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The Power of Boycotts in the Food Industry.

A study of consumer behavior amid conflict.

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Title:	The Power of Boycotts in the Food Industry: A study of consumer behavior amid conflict.
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Key terms: Boycotting, Anti-consumption, Social Influence, Cultural Values, Customer Identity, Social Media.

Background: As consumer behavior evolves, the influence of ethical considerations on purchasing decisions becomes more significant, especially in the face of international conflicts. This thesis delves into the relationship between consumer activism and corporate ethical practices within the food industry, explaining how boycotts are used as strategic tools for advocating change. It explores the multifaceted role of boycotts in shaping corporate policies, driven by consumers' unwillingness to support companies whose practices conflict with their ethical standards. The study seeks to understand the broader implications of consumer choices in the context of ongoing geopolitical conflicts, highlighting how these choices impact corporate behavior and contribute to broader social movements.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to delve into the specific mechanisms through which individual perceptions and beliefs about geopolitical conflicts influence consumer decisions to engage in boycotts within the food industry. It focuses on understanding the role of personal values, social media, identity, and social influence in shaping these decisions in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Method: This study employed a qualitative methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer boycotting behaviors. We conducted semi-structured interviews with Generation Z consumers in Jönköping, Sweden, from which we gained valuable insights into their perspectives and experiences. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis to explore the factors impacting consumer behavior toward boycotting.

Conclusion: The results show and further supports that consumer decisions to participate in conflict-oriented boycotts are shaped by social media, social influence, customer values and identity. Other factors were also discovered to be drivers to this behavior in the context of Israel/Palestine conflict. Boycotting behavior is found to be a complex interaction of emotional responses, identity, ethical considerations, and others which is heavily influenced by collective social dynamics. Lastly, the findings indicate that boycotting within the food industry is not just a temporary response to conflicts but may evolve into brand avoidance.

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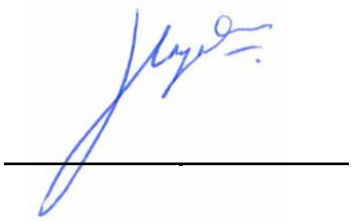

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1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the concepts of this thesis. Firstly, the background discusses the phenomenon of anti-consumption, specifically boycotts, within evolving consumer behavior influenced by global conflicts. Following that, the research problem points out the research gap emphasizing the areas lacking in understanding consumer behavior. Lastly, the purpose of the thesis is presented along with the proposed research question.

1.1 Background

In the constantly shifting context of consumer research, the anti-consumption phenomena have arisen as a captivating subject. Over the last two decades, researchers have delved into anti-consumption, revealing a wide range of consumer attitudes, feelings, and behaviors (Witkowski, 2021). Anti-consumption attitudes include resistance and rejection of consumption that are shaped by cultural values and individual motives (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). The growing field of studies sheds light on various forms of consumer activism, including boycotts and brand avoidance (Witkowski, 2021).

Since consumers are becoming more socially aware and concerned about the origin, manufacture, and disposal of products, it contributes to their willingness to engage in boycotts (Paek & Nelson, 2009). Boycotts have historically been a significant instrument for social movements, allowing people to express their dissatisfaction and advocate for change by withholding support from certain firms or products (Buheji et al., 2023). One reason for consumer boycotts is geopolitical conflicts

(Ahn et al., 2020; Shi & Wei, 2023). Additionally, social change, self-expression, and individual values also influence participation in boycotting (Klein et al., 2004).

Boycotting a brand is widely recognized as a powerful force to challenge and alter company practices that are considered unethical (Bravo, 2020). As a consumer activism, it seeks to penalize firms for their perceived lack of social responsibility and ethics (Paek & Nelson, 2009). In fact, consumers do not purchase products from brands that dispute their beliefs. This type of purchasing behavior stems from emotional conflicts and therefore signals the relationship on power, emotions, and purchasing decisions (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023).

Consumers are no longer "passive recipients of advertising" but rather, they are in charge of their purchasing intentions to a further extent (Moynagh & Worsley, 2006). Hence, social platforms and their content empower consumers to influence corporate ethics and practices, making them a powerful tool in business. Consequently, social media commonly target global brands that may be affected by consumer negative opinions, serving as a form of boycotting (Boström et al., 2019).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Boycotting poses a significant threat to businesses since it may lead to a loss of revenue, a reduction in sales volume, and damage to a firm's relationships with partners. A boycott may adversely affect a company's brand image, causing customers to refrain from purchasing its products (Dekhil et al., 2017). Thorough research on boycotting is significant as it can drive corporate behavior changes and encourage companies to adopt more socially responsible practices (Paek & Nelson, 2009). However, corporate compliance with consumer demands is often a response to the economic incentive that the boycotting holds, rather than ethical standards (Beck, 2018).

As examined in previous research, a substantial percentage of consumers are willing to boycott a company or switch to a competing brand if they become aware of their malpractices. This underscores the power of consumer boycotts in driving change and holding companies accountable

for their actions (Paek & Nelson, 2009). Literature provides insights that global companies can encounter challenges concerning geopolitical conflicts (Shi & Wei, 2023). Moreover, the influence of global conflicts extends to the duration and consistency of boycott actions, further demonstrating its profound impact on consumer decision-making processes (Ishak et al., 2018). This further explains the significance of continuously examining consumer behavior, their power, and the consequences, in an ever-evolving landscape (Paek & Nelson, 2009).

Examining the food industry, daily consumer decisions regarding food consumption are often impacted by ethical, environmental, or political values, and can be used as a means for social change (Vázquez & García-Espejo, 2021). A pivotal change becomes consequential for boycotting in the expanding food industry, especially with companies who are globally recognized. In fact, actions of consumers in the form of boycotts are significantly higher for such companies (Ishak et al., 2018). For example, numerous brands such as Coca-Cola and McDonalds, are in the scope of the global boycotts (Buheji et al., 2023).

It is evident from existing research that there is a considerable focus on understanding consumer behavior in relation to various products and industries. However, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the impact of geopolitical conflicts on consumer behavior, particularly within the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Despite the extensive body of literature on consumer behavior and global conflicts, there is limited research specifically addressing how the Israel/Palestine conflict influences consumer behavior, particularly in the food industry. This gap in knowledge underscores the importance of investigating the relationship between geopolitical conflicts and consumer behavior in this specific context. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to provide a more holistic approach to the impact of the Israel/Palestine conflict on consumer behavior in Sweden. Through an analysis of various factors such as social influence, social media and personal values, this thesis seeks to identify the drivers behind consumer boycott behavior and assess its implications for global businesses. Leads to the research question:

> *"How do individual perception and beliefs shape consumer decisions in terms of boycotting within the food industry, in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict?"*

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to delve into the theoretical background of our thesis topic. It consists of five segments related to boycotting. It reviews the literature on consumer boycotting and the use of boycotting within conflict situations. Furthermore, we examine the motivations and factors that influence this behavior.

2.1 Literature Review Method

The literature review was carried out in a systematic way to identify relevant academic resources for this thesis. Academic databases including Google Scholar, ProQuest, Diva Portal, and ScienceDirect were utilized as well as the online university library known as Primo Library. Keywords such as "consumer boycott," "food industry," "anti-consumption," and "consumer behavior" were searched. The focus was on peer-reviewed articles and books mainly from the last two decades to ensure that the content was current and relevant.

2.2 Anti-consumption

The term anti-consumption refers to deliberate action against the consumption of specific brands or products (Lee et al., 2011; Iyer & Muncy, 2008). Researchers attempted to characterize anti-consumption based on consumer motivation and intensity, ranging from resistance to complete rejection (Makri et al., 2020). Following this theory, Lee et al. (2011) identifies three categories of anti-consumption: reject, restrict, and reclaim. A study by Makri et al. (2020) utilizes Lee et al.'s framework to define anti-consumption as intentionally avoiding or reducing the use of goods, to reduce consumption which often relies on factors like self-efficacy and the availability of alternatives. Adding to this, the availability of substitutes makes product avoidance considerably easier (Kam & Deichert, 2020). Lastly, research claims that the understanding of anti-consumption

as a consumer behavior is significant to understand and might be as crucial as consumer needs (Lee et al., 2009).

Relevant areas related to anti-consumption are boycotting, activism, cultural jamming, and brand avoidance (Kashif, 2019). As stated, boycotting can be viewed as a theme and byproduct of anti-consumption, which more specifically targets a company, rather than solidly the act of consumption (Lee et al., 2011). Boycotting is viewed as an act of both ethical and political means (Delistavrou, 2022). Compared to the act of avoidance within anti-consumption, boycotting signifies a commitment to deliberate avoidance, maintaining an open mind to future consumption. This shift in beliefs, within boycotting, often comes as a result of meeting the requirements and terms of the consumer (Lee et al., 2011; Yuksel et al., 2020).

2.3 Consumer Boycotting

The term "boycotting" stems back to the 19th century, where it was used by the media to symbolize the act of avoidance towards a company (Kam & Deichert, 2020; Vázquez & García-Espejo, 2021). Boycott campaigns focus on products or companies that often raise ethical questions about several factors such as environment, human rights, and animal rights. Such ethical consumerism is also directly linked to political conflicts (Delistavrou, 2022). Boycotting can be both short-term and long-term, as they rely upon company actions. Boycott's duration is often conditional, meaning that they last only until specific demands are met (Ishak et al., 2018; Yuksel, 2013). As a result, boycotting has served as an effective tool for consumers to express their dissatisfaction with companies and has proven to be powerful throughout history (Copeland, 2014; Yuksel et al., 2020). The action of boycotts often derives from negative stimuli related to a specific brand and as a result, brands are often deliberately avoided (Kam & Deichert, 2020). The intention is influenced by factors such as consumers' self-enhancement, the desire to make a difference, perceived costs, and effectiveness of the boycott (Yuksel et al., 2020).

Recently, it has been observed that boycotting has faced growth on a global scale, with a variety of reasons, such as political, social, and economical (Peled, 2019). Studies have shown that 56 percent of consumers have made an active choice to refrain from products (Kam & Deichert, 2020). In fact, 40 percent of all Swedish consumers have boycotted in 2016 (Vázquez & García-Espejo, 2021).

2.4 Boycotting amid conflict

Customer boycotts have been utilized historically as a tool for political consumerism in controversial situations (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021; Bossy, 2014). Examples of conflicts that have sparked boycott actions are Japan/China, Israel/Palestine, and South Africa/France (Heilmann, 2016). Beyond expressing a wish to affect market behavior, this kind of political consumption envisions a different society in the future (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021). A consumer boycott serves as an aid for addressing perceived political, social, or economic injustices that are present between parties involved in conflicts (Zralek, 2022).

Boycotts amid conflicts are globally understood and accepted and perceived as "unproblematic". Due to their nature of acceptability, these boycotts can attract sizable support (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021). Because of the application of boycotting amid conflicts, it touches upon the power consumers have in their purchasing decisions. It therefore concludes that boycotting in this specific nature is a "weapon of non-purchase", serving a powerful threat to the corporations (Bossy, 2014).

2.5 The Global Food Industry

The food industry represents a significant sector globally, with a market revenue of $9.13 trillion in 2024 and an expected annual growth rate of 6.58% from 2024 to 2028 (Statista, 2024). In the European Union, the food sector generates a turnover of €1.1 trillion, making it one of the largest manufacturing industries in the region (FoodDrinkEurope, 2023). It is recognized that global

conflicts can disrupt the food industry, particularly when there are connections between the industry and those parties involved (Ishak et al., 2018). Examples of major companies that have experienced the impact of consumer boycotting are McDonald's and Coca-Cola. Their involvement has led to significant financial losses and damaged brand images (Gruet, 2024). This highlights the food industry's vulnerability to consumer behavior changes and global conflict dynamics, demonstrating the critical link between consumer actions, corporate reputation, and the industry's economic performance (Buheji et al., 2023).

2.6 Factors Influencing Boycotting

2.6.1 Customer Identity

Cherrier (2009) explains that anti-consumption is connected to consumer identity. Similarly to normal consumption behavior, anti-consumption practices also integrate a consumer's identity as a key factor. The term “consumer identity” can be connected to the relationship between self-image and a specific product or brand (Mihalcea & Catoiu, 2008). Given that identity is essential to consumer behavior, brand communication that contradicts with consumer identity can incentivize collective action and boycotts (Chaney et al., 2018). Consumers tend to choose brands that reflect who they are. Thereby, consumers often seek brands that align with their consumer identity and their characterizing factors when purchasing products (Reed et al., 2021). Additionally, Mihalcea et al. (2008) suggested that people buy products not only for their function but also for their symbolic value of consumer identity. Research further claims that consumers tend to favor brands that are considered “acceptable” within their social groups. Consequently, the gap between self-identity and brand identity can impact companies negatively leading to the purchase of substitute products, as a deliberate action of avoidance (Ilaw, 2014).

2.6.2 Customer Values

According to research, values establish the foundation of a society and shape how people perceive situations. Cultural values can be explained as a framework for acceptable behavior. It has been

utilized to explain behavioral patterns and attitude differences in the context of consumer behavior (Watson et al., 2002). In addition, values can act as an incentive to action, as consumer intent can be driven by conflicts between one's values with another party (Garland et al., 2013).

