question.

6.1 Reviewing the research question

In this thesis I aimed at exploring the Pulled Oats phenomenon through the following research question which divides into two sub questions:

How is Pulled Oats categorized?

- a) *How is it categorized in retail?*
- b) *How is it categorized in media?*

Market categories are said to uphold both the exchange of goods and the dialogue among market participants (Granqvist & Ritvala, 2016, pp. 230). In the case of Pulled Oats, the categorization by media and retail appears as context sensitive and still somewhat vague. Pulled Oats seems to be a member of multiple categories. For example, the media delivers both prototypical and goal-derived cues to the audience. A set of defined expressions about the (observable) features like texture, color and nutritional values is paired with notions about animal welfare and the need to lessen the consumption of meat due to the environment impacts. Pulled Oats is affiliated with meat and the attribute 'plant-based' nearly as often.

In contrast, the retailers categorize the product based on the perceived purpose of use because that is the driving principle in their category management

processes. In most S stores, and in their category management, the product was placed next to meat products like bacon and pizza topping ham. On the other hand, the K group had a similar strategic segmentation in terms of the official category management (product category tree) but they had approached the placement through a separate veggie section. For the retail sector the placement of Pulled Oats in stores seems to be very clear but still it resides in different sections in many stores. However, it could be suspected that the meat substituting nature of plant-based proteins and the increase in the amount of discussion in media and the products released to the market could indicate a change in the existing practices of how we perceive the categorization of foodstuffs.

The nature of the two actors differ greatly. The media works as an intermediary or even a critic in between the producer and the audience providing information, reviews and instructions in the form of for example recipes. The retail sector and especially grocery stores are not an outlet for information per se but a concrete forum in the audience's everyday lives where a great deal of purchase decisions are made. By and large, the media tends to categorize Pulled Oats as both a plant-based food and an alternative or replacement to meat whereas the grocery stores link it more directly with meat. Could this be because media aims to broadly describe what the product is whereas the retailers' thinking derives from category management that is based on the use purpose of products? Or is it because the (Western) culture considers meat as the main meal component and the vegetables as the side dish that the consumers are offered linkages to meat-based food to a great extent by the intermediaries? In any case, the media is more free to describe and affiliate the product with a wider spectrum of attributes whereas the retail sector has to conjoin to the pre-existing product categories.

6.2 Results in light of previous studies

The findings suggest that Pulled Oats is categorized in two ways. The prototypical categorization can be seen as defining the product and drawing the category boundaries. The goal-derived categorization on the other hand takes a stand on the abilities and the possible ways of and reasons for using the product. Because of the versatile attributes and two-way categorization, Pulled Oats seems to be straddling categories but with positive outcomes instead of negative as it has been launched to the market successfully.

A great deal of prototypical features about Pulled Oats were found from the data, and the emergence of a prototype is an interesting finding in itself. According to Granqvist and Ritvala (2016) the emergence of a prototype is associated to categories in the economically vibrant stage of category development. This suggests that the product is advancing the emergence of a category for plant-based meat substitutes, if not creating it.

As featured in Table 1 in chapter 3 the direction of the cognitive process in the prototype-based approach is different compared to the goal-orientation. In prototypical categorization the line of thought travels from the item's features

towards the audience member and in the goal-oriented categorization the direction is from the audience towards the item. This means that the categorization based on a prototype requires observation of the features and attributes of items after which they are organized into categories based on similarity and family resemblance. The goal approach on the other hand follows a reverse logic: the reality is already organized because the audience member has a goal in mind based on which they make up the categories.

Both retail and media present prototypical and goal-based aspects in their categorization of Pulled Oats. However, the prototypical categorization stands out more in the retail sector than in the media. In the light of the cognitive process this seems logical: retail assesses the features of a product and then places it in a category whereas the media is not compelled to do so. The grocery stores have had to stick to a logical and simple way of categorizing their goods in a store to serve their customers the best and retain from causing confusion. Even though the science behind product placement in stores and consumer behavior is out of scope of this thesis, it is interesting to notice that not only are the stores usually organized based on similarity of items in each section (dairy: yoghurts, milks, butters) but also the category management classification, the so called product category tree, has its structure built around prototypicality (meat - meat products - sausages - a certain brand of sausages). To my view, the retail for example is not able to follow the goal-based logic of each consumer. A grocery store cannot organize its selection based on everyone's taste, preference or diet as the needs, wants and goals within an audience are remarkably colorful. Even though the retailers aim at recognizing the consumer preferences the best they can in a large scale, the categorization based on similarity, be it in the way of use or in the features, proves to be the best way to go.

