White Rose Research Online

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York

Deposited via The University of Sheffield.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/137496/

Version: Published Version

Article:
House, J. (2019) Modes of eating and phased routinisation: Insect-based food practices in the Netherlands. Sociology, 53 (3). pp. 451-467. ISSN: 0038-0385

https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518797498

Reuse
This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. This licence allows you to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as you credit the authors for the original work. More information and the full terms of the licence here: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
University of Sheffield
UNIVERSITY of York

Check for updates

Article

Sociology

Modes of Eating and Phased Routinisation: Insect-Based Food Practices in the Netherlands

Sociology
1–17
© The Author(s) 2018

Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/0038038518797498
journals.sagepub.com/home/soc

Jonas House
Wageningen University, The Netherlands and University of Sheffield, UK

Abstract

Sociological research on sustainable consumption has seen widespread application of theories of practice ('practice theories') as a means of transcending the limitations of epistemologically individualistic 'behaviour change' approaches. While in many ways the central insights of practice theories vis-a-vis consumption are now well established, this article argues that the approach holds further insights for sociological analysis of food consumption in general, and of novel foods in particular. Based on empirical research with consumers of a range of insect-based convenience foods in the Netherlands, this article introduces two practice-theoretic concepts – 'modes of eating' and 'phased routinisation' – which contribute to sociological theorisations of how food practices are established, maintained, interdepend and change. Beyond its theoretical contribution, the article substantively extends research literatures on the introduction, uptake and normalisation of insect-based and other novel foods.

Keywords

consumer acceptance, edible insects, entomophagy, insects, novel foods, routinisation, theories of practice

Introduction

Among current debates in the sociology of consumption, there are two prominent emphases: sustainable consumption, broadly conceived, and the development of theories of consumption which break with the orthodoxies of 'behaviour change' approaches (e.g. Mylan and Southerton, 2017; Shove, 2010). This article extends these debates by analysing the attempted introduction of a range of novel, purportedly more sustainable foods – insect-based convenience foods – into Dutch diets. Drawing on theories of practice

Corresponding author:
Jonas House, Sociology of Consumption and Households group, Wageningen University, De Leeuwenborch (Building 201), Hollandseweg 1, Wageningen, 6706 KN, Netherlands.
Email: jonas.house@wur.nl

('practice theories'), it introduces two concepts for the sociological analysis of food, and indicates how these may contribute to the conceptual resources of practice-theoretic research in general. The article's theoretical contribution is particularly useful, I argue, for analysis of the acceptance and routinisation of novel foods, helping to elaborate how positioning of foods as 'edible' is sociologically achieved rather than a purely psychological matter (cf. House, 2018b). The article also makes a substantive contribution to literatures on the introduction, uptake and normalisation of novel foods, indicating how the sociological constitution of established diets may inhibit novel foods' diffusion.

Practice theories are a loose grouping of related theories regarding the nature of 'the social' and of human activity (e.g. Schatzki, 2002; Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2016), which share a number of characteristics. Most prominent among these is their common contention that 'the social' is not situated in the mental activities of the individual, or in the determining influence of social structure, but rather at the level of social practice.

In these terms, social life is constituted of myriad interrelated social practices in which people participate: for example, those of driving, cooking or playing football. Thus for many (although not all) practice theories, it is practices themselves that represent the fundamental unit of social analysis (Nicolini, 2016). A practice can be understood as 'a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood' (Reckwitz, 2002: 250). Practices are constituted of a number of interconnected elements, including bodily and mental activities, objects or materials ('things'), practical, motivational and background knowledges, and emotional states (Reckwitz, 2002: 249). Despite conceptual and terminological differences between different practice theories (e.g. Nicolini, 2016), three key areas of theoretical confluence are identifiable.

First, practices do not exist in isolation: they are *related*. They are conducted amid, and shaped by, proximate practices. For example, the practice of eating breakfast could be shaped by shopping practices, work practices, childcare practices and so on, which may affect its content, location, timing and affective valence. These related practices themselves shape, and are shaped by, other practices. Social life may be understood as a web or 'mesh' (Schatzki, 2002) of interrelated, interdependent practices.

Second, practice theories are *recursive*. Practices are constitutive of 'the social', but 'the social' so constituted also shapes the performance of practices. A supermarket trip, for example, may be shaped by adjacent practices (e.g. work, social commitments) and contextual factors (e.g. the weather); in turn, the shopping trip shapes subsequent practices, whether eating-related or otherwise.