It has been established that personal values constitute the basic determinant of attitudes and consumption behavior of consumers (Kim et al., 2002). The term “values” reflect upon emotions and beliefs, and are often visible through social, economic, and cultural forms (Karami et al., 2017). Furthermore, values are the embodiment of behavioral norms or the practices of a group of people, which later build the foundation of acceptance of products or brands (Mkik & Mkik, 2020). Due to the significance of values on consumer decisions, marketers aim is to identify and target social needs. This entails the fundamentals of belonging, approval, and self-esteem (Kim et al., 2002). Additionally, values can assist marketers in understanding the underlying factors and reasons for their shopping behaviors and decision-making process (Karami et al., 2017). As a result of the mentioned research, it is said that values play a crucial role in understanding consumer behavior, purchase intent, and the decision-making process amongst consumers (Mkik & Mkik, 2020).

2.6.3 Social Influence

Social influence discusses a shift in an individual's perceptions, beliefs and actions caused by input from a third party (Rashotte, 2007). It highlights how societal pressure such as norms and expectations can shape individuals' behaviors based on the perception of "ethical" or "acceptable" actions (Raven, 1964). A desire to follow the attitudes and actions of others is rooted in a basic need to improve, preserve, or rebuild one's self-worth (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). The social influence has been researched as one of the elements of boycotting actions taken by consumers (Shin & Yoon, 2018).

In the context of boycotting, social influence through media outlets can thus be seen as a powerful mechanism through which collective action is incentivized (Yuksel et al., 2020). It encourages individuals to adapt their actions to the norm of a group, often leading to social and organizational

changes (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). People who are subject to social influence are more likely to take part in boycotts (Klein et al., 2004). These individuals may be driven by a need for social approval, a sense of loyalty to perceived social norms, or the influence of a group dynamic (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004).

2.6.4 Social Media

As mentioned earlier, social media is a tool that enables consumers to quickly share details about companies' unethical practices, thereby mobilizing collective action and building a community among those who share similar values (Kam & Deichert, 2020; Delistavrou, 2022). Research presents the dual purpose of social media, highlighting its role in allowing businesses to transmit messages directly to customers while simultaneously offering a platform for people to contact businesses and interact with one another (Deng et al., 2023). Additionally, social media is a known channel for the voice of consumers as it enables a wide informational reach (Dalakas et al, 2023). Hence it has become a crucial instrument for crises communication allowing stakeholders to seek information and voice their opinions. Political, social, cultural, and economic factors all influence how organizations, governments, enterprises, and stakeholders respond to crises (Austin et al., 2022).

Social media is rapidly shaping our perceptions of conflicts. Due to exposure and accessibility of social media platforms, consumers can engage and remain up to date on the latest developments in conflicts (Legendre et al., 2022; Hirschberger, 2021). Copeland (2014) suggests that boycotting can be viewed as a civic engagement, as it is strengthened by word of mouth and informal communication. Additionally, social media also plays a role as a catalyst for consumer behavior by providing individuals with means to express opinions, and organize collective efforts (Hirschberger, 2021). This ease of communication facilitated by social media has led to the emergence of large-scale boycott movements, which have grown over time, due to the importance of social media platforms (Kam & Deichert, 2020; Delistavrou, 2022).

2.7 Conceptual Frameworks

2.7.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) builds on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) but expands upon it by recognizing the influence of perceived behavioral control (Lou et al., 2022). TPB provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior, particularly in the context of boycotting (Delistavrou, 2022). According to Ajzen, an individual's behavior is mainly caused by their intention to perform the behavior, which is influenced by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ringim & Reni, 2019).

The combination of the three components above is considered to contribute to the formation of behavioral intention to boycott (Delistavrou, 2022). Regarding the first component, consumers who assess their participation in boycotting as a positive experience are more likely to participate, whereas those who evaluate it as a negative experience are less likely to participate (Farah & Newman, 2010). Following this, the second component of subjective norms suggests that perceived social pressure typically enhances consumer intentions to boycott, whereas an absence of such pressure reduces the likelihood of boycotting (Delistavrou, 2022). Lastly, perceived behavioral control discusses the degree of involvement based on an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a behavior (Conner & Armitage, 2006).

It was proven that boycotting is a planned rather than an impulsive behavior. For example, Farah and Newman (2010) found that TPB was able to explain 90% of the variance in boycott intentions among the consumers studied. This highlights the reliability of the framework in understanding consumer behavior (Ringim & Reni, 2019). Overall, TPB is an appropriate theoretical framework to study and predict consumer intentions to participate in boycotting activities (Delistavrou, 2022). As Shin et al. (2018) stated, TPB is applicable across diverse contexts, particularly in the food industry.

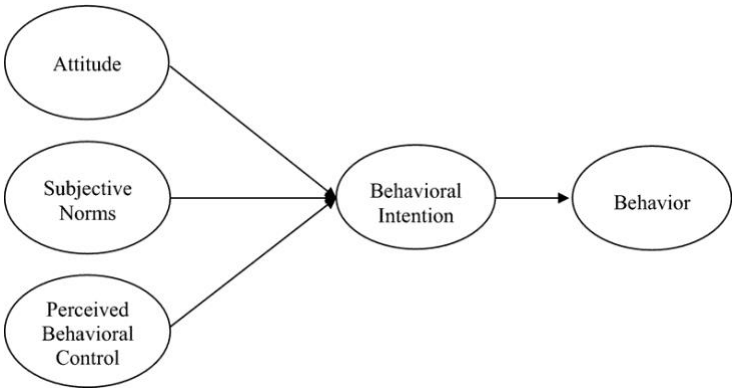

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior by Park & Ha (2014)

2.7.2 Norm Activation Model

The Norm Activation Model (NAM) is a theoretical framework for comprehending and predicting altruistic and prosocial behavior, including consumer behavior. NAM is based on the idea of sacrificing personal interests for the sake of others. It demonstrates the importance of individual norms in motivating behavior and focuses on the behavior derived based on the belief of what is right and wrong (Park & Ha, 2014). Additionally, NAM sheds light on how individuals' personal norms and moral principles influence their decisions to participate in boycotts (Bravo, 2020). Research also claims that consumers are more inclined to boycott a brand when they perceive its behavior as unethical (Delistavrou, 2022). Therefore, the belief and sense of obligation to act are significant factors influencing consumers' intentions to boycott a brand that violates ethical standards (Bravo, 2020).

In consumer behavior, NAM highlights three key factors: awareness of consequences (AC), ascription of responsibility (AR), and personal norm (PN) (Park & Ha, 2014; Joanes, 2019). When individuals realize the impact of their actions, they feel a sense of responsibility and moral obligation, which influences their behavior (Shin et al., 2018). This model helps explain why individuals may engage in boycotting behavior, such as refraining from purchasing products associated with certain entities (Shin et al., 2018; Bravo, 2020). Research utilizing NAM framework has shown its relevance in understanding various forms of prosocial behavior and its relation to intentions (Shin et al., 2018; Steg & de Groot, 2010; Joanes, 2019). Hence, NAM is a

suitable model for comprehending boycotting, given its nature as a type of prosocial behavior (Bravo, 2020).

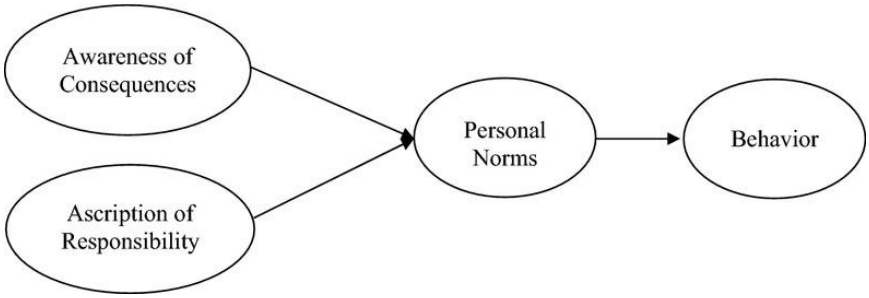

Figure 2: Norm Activation Model by Park & Ha (2014)

2.7.3 TPB and NAM

Both TPB and NAM align their core elements to understand the motivations behind consumer boycott participation. Scholars claim that utilizing the two models allows for a more accurate explanation of norms and beliefs in the context of consumer actions in a pro-environmental context (Dada et al., 2023). NAM sheds light on moral standards and incentives that compel us to act in the interests of the greater good (Wang et al., 2018; Joo et al., 2022). It implies that every action we take is motivated by a desire to act morally. TPB, however, adopts a viewpoint that is more neutral. It takes into consideration variables such as emotions towards actions, and the impact of social norms. To phrase it simply, TPB describes behaviors that stem from our individual interests (Wang et al., 2018). According to research, TPB may ignore factors that influence behavior that are not reasonable. This limitation is therefore addressed by combining the two models. We can better understand why people engage in pro-environmental or social behaviors by combining the two models, as it displays a range of personal motives as well moral perspectives (Xuan et al., 2023). Although TPB and NAM both present compelling arguments, they do so through distinct perspectives. When combined, they enable a more thorough examination of customer behavior in a range of contexts (Joo et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

This methodology outlines the research methods used within this thesis. It entails the research philosophy, approach, and methods utilized. Additionally, data collection and analysis are discussed to answer the research question. Finally, we address how the research ensures data quality and ethical considerations throughout the thesis.

3.1 Case

The conflict between Israel and Palestine, which can be traced back to 1936, arose as a conflict over land occupation and distribution. In 1937, a land partition was suggested due to the region's diverse cultures, but this proposal was rejected (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021). The conflict notably escalated in 1967, becoming widely recognized, and has since been considered “one of the world's most persistent and intractable conflicts” (Abdel-Malek, 2023). Despite international peace efforts starting in the early 1990s, the conflict remains unresolved, underscoring the challenges of achieving peace in the region (Bröckerhoff & Qassoum, 2021).

As the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine has captured attention globally, it has become a major source of concern impacting instability worldwide resulting in consumer behavior of boycotting (Shahzad et al., 2023). In the complex situation between Israel and Palestine, boycotts have played a significant role. Companies are finding it increasingly difficult to navigate the nature of this conflict as their responses, or lack thereof, can have serious consequences (Buheji & Ahmed, 2023).

Several companies have found themselves in the scope of consumer boycotts, because of the conflict. Amongst these, Coca-Cola has been one of the companies that have faced challenges for the past two decades. In general, the American fast-food industry has been struck with decreasing market shares in the Middle East, as a result of boycotting (Benstead & Reif, 2017). Additional

companies that have been targeted within the same sector are the major corporations McDonald's, Burger King, and Starbucks (Anonymous, 2024). McDonald's has faced severe action from the boycott movement, due to their perceived standpoint in the conflict (Abdullah, 2024). This has been noticed in Egypt, with McDonald's sales declining in relation to the conflict. Although long-term effects on brands remain unclear, the conflict undeniably sparked significant consumer attention and action (Buheji & Ahmed, 2023).

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is essential for shaping the investigative approach of a study as it contributes to the understanding and perception of the topic. Rubin & Rubin (2005) define it as a means of looking at the world, evaluating what is seen, and determining what observations by researchers are real, valid, and significant to document. Therefore, we adopted a research plan to ensure that our investigation of consumer boycotting behaviors in the Israel-Palestine conflict was both coherent and relevant.

Within the context of the study, the interpretivist paradigm appeared as particularly relevant to our investigation. Unlike the positivist approach, which emphasizes accurate observation and objective facts, interpretivism acknowledges the subjective aspect of human behavior (Saunders et al, 2023). Furthermore, interpretivist epistemology acknowledges the significant impact of individual perceptions (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This viewpoint recognizes that knowledge of consumer boycotting is subjective, requiring an in-depth study of the contextual factors of these behaviors (Saunders et al., 2023).

This study does not follow a positivist approach as it does not recognize that reality is a concrete structure (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Hence, this study adopts a social constructivism stance which aligns with the interpretivist approach. Within research philosophy, there are two main assumptions known as ontology and epistemology (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Social constructivism in ontology, highlights that reality is shaped by human interactions, which include the dynamics

of consumer boycotting (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021; Saunders et al., 2023). This perspective is particularly relevant when examining consumer behavior towards boycotting because it recognizes that these behaviors are shaped through social interactions and personal experiences.

This ontological approach goes hand in hand with interpretivist epistemology, as it suggests that reality, including consumer attitudes and behaviors towards boycotting, is constructed through social interactions (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Therefore, it is best understood from the perspective of those engaging in or affected by these actions. In conclusion, social constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, allows for a nuanced exploration of the subjective realities of consumer boycotting behaviors (Saunders et al., 2023). This approach provides deep insights into how personal perceptions and social interactions shape consumer responses to boycotting within the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.

3.3 Research Approach

The research approach for this thesis is qualitative. A qualitative approach facilitates in-depth insights into the participants' views on the studied phenomenon, thus interviews were conducted. These interviews helped gather information about individuals' beliefs, perspectives, and practices from both past and present (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Harrel & Bradley, 2009). This choice was driven by the aim of delving deeply into their experiences, which influenced their decision-making processes regarding boycotting food products associated with the conflict. Additionally, according to Bryman 2016, a qualitative research study goes hand in hand with an interpretive approach. In this context, it aims to understand the subjective experiences, and interpretations to gain insight into the relationship between geopolitical conflicts and consumer behavior, especially within the food industry (Saunders et al, 2023). Therefore, a qualitative approach is most suitable.

There are three research approaches to theory development, which include deductive, inductive, and abductive. The deductive approach involves the formulation of a hypothesis based on existing theories or principles, followed by the collection of data to test the hypothesis, and confirm it (Saunders et al., 2023). In this approach, the researcher starts with a general theory and moves

towards specific observations or predictions. Conversely, inductive reasoning involves generalizations based on observed patterns or instances in the data (Eisend & Kuss, 2019). Researchers using inductive reasoning begin with observations and then work toward developing broader theories or concepts that explain those observations (Saunders et al., 2023).