Also, it must be noted that traditions surely play a role in the categorization of products in the retail sector. While the assortments grow wider and deeper, it is simple to place different types of canned beans next to each other rather than scattered around a store. However, categories and categorization are not fixed and stagnant because new products and categories have the potential to question the existing organization. Even though Pulled Oats is a new product and a representative of a novel market, it is not one of its kind. In the long haul, for example convenience food and ready meals have emerged and changed the prevailing understanding of categorization in retail. Thus, it may well be assumed that if previous conceptions have been challenged, the current ones will be challenged as well.

In terms of goal-derived categorization, personal goals like health as well as situational goals like changing a recipe with pulled pork to a vegetarian version come up in the media data. In addition to the personal and situational goals listed in the categorization literature I would however add another set of goals: universal or societal goals. These goals relate to societal, ecological and ethical levels of life, not only personal or situational goals.

"I aim to eat healthy food" or "I aim to eat foods that offer some change and alternatives for my vegetarian diet" could be examples of personal goals related to Pulled Oats. These would generate categories 'healthy foods' and 'vegetarian

food alternatives'. An example of a category with a situational goal could be 'foods that can be used to substitute meat in a certain recipe'. The universal goals could, again, generate for example this type of a category: 'foods that contribute to combatting climate change'. The different goal-based categories may co-exist, meaning a category 'healthy foods that combat climate change' is a possibility. However, as Ratneshwar et al. (as cited in Durand & Paoletta, 2013) suggest, the ad hoc categories combining different goals must exclude some items from each of the categories to maintain the focus on the ad hoc category. For example, regarding the category 'healthy foods combatting climate change', it is not environmentally sustainable to eat only avocados in Finland as they have to be shipped from afar even though they are healthy. In essence, the goal-based categories are versatile and context-sensitive. They are dependent on the environment, culture, personal preferences and situations.

In the case of Pulled Oats it could be said that the product is close to the ideal that stands in the crossroads of personal (healthy food, vegetarian food), situational (an alternative for a meat dish) and the universal goals (animal welfare, combatting climate change, decreasing meat use). Barsalou (1985) suggests that the reflection of the ideal goal-fulfilling entity would be the unifying factor in categorization rather than a set of common features. Thus, the entities do not have to be similar in terms of their features as they simply need to be close to the ideal solution for a goal (Durand & Paoletta, 2013). In short, as Durand and Paoletta (2013) suggest, pursuing a goal drives categorization more than the family resemblance.

In conclusion, and in the light of the theoretical framework, it appears that Pulled Oats is approaching the status of a prototypical product if not there already. However, the categorization is affiliated with several goals from personal to societal range.

6.3 Other interesting observations

Multi-category member

Based on the findings, Pulled Oats is not only categorized based on prototypicality and goal-orientation, but it also appears as a multi-category member. It is tapping on categories such as plant-based food, meat substitutes and even convenience foods. In the categorization literature spanning categories has been seen as negative because sanctions would follow for unfocused organizations or products (Durand et al., 2017). Gold and Green Foods Ltd.'s competence, it seems, is not doubted by the audiences even though their product stretches the category boundaries within their market. The interest of the audience has stayed high judging from the release frequency in Helsingin Sanomat newspaper during the study period. Perhaps it is one of the advantages of Pulled Oats that it speaks to several target audiences instead of a single audience. But, what exactly are the categories Pulled Oats spans?

The category for plant-based meat-substituting easy-to-use products has existed for long but does not possess a coherent vocabulary to define the category or the several categories it consists of. Recently, supposedly because of the intersecting trends of health and fitness, food consciousness and acknowledging the planetary boundaries, the need for a proper naming has popularized the term meat substitute. To indeed speak to larger masses, the naming derives from something already known: meat. Because there are no established practices for the use of plant-based protein product outside the vegetarian circles, the affiliation with meat may lower the threshold for masses to familiarize with the product. Will the naming affect Pulled Oats' categorization in a negative or positive way in the future? Will it diminish the value of plant-based proteins? What is known from the prototypical approach to categorization is that the exemplars stored in memory tend to be referred to when categorizing (Durand et al., 2017). Thus it may be natural to compare novel items to known items and eventually also name them according to something already known.

