Animal-free meat and dairy What does the public think?

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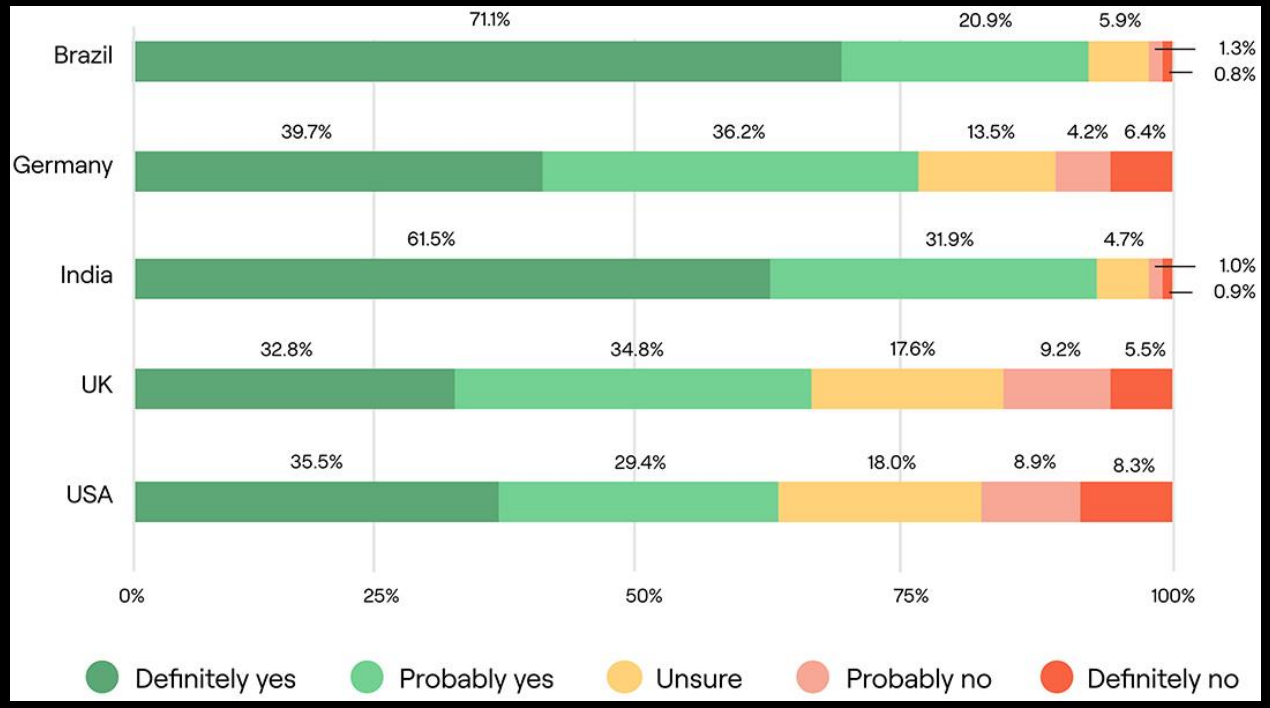
Seven studies of consumer attitudes towards percision fermentation and cultured meat

- Don’t have a cow, man: Consumer Acceptance of Animal-free Dairy products in five countries
- Precision fermentation: is the world ready for animal-free dairy?
- Consumer Acceptance of Cultured Meat: An Updated Review (2018–2020)
- Alternative proteins, evolving attitudes: Comparing consumer attitudes to plant-based and cultured meat in Belgium in two consecutive years.
- Cultured Meat in Germany: Consumer Acceptance and A Nomenclature Experiment
- A Survey on Polish Consumers’ Perceptions of Meat Produced from Stem Cells in Vitro
- Does the future of meat in France depend on cultured muscle cells? Answers from different consumer segments

Willingness to try is high

“Would you try animal-free cheese?”

- Probably/definately yes: 79%
- Higher in Germany than UK
- Favorite word: ‘animal-free dairy’



From: Don’t have a Cow, Man: Consumer Acceptance of Animal-Free Dairy Products in Five Countries

The same is true for cultured meat

- In most countries, a majority says they are ‘willing to try’
- Germany: 60% willing to try
- Belgium: 39.3% willing to buy

Drivers of acceptance: societal

Animal welfare

People – including meat eaters – are deeply conflicted about the morality of killing animals for food

Environmental benefits

Particularly greenhouse gas emissions;
but also land use and water use

To a lesser extent:
Feeding the world

Drivers of acceptance: personal

Precision fermentation:

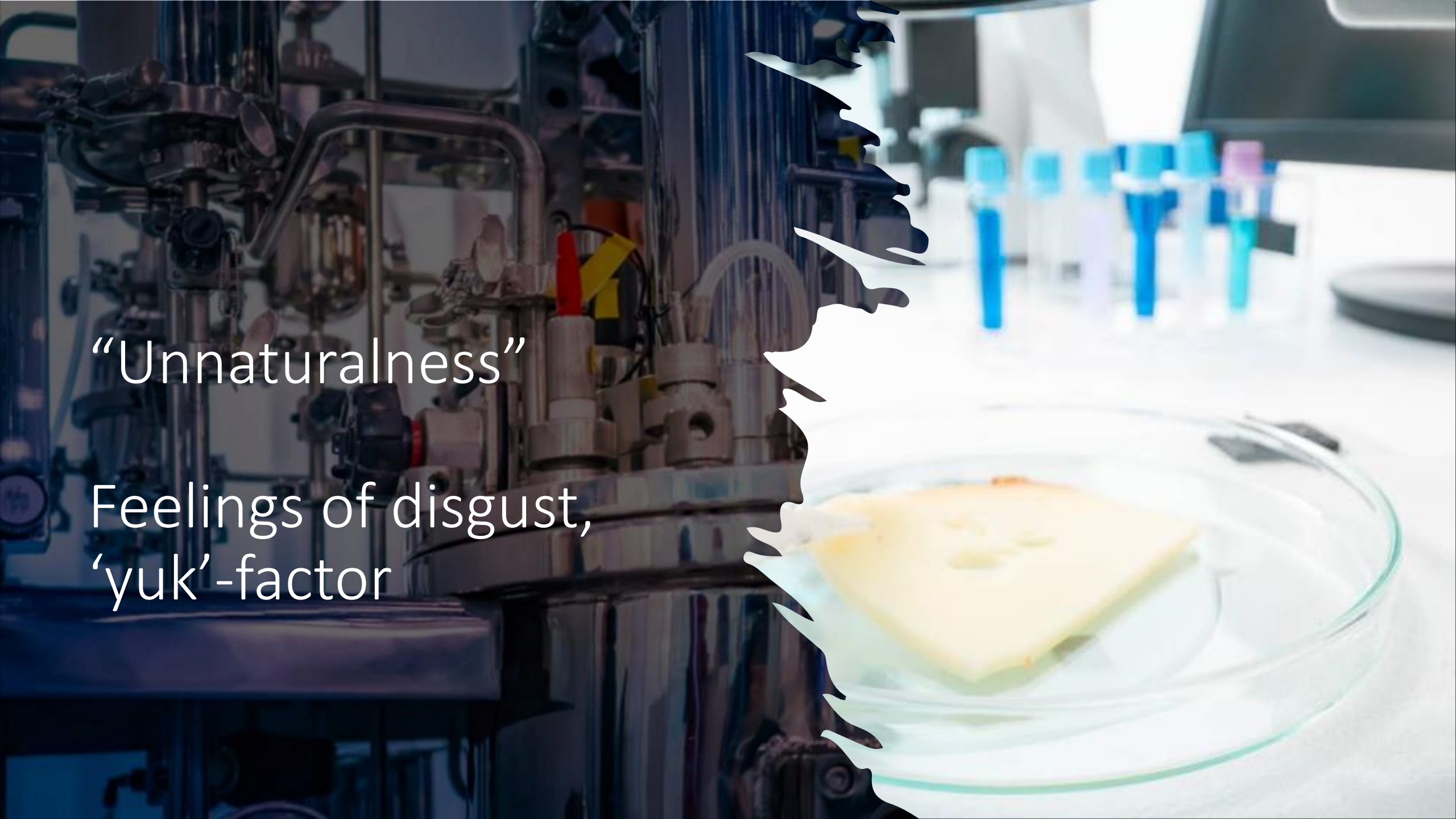
Expectations of better taste (better than plant-based proteins)

Healthiness

Drivers of rejection


Unfamiliarity, lack of knowledge

Food safety; impact on health



“Unnaturalness”