On the other hand, an abductive approach seeks to identify the most plausible explanation for the observed data (Eisend & Kuss, 2019). It uses cognitive reasoning to understand and investigate a phenomenon in depth (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). It provides the flexibility to switch between theory and data. For instance, the theory from the literature review and the data collected from the interviews. Therefore, the abductive approach is particularly relevant, as the literature review served as a foundation for data analysis to expand knowledge of the impact of the conflict on consumer behavior. This approach recognizes the researcher's subjective nature in the study, which encourages interpretivism philosophy (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).
The abductive approach utilizes human behavior in a specific setting to identify reality. This is suitable with the study's social interpretivist epistemology, which claims individuals create reality. (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Therefore, an abductive approach was deemed the best fit given the assumption and recommended methodology.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Data collection can be divided into different methods, primary and secondary (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Primary data can come from surveys, focus groups, interviews, or experiments. It can be divided into two types; spontaneous and solicited data. Solicitated data is when the researchers use open-ended questions, to solicit information relevant to the research topic (Hox & Boeije, 2005). As a result, this study will adopt a qualitative data collection using a solicited approach.

For this qualitative study, interviews were conducted to gather primary data for the research purpose. Interviews are a primary data collection method that cumulates individuals' perception, ideas, and beliefs (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Lastly, the choice of using interviews stems from the research supporting this method as “flexible and sensitive to the social context” thereby it can be

determined as suitable when understanding boycotting and consumer behavior at large (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

As previously stated, with respect to the abductive approach, we collected data through semi-structured interviews. This was done through interviewing Gen Z consumers based in Jönköping, with a relation to anti-consumption within the food industry. As each consumer provided knowledge from their own experiences, a subjective reality was provided (Saunders et al., 2019). This data collection method provides interaction with the participants, to extract the answers required (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Additionally, the semi-structured approach entails using scripted questions, as well as follow-up questions. The prepared questions were structured open-endedly, to ensure that the interviewees could freely express their emotions. Using pre-decided questions as well as follow-up questions allowed the researcher to gain knowledge of the main topic as well as it encouraged a deeper analysis (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This decision of the data collection method is relevant to our thesis as it allowed for the examination of various points of view, unique experiences, and the contextual nature of the phenomenon under study.

3.4.2 Sampling

The sampling method used for this study is non-probability sampling (purposive sampling), and moreover using convenience sampling. By using convenience sampling, it allowed for the recruitment of participants that were available to the researchers. This may involve approaching potential participants from personal networks, university campuses, or online communities (Acharya et al., 2013).

The use of non-probability sampling is widely used in research where certain requirements need to be met (Acharya et al., 2013). Additionally, purposive sampling allows for the selection of information-rich cases that align with the research objectives. It is used when research requires specific ideologies, such as the action of boycotting in this study. In this case, the decision of

purposive sampling aimed to understand the motivations and experiences of those who participate in boycotts (Campbell et al., 2020).

The total sample size consisted of 10 Gen Z individuals, who are based in Jönköping. The decision for this specific sampling was based on their knowledge and social media usage concerning current anti-consumption behaviors. When it comes to boycotts, Generation Z, those born somewhere between 1995 and 2010, are unmatched compared to other generations (Reinikainen et al., 2020). According to research, they are more inclined than earlier generations to prioritize ethical concerns when making purchasing decisions (Tuan et al., 2023). Their social consciousness and powerful demography make them a force in political consumerism (Giandomenico et al., 2022). Due to active engagement and awareness of social concerns, this generation has taken a stance against social injustice (Tuan et al., 2023). This willingness to act, combined with their critical eye towards the marketplace, made Gen Z an appropriate group to study in the evolving world of boycotts.

3.4.3 Interview Procedure

Interviews for this study were performed utilizing online video conferencing platforms, especially Microsoft Teams, to accommodate the varied locations of both the researchers and participants (Archibald et al., 2019). While research suggests that remote interviews may sacrifice some information richness compared to in-person interactions, it was proven that online interviews offer several benefits (Johnson et al., 2021; Engward et al., 2022). Utilizing web-based methods like Microsoft Teams addresses cost constraints associated with traditional face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews (Collis & Hussey, 2014). They facilitate rapid organization and execution of interviews, eliminating the need for travel, and provide a convenient space for participants and researchers to engage in meaningful conversations. Overall, online interviews have proven to be a valuable tool in this study, offering efficiency, convenience, and opportunities for meaningful engagement between researchers and participants. Furthermore, the feature to do instant voice over using internet electronic transcription of the interviews is a bonus (Engward et al., 2022). Despite

potential challenges such as technological difficulties, online interviews have been recognized as a viable and acceptable method for collecting qualitative data (Archibald et al., 2019).

3.4.4 Interview Design

Regarding the interview design, the questions were decided and based on the information within the literature review. This acted as guidelines to collect the information necessary for the topic. When structuring the interview questions, it was of utmost importance to delve into emotions, ideas, and thoughts of the interviewees. Due to this purpose, we conducted a structure with initial questions about boycotting activities as well as the underlying factors. With these questions, we aimed to reach a deeper understanding on why consumers boycott and its relation to the conflict at hand. Furthermore, we delved into the possible effects of social media, ethical and social factors. Subsequently, we followed up with questions when needed, to withdraw any additional information. To do this, usage of probes was often applied to gain richer knowledge of personal experiences. Probes is known as a technique often applied to semi-structured interviews to deepen the information given by the interviewee. Thus, leading to a prominent understanding of the individual's experiences within the specific context of boycotting (Collis & Hussey, 2014). As seen in ***Appendix 1***, a set number of questions were prepared, to cover the scope of the thesis, whilst also allowing the researchers to use probes to fully understand the interviewee.

3.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

Transcription of the interview recordings were conducted to efficiently gather the data, ensuring accuracy. As seen in ***Appendix 4***, the transcribed data was then deconstructed through coding to identify themes, patterns, and relationships within the interviews following a thematic analysis approach (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This analysis is a descriptive and adaptable method that can be applied alongside other data analysis techniques. Because of its adaptability in addressing a broad range of research problems and topics, it was used in this paper (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The first step involved transcribing and meticulously reading through the interview transcripts to become familiar with the data. This step was crucial for gaining an in-depth understanding of the content and beginning to identify themes and patterns. The data analysis process followed an open and axial coding approach. The open coding approach involved breaking down the transcribed data into meaningful units and assigning initial codes to each unit. This process allowed for the identification of themes, patterns, and relationships within the data. The axial coding approach, on the other hand, involved categorizing the initial codes into broader themes and sub-themes, thereby creating a more organized and structured coding system (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Throughout the coding process, the themes were meticulously evaluated and enhanced to ensure they appropriately represented the coded material. This involved reviewing the codes and their relationships within the dataset. For example, the broader theme of "Collective boycott intention" was further broken down into more specific sub-themes, such as "Power of Collective Action" and "Influence on Corporations". Each theme and sub-theme were clearly defined and identified, with a brief explanation conveying the core of the underlying data. The final step involved writing up the findings, which described each theme with supporting quotes from participants ***(Appendix 5-18).*** Lastly, the analysis was constructed by addressing existing literature in relation to the findings. This analysis supports the interpretive assumptions of the study since it allows the examination of different viewpoints, individual experiences, and the contextual nature of the phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al, 2023).

3.6 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is crucial in qualitative research to ensure the results' credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability, and authenticity (Kyngäs et al., 2020). It provides a framework for researchers to establish the validity and applicability of their findings (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). Following trustworthiness criteria enhances the study's contributions to the context, making it a useful and credible source of information (Anney, 2014). It was proposed that “internal validity

should be replaced by that of credibility, external validity by transferability, reliability by dependability, and objectivity by confirmability (Anney, 2014).

3.6.1 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other contexts in other words allows generalization (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Providing details about the study's setting, methodology, and participants allows readers to assess the applicability of the findings to their contexts. By offering rich, contextual descriptions of how the Israel/Palestine conflict influences consumer behavior within the food industry, the study enables other scholars to evaluate the potential relevance of the findings to similar geopolitical situations (Kyngäs et al., 2020).

3.6.2 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research ensures that the findings genuinely reflect the participants' experiences and perspectives. To enhance credibility in our study, engagement and persistent observation were crucial (Anney, 2014). These methods allowed for a deeper understanding of the topic and ensured that the findings truly reflect participants' experiences. (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). For instance, using semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' boycotting behaviors and motivations, while the purposive sampling strategy ensured the selection of information-rich cases. Additionally, employing triangulation by combining different data sources or methods, such as primary and secondary data, provided the study with a more comprehensive view of anti-consumption behaviors. Therefore, multiple data collection methods were important to ensure credibility in qualitative research (Kyngäs et al., 2020).

3.6.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings of the study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias (Kyngäs et al., 2020). This thesis prioritized confirmability by documenting

all stages of the study process, from data collection to analysis. This ensured that the findings drawn were closely related to the data, which Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016) argue is critical for the integrity of qualitative research. Both author's involvement in interviews and coding processes ensured that interpretations were directly derived from the data, reducing subjective bias (Kyngäs et al., 2020; Anney, 2014). Moreover, this study included direct quotes (***see all in Appendix 5-18***) in the findings which allow readers to trace the connection between the data collected, and the conclusions drawn (Kyngäs et al., 2020).

3.6.4 Dependability

Dependability concerns whether the research process is consistent and could be replicated in a similar context. As mentioned, the research methodology was documented in detail, from the selection of participants to data collection and analysis methods, which ensured dependability. Hence, this makes it possible for other researchers to follow the same steps in a similar study, ensuring that research findings are reliable and can be trusted (Anney, 2014).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Maintaining ethical principles is crucial to protect the rights and privacy of all participants involved in the study. Strict ethical guidelines, as recommended by Collis and Hussey (2014), were followed throughout the research process to avoid causing harm and protect the integrity of the study. Informed consent was obtained from each participant after a thorough briefing on the research purpose, method, and their rights (Saunders et al., 2019). Due to GDPR, a consent form was filled in by all the participants ***(Appendix 2)***, to ensure that they are informed about data collection and its usage. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary, and no incentives were provided that might influence the results (Eisend & Kuss, 2019). Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, ensuring participant privacy and protection of sensitive information as collected data were anonymized and securely stored (Aityan, 2022). Transparency and honesty were upheld throughout the study, with no false or misleading information (Collis &

Hussey, 2014). This helped in building trust ensuring that the insights provided were truthful and valuable, not influenced by any dishonest intentions. By adhering to these ethical guidelines, the study aimed to contribute to the field not only scientifically but also ethically, prioritizing the well-being and rights of the participants (Aityan, 2022).

4. Findings

This section presents the empirical findings from the semi-structured interviews. The structure of the findings follows the six categories, along with their respective subcategories with quotes from the participants.

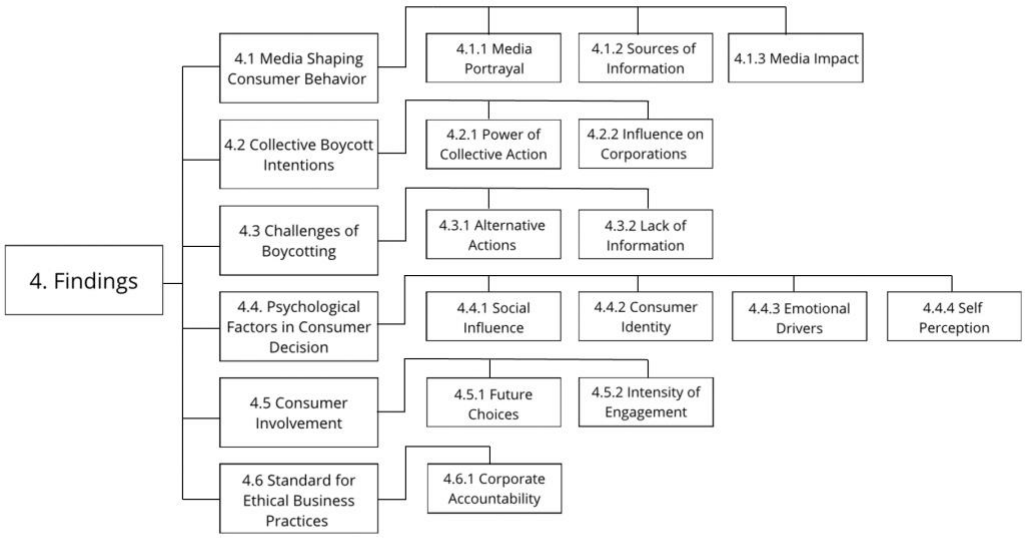

Figure 3: Summary of Findings

4.1 Media Shaping Consumer Behavior

4.1.1 Media Portrayal

The participants have mentioned that their preference for social media platforms over traditional media derive due to perceived bias. Most participants stated that social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram are valued for their more direct and seemingly unbiased information flow,

which the consumer believes offers a more accurate reflection of realities, especially in politically charged issues like the Israel-Palestine conflict.

> *"I don't really rely on news outlets on like TV because they're pretty biased and they have an agenda, so I like to watch or get my news from like social media outlet, TikTok and Instagram." - INT2*

Additionally, several respondents noted that social media content is highly personalized, often varying significantly even among members of the same family. As expressed, this can lead to a range of narratives and diverse opinions. The findings further indicated that consumers appreciate how these platforms provide "eye-opening" information. It shows how social media plays a big role in shaping individual views based on the content people see.