Meat substitute versus plant-based protein

What then is the difference between meat substitutes and plant-based protein? The concepts are used interchangeably, and in everyday discussions there may not be any difference. However, in this paper, a difference is recognized between those terms. It seems that the concepts are used to depict two slightly different markets.

In terms of consistency, texture and taste, meat substitutes oftentimes resemble meat in some way when in fact the plant-based proteins do not need to do the same. By resembling meat in one way or another, the meat alternative products increase the size of the potential market from vegans and vegetarians to average meat-eaters who want to try something different but are probably hesitant to try something too novel. Vegans and vegetarians have for long found their way around minimal supply of special vegetarian options in grocery stores making use of beans, nuts, vegetables, bread and other products that an average meat-eater would only consider as a side dish. Meat-resemblance is not the most important criterion for vegans and vegetarians when choosing products and in fact, it may even repel some vegans. All in all, all consumers are different, no matter if they are vegans, pescatarians, flexitarians or meat-eaters. There is no watertight separation between plant-based proteins and meat substitutes. For future research an interesting area to study would be the reasons behind the emergence of these kind of markets.

Meat substitutes are also known as meat alternatives or meat replacements. In this thesis, the term meat substitute is found to be used to distinguish it from for example vegetarian everyday food items and to emphasize the meat substituting function of those products. Meat substitutes however can be and often are part of vegan and vegetarian diets but in that purpose they don't represent meat substitutes as such but are most likely consumed as plant based protein products. On the other hand, if a meat-eater decides to replace meatballs with falafel in his or her dinner, those falafels become meat substitutes. Thus, the use purpose somewhat draws the fine line between plant based and meat substitute products.

Meat substitutes refer to food containing protein that could be used in a similar or nearly similar way as meat and meat products, whereas the primary function for plant-based protein is to act as a protein source. The differences can be distinguished more easily through target audiences. Meat substitutes, in my view, are primarily targeted to attract those who do not follow a strict or devoted vegan or vegetarian diet but the products are not “off limits” from anyone else either. Plant based proteins, on the other hand, are *the* protein source for the aforementioned vegans and vegetarians, and the masses may not find them that appealing. In addition, the products perceived as meat substitutes often are marketed as easy replacements for meat in dishes usually containing meat.

Traditionally in Finland, meat and dairy were perceived as the main source for protein. Hence, it is easy to speak about meat alternatives and meat substitutes instead of plant-based proteins. Also, there is difference in the categorization because plant-based market means products made entirely from plant-based sources of protein whereas the meat substitute market may include for example insects and dairy-based protein sources (like Valio’s MiFu in Finland) as well. Thus, depending on the context, the umbrella term can be either plant-based proteins or meat substitutes. In this paper, however, only the plant-based meat substitutes were studied.

Categorization in social interaction

In addition to categorization based on prototypes and goals, some hints were discovered in the data attaching the categorization of Pulled Oats to social interactions. Fundamentally, categories are social constructs because they are a part of the human-influenced social world. Categories are something that humans have created and something that develop and reform in social interactions. For example, trends can be seen as social constructs as well. It seems that the simultaneous prevalence of several influential trends enabled also the emergence of both Pulled Oats and the category for plant-based meat substitutes.

It appears that the plant-based proteins and other alternative protein sources have formed a more or less loose entity or a group of items with similar features but have not grown to an independent category. The goods existed and fulfilled the needs of many consumers like vegans and vegetarians. This hazy category gained shape and formed thanks to the crossroads of the several movements and the co-existence of (social) trends. In the media data several of these “megatrends” are mentioned such as health, food consciousness, animal welfare, hectic lifestyle of today, appreciation of leisure time, climate change awareness, concern over the environment and population growth. Even though the conclusion could be questioned, there are some hints that the fusion of trends can also be one driver for the emergence and development of new categories as a social construct. Or better yet, the trends work as the driver for collecting together the ripples of small, undefined and not necessarily interlinked groups of products to a meaningful hybrid market category of its own.

Acts of categorization

Even though this research provides hints of the acts of categorization the actors use to categorize Pulled Oats, they were not the focus in this thesis per se. However, I suggest that the acts used to categorize objects and entities would be an interesting avenue for future research. Based on the data gathered for this thesis it seems that the categorization acts of actors like the media relate to describing the product in a certain way and the ways how and contexts in which Pulled Oats is discussed.