Third, stability in social affairs is conceived of as a *recurrent* achievement, an emergent effect of repeatedly performed social practices. These are not, as Shove et al. (2012) note, exact replications of each other. Rather, each performance of a practice is a distinct occurrence, which may or may not involve the same elements as previous performances. While the recurrent performance of a particular practice using the same constituent elements leads to a degree of social stability, such stability is essentially provisional. This is how practices afford modification and change over time. Gradual changes in the constituent elements of a practice lead to their mutual reshaping in and through the reconfiguration of practices as they are recurrently performed.

It has become commonplace to assert the conceptual advantages of practice theories over 'behaviour change' models of human activity (e.g. Shove, 2010), and practice-theoretic consumption research has proliferated. Although the widespread application of practice theories to diverse empirical studies of (un-)sustainable consumption has met with justifiable criticism (Evans, 2018), such theory remains, I argue, an insightful basis for analysis of food consumption.

Perhaps the most comprehensive practice-theoretic account of eating is that developed by Warde (2016), which foregrounds, inter alia, the role of routine, convention and 'the encompassing flow and sequence of action' in shaping food consumption (Warde, 2016: 150). Other research has emphasised the role of routine in food consumption (Wahlen, 2011), its social and contextual derivation (Delormier et al., 2009) and the interdependence of eating with other social practices (Halkier and Jensen, 2011). Food has been conceptualised as a 'nexus' point, at which a plethora of mundane daily practices are interconnected (Paddock, 2017).

Practice theories have been employed to understand how eating may change over time, for example with regards to the integration of new technologies (Truninger, 2011), the 'normalisation' of food types (Halkier, 2017) or the 'transition' to new dietary orientations such as veganism (Twine, 2018). Research has also investigated how diets may change or be changed with a specific focus on public health or increased sustainability (Sahakian and Wilhite, 2014). Such studies have substantiated a central argument of practice-theoretic analysis: that successful dietary change (whether in orientation, 'healthiness' or vis-a-vis the uptake of new foods or technologies) involves all related areas of food practice, and indeed a web of non-alimentary practices as well.

Despite these advances, however, there is a dearth of research investigating the integration of specific novel foods into established eating practices. This article addresses that subject, presenting empirical data from a research project investigating public acceptance of insects as food in the Netherlands.

Building on the work of Schatzki (2002) and Warde (2016), the article's principal objective is to offer a theoretical extension to practice theories as applied to the sociology of food. It does so by introducing two concepts: (1) modes of eating, which refers to the different ways in which eating is recurrently performed amid the prevailing configurations of social practice affecting one's diet; and (2) phased routinisation, which refers to the way in which longer-lasting shifts in food consumption are achieved as a result of significant, enduring modifications in the configurations of social practice affecting and constituting one's diet. Both concepts reflect the fundamental characteristics of practices discussed above. Modes of eating theorises how eating practices are constituted, emphasising their interrelation with other practices and their recursive, routine nature. Phased routinisation also incorporates the routine and relational aspects of eating, but elaborates more specifically how the recurrent performance of eating practices engenders change over time.

The two concepts are theoretical rather than empirical. Building on sociological insights into how food consumption is achieved amid a web of social practices (e.g. Warde, 2016), the concepts provide formal theorisation of *how*, in these terms, eating is conducted. The concept of modes of eating introduces a comparative analytic unit to practice-theoretic food research, which does not privilege particular eating events and

accounts for both routine and occasional consumption. Phased routinisation theorises how gradual dietary changes occur, introducing *periodisation* to practice-theoretic food research. The concepts are thus intended to develop the analytic resources available for the sociology of food, and potentially consumption more broadly. These points are elaborated in the discussion section of the article.

In addition to the article's central theoretical contribution, it also aims to shed light on the challenges faced by efforts to introduce more 'sustainable' foods to diets in Europe and the USA (the 'West'), and the substantive issue of whether, how and to what extent western consumers may adopt insects as food. I now explain this substantive focus.

Insects and Sustainable Consumption

In the context of global population growth and anthropogenic climate change, efforts to identify more sustainable protein sources are widespread. One such proposed solution is the use of insects as human food ('entomophagy') in the West, on the grounds that insects are relatively low in fat and high in nutrients, and that their production is significantly less harmful to the environment than that of conventional western meat animals (Van Huis et al., 2013). Yet despite the suggested benefits of insects as human food, a significant question remains: will people actually eat them?