> *"The news that I am getting on my social media feed, is completely different from what my brother is seeing on his social media. And we realized that different people get different kinds of posts and perspectives, which affects our opinions of course." - INT3*

> *"I feel like this platform really showed a reality that many of us did not want to acknowledge. It brought it to light and so it also made us see a very different side of the story." - INT4*

> *"Specially social media, It gives you different like insights and perspective" - INT9*

4.1.2 Sources of Information

The interviewees indicated that social platforms act as their main source of information, regarding the conflict between Israel/Palestine. Some consumers indicated that traditional media such as newspapers are not as frequently used. Instead, platforms such as TikTok and Instagram were used to gather information about the conflict. Consumers expressed that the immediacy and accessibility of information on these platforms played a crucial role in informing consumers about corporate

behaviors and the ethical implications of their choices This included the information on which brands to boycott. Moreover, the findings showed that in some cases, social media was the initial source of information.

> *"[...] mostly through social media. Of course there is this news outlet like Aftonbladet [...] I don't actively go to those platforms and get my news, but mostly it is from social media." - INT3*

> *"I wouldn't say a certain media campaign made me boycott more so than certain social media posts about not only about what's happening, but also about companies that are involved and what products or brands to target" - INT4*

> *"Without the platform, I can't know what's going on. I don't have any knowledge whatsoever about what's going on [...]" - INT9*

4.1.3 Media Impact

These insights demonstrate how social media is not only important for spreading information but also for encouraging and driving consumer actions. Social media posts and messages were discussed to be a driver to boycotting actions amongst the interviewees. Additionally, the respondents displayed that social media may be used to promote boycotts and encourage collective actions through the content shared. Social media serves both as a trigger and a space for spreading boycott efforts, boosting consumer commitment and involvement in these activities. Lastly, the data indicate that social media provides consumers with empowerment.

> *"I would say that platforms have definitely shaped my intention to boycott by providing diverse perspective and exposing injustices associated with certain products and brands. You always see news or posts about supporting the boycott [...] therefore it is easy to "follow"." - INT1*

“Tiktoks and the social medias [...] showing the progress of boycotting it makes me, you know, it makes me want to boycott more and it does affect me to continue in my journey.” - INT3

“And I also get to messages and stuff on my social media to encourage you not to stop boycotting and just keep continuing” - INT3

“For example with boycotting, social media is a driver to the boycott I would say. It’s a way to collectively drive the boycott forward and spread the awareness”- INT10

4.2 Collective Boycott Intentions

4.2.2 Power of Collective Action

The statements bellow underlines the belief in the power of collective action. Most of the participants believed a larger movement starts with one individual. They highlight the concept of "strength in numbers," where even seemingly insignificant individual decisions to boycott can trigger a domino effect. As more people join the movement, the boycott gains momentum and visibility, leading to a potential change.

“I believe it can lead to change because if one individual does it then they're most likely going to inform other individuals about it. So it kind of causes a ripple effect where it will get to a point where the majority are boycotting” - INT2

“It believe it starts from individual boycotting. I mean we, as humans we influence each other to a certain extent.” - INT6

The findings further indicate that individuals feel more empowered and effective when they act as part of a larger group. Such collective actions are perceived as more likely to lead to tangible

impacts on corporations, especially in terms of damaging their reputation or affecting their financial performance.

> *"I 100% believe that because it's like if there are multiple people who are like consumers of a certain company and they decide to boycott a certain company, then of course they will not end up buying stuff from it and this will impact it very, very hugely." - INT5*

> *"Even if my individual action seems small, collectively, they can lead to significant impacts. It reaffirms that consumers have power." - INT10*

4.2.3 Influence on Corporations

The participants displayed an intention to influence corporations, using boycott as a strategy to pressure companies by directly impacting their reputation and revenue. This strategic use of boycotting power highlights a proactive approach in consumer behavior. The participants use their collective purchasing power to enforce corporate accountability and encourage ethical business practices. The findings indicated that consumers are aware about their power to influence companies and thereby execute this in the form of boycotting, to receive a desired result.

> *"Yes, I believe consumers have the power to influence companies through boycotting by affecting their reputation and their actions. Because when consumers or segments of the community say "we will boycott this company", it means that the demand for the company or product will be lowered. And then, the company will be effected in many ways." - INT1*

> *"I will retract my purchasing power so that I can maybe have the power to harm or damage their company reputation. Enough perhaps, to even make them question their actions." - INT8*

> *"If you think about it, we are the consumers, we are buying the goods and products. So if we refuse to buy their products, their financials will decrease" - INT10*

4.3 Challenges of Boycotting

4.3.1 Alternative Actions

The insights bellow highlights a practical challenge consumers face when boycotting. The interviews presented several challenges such as finding suitable alternatives and lack of information. On the contrary some interviewees note that in the food industry, finding substitutes is easier compared to other sectors. These findings suggest that, while boycotting is a powerful tool for consumers, its feasibility may depend on the availability of alternatives without excessive compromise.

> *"Yes, I have experience challenges when boycotting, such as finding alternatives to products are usually consume [...]" - INT1*

> *" I think the easiest to know or boycott are usually I would say anything in the food industry because there's so many substitutes like there's always another option if you have to give up on something." - INT5*

> *"Yes, it's challenging, particularly when it comes to finding alternatives to products I used to enjoy. For instance, boycotting certain beverages or fast-food brands required me to change my consumption habits significantly [...]" - INT10*

Additionally, several respondents indicated that challenges were faced when reviewing the quality and price of substitute products. They indicated that the boycotted brands usually hold a higher quality than the alternatives. Lastly, the alternative options available also tend to be higher in price, presenting an obstacle for the interviewees.

> *"When I try to find other alternatives, it might not be the same quality or it might be more expensive, so that's why it's a bit tough." - INT1*

4.3.2 Lack of Information

These quotes address the informational barriers that can hinder effective boycotting. Consumers often struggle with inadequate or unclear information about which companies are involved in actions that call for boycotting. This scarcity of information may at times therefore obstruct the action of boycotting. Several interviewees stated that the lack of information may present a barrier regarding new information about unethical practices of companies, potentially hindering their ability to make informed purchasing decisions.

> *"Because, you know, sometimes it is hard to know exactly what companies to boycott. It can be hard to find that information."- INT4*

> *"But in general, sometimes it can be hard knowing, like, which companies to target in specific industries."- INT5*

> *"But ofcourse, at times it can be difficult and challenging for me as a consumer. Even if there are websites helping out with companies to boycott and so on, social media doesn't always cover everything."- INT8*

4.4 Psychological Factors in Consumer Decision

4.4.1 Social Influence

The influence of social factors on boycotting decisions is significant as it was observed by the interviewees. Social influence was explained as both an encouraging and pressuring factor leading to the participation in boycotts. The findings display that consumer have experienced social pressure in various ways, in relation to boycotting. The pressure to actively engage in boycotting derived from both social media and their surroundings.

“Yes, I have experience challenges when boycotting, such as [...] facing social pressures to continue purchasing certain brands”. - INT1

“I feel social pressures from both sides actually, because when I go and look at media, I always read comments and it is very interesting to see how both sides are very vocal and how both sides want to influence as much as they can.” - INT8

As previously mentioned, the interviewees highlighted the impact of their surroundings, including friends, family, and general social circles. They mentioned that acceptable behavior and discussions within their social groups influenced their decision. The data further indicated that feeling exclusion in combination with “feeling of doing the right thing” drives boycotting behavior. Lastly, the movement of boycotting led interviewees to feel connected to one another.

“So it kind of causes a ripple effect where it will get to a point where the majority are boycotting, and if you're not, you're gonna feel left out or feel kind of like a betrayer. So it does have a big effect on society.” - INT2

“So when the discussions did come up, I was involving myself more. It was more so me asking, “hey, like, OK, which ones should we boycott” and so on. [...] And in that sense, they did influence the decision.” - INT4

“When you see all of the news, and people talking about it alot, I feel the need to join them and do the right thing. [...] when it comes to boycotting for these conflicts, there is a social opinion of what we should do as humans [...] for example boycotting. [...] Although, my decision to boycott is ofcourse from my own beliefs, but this social right and wrong will impact me to some extent aswell. When I boycott, I feel connected to the movement and the society." - INT10

4.4.2 Consumer Identity

The interviews revealed that ethical standards and personal values reflect their identity, which is shown through their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, a moral obligation was addressed, when speaking of their action to boycott. Several respondents emphasized on the role of responsibility in connection to their purchases, as they wish for shared values between themselves and the brands.

> *"Yes, I feel that I boycotted due to both moral obligation and ethical responsibility to take stand against justice and support human rights."* - *INT1*

> *"I feel as if my decision to boycott is the ethically right actions you know. I feel good knowing that I am doing something, even the slightest can help."*- *INT6*

> *"And the reason I boycott in this situation is the ethical responsibility that I believe that I have, as a consumer. I think that I have the obligation to change my purchases and consumption, so my personal values. My personal values does not support this kind of behavior, so therefore I avoid these products."* - *INT10*

4.4.3 Emotional Drivers

The interviewees emotional responses to the conflict, ranging from empathy and solidarity to anger and outrage, are powerful motivators for consumer boycotts. These emotions show the urgency and intensity of consumer actions, suggesting that emotion act as a driver in boycotting. Lastly, the interviewees indicated that such emotions did not only lead to participation, but also a sustained boycott.

> *"My emotions have played the role in my decision-making process regarding boycotting as feeling of empathy, outrage and solidarity with affected communities can influence my actions."* - *INT1*

“Yeah, 100% emotions is the biggest motivator [...]. And when you get these emotions, you want to help in any way that you can, and that’s why I boycott. Because you get sad, angry and all of that.” - INT6

“Emotions are a big driver, especially anger and sadness when I learn about the extent of a company's involvement in unethical practices. These emotions motivate me to maintain my stance on boycotting [...] ” - INT10

4.4.4 Self Perception

This data demonstrated that consumers' self-perception significantly influences their engagement in boycotting behaviors. The interviewees expressed emotions such as happiness and pride, which directly link to their self-perception. Additionally, the decision to boycott often aligned with how the interviewees see their role in society and their power to make a change. This power was seen to enhance their sense of self-worth.

“So it's my, it's the first time I'm doing it and I feel very happy and proud that I'm doing it because. I know it's for a good purpose.”- INT3

“Like I was talking about before about ethical and just like moral values and how I see myself.” - INT7

“ But knowing, I can make a change and contribute in any way then I would say It makes me feel like a better person.” - INT9

4.5 Consumer Involvement

4.5.1 Future Choices

Future choices of consumers were also examined, and interviewees expressed a strong intention to continue boycotting because of continuous ethical issues. These decisions were described because of the company's actions, whereby the interviewees highlighted the importance of company improvements. They indicated that a drastic change from brands is necessary to regain consumer trust. This demonstrates a significant degree of consumer engagement and commitment to boycott movements, suggesting that such decisions are not fleeting but are sustained by ongoing ethical judgments.

> *"[...] as long as the companies still support the conflict, the boycotting action from me will stay the same. Until the unethical actions stop." - INT1*

> *"I can see myself definitely continuing to boycott." - INT2*

> *"Even if the conflict ends, doesn't change that they were supporting the wrong side of things [...]. If the company takes active changes and actions like rebuilding. But it will take a lot for me to go back to purchasing their product." - INT4*

> *"Yeah, I'll keep boycotting those food products as long as there's a connection with the conflict. It's not just about the conflict itself, but about the companies understanding that their actions have consequences." - INT7*

4.5.2 Intensity of Engagement

The interviews revealed that increased awareness and deeper understanding amplify consumer commitment to boycotting. These mentioned factors as well as the perceived effectiveness were

proven to be a great motivator for the interviewees. Although some interviewees were skeptical about boycotting, the ability to contribute to the cause intensified their engagement.

> *"[...] factors such as increase awareness, education and engagement [...]" - INT1*

> *"I did not really believe in boycotting. I thought it was just a petty way of people getting at corporations for no valid reason, but now that I'm seeing what it can do and the big changes it can make, I've definitely changed my perception of boycotting." - INT2*

> *"[...] showing the progress of boycotting it makes me, you know, it makes me want to boycott more and it does affect me to continue in my journey." - INT3*

> *"And when you also see that, uh, the actions that you're doing are impacting businesses [...] to a greater extent, then you feel more motivated." - INT3*

4.6 Standard for Ethical Business Practices

4.6.1 Corporate Accountability

The interviewees mentioned the expectations of corporations involved in this situation. They emphasized that companies should not only acknowledge their missteps but also take actions to rectify them. Further, they expressed a desire for genuine change rather than superficial communication, indicating a demand for transparency and real ethical reforms. This reflects a broader consumer expectation for corporate accountability, where actions speak louder than words, and ethical commitments must be evident in tangible changes to corporate practices.

> *"I think it's not about communication, it's about action. At this point they need to put what they want to say into action [...]" - INT3*

> *"[...] if the companies "come clean" and apologize and all this, and acknowledging their fault in this, then maybe they can regain my trust and loyalty." - INT6*

"[...]by taking actions towards better morals." - INT7

By being transparent and also to see that they need to change some stuff. [...] Companies need to show not only that they are aware of the issues but also that they are taking concrete steps to address them. [...] They can't just issue statements that they are doing stuff wrong, actions are as important." - INT10

5. Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the empirical findings in correlation with the literature and theoretical frameworks. This chapter argues that boycott derives from various components, which is further justified. Additionally, the synthesis of empirical data with theoretical frameworks not only enriches our understanding of the dynamics of boycotting but also sheds light on the emergence of new insights. As a result, new knowledge emerged from this analysis, providing an opposing perspective on boycotting.