The acts of the retail sector divide roughly into public and hidden practices. Firstly, the placement of products in grocery stores give a strong signal to the audiences on which products supposedly relate to each other, i.e. belong to the same category. Second, the strategic segmentation, that guides also the placement to some extent, guides the mental image of the reality of retail personnel and suppliers. The process of category management is about cooperation between the retailer and supplier over strategic business units, i.e. the categories (Timonen, 2001). Thus, anything that enters to sale for consumers goes through the process of evaluation and placement to a category. And even though the consumers would also categorize the offering based on their predetermined ad hoc goals, it could be assumed the departments and sections in the store have an underlying and subconscious influence on consumers. However, these conclusions ought to be confirmed by other research dedicated in these matters.

Implications of the study

There are practical implications to this study. For the retail sector I would like to communicate that it seems a separate category for novel plant-based meat substituting products could be in place but the connection to meat could still be maintained for a while longer. The S Group is apparently already taking steps towards this kind of change. The placement of the products in stores is important but the strategic segmentation into a separate category would make sense business-wise as presumably the volumes increase. However, the situation is still slightly challenging as it is impossible to define the category borders completely. Also, if a separate section is established within a store for meat substitutes or the likes, the naming of those departments ought to be done discreetly. It is yet to be seen which term, plant-based proteins or meat substitutes solidify their status in the marketplace.

For the producers this thesis may bring insight about product innovation. As it seems the (consumer) media tends to name Pulled Oats as a plant-based vegetable protein over meat substitute, it could be a sign of a wish to neutralize the naming practices of products. Thus, references to meat could be eventually faded out. However, as it has been acknowledged in this thesis that the meat-reference most likely appeals to masses it makes sense sales-wise to stick to the meat-reference at least for some time. However, as the categorization practices are different in the consumer media environment and in the retail sector, more research on the consumer side is still needed to properly guide the suppliers and producers in these matters.

7 CONCLUSION

This master's thesis explored how Pulled Oats is categorized in the marketplace. In the research domain of categories and categorization it is not uncommon to study market labeling from the organizational viewpoint (e.g. Granqvist et al., 2013) or the bases for categorization from consumer goods' viewpoint (e.g. Rosa & Porac, 2002). Therefore, this study provides a fresh angle studying the actors who enable and advance the market entry of products as well as act as an interested audience affecting the general perception and meaning creation of products.

The study explored the categorization of a novel product in a nascent market from the perspectives of retail and media. Pulled Oats worked as the case in this qualitative study. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews from the retail sector and secondary from newspaper articles of Helsingin Sanomat newspaper. Altogether 12 interviews stretching from 25 minutes to one hour, and 132 articles from various themes were used as the data for this thesis. The interviewees represented the retail sector from viewpoints of grocery store personnel and chain management. The newspaper articles were sourced based on their mentions about Pulled Oats. The data was content analyzed, coded and reorganized thematically. The theoretical framework of prototypical and goal-based categorization supported the thematic analysis.

The results show that media and retail categorize the product differently, retail concentrating in the observable features and the family resemblance whereas media providing a broader look with attributes, goals and use ideas.

The results also confirm that the categorization of Pulled Oats follows the division to prototypical and goal-based categorization. The data indicates that a two-fold goal-orientation is being built for the prototype launched recently to the market. As a matter of fact, the spectrum of the goals runs from decreasing meat consumption to bringing the changes to the vegetarian diet. Furthermore, the goals are linked to different levels of audiences' goal formation: the goals appear in personal and situational levels but also in much higher universal levels. However, due to the multidimensionality of categorization theories, it could be argued that there are also other possibilities to present the results than the prototypicality and goal-orientation.

In addition to the differences in the categorization methods, and between the two data sets, a more overarching conclusion may be drawn from the results. Namely, the common denominator of the categorization of Pulled Oats in each dimension seems to be meat. It is avoided because of environmental reasons, replaced by Pulled Oats in a recipe provided by a food blogger of Helsingin Sanomat or positioned next to meat products in a retail product category tree. Also, several attributes which are used to describe the product refer to the texture, the protein content or the use purpose that are similar to the ones of meat. This is not surprising, though, as the term "meat substitute" is already broadly used.

Even though vegetarian diet is currently trendy, more and more consumers are concerned over their health, and the environmental impacts of meat are

widely recognized, it seems that the 'plant-based protein' category has less weight than the 'meat' category in terms of the power to influence masses. People are more familiar with meat than with meatless options in the Western world because of the abundance of options and the commonplace status of meat. Thus, the newness value of plant-based foods may have previously been hidden behind the doubt of unknown. I find that Pulled Oats, however, managed to enter the marketplace through conjoint categories maintaining the idea of a plant-based option but affiliating with meat-like status as well. In this way the category appears more familiar to the audiences which lowers the threshold for getting acquainted with the product.