Feelings of disgust,
‘yuk’-factor

“Unnaturalness” revisited

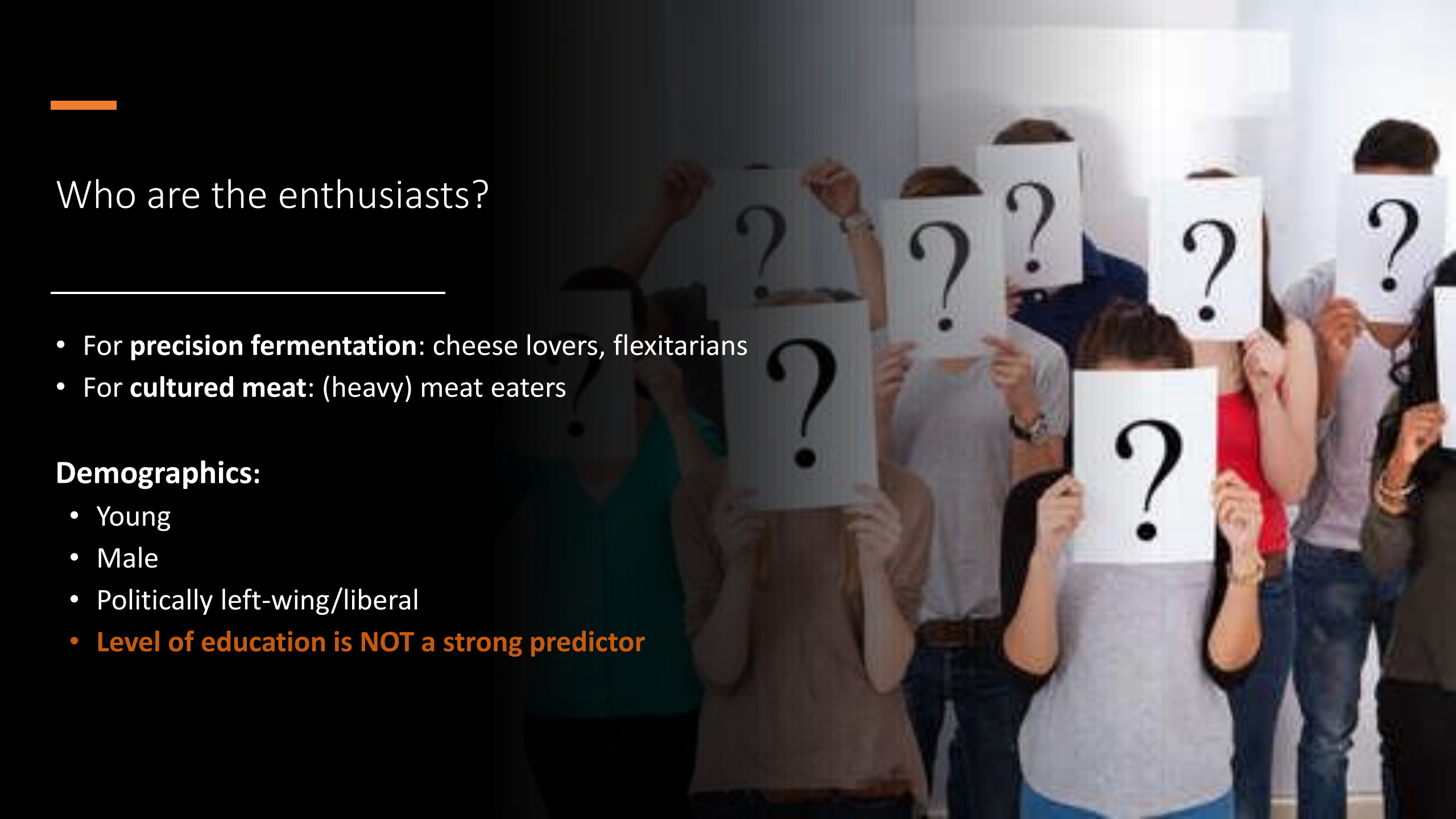
- Many agree that it is ‘unnatural’ – but are nevertheless willing to try. ‘Naturalness’ is not very important to them
- Feelings of unfamiliarity and norm violation are often rationalized as ‘it is not natural’

Who are the enthusiasts?

- For **precision fermentation**: cheese lovers, flexitarians
- For **cultured meat**: (heavy) meat eaters

Demographics:

- Young
- Male
- Politically left-wing/liberal
- **Level of education is NOT a strong predictor**



Where are the enthusiasts?

- **Between country-differences**: acceptance is higher in progressive pragmatic parts of Europe (The Netherlands) than in countries with more traditional values (Poland)
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- **Within country-differences**: higher in Flanders than Wallonia; higher in urban areas


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The challenge:
How are we going to tell progressive liberals with high ethical and ecological concerns that **gene-editing** is involved?

Messaging to EU-policy makers

- Political costs -> fear of losing voters
  - Fear is mediated by perceptions of public opinion
    - Perceptions can be false: politicians mistakenly think that the public doesn't accept it

From: Promoting the acceptability of nuclear power among EU-decision makers. Dr Inari Fjärd and Dr Mirjam Vossen


We have to demonstrate to politicans that the public likes it!

Messaging: do’s

1. Focus on the **benefits for animal welfare and the environment.** Explain HOW animal farming is related to greenhouse gas emissions, land use, water use

2. Highlight **personal benefits**: frame it as a solution to existing **food safety** problems; emphasize the benefits for **health**

3. Give neutral, factual, non-opinionated **expert information**. Let people make up their own minds.

Messaging don’ts

1. **Avoid technical language and imagery**.
    - Avoid ‘DNA’, (“Too ‘techy’ and ‘creepy’”)
    - Avoid highlighting the technological/ scientific aspect of cultured meat
    - Avoid “lab-grown meat”. Avoid test tubes, lab coats, syringes.
2. **Don’t talk about ‘naturalness’:** “messages targeting the perceived unnaturalness **failed** to persuade consumers…”