Entomophagy is globally widespread, a point which is often emphasised by its western advocates (e.g. Van Huis et al., 2013). However, the wide range of non-western entomophagy practices are not the basis of recent European efforts (House, 2018a), which have been shaped by interactions between academia, business and policy since around 2006 (House, 2018b). Four main species – mealworms, buffalo worms, crickets and grasshoppers – are sold whole, powdered or processed into familiar product types, such as bread, cakes or pasta.[1] Processing and use of familiar products are argued to mitigate the 'yuck factor' and encourage consumption (House, 2018a). In contrast with media representations of insect-eating as a daring or shocking activity, western entomophagy advocates frame the practice in terms of healthiness and sustainability (e.g. Van Huis et al., 2013), an orientation reflected in consumers' reported motivations (House, 2016). Development of familiar-looking insect-based products reflects the intended consumers: people who deliberately moderate their meat intake, but otherwise eat a largely conventional diet (House, 2018b). Of course, for many westerners, insect-based foods are still unusual and unappealing. However, I argue that widespread resistance to culturally unusual foods is of less immediate analytic or practical relevance than the interest of 'early adopters', who represent the entry point for novel foods into new locations (House, 2016).

Such considerations shaped the Insecta range of insect-based convenience foods, which are central to this article (see House, 2018b for detail). One of the most prominent insect-based foods in Europe at the time of research (2015–2016), Insecta products were sold in (~550) branches of the Dutch supermarket chain Jumbo throughout 2015. The range – which included five products, such as burgers, nuggets and schnitzel – were essentially vegetarian convenience foods, except for the 14 per cent ground-up buffalo worms or mealworms they contained.[2] Targeted at meat-reducing consumers, Insecta were produced and sold in the same manner as more conventional 'meat

replacers' (*vleesvervangers*). These included plant-based burgers, sausages and chicken-style pieces, as well as schnitzel- or burger-type products – often containing nuts or cheese – which sought to imitate meat less closely.

Consumers of Insecta are the analytic focus of this article, which addresses the limitations of current research on western 'consumer acceptance' of insects as food. Such research largely conceptualises acceptance of novel foods in cognitive terms, underemphasising the social and contextual nature of food consumption. Studies accounting for social context tend to be based on imaginary eating events, and research which engages people in 'actual' insect consumption is chiefly conducted in decontextualised and/or unrealistic environments (see House, 2016).

This article directly addresses these limitations. It adopts a theoretical approach that can accommodate the social, practical and contextual derivation of food consumption, and empirically engages with people who have voluntarily purchased and consumed insect-based foods.

Methodology

The research design sought congruence with a practice-theoretic account of eating in two key ways. First, by taking eating practices as the locus of analysis: specifically, those into which Insecta fitted, or were supposed to fit. Second, by investigating 'actual' eating practices, rather than people's reported attitudes or speculations regarding future behaviour. The project received ethical approval from the author's university, and participants provided informed consent at all stages of the research.

Participants were recruited through cards placed in packs of Insecta sold in Jumbo during September and October 2015. Interviews were conducted with 40 participants regarding their consumption of Insecta and their other eating practices. Sampling was purposive: in keeping with the analytic objectives, participants were sought who had voluntarily purchased and consumed Insecta (see House, 2016).

This article draws on follow-up research with 20 of these participants. Six to 12 months after the initial stage of research, follow-up interviews were conducted. These investigated whether and why (not) participants' consumption of Insecta had continued, the particular eating practices that Insecta had (or had not) been integrated within, and more general aspects of participants' eating practices, particularly around daily cooking and regular food shopping.

Of these 20 participants, 17 then completed a two-week food diary. Participants photographed their daily main meals and food shopping done during the two-week period. The diaries sought to mitigate difficulties with recollection of mundane practices (cf. Martens, 2012) and provide visual data on shopping and cooking. They were also the basis for subsequent detailed discussion about domestic food practices, conducted within and around participants' kitchens. This 'situated' the discussion, enabling participants to point out relevant things (e.g. kitchen equipment).