It is evident that certain meat products and mincemeat for example serve or may serve the same purpose as Pulled Oats. However, it should not be forgotten that there are several other products and produce that may also be used for a similar purpose, that is, provide protein in a meal. However, in the Pulled Oats case, it could be concluded that the successful launch of a new product and category requires an affiliation to something already known and established. From among all the options that provide a protein source in a meal, meat is the most familiar to larger audiences.

It should be noted that the category surely continues to develop and evolve even though it is currently linked with meat in the marketplace. This study provided only a snapshot of the categorization of Pulled Oats by media and retail during the time of its launch to the market, and in that picture the meat affiliation was the key to a successful market entry. As discussed earlier in this thesis, there are several dimensions and aspects related to the Pulled Oats phenomenon (see for example Figure 1 in chapter 1), the attachment to meat being but one. Thus, to confirm the conclusion provided, more research ought to be conducted.

It can be argued that the vagueness of the categorization of Pulled Oats indicates that the category of plant-based meat substitutes is in its early stages still. Thus, suitable avenues for future research lie in longitudinal studies. Even though this study provides insight about the categorization of Pulled Oats in media and retail sector, a more longitudinal and more comprehensive study would help in confirming the results. Also, category life cycle exploration could be in place. The study from Granqvist and Ritvala (2016) already sheds light on the stages of category development and the plant-based meat substitutes could be a suitable market for a rerun.

In addition, the actual acts of categorization are a less studied aspect of categorization (Durand et al., 2017). The acts of the producers themselves - how they see Pulled Oats and what have they done to label their product - could be a prominent avenue for future research in addition to the perceptions of consumers. All in all, due to the multidimensional nature of market categories, future studies should aim to include different contexts and the views of different actors.

There are some limitations to this study. I as a researcher aimed at objectivity during the research process. However, it should be acknowledged that the researcher is a part of the phenomenon studied as the case exists in the human-affected social world and in a certain kind of setting. Also, the generalizability of a case study ought to be questioned even though it may be possible to transfer

the conclusions into another situation or context. I encourage further research to be made in regard of the affiliation to different categories when entering a nascent market.

Another possible limitation is the low triangulation level of the secondary data. Even though in the big picture the data was collected from more than one source, no other media outlets were chosen to be studied in addition to Helsingin Sanomat. Thus, no practical comparison was formed regarding the mentioned hype in the media. Also, the way how Pulled Oats was described in other media outlets was not considered in this thesis but could be an interesting research option for future. The long study period of 10 months, however, compensates the lack of triangulation to some extent.

Lastly, there are possible limitations related to the interviews and the selection of the interviewees. The retailer interviews provided insight about how different stores place Pulled Oats. However, to gain larger understanding, some comparison points could have been chosen for Pulled Oats. Namely, products like tofu or “mince soy” that have been on the market for a long time would have provided a useful comparison in terms of categorization within the retail sector. Also, the interviewee selection could have been improved as during the interviews it became clear that not all the retail personnel interviewed were able to influence the placement of Pulled Oats. Usually it was not their core task which is why they referred to the people responsible for the dedicated departments for knowing the placement and the placement instructions the best. However, because it became evident that the categorization of foodstuffs is significantly related to the strategical categorization (e.g. the product category tree branches), it would have required a considerable amount of additional resources to expand the scope of the interviewees and the sourcing of informants. The product category trees, however, surely offer interesting options for future research.

Pulled Oats may not be ancient ambrosia, food reserved for Gods, but it has definitely created large interest towards and movement within the food sector and among different audiences. This intriguing phenomenon is partaking and contributing in a new era on how we perceive food, what we think about it and how we categorize it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview question template