In today's world, understanding consumer behavior, especially boycotting in the context of global conflicts, is crucial for businesses as they hold corporations accountable for their ethical standards and practices (Paek & Nelson, 2009). This analysis explores the complex ways in which digital platforms, social influence, emotional reactions, and cultural values shape consumer actions, particularly focusing on boycotting behaviors related to the Israel/Palestine conflict. Additionally, this analysis reveals additional components emerging from the empirical data such as alternative actions and lack of information. By exploring how these factors collectively influence consumer boycotting behaviors, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms that drive such actions. Applying frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Norm Activation Model (NAM), we investigate how personal and societal norms are not just adopted passively but are actively applied by consumers. Through examining both data and theory, this analysis contributes valuable insights into consumer activism, aiding strategic planning in markets affected by geopolitical conflicts.

5.1 Social Influence in boycotting

Social influence, as indicated by Shin & Yoon (2018), plays a crucial role in shaping consumer boycotts, a phenomenon supported by both literature and empirical data. Raven (1964) explains how social circles, families, and online networks create collective expectations that shape individual behavior. This is a concept supported by empirical findings highlighting the influence of conversations and social environments on individual decisions to boycott. Several interviewees indicated that boycotting arose from a perception of "expected behavior" and the perceived necessity to boycott. These expectations not only initiate participation in boycotts but also sustain long-term engagement. This is further examined through the theoretical frameworks, as TPB underscores the importance of subjective norms, highlighting how perceived social pressures influence behavior (Ringim & Reni, 2019; Delistavrou, 2022). The interviewees highlighted the significant role of social networks and social pressure in shaping their views on food boycotts as it increased the likelihood of engagement. This aligns with the concept of social influence, explored by Cialdini & Goldstein (2004), which emphasizes how people conform to the norms of their social groups to avoid disapproval or exclusion. In the context of food boycotts, participants might be more likely to participate if their social circles endorse the boycott.

In addition, NAM explains how exposure to social norms activates personal standards, compelling individuals to align their behavior with broader ethical stands (Hoffmann et al., 2018). NAM can provide a framework for understanding the influence of social circles on consumer boycotting behaviors. The model posits that personal norms are activated through an individual's awareness of the consequences and their ascription of responsibility (Park & Ha, 2014). Empirical findings presented these personal norms and sense of responsibility can be shaped by social influence. Interviewees consistently mentioned the significant impact their social circles had on their decision to participate in the boycotting of brands like Coca Cola and McDonalds. These interactions within their social networks served as a powerful platform for discussing the brand's ethical practices.

Lastly, NAM presents personal norms that compel individuals to align their actions with their moral values and shared beliefs, driving collective boycotting efforts as part of a larger social movement (Park & Ha, 2014). This is evident in the empirical data, as interviewees stated that through discussions, a sense of shared social norms emerged, highlighting the importance of aligning consumer choices with personal values. This also reinforces their belief that their collective actions matter which motivated them to boycott. This aligns with Ilaw's (2014) perception that consumers identify with ethical behavior, finding solidarity in shared values.

5.2 The Role of Social Media in Consumer Boycotting

As mentioned in the literature review, social media is a key factor in driving boycotts among consumers, greatly increasing its scope and effectiveness. The interviewees mentioned that social media serves as a quick source of information, directly shaping their choices and behaviors. Literature further describes social media as a tool that enables consumers to rapidly share details about companies' unethical practices and their impacts. It thereby mobilizes collective action and builds a community among those who share similar values (Kam & Deichert, 2020; Delistavrou, 2022). Consistently, the empirical data supports this assumption, with respondents emphasizing the influence of social media in their decision to boycott. Tiktok, Twitter and Instagram were identified as platforms related to the Israel/Palestine boycott in the food industry. As highlighted by the interviewees, social media encourages, supports, and advocates for boycotts. This perspective is reinforced by research, which emphasizes how social media significantly boosts public participation, playing a role in enhancing consumer voices and impacting corporate behavior (Hirschberger, 2021).

A key component from our empirical data suggests that social influence and social media are intertwined. It revealed how social media amplifies the effect of social influence, with platforms offering spaces where like-minded individuals share posts encouraging boycotts. These platforms create a sense of community and reinforce social norms, encouraging sustained action. This aligns with NAM, which presents how group norms can activate personal norms which compels

individuals to participate (Shin et al., 2018). Furthermore, it elaborates on the consequences of corporate actions, activating personal norms related to ethical consumption and social responsibility. These personal norms lead to greater consumer involvement in boycotts as a form of ethical protest (Kam & Deichert, 2020; Delistavrou, 2022). The findings confirm that social media is a primary source of information regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. Besides, the information originated from social media increased the interviewee's motivation to act according to their norms.

Furthermore, the collected data connects with previous research stating that social media enhances consumers' perceived control. This is a key component of the TPB, which posits that awareness and social platforms encourage active participation in boycotts (Ringim & Reni, 2019). Furthermore, the theory suggests that consumer intention originates from attitudes towards behavior (Delistavrou, 2022). This was shown by interviewees indicating that their participation in this conflict-specific boycott often arises as a response to corporate behavior. Therefore, both empirical data and previous research support that boycott are in fact an “attitude towards behavior” through social media.

5.3 Identity and Value-Driven Decisions

Customer identity, as described by Ilaw (2014), encompasses the relationship between self-image and specific products or brands. The study discusses that consumers often gravitate towards brands that align with their perceived identity, reflecting their cultural values and self-image. Based on the empirical data, it has become significant that both consumer identity and consumer values are underlying factors to boycotting in the food industry. Several interviewees stated that their decision to actively engage in the boycott derives from the lack of alignment between their self-image and the brands. This supports what Ilaw (2014) concluded that consumer values and identity related to purchasing intent is correct. Empirical data suggests that consumers are willing to avoid products that do not align with their identity, this is acknowledged by the research by Reed et al. (2021).

The subjective norms and perceived behavioral control explained by TPB are influenced by both identity and consumer values. Therefore, a strong alignment with personal values enhances perceived behavioral control, empowering consumers to feel capable of effecting change through their actions. This is further elaborated by Kim et al. (2002) which explains that customer values shape societal norms and expectations, and strongly affect consumer choices, particularly when ethical considerations are at play. This further aligns with the empirical findings. Interviewees expressed their beliefs that values are important in their purchases, as they actively seek food brands with similar values. Hence, companies' stance on the conflict plays a role in this situation. This observation is supported by findings in previous studies, such as those by Mkik & Mkik (2020) and Karami et al. (2017), which indicates the role of cultural values in shaping consumer preferences and actions towards products and brands.

In addition, the findings demonstrated the relationship between boycotting and perceived social impression of “right and wrong”, which corresponds with NAM. Secondly, emotional responses that were discussed in the findings significantly influenced consumer decisions to engage and sustain boycotts. Literature and empirical data show that emotions like empathy and outrage against perceived injustices are powerful motivators for consumer activism. Based on the correlation of the findings and insights from the literature review, it is evident that emotional responses play a role in shaping consumer attitudes in the food industry. The theoretical frameworks of TPB and NAM offer perspectives that align with this observation. According to these frameworks, emotional engagement triggers personal norms, motivating consumers to adopt ethical stances against corporations perceived as unethical (Wang et al., 2018).

5.4 Additional Factors Influencing Boycotting

As mentioned in the literature review, it is evident that anti-consumption practices such as boycotting involves more than just rejecting products but requires a nuanced approach to consumer choices, including the availability of alternatives. This is supported by findings that display the importance of substitutes in maintaining a boycott, particularly in the food industry. The

effectiveness of a boycott often depends on finding satisfactory alternatives, reflecting Lee et al. (2011)'s examination of reject, restrict, and reclaim dynamics in anti-consumption.

According to the TPB, when consumers find suitable alternatives that meet their needs, their perceived behavioral control increases. As a result, this strengthens the intention to participate in a boycott. Furthermore, according to NAM, the availability of alternatives can activate personal norms related to ethical consumerism. As consumers become aware of the negative consequences of their initial choices (AC) and feel responsible for making positive changes (AR), they are more likely to adopt alternatives that align with their ethical beliefs, thereby reinforcing their commitment to boycotting.

Additionally, the findings on the lack of information about which food brands to boycott underline the essential role of accessible and reliable information for a successful boycott. According to the literature, social media and other sources of information can greatly influence consumer decisions, however, a lack of information can restrict consumer’s ability to align their purchases with their ethical values which disrupts boycotting. Both TPB and the NAM shows that not having enough information can reduce consumers' control over their boycotting actions and diminish their awareness of the consequences.

5.5 Boycotting as a Permanent Behavior

Literature usually characterizes consumer boycotting as a short-term behavior which remains until the event that triggered the boycott ends (Lee et al., 2011). Lee et al. (2011), Yuksel et al. (2020), Ishak et al. (2018) and, Yuksel (2013) noted that boycotting is usually a temporary reaction to specific events rather than a sustained avoidance. However, the empirical findings in this study show a change of behavior, revealing that participants intend to avoid certain brands in the long run, even after the conflict is over.

As highlighted in the findings on future choices, participants do not plan to return to purchase items from boycotted brands, maintaining their avoidance even if changes are considered by the

companies. This shows a deeper alignment with their values, where trust in these brands has been affected. The participants emphasized that significant corporate changes are required for them to reconsider their stance, suggesting a permanent approach to boycotting in the food industry. This avoidance differs from the typical perspective presented in the literature. Moreover, the findings on corporate accountability further support this shift. The participants emphasized that even if brands acknowledge their faults and take collective action, regaining consumer trust would require more than apologies or minor changes. They believe that true corporate accountability needs significant improvements that correspond with their values. The participants were skeptical of brands that have previously failed ethically, implying that once trust is destroyed, it may not be repaired.

Therefore, these findings challenge the idea of boycotting as a short-term reaction, extending the theory to suggest a more lasting shift in consumer behavior. Many consumers view boycotting as a thorough reconsideration of the brand they support, based on ethical values. This typically leads to a long-term rejection of business linked with unethical actions. Furthermore, this shift may represent a developing theory in consumer behavior, where ethical beliefs lead to sustained changes in purchasing habits. This demonstrates that boycotting is not only an impulsive behavior but may indicate an intentional and long-term choice driven by strong values and mistrust.

This new knowledge suggests successful and sustained boycotting disrupts consumers' purchasing habits, encouraging them to seek alternatives. Over time, this habit formation breaks the pattern of buying the boycotted product, making it easier to avoid it altogether. This framework fills a gap in existing research by explaining how consumers' habit formation, social learning, brand image damage, and confirmation bias contribute to the transition from boycotting to avoidance. Therefore, this study uncovered that the branches within anti-consumption (brand avoidance and boycotting) are intertwined, therefore requiring a further investigation on the specific elements that differentiate them from each other.

6. Conclusion & Discussion

The purpose of the final chapter is to summarize the overall research. Firstly, the conclusion is presented, where the research question is answered. Secondly, the chapter discusses the theoretical contributions and practical implications. Lastly, the strengths and limitations of the study are discussed as well as future research suggestions.

6.1 Conclusion

Our study was guided by the question: "How do individual perception and beliefs shape consumer decisions in terms of boycotting within the food industry, in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict?". Answering the question, the findings validate the importance of behavioral aspects regarding consumer boycotts. This study has answered the question by presenting that both consumer perception on brands and their beliefs does in fact impact their purchasing decisions. This study suggests that increased consumer awareness of ethical issues and their willingness to express disapproval through boycotts are significantly influencing their purchasing decisions concerning the Israel/Palestine conflict. Our study confirms existing research that individual behavior is influenced by social media, social influence, consumer values, and identity. Apart from the mentioned, additional factors were uncovered during the conduct of this study. This builds upon previous research, giving a more holistic approach on consumer behavior amid conflict. The findings and analysis revealed that personal beliefs are intertwined with societal norms and collective identity, influencing consumers to participate in or maintain boycotts in the food industry as a form of ethical stance. Ultimately, these findings emphasize the interconnectedness of social platforms, emotions, and cultural norms in shaping consumer activism within the food industry during geopolitical conflicts. Lastly, this study has identified further insights that were not thoroughly explored in previous research. It unveiled that boycotting in the food industry is a complex concept and that sustained boycotting due to ethical concerns can lead to product avoidance.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

Through this study, we have acknowledged researchers' call to incorporate factors like values, identity, and norms into the study of political consumerism, addressing the existing gap in understanding the drivers of boycotts (Copeland, 2013; Delistavrou, 2022). Accordingly, our research investigates the underlying factors influencing political consumer behavior, focusing specifically on boycotting within the food industry. Correspondingly with Ishak et al. (2018), we determined that psychological, social, and cultural factors are motivators to consumer boycott. Furthermore, in line with Kam & Deichert (2020) and Delistavrou (2022) we have established that social media play a role in shaping consumer behavior, as this study identified the impact of social media concerning the Israel/Palestine boycott.

Additionally, like Kashif (2019), we examine the food industry in relation to boycotting, however, we take a different approach by disregarding religion from our scope, offering a new and diverse perspective on the phenomenon. Similarly to Kashif (2019), the research conducted by Ishak et al. (2018) also analyzes boycotting by interviewing participants with a Muslim background. To provide a more nuanced analysis on the topic at hand, the sampling of this study employed a more neutral stance by interviewing participants from various origins and backgrounds. Previous research by Copeland (2013) mentions that “conflict-oriented boycotts” can be considered a frequently used tool for consumers to express their opinions. This study further explores this aspect by focusing on the current geopolitical conflict of Israel/Palestine. This expansion of knowledge sheds light on the complex interplay between political events, ethical considerations, and consumer behavior, enriching the literature on boycotting.