Although the question of whether or not people are able to provide adequate post hoc accounts of social practices is debated (e.g. Hitchings, 2012; Martens, 2012), the diaries and interviews nevertheless provided crucial insights into how Insecta fitted into the practical reality of food provisioning and consumption. The diaries also gave insight into

the rhythms and routines of mundane food practices *over time*, a point which, Warde (2016: 175, note 1) suggests, remains relatively understudied.

Of these 17 participants, some took part in accompanied shopping ($n = 12$), cooking ($n = 13$) and eating ($n = 10$). Shopping was intended to be broadly representative of participants' typical shopping trips, and cooking/eating were intended to be broadly representative of participants' mundane evening meal preparation/consumption. These 'go-alongs' (Kusenbach, 2003) were intended to provide insight into participants' food practices as they were performed, to prompt discussion, and to allow elaboration of earlier remarks.

Of course, the go-alongs did not provide unmediated access to participants' 'real' food practices. My presence introduced a degree of artificiality to the proceedings, and participants were required to explain themselves during practices that would typically involve limited rational deliberation and reflexivity. Nevertheless they helped to add depth and detail to understanding of participants' food practices.

Eating Practices and Insect-Based Foods

Drawing on empirical material from the Insecta project, the article now introduces two concepts – modes of eating and phased routinisation – which extend practice-theoretic accounts of eating. In so doing, the article also explains how the constitution of the practice of eating affects the integration of novel foods into established diets. The two concepts pertain to the synchronic and diachronic aspects of food consumption respectively.

On the synchronic dimension – the current, prevailing manner of an individual's mundane eating practices – different *modes of eating* are evident, which bear upon the extent to which particular novel foods are consumed. Modes of eating are ways in which the practice of eating is organised amid and through particular configurations of practices, both alimentary and non-alimentary. Modes of eating demonstrate the recursivity of practices: eating practices involve individual agency, but are shaped by proximate practices. Eating practices, in turn, shape other practices.

On the diachronic dimension – the stability and change of practices over time – a process of *phased routinisation* is evident. This conceptualises how meaningful, enduring shifts in eating practices are engendered by longer-lasting changes in prevailing configurations of practices, both alimentary and non-alimentary. Phases also have a bearing on the extent to which novel foods are consumed.

Both concepts are argued to have substantive and broader theoretical relevance, discussed in the closing section of the article.

Modes of Eating

This section introduces the concept of modes of eating. This builds on Warde's (2016) notion of eating as a 'compound practice'. Some social practices, such as driving, have relatively clearly identifiable boundaries and constituent elements. Others, such as business practices, involve the integration of different practices in their performance (such as the practices of taking part in meetings, emailing and compiling reports). These

are *integrative* practices (Schatzki, 2002). Eating, for Warde (2016: 86), is a complex practice with fluid boundaries; it is 'subject to, and also a complex corollary of, the intersecting injunctions of several relatively autonomous integrative practices'. Eating is thus a *compound* practice, shaped by 'adjacent, complementary, but also invasive integrative practices' (Warde, 2016: 50) such as working, leisure or childcare.

As a compound practice, eating is 'weakly coordinated and weakly regulated' (Warde, 2016: 10) and thus can be conducted in innumerable ways. *Modes of eating* theorises how performances of the compound practice of eating are organised, both for specific eating events (e.g. a birthday meal), or sequences of eating events (e.g. weekday breakfasts).

A mode of eating (henceforth 'mode') is defined as a particular configuration of (integrative) practices, both alimentary and non-alimentary, which is organised in relation to a particular teleoaffective structure. For Schatzki (2002: 80), a teleoaffective structure is 'a range of normativized and hierarchically ordered ends, projects, and tasks, to varying degrees allied with normativized emotions and even moods' that structure a particular practice. Compound practices, such as eating, also have a teleoaffective structure. That of a 'business lunch' likely differs from that of a 'romantic dinner'.

Teleoaffective structure is a distinguishing characteristic of modes because different modes may be constituted of, and conducted amid, the same configuration of practices (e.g. work, shopping, exercise), yet have different ends or emotional valences. For example, a meal shared with visiting friends on a Wednesday may be constituted by and among a similar configuration of practices as a mundane evening meal the following day, but oriented to hospitality and conviviality rather than ease and convenience. Conversely, different enactments of the same mode of eating may involve variations in the practices they are constituted of, and conducted amid, but remain part of a particular mode of eating due to a common, distinct teleoaffective structure. For example, one may buy lunch daily from different places, while the relevant mode of eating remains 'lunchtime at work'.

