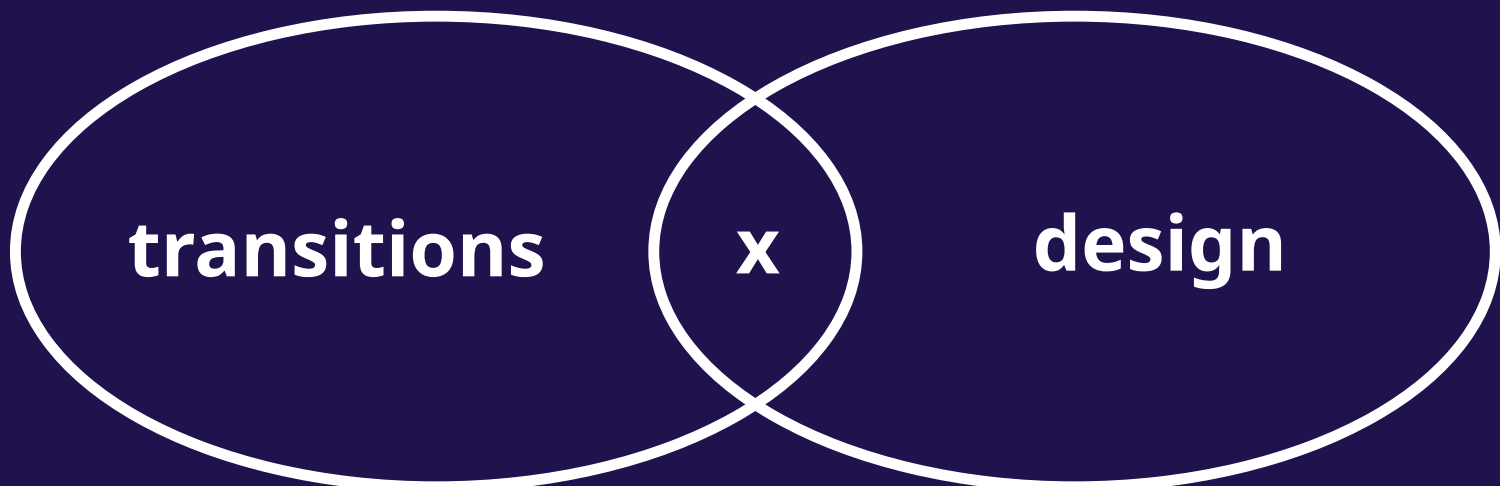


FRAMING FOR THE PROTEIN TRANSITION

Eight pathways to foster plant-based diets through design



PROBLEM DEFINITION

Meat and dairy mimicking has been the most popular strategy in the plant-based protein transition, representing a dominant 'design frame'. These analogous products come with several risks. Complementary to transition studies, design considers behavioral and material dimensions of the environment influencing consumers' dietary decisions. By analysing existing consumer interventions in the Netherlands, we seek to identify prevalent design frames ('i.e. strategies for intervention') in the Dutch protein transition. We elucidate and examine alternative pathways to foster the transition, informing on more effective ways forward.

Which transition design frames are prevalent in consumer interventions that foster the plant-based protein transition?

METHOD qualitative frame analysis of 62 consumer interventions + 8 expert interviews



Units of observation

Unit of analysis

WHAT	Transition Design Frame	
	HOW	OUTCOME
design interventions	behavior change mechanism + worldview	(societal-behavioral) transition impact

RESULTS: 8 categories of consumer interventions fostering plant-based diets

Tasty Doppelgangers

Supporting existing consumption patterns with a convenient, responsible alternative

ISSUE Consumers wish to continue eating as they are used to, due to ingrained habits and neophobia

CHANGE MECHANISM Fit and conform strategy: mimic animal-based proteins with plant-based alternatives (high-tech + market driven).

Silent Steering

Supporting consumers discreetly with responsible choice architecture

ISSUE Most food environments currently still promote animal-based products, pulling consumers towards these options.

CHANGE MECHANISM Alter the choice architecture to steer behaviour in a certain direction, without prohibiting any choices (nudging).

Gentle Guidance

Giving the conscious consumer a helping hand

ISSUE Many consumers do not know what a responsible diet is or how to cook plant-based.

CHANGE MECHANISM Offer information and practical guidance to foster consumers' competences through changes in skills, knowledge or decision tools (boosting).

Be the Transition

Showing everybody can be a changemaker, by joining a movement

ISSUE Consumers find it difficult to change their lifestyles for a larger purpose, such as the environment, animal welfare or their own health, by themselves.

CHANGE MECHANISM Invite them to join a movement and adopt the identity of a changemaker, to help them feel empowered to make a change and feel part of a community.

Shifting Meaning

Celebrating plants as meaningful and appealing sources of protein

ISSUE Consumers regard meat and dairy as essential and meaningful elements of their meals.

CHANGE MECHANISM Release 'meat as the centerpiece': demonstrate plant-based foods and eating practices as meaningful, tasty and fun.

Cracking the Discourse

Challenging the status quo through public provocation

ISSUE Consumers strategically ignore their cruelty towards the environment, animals and public health, in order to sustain animal protein consumption.

CHANGE MECHANISM Confront the public in a provocative or shocking way to open up the debate and create room for alternative futures.

Changing the Rules of the Game

Modifying the food system through coercion and regulation

ISSUE Current food related regulations and policies sustain animal protein consumption.

CHANGE MECHANISM Public and private authorities, such as governmental actors, retailers and schools should regulate the market.

On to the Ecocene

Restoring our connection with nature through alternative food networks

ISSUE Consumers have lost touch with nature, leading to high consumption patterns and diets dominated by animal products.

CHANGE MECHANISM Creating alternative food networks that are transparent, local and circular, where farmers and consumers collaborate - qualitative over quantitative growth.

FINDINGS



To transcend the meat substitution path, **market regulation** and **cultural interventions** are the most strategic avenues to pursue in the protein transition.



Opportunities for novel pathways involve a) **inclusivity**, b) **system breakdown** and c) **integrating multiple design frames** into single consumer interventions.



Consumer interventions are strategic 'resources' in transitions: they support behavior change at a micro-level, fostering societal shifts at a macro-level.



Design provides a **complementary lens** to transition studies, by focusing on human-made, material interventions as manifestations of framing and as strategic 'resources' in transitions.