Research by Delistavrou (2022), indicates that several researchers have utilized TPB to explain boycotting as a behavior. Although this theory has been investigated in relation to boycotting, there is a noticeable gap concerning the applicability to conflict situations. Shin et al. (2018) integrated

TPB and NAM offering insights to comprehend consumers' behavior and decision-making process regarding the selection of organic menu items when dining out. Similarly, this study utilizes the different components of each theory, to create a complementary knowledge to bridge the gap between them.

Previous literature has conceptualized boycotting as a short-term behavior (Lee et al., 2011; Yuksel et al., 2020; Ishak et al., 2018; Yuksel, 2013). These researchers explain that boycotting is often perceived as a temporary reaction to specific events rather than a sustained avoidance strategy. However, our findings contradict this perspective by revealing that participants intend to avoid certain brands in the long run, even after the conflict that triggered the boycott ends. This finding contradicts the prevailing notion that boycotting behavior fades once the triggering event concludes. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing body of literature as it further introduces the fine line between boycotting and brand avoidance, highlighting the complexity of purchasing habits.

6.2.2 Implications

This research offers implications for businesses and marketers operating in the food industry amid geopolitical conflicts. This study reveals that the intention to boycott is shaped by several factors, as well as implies that long-term effects may arise because of such actions. Understanding the consequences highlighted by Dekhil et al. (2017), which indicates that boycotts can significantly damage a company's brand image further explains how crucial it is for businesses aiming to sustain a positive brand image and retain consumers. By maintaining ethical practices, companies can mitigate the risks of extended boycotts and brand avoidance.

The research provides valuable insights for businesses looking to navigate the challenges of modern consumer activism and ethical practices. This is supported by research by Paek & Nelson (2009), that shows how consumers are inclined to boycott or change their purchasing habits based on ethical concerns. This underscores the consumer power to drive ethical change and force accountability amongst companies. Therefore, businesses in the food industry should consistently

assess their ethics and adjust practices to align with evolving consumer values in the long run, especially in sensitive geopolitical contexts.

Additionally, social media acts as a powerful tool that can rapidly mobilize collective action, increasing pressure on companies to act responsibly (Kam & Deichert, 2020; Delistavrou, 2022; Bravo, 2020). Given the role of social media highlighted in this thesis, digital marketing strategies should be created to foster transparency and engage with consumer activism positively. Businesses should utilize social media not just for promotion, but as a platform for honest communication. It is important for companies to actively listen and respond to consumer concerns, demonstrating commitment to transparency and ethical standards. This goes in line with what Boström et al. (2019) emphasized regarding the significant impact of online posts as a powerful force in shaping corporate ethics and practices. Ultimately, these implications can help strengthen consumer trust and loyalty, decreasing the risk of permanent avoidance.

6.2.3 Limitations

The current study acknowledges several limitations that call for further exploration in future research. The study primarily involves Gen Z consumers in Jönköping, which may not reflect the broader consumer behaviors or opinions in other regions or among different age groups. The specificity of the demographic and geographic focus could affect the diversity of perspectives, limiting the study's applicability to a wider audience. Additionally, as the study only focuses on the Israel/Palestine conflict within the food industry, its generalizability may be restricted (Saunders et al., 2019). Due to this, it may also affect the applicability to other industries or conflicts.

Due to the nature of qualitative data, a challenge presented could be researcher bias in data interpretation. As researchers bring their own perspectives, experiences, and values to the analysis, this can influence how data is interpreted and presented (Hammersley & Gomm, 1997). In addition, whilst qualitative research is often used for understanding human experiences, it holds limitations that quantitative methods could address more effectively (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

6.2.4 Future research

Addressing the limitations mentioned, future studies should aim for a more diverse sample encompassing different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and potentially even geographic locations. This will provide valuable insights into how consumer behavior varies across demographics and regions. Furthermore, future studies could explore how these findings apply across different sectors or in other geopolitical situations to enhance the scope of applicability. Comparative studies across sectors or regions would enhance the generalizability of the research findings. Moreover, a longitudinal study design presents an opportunity to track changes in consumer behavior over time. This can provide future research with a deeper understanding of how boycotts evolve over time, because of conflicts. Additionally, it may provide a more detailed understanding on shifts in consumer behavior, as a response to company actions. This would offer valuable insights for businesses to adjust their strategies accordingly.

Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach to gain a more holistic understanding of the complexities regarding the topic at hand. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods would allow for a nuanced exploration of consumer motivations and behaviors. Following, future research could also explore the perspectives of companies and their responses to consumer boycotts. This would allow for a further investigation on how businesses adapt their strategies to consumer opinions. Lastly, future studies could explore the reason behind why some consumers commit to brand avoidance rather than boycotting. Building on the new knowledge provided by this study, future research can validate the factors presented in this study as well as applying it to other contexts.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1- Interview Guide

Starting:
This interview is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Your participation is confidential, and your answers will be anonymized in our research

We just wanted to inform you that this conversation will be recorded and transcribed, is that okey with you?

Introduction:

1. When you are consuming food products, would you say that you tend to purchase "name brands" and bigger brands that are generally known?
2. Have you ever engaged in boycotting?
   If yes: what industry or products have you boycotted.
   If no: what factors have prevented you from doing so?

Perception of Consumer Power

3. Do you think that consumers have the power to influence companies, through boycotting?
4. Do you believe individual boycotting actions can lead to change? Why or why not?

Boycotting

5. How familiar are you with the Israel/Palestine conflict?

6. Have you ever boycotted in relation to this conflict?
   Follow up: Do you associate any food products or brands with this conflict? If yes, which ones and why?
7. How do you collect news and information about the conflict? Such as news outlets, social media and similar sources?
8. How would you say that these platforms impact your intention to boycott?
9. Would you say that this information has persuaded you to boycott? For example, media campaigns or social media posts?

Decision-Making Process:

Social Influence and Peer Behavior

10. What factors influenced your decision to boycott?
11. Have you ever felt social pressure to either join a boycott? For example: Do you think that your decision to boycott is based on a "sense of belonging."

Values

12. Is your decision to boycott based on personal values?
13. Have your perceptions or beliefs about the conflict influenced your purchasing decisions regarding food products?
14. Do you usually speak about your decision to boycott with others?
    Follow up: If yes, please describe how these conversations can impact your opinion on boycotting.
15. Have you experienced any challenges when boycotting? For example cutting out products that you usually consume, that now are seen "unethical" to you?
16. Do you feel like you boycott due to moral obligation or ethical responsibility?
17. Have your emotions ever played a role in your decision-making process regarding boycotting? If yes, how?

Personal Experiences and Attitudes:

18. With your boycotting experience: How do you feel about your decision to boycott? Do you think it contributed to anything?
19. Have your attitudes or feelings toward boycotting these products changed over time? If so, what influenced this change?

Reflection and Future Behavior:

20. How can companies communicate with you, in order to regain your trust and loyalty, in relation to the conflict?
21. Looking ahead, do you foresee yourself continuing to boycott (or not boycott) food products associated with the Israel/Palestine conflict? Why or why not?
22. When or if the conflict ends, do you see yourself going back to the brand that you boycott today?

Appendix 2- GDPR Thesis Consent Form

JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
Jönköping International Business School

GDPR Thesis Study Consent Form

Required by European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679

GDPR Consent for Anti-consumption Practices in the Food Industry: A study of consumer behavior amid conflict

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking part in the study		
I consent to JIBS processing my personal data in accordance with current data protection legislation and the data delivered.	☐	☐
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.	☐	☐

My signature below indicates that I choose to take part in the thesis study and consent to JIBS treating my personal data in accordance with current data protection legislation and the data delivered.

_____ _____ _____

Name of participant [IN CAPITALS] Signature Date

Thesis contact details for further information

Haya Alaouir, +46 73 770 62 56, alha20ql@student.ju.se

Amanda Nero, +46 72 155 06 55, neam21ta@student.ju.se

Participant Information Sheet template

You are being invited to take part in a thesis study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study collecting personal data?

Dear Participant,

We are writing to inform you about the collection of your personal data for the purpose of a research study conducted as part of our Bachelors thesis at Jönköping University. This study focuses on understanding how geopolitical conflicts, specifically the Israel/Palestine conflict, influence consumer behavior, particularly in the food industry. With increasing social awareness, consumers are demonstrating willingness to engage in boycotts against firms perceived as unethical. This study aims to explore the impact of the Israel/Palestine conflict on consumer behavior regarding boycotting food products.

By providing your personal data, you contribute to our research aimed to understand consumer perceptions and motivations regarding the impact of geopolitical conflicts on food industry boycott. The data will be collected through interviews, during the spring of 2024. Your participation will help us gather valuable insights, enhancing our understanding of research methodology and contributing to academic learning.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to do so, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to give your consent.' All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any ensuing reports or publications.

Under GDPR you have the following rights over your personal data:

- ***The right to be informed**. You must be informed if your personal data is being used.*
- ***The right of access**. You can ask for a copy of your data by making a 'subject access request'.*
- ***The right to rectification.** You can ask for your data held to be corrected.*
- ***The right to erasure**. You can ask for your data to be deleted.*
- ***The right to restrict processing**. You can limit the way an organisation uses your personal data if you are concerned about the accuracy of the data or how it is being used.*
- ***The right to data portability**. You have the right to get your personal data from an organisation in a way that is accessible and machine-readable. You also have the right to ask an organisation to transfer your data to another organisation.*
- ***The right to object**. You have the right to object to the use of your personal data in some circumstances. You have an absolute right to object to an organisation using your data for direct marketing.*
- ***How your data is processed using automated decision making and profiling**. You have the right not to be subject to a decision that is based solely on automated processing if the decision affects your legal rights or other equally important matters; to understand the reasons behind decisions made about you by automated processing and the possible consequences of the decisions, and to object to profiling in certain situations, including for direct marketing purposes.*

You should also know that you may contact the data protection officer if you are unhappy about the way your data or your participation in this study are being treated at dpo@ju.se

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering whether to take part in this research study.

Contact details for further information

Thesis supervisor	**Nadia Arshad**	**Email: nadia.arshad@ju.se**
Thesis student	**Haya Alaouir**	**Email: alha20ql@student.ju.se**
Thesis student	**Amanda Nero**	**Email: neam21ta@student.ju.se**

Appendix 3- AI Declaration Form

AI DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this thesis represents our own work.

We declare that we have obtained the necessary ethical approval (e.g., GDPR) and acknowledged our obligations and the rights of the participants/respondents in the research.

We have read and applied Jönköping University's current research ethics guidelines with regard to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tool in this work as presented in the Course Guide. During the preparation of this work, the authors used the following AI tools and the purpose for their use.

AI tools such as Gemini and ChatGPT were utilized for idea generation, providing writing guidelines, and correcting grammatical errors. It assisted in formulating interview questions and provided suggested themes for the thematic analysis.

As authors, we have reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the thesis.

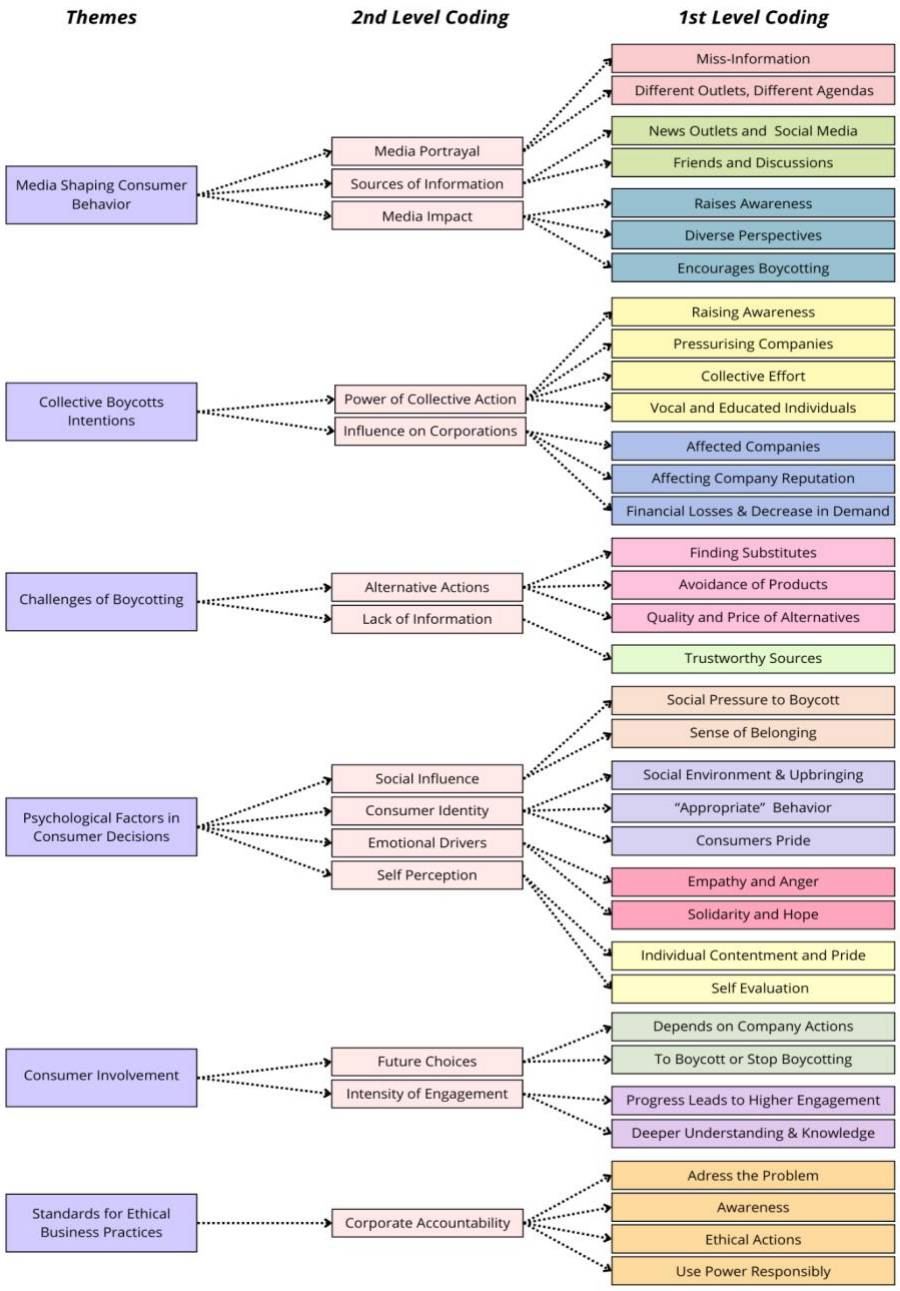
Signature: _____

Date: 17/05/24

Signature: _____

Date: 17/05/24

Appendix 4- Thematic Analysis



Appendix 5- Media Shaping Consumer Behavior (Media Portrayal)