No.	Question	Aim of question
<i>Starting questions – Main trends?</i>		
1	What are the main trends in your store at the moment?	Icebreaker, getting conversation started. Potential insight about veggie trend, foundation of it.
2	What have been the most visible trends in your store within the previous year?	Follow-up. Insight about veggie trend, foundation for phenomenon.
3	→ Follow-up: On your opinion, do these products have an effect on the sales of other products?	Insight about sales, foundation for phenomenon.
<i>Pulled Oats – What is it like in your opinion?</i>		
4	You seem to have Pulled Oats in your selection. On your opinion, what / what kind of product it is?	Naming/labeling/meaning of product from retail environment.
5	Why has this product been taken into the assortment of your store?	Reasons for having the product in the selection.
<i>Assortment and category management – Where is PO located?</i>		
6	Who made the decision about including Pulled Oats into your selection? On what grounds was this decision made?	How the manager decides upon new products to be taken into the selection. The key characteristics of Pulled Oats.
7	Where is the product located in your store? Why there?	Shelf/product placement - product & category.
8	Who made the decision about the placement? On what grounds?	Shelf/product placement - persons responsible.
9	How are novel products placed in your store in general? On what grounds are those decisions made?	Shelf/product placement - new products in general.
10	Were there other ideas for the location of Pulled Oats in your store?	Shelf/product placement - other options, market building.
11	On your opinion, does the location of a product have an effect on the sales of the product? How? Have you tested/experienced this?	Shelf/product placement - impact on demand, cool-down question towards the end.
<i>Final question and closure</i>		
12	On your opinion, how have the consumers found the product?	Customer satisfaction, insight, “cooling down” easy-to-answer.
*	Practicalities: a quick summary about the thesis and potential questions the interviewee may have. Thank the interviewee.	Reminding and informing the interviewee about the reason they were interviewed.

Appendix 2. List of quoted articles from Helsingin Sanomat

Date	Title of article (in Finnish)	Author (surname, first name)
12.1.2016	Suomalaisnaiset kehittivät nyhtökauran vaihtoehdoksi lihalle ja kertovat, miten Suomeen saadaan lisää ruokainnovaatioita	Kallionpää, Katri
13.1.2016	Nyhtökaura osuu nykyaikaan	n/a (editorial)
1.5.2016	Reetta Kivelä kehitti miljoonarahoituksen keränneen nyhtökauran – onko tämä lihan korvike uusi jauheliha ja ilmaston pelastaja?	Vasama, Tanja
7.5.2016	HS testasi nyhtökauran: Kelpo tuote mutta vaatii kastikkeen	Leminen, Teemu
13.5.2016	Nyhtökauraa kysytään enemmän kuin suomalaistehdas ehtii tuottaa – ”Kyselyjä on tullut joka puolelta maailmaa”	Pääkkönen, Sirpa
2.7.2016	Yhä useampi ostaa kasvisruokaa – nyhtökaura revitään käsistä, tofun ja quornin myynti kasvanut lähes kolmanneksella	Huotilainen, Heidi
28.7.2016	Nyhtökauraa ei riitä kaikille – ”Ei auta, vaikka palkattaisiin satakertainen määrä työntekijöitä”	Sneck, Petra
29.7.2016	Kun nyhtökauraa ei löydy, testaa näitä – kasviproteiinien myynti on lisääntynyt huimasti tänä vuonna	Bäckgren, Noona
25.8.2016	Lihankorvikkeet vyöryvät ruokakauppoihin – mutta miltä ne maistuvat ja miten niitä käytetään?	Leminen, Teemu
26.8.2016	Vallankumous hiipii ruokapöytään – lihakorvikkeiden myynti kasvaa kiivaasti, ja vaihtoehtoja tulee koko ajan lisää	Nalbantoglu, Minna
2.9.2016	Nyhtökaura oli liian hyvä keksintö pienelle yritykselle	n/a (editorial)
11.9.2016	Ehkä vegaanit vielä pelastavat koko maailman	Ahola, Suvi
17.9.2016	Sarjayrittäjä Maija Itkonen kertoo, millä reseptillä muutkin voivat ”tehdä nyhtökaurat”	Liimatainen, Karoliina
31.10.2016	Kokeilitko näitä 2000-luvun ruokatrendejä? Professori kertoo, miksi kasvisruoka on tullut jäädäkseen	Ala-Risku, Päivi
7.11.2016	”Vulkaanisen maaperän linssejä”, 190 euroa annos – ranskalaiset opettelevat kasvissyöjiksi omalla tyylillään	Pelli, Petja
2.12.2016	Tunnistatko vegaanin? Selvitä Kuukausiliitteen testillä	Pallaste, Tuija
3.12.2016	Vuosi ilman lihaa	Kemppainen, Jouni K.
20.2.2017	Maailman maukkain curry tulee Indonesiasta – näin valmistuu rendangin vegeversio	Kaapro, Laura