Participants	Quotes
INT2	*"I don't really rely on news outlets on like TV because they're pretty biased and they have an agenda, so I like to watch or get my news from like social media outlet, TikTok and Instagram."*
INT3	*"The news that I am getting on my social media feed, is completely different from what my brother is seeing on his social media. And we realized that different people get different kinds of posts and perspectives, which affects our opinions ofcourse. So when we came and when we spoke about it to each other, we had completely opposing opinions to one another, and we were wondering like, where is this coming from?."*
INT4	*"I feel like this platform really showed a reality that many of us did not want to acknowledge. It brought it to light and so it also made us see a very different side of the story."*
INT9	*"I watch news channels such as Aljazeera. I umm stay on social media. I read comment and videos anything people post. Usually it's social media, but I like to watch news channels because they're less biased than media."*
INT9	*"specially social media, It gives you different like insights and perspective"*

Appendix 6- Media Shaping Consumer Behavior (Sources of Information)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"A lot of post are flowing on social media, everyone is posting about, it doesn't need to be only Palestinians posting about it because there's people from Palestine, people from different nationalities, even Swedish people, been posting about how this, how these stuff are happening in Palestine. So all these together led me to take this step and boycott."*
INT2	*"I try to stay updated on the conflict, following it on social media of course and I see the news."*
INT2	*"Me personally, I I collect most of my news outlets from news from social media."*
INT3	*"Umm, it's mostly through social media. Of course there is this news outlet like Aftonbladet, that you know Swedish and then BBC and stuff like that, that come up and that I'm I might see. But it you know, I don't actively go to those platforms and and get my news, but mostly it is from social media and I also need to be very careful and aware that like."*
INT4	*"And I feel like TikTok is one platform, as you can find a lot on there, but more so than that, my friends tend to post a lot on their Instagram stories and I do tend to watch those videos and they have been very, very informative. So that's my main new sources."*
INT4	*"Umm, I wouldn't say a certain media campaign made me boycott more so than certain social media posts about not only about what's happening, but also about companies that are involved and what products or brands to target"*
INT5	*"I would say mainly social media. If I'm going to be honest. Maybe friends, but other than that I mainly social media."*
INT6	*"The conflict, I would say. Twitter, Twitter or X as it is called now. Instagram. TikTok is not that much, but I would say Instagram and expect more specifically X because it's a very open like app that you can share whatever you want and you're not restricted like Instagram. Instagram is more restricted about sharing stuff, and you know, sharing ideas within this conflict. So a lot of social media platforms."*
INT7	*"Either through my friends or through social media. I mean, that's where all information comes from."*
INT9	*"I know a lot about it as it is a recent conflict and everyone is talking about it through social media and news."*
INT9	*"without the platform, I can't know what's going on. I don't have any knowledge whatsoever about what's going on, and then I wouldn't care about boycotting"*
INT10	*"I primarily use reputable news outlets to stay informed about it. But as I said, I also use some social media to check news. I would say that I use as many sources I can to make sure that I am up to date"*

Appendix 7- Media Shaping Consumer Behavior (Media Impact)

Participants	*Quotes*
INT1	*"Ehm, I would say that platforms have definitely shaped my intention to boycott by providing diverse perspective and exposing injustices associated with certain products and brands. You always see news or posts about supporting the boycott and supporting a side in the conflict, therefore it is easy to "follow"."*
INT3	*"Social media has a huge impact on our on our thinking and how we behave and so on."*
INT3	*"the Tiktoks and the the social medias, you know, showing the progress of boycotting it makes me, you know, it makes me want to boycott more and it does affect me to continue in my journey."*
INT3	*"And I also get to messages and stuff on my social media to encourage you not to stop boycotting and just keep continuing"*
INT3	*"I think it has gotten even more stronger to boycott even more because as I said, because of the encouraging facts that I'm seeing on social media and other places"*
INT3	*"There's so much media coverage and there's so much news about it, and I'm glad that its has raised awareness"*
INT7	*"they give me more reason to boycotting. I mean, they increase the chances of me boycotting. Because, you know, I see all of the things that is happening and what's going on over there. I'm wont be able to see it if I don't see it on social media. So in that way it definitely is the platforms that is influencing me or that is adding to me to boycott."*
INT9	*"it also motivates and push you to boycotts, which is, you know why I would say that I do it more because, like, social media pushes you to do that, it pushes. They push you to boycott while news channels, they don't really do that."*
INT10	*"And aswell, social media gives us so much power"*
INT10	*"For example with boycotting, social media is a driver to the boycott I would say. It's a way to collectively drive the boycott forward and spread the awareness"*
INT10	*"Ofcourse they impact my decision to boycott, as I said, that's how I found ourtabout all of this. I heard about the news of the conflict on different outlets, but at the end of the day, social media platforms were the way that I found out about the boycott and that people are using their purchases so hinder the companies from continuing with their behavior."*
INT10	*"All the posts and news about company involvement has specifically persuaded me to boycott, as it gives a more clear image of the relationship between brand action, or rather the actions that they are not taking, and the conflict."*

Appendix 8 – Collective Boycott Intentions (Power of collective action)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"I do not think that 1 individual can make a big change, but every person can influence and spread the word of the boycott, and through that cause big changes."*
INT2	*"I believe it can lead to change because if one individual does it then they're most likely going to inform other individuals about it. So it kind of causes a ripple effect where it will get to a point where the majority are boycotting"*
INT3	*"Uh, it might not seem like I'm doing a significant act. However, you know it starts with one person, it's and goes to 111 and then it's gonna all add up and it's gonna become a collective effort"*
INT4	*"I mean by individual I mean that we all have the power to affect and but more so that if each individual boycott a certain products, one becomes many and so the impact is much much larger, but it always starts from. From the individual, it's him or herself. But it can always grow and lead to changes."*
INT5	*"Yes, if it's big enough, there is a major influence, but if not, many people are participating, a lot of people just say that they will or they pretend to be. But if they're not, then of course it's not. It's not gonna make a difference, but I think numbers do matter in this case, so the larger the like, the larger the number is, then the higher effect on the companies."*
INT5	*"I 100% believe that because it's like if there are multiple people who are like consumers of a certain company and they decide to boycott a certain company, then of course they will not end up buying stuff from it and this will impact it very, very hugely.And yeah, I I do believe it's, uh, there's huge influence in it."*
INT5	*"the more the larger the stream of income for them that gets subtracted by boycotting the more and will affect the company besides the image."*
INT6	*"It believe it starts from individual boycotting. I mean we, we, we as humans we influence each other to a certain extent."*
INT6	*"So it starts from an individual and then the individual impacts their friends and the friends have friends. And the bigger it goes until it becomes a community that goes against this whole idea. So it starts from one person force I would say."*
INT8	*"enlightening them of the situation and, well, a group impact starts with an individual."*
INT8	*"Humans of the power to change the whole world, in a sense, depending on if they're united or if they're divided"*
INT10	*"Even if my individual action seems small, collectively, they can lead to significant impacts. It reaffirms that consumers have power."*

Appendix 9 – Collective Boycott Intentions (Influence on Corporations)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"Individual pointing actually can lead to change as they can contribute to raising awareness and putting pressure on companies to address unethical practices"*
INT1	*"Yes, I believe consumer have the power to influence companies through boycotting by affecting their reputation and their actions. Because when consumers or segments of the community say "we will boycott this company", it means that the demand for the company or product will be lowered. And then, the company will be effected in many ways."*
INT2	*"It affects their financial gains and by affecting their financial gains"*
INT3	*"However, when I'm seeing news from Tiktok and from Instagram and different platforms that like these, these companies are actually getting impacted. They're losing a lot of revenues and like employees are are like going out of jobs and so on."*
INT3	*"And when you also see that, uh, the actions that you're doing are impacting businesses in a in a great and not to a greater extent, then you feel more motivated."*
INT7	*"Yeah, definitely. Uh, I mean, if there's enough people that stops buying their product, then their revenues will obviously go down and then they will see that, OK. If they don't start changing or fixing something, then they're gonna go bankrupt so that they would probably start changing their image or whatever. The reason is that consumers are boycotting that company, that's what they will try to adjust. Because the consumers hold a lot of the power. So I mean, consumers influences the companies."*
INT7	*"Like I've seen uh revenues fall quite a bit at McDonald's and also because of the conflict. I haven't purchased like Burger King or or Pizza Hut like these restaurants or these fast food chains. I named a bit earlier, so yeah, the conflict has definitely influenced me when it comes to these like food products."*
INT7	*"If enough individuals are boycotting a specific product, then that product won't exist anymore because it will go bankrupt."*
INT8	*"I will retract my purchasing power so that I can maybe have the power to harm or damage their company reputation. Enough perhaps, to even make them question their actions."*
INT9	*"but I do believe that it can to some extent as there are many people boycotting so it can affect their revenue for example."*
INT10	*"If you think about it, we are the consumers, we are buying the goods and products. So if we refuse to buy their products, their financials will decrease"*

Appendix 10 – Challenges of Boycotting (Alternative Actions)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"Yes, I have experience challenges when boycotting, such as finding alternatives to products are usually consume or facing social pressures to continue purchasing certain brands."*
INT1	*"When I try to find other alternatives, it might not be the same quality or it might be more expensive, so that's why it's a bit tough."*
INT3	*"What I want to do, of course, no one forces a person to go out of their way to boycott and make their life harder, let's say, because it's, you know, products that they purchase frequently. But it's just about finding alternatives."*
INT4	*"But then if you push through and you don't buy it after a while, that craving goes away and there have appeared alternatives for the product. For example, Palestine cola. And yeah, although it wasn't easy in the beginning. There's alternatives one can buy, although they might not be the exactly identical to the original products. That's fine by me."*
INT5	*" I think the easiest to know or boycott are usually I would say anything in the food industry because there's so many substitutes like there's always another option if you have to give up on something like let's say Starbucks, there's like so many other options like I said, like there's this process for instance, there is like local coffee shops."*
INT5	*" So and yeah, snacks and candies are all of these are they have substitutes. So there's definitely other options. It's not necessarily to continue with the ones that are known to be part of the problem."*
INT5	*" But like let's say Arla or like a product that I buy religiously all the time maybe would have been harder, but right now it's a lot of brands that I find easy to substitute or I don't really feel like they are necessary in my life."*
INT6	*"I bought some of the products before this. Like the beverages and the fast food and so on. And I had to find another alternative for this and the alternative was the experience where like the the challenge in itself."*
INT8	*" What I do find that some of the substitutes taste pretty bad like the "off brand" cola then I just don't buy it."*
INT10	*"Yes, it's challenging, particularly when it comes to finding alternatives to products I used to enjoy. For instance, boycotting certain beverages or fast-food brands required me to change my consumption habits significantly, which was initially hard because they were brands I grew up with and were integral to social activities."*

Appendix 11 – Challenges of Boycotting (Lack of Information)

Participant	Quotes
INT3	*"However, I feel like I do have strong feelings about this and by no means am I saying what I'm doing is perfect. There are times where I am purchasing a product that I don't know is, you know, part of this whole process and then I, you know, I educate myself based on that. So I think this boycotting process isn't easy."*
INT4	*"Because, you know, sometimes it is hard to know exactly what companies to boycott. It can be hard to find that information."*
INT5	*"So I would say, yeah, these are like the ones that you tend to get more information about as well because it's I think a lot harder to know, like, you know, technological products and stuff like that whether or not they're contributing to the conflict."*
INT5	*" But in general, sometimes it can be hard knowing, like, which companies to target in specific industries."*
INT8	*"But ofcourse, at times it can be difficult and challenging for me as a consumer. Even if there are websites helping out with companies to boycott and so on, social media doesn't always cover everything."*

Appendix 12 – Psychological in Consumer Decisions (Social Influence)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"Yes, I have felt social pressure to join the boycott at times, like not all the time.Sometimes, and the decision to boycott could can be influenced by sense of belonging to community or social group that advocates for certain causes. Let me give you an example: Like sometimes I'll be like, "OK guys, let's go eat McDonald's". But I'm sitting with four people who are boycotting McDonald's and they will give me, like, this look like ohh, you're not boycotting. So because I'm in this segment and this group or this part of the community, I have to take this step and not buy boycotting."*
INT1	*"Yes, I have experience challenges when boycotting, such as finding alternatives to products are usually consume or facing social pressures to continue purchasing certain brands"*
INT2	*"No, no, I've never. I wouldn't call it social pressure. I would call it more of like a people with similar interests trying to make a change together and sharing ideas nobody has ever come up to miss it. You have to be a part of this boycott or you are a you are someone who's betraying your people, or none of that. It was more of people that are on the same path who all want to make a change that found a way virtual."*
INT2	*"So it kind of causes a ripple effect where it will get to a point where the majority are boycotting, and if you're not, you're gonna feel left out or feel kind of like a betrayer. So it does have a big effect on society."*
INT3	*"Umm, I would say definitely not social pressure of course.* *Like when people around you do a certain thing that it's normal that anybody is impacted by that. However, like my values are like you know, sympathy. Empathy like these, these things I I feel for the struggles that you know, people, Palestinian people are going through. So I I believe that if in that time if people were to come together and boycott a certain company to, you know, make the situation stop, then it would have been great out of appreciated and loved the effort."*
INT3	*"when people are boycotting for sense of belonging, I feel like it's not. It's not coming from the heart. It's not ethical. It's not like you're not doing it out of your morals, but to just fit in."*
INT4	*"Uh, yes, they are very knowledgeable of the situation and conflict and what certain products or certain brands to target. So when the discussions did come up, I was involving myself more. It was more so me asking, "hey, like, OK, which ones should we boycott" and so on. Which ones would create a bigger impact and and they let me know. And in that sense, they did influence the decision. I asked them what they are boycotting, and then joined in, if that makes sense, since they are very educated on the topic."*
INT6	*"Of course, I've felt like this social pressure from the people around me, and since we are doing this "together", we end up supporting each other, but like backing up each other as well, I believe that I have a social pressure on them by, you know, reminding them aswell.So there's a huge social pressure to join and boycott I would say."*
INT7	*"but then, you know, everyone is influenced by their friends a bit. And when you see that everyone else is doing it, for example, if you're all going to go order food or something and everyone is picking to get water and you're the only one who wants Coca Cola, for example, you feel a bit left out, you feel a bit odd. So you end up picking water"*
INT8	*"I feel social pressures from both sides actually, because when I go and look at media, I always read comments and it is very interesting to see how both sides are very vocal and how both sides want to influence as much as they can."*
INT9	*"yeah so then maybe I would feel like that, like if I did, you know eat mcdonalds, then I would feel left out. Like now I'm being that person, like during a boycott I'm supporting all these brands. Then I would say i would do more for belonging just because I'm not in that"*
INT10	*"Yes, ofcourse. When you see all of the news, and people talking about it alot, I feel the need to joint hem and do the right thing. I would say that I am not forced, but when if comes to boycotting for these conflicts, there is a social opinion of what we should do as humans, and how that should be shown, for example boycotting. Especially when the boycotting is widely used to support the cause, amongst my friends and close ones. Although, my decision to boycott is ofcourse from my own beliefs, but this social right and wrong will impact me to some extent aswell. When I boycott, I feel connected to the movement and the society. Because, it's a wide topic and many people have joined the boycotting"*

Appendix 13– Psychological in Consumer Decisions (Consumer Identity)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"Yes, this is information has persuaded me to boycott certain products, especially when aligns with my values and ethical consideration."*
INT1	*"The factors that I would say influenced my decision in boycotting are a lot of different ones. It could be anything from ethical considerations, information online and on news outlets and also the community at large"*
INT1	*"Yes, my decision to boycott is based on personal values. It all is human rights, everyone is affected you know. Uhm its about social justice, ethical consumption and yeah, right and wrong."*
INT1	*"Yes, I feel that I boycotted due to both moral obligation and ethical responsibility to take stand against justice and support human rights."*
INT2	*"I'd say it's both your moral obligation and your ethical responsibility that is attached to boycotting."*
INT2	*"It's related to my values for sure. It's related to my moral code I would say, and like mostly because I believe that there is a right and wrong, and therefore I belive that everyone deserves to be treated fairly."*
INT4	*"I wouldn't necessarily say it's social influence. It's more about doing what I believe is right and not supporting what I believe to be the "wrong side" of things."*
INT4	*"Uh its basically that the values are very different from my own personal values and it doesn't reflect. So I mean the companies I boycott does not share my values, and therefore I do not support them by purchasing any products from them. But anyways, that's a lot of personal opinions in there."*
INT5	*"No, I would not say this social pressure again. It really comes down to the individual person and what they believe in, but I don't really feel pressured by other people. Maybe a lot of people that are not OK with the conflict that are not boycotting as much or they're not trying to, then they would probably like, feel pressured by their friends and they would feel like some guilt or shame. But like I said, if somebody is already doing it, then it's kind of like this peer pressure factor is not really there."*
INT6	*"I feel as if my decision to boycott is the ethically right actions you know. I feel good knowing that I am doing something, even the slightest can help."*
INT7	*"Uh, yeah. I mean, yes, like even though that you can be a bit influenced, the majority of it is personal values"*
INT7	*"Uh. Morally, because you know I have my own morals and I judge what's right and wrong for me and ethically I would say the same reason. Like it, you know, I can see what's happening and I know ethically it's wrong. It also must mean that morally it's wrong as well. But that's just how I view it. So I think the both of them go hand in hand if you think one thing is wrong ethically, then morally you can't say it's right because they kind of go together."*
INT8	*"My personal value is definitely play a a big role and they've been there since my upbringing since my childhood."*
INT9	*"I am doing it not because anyone is telling me to. I believe I have to boycott these brands cause i can do it as For what I believe is a good cause."*
INT10	*"And the reason I boycott in this situation is the ethical responsibility that I believe that I have, as a consumer. I think that I have the obligation to change my purchases and consumption, so my personal values. My personal values does not support this kind of behavior, so therefore I avoid these products."*
INT10	*"to buy from these brands, and supporting them financially, would not be ethical. This, aswell as my personal beliefs and values. I believe that what is happening is wrong, and therefore I decide to boycott."*
INT10	*"My choices are a direct reflection of my ethical beliefs and commitment to social responsibility."*

Appendix 14 – Psychological in Consumer Decisions (Emotional Drivers)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"Yes, my emotions have played the role in my decision-making process regarding boycotting as feeling of empathy, outrage and solidarity with affected communities can influence my actions."*
INT2	*"Obviously you get a sense of, like rage and anger.So like, obviously, now that we've gotten some type of information on what we can do.It's sort of a justice, that type of feeling and it's like fueled by anger outside."*
INT5	*"Yeah, I would say, yeah, I think there's a lot of anger I would say and a lot of sadness of course. So I would say emotions do play an important part. I would say it's part of humanity."*
INT6	*"Yeah, 100% emotions is the biggest motivator. When you see these posts, about what is going on in the conflict, you get affected. And when you get these emotions, you want to help in any way that you can, and that's why I boycott. Because you get sad, angry and all of that."*
INT6	*"You would certainly have a deep empathy and want to reinforce this like commitment to boycotting."*
INT9	*"It make you, like, sympathize a lot and that helps with boycotting."*
INT9	*"Like for now, if I boycott something, umm and I truly believe that it's going to make a change, then I would do it out of sympathy and anger"*
INT10	*"Emotions are a big driver, especially anger and sadness when I learn about the extent of a company's involvement in unethical practices. These emotions motivate me to maintain my stance on boycotting, even when it's hard at times. I just remind myself about the conflict, how it makes me feel, and then I remain in my decision."*

Appendix 15 – Psychological in Consumer Decisions (Self Perception)

Participants	Quotes
INT3	*"So it's my, it's the first time I'm doing it and I feel very happy and proud that I'm doing it because. I know it's for a good purpose."*
INT4	*"I wouldn't necessarily say it's social influence. It's more about doing what I believe is right and not supporting what I believe to be the "wrong side" of things."*
INT6	*"I feel as if my decision to boycott is the ethically right actions you know. I feel good knowing that I am doing something, even the slightest can help."*
INT7	*"Like I was talking about before about ethical and just like moral values and how I see myself."*
INT9	*"But knowing, I can make a change and contribute in any way then I would say It makes me feel like a better person."*

Appendix 16 – Consumer Involvement (Future Choices)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"Its a hard question to answer, because I cannot see myself buying them within the close future, but if they stop all of this, I can see myself buying the items in the future."*
INT1	*"Yes, I would still boycott these companies as long as they're still doing what they do and as long as they don't solve the issue. So in short, as long as the companies still support the conflict, the boycotting action from me will stay the same. Until the unethical actions stop."*
INT2	*"I am not sure about that, I wouldn't actively boycott the brands, but I would not actively purchase them either. If I would get a coca-cola in a meal, I would not change it to something else, like I am doing now. But I do not think I would go and buy it at the time."*
INT2	*"I can see myself definitely continuing to boycott."*
INT3	*"Umm, moving forward, I will definitely aim or like try to boycott as much as I as I possibly can, but I'm not going to make 100% promise that I'm never going to use this product."*
INT3	*"I don't want to predict what my future actions are going to be. However, I will try to limit my my purchase of these products. However, I'm not going to sit here and say I'm never going to purchase it ever again in my life. That's not what I'm saying, however, in it's gonna be in high moderation. I would probably use these products. However, it's not something that I will engage on in daily as I may be used to before."*
INT4	*"Even if the conflict ends, doesn't change that they were supporting the wrong side of things. That doesn't change. If the company takes active changes and actions like rebuilding. But it will take a lot for me to go back to purchasing their product."*
INT5	*"I'll go but like. Other than that, I don't see myself like, purchasing the product again. Like I said, it is, uh, it just comes down to how the Companies actions and how they react from today in the future."*
INT5	*"Like I said, McDonald's have and Starbucks have been known to be like to continue with the same the same action. So there's no need to go back to companies like them. Since they haven't changed or taken action during this time, I feel like it would be "fake"."*
INT6	*"From what I can say right now, it would be hard to start consuming these products again. I don't have trust for those companies. I would say there has to be a change within the companies. Because other companies can take over the industry."*
INT7	*"Yeah, I'll keep boycotting those food products as long as there's a connection with the conflict. It's not just about the conflict itself, but about the companies understanding that their actions have consequences."*
INT7	*"So I guess I would still be boycotting, but it wouldn't necessarily be for the same reasons. Now it would just be that I just don't want to buy that anymore because of their previous actions."*
INT8	*"Those that I'm boycotting, I don't think I'll support them ever."*
INT8	*"They can't do anything to make me go back. I don't know. Like I'm gonna purchase and eat something else instead."*
INT9	*"I don't see myself going back to those brands after the conflict ends. For me, boycotting is about taking a stand against what I believe is wrong. Just because a brand might not currently be involved in something negative doesn't erase what they did in the past."*
INT10	*"I see myself continuing to boycott as long as the underlying reasons for the boycott remain. If the situation changes or if companies genuinely takes action against it, I might reconsider. "*
INT10	*"It would depend on the company's actions during and after the conflict. Ending support for unethical practices would be crucial, but so would taking steps to make up for their actions. They cant just change in one second and think that we s consumer would forget. If a brand demonstrates genuine change and commitment to ethical practices, I might consider supporting them again. However, trust would need to be rebuilt over time."*

Appendix 17 – Consumer Involvement (Intensity of Engagement)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*" I have gained deeper understanding of the complexities of this conflict and its impact. Ohh factors such as increase awareness, education and engagement. Yeah, like there's a lot of stuff that changed my point of views, especially as well having discussions with other people."*
INT2	*" You don't have to have big powers in politics or a lot of money for you to make a change. That's really what kind of motivate me to try to make a change."*
INT2	*"Like I mentioned before, I did not really believe in boycotting. I thought it was just a petty way of people getting at corporations for no valid reason, but now that I'm seeing what it can do and the big changes it can make, I've definitely changed my perception of boycotting."*
INT3	*"showing the progress of boycotting it makes me, you know, it makes me want to boycott more and it does affect me to continue in my journey."*
INT3	*"And when you also see that, uh, the actions that you're doing are impacting businesses in a in a great and not to a greater extent, then you feel more motivated."*
INT4	*"So in discussions, when people are discussing different brands to boycott and so on, I am getting more educated. And thought to myself that that's new information I didn't know about this. Now I'm even more motivated to boycott them. Umm in that sense."*

Appendix 18 – Standards for Ethical Business Practices (Corporate Accountability)

Participants	Quotes
INT1	*"You need to look first of all address the problem directly. "What is the problem?". Why are these people boycotting once you know the problem?. From there you should start solving it."*
INT2	*"Well, the first thing they can do is stop pretending like they don't know what's going on and not releasing any statements the way they're communicating with the society is more of like as if they're responding to an A chat bot, for example, there is no emotions and authenticity to it, so if there were a bit more honest and open with their consumers, then possibly there would be a bigger change, I would say."*
INT3	*"I think it's not about communication, it's about action. At this point they need to put what they want to say into action..... Maybe as time goes by, we'll see about my my feelings towards the situation, but if they just put it into action, that's how they can communicate"*
INT5	*"I would say I'm gonna have to see proof that they are not contributing anymore and don't think just empty words are gonna do anything. To be honest, I would say action like a sincere apology. But other than that, don't really think anything would help."*
INT6	*"So as long as the company values does not align with mine, I cannot see myself consuming any products from them. But if the companies "come clean" and apologize and all this, and acknowledging their fault in this, then maybe they can regain my trust and loyalty."*
INT7	*"..by taking actions towards a better morals."*
INT9	*"like they would have to stop being main actors in the conflict. Like they, I would say like stop completely supporting the conflict. completely cutting all relations. That would be the only way."*
INT10	*"By being transparent and also to see that they need to change some stuff. Ofcourse, all of the companies are not fully ethical and perfect. Companies need to show not only that they are aware of the issues but also that they are taking concrete steps to address them. Publicly changing policies, supporting ethical practices, and being transparent about everuthung is very important to me. They can't just issues statements that they are doing stuff wrong, actions are as important."*