The configuration of practices and teleoaffective structure that constitute a mode of eating may be particular and one-off, or recurrent. The concept of modes does not delineate time involved or degree of recurrence. Thus, a meal eaten out in a restaurant for one's birthday may be considered part of a specific mode of eating, contrasted with the daily consumption of the same breakfast foods, which may be considered another mode. (The configuration of people, practices and places may be unique in the first instance but recurrent in the second.) The purpose of identifying modes is to provide a fundamental analytic unit which can enable comparative analysis, incorporating both highly routine and more fluid eating behaviours.

In keeping with the practice-theoretic conception of social life as recurrent – constantly reproduced through the repeated performance of social practices – the concept of modes is in theoretical terms confined to single eating events, yet which may be recurrently performed, thus *producing stability* or the effect of a mode enduring over a longer time (e.g. 'lunchtimes while working at Company Z'). Thus, it is possible to talk about a *prevailing mode* of eating, but it must be acknowledged that this is an emergent outcome of repeated performances of particular eating events conducted as part of the same mode, and not as a result of a mode having a distinct, enduring ontological reality outside of its constant reproduction.

The concept of modes is used here to analyse eating events involving a particular range of insect-based foods and thus does not, a priori, analytically privilege particular eating events (e.g. dinners). However, Insecta were, with one exception, eaten exclusively during evening meals, so comparison between evening meals is the primary analytic focus here. Modes are intended to be a cross-cutting analytic concept for the purposes of comparative analysis. They may be deployed to study 'modes of breakfasting', for example, or how daily practices structure differences between 'daily modes' of eating, depending on one's analytic objectives. However, the present focus is how modes affect the integration of a range of novel foods into established dietary practices.

The following section illustrates how different modes are performed, and how these are constituted through particular configurations of practice (both food-related and otherwise) with particular teleoaffective structures. It then explains how modes had a bearing on the ways in and extent to which Insecta products were integrated into established dietary practices.

How Modes Are Performed

Participants' diets generally exhibited one or two *prevailing modes* of eating. Also identifiable were *routine variations* to the prevailing mode(s), as well as occasional *planned or unplanned deviations* from the prevailing mode(s). I illustrate these concepts primarily with examples from one participant, Gijs, providing supplementary examples from other participants. Gijs, like most participants, did not routinely consume Insecta, but he offers the best single example of modes of eating.

Gijs lived alone in the suburbs of a small city. He was divorced, and had adult children who lived elsewhere with their families; his girlfriend lived in a larger city, 20 minutes away by car. He worked full-time in the region, to which he also drove. Following a high cholesterol diagnosis, he had stopped eating meat in the last year. However, he continued to eat fish twice a week, and was trying different meat replacers in his evening meals.

Gijs's evening meals were, broadly speaking, arranged into three main modes. The first, which I term the 'mundane' mode, was generally operative on weekday evenings, when Gijs ate alone at home. These meals were drawn from a limited repertoire, were often of a similar format (the traditional Dutch potato–meat–vegetable 'trinity') and typically involved meat replacers.

The mundane mode emphasised functionality, ease and convenience. Provisioning, preparation and consumption of these meals had to fit in around Gijs's various commitments, such as going to work, dog walking and playing sport. Sport on Tuesday evenings exerted particular influence on his evening meal, necessitating a swift meal after work which was not – in Gijs's terms – too 'heavy', and thus usually involving 'light' things like stir-fried noodles and vegetables, rather than 'heavy' things like beans and potatoes. Provisioning for mundane meals chiefly took place in conjunction with other activities, such as dog walking close to a nearby town.

Every Friday Gijs's son would visit, bringing Gijs's young grandson. Gijs would cook a simple oven-based meal that could be prepared with little time and effort, which could be left in the oven while he played with his grandson. This 'routine variation' was shaped and constituted by practices which affected Gijs's mundane mode of eating more broadly,

such as work, dog walking and food shopping. The crucial difference to 'normal' evenings was the presence of family members that Gijs wanted to spend as much time with as possible.

In contrast to the functional orientation to eating on a Tuesday before playing sport, Friday's evening meal – while substantively relatively similar, involving simple and convenient food – was oriented towards familial love and care (cf. Meah and Jackson, 2017). As such, this routine variation can be understood as a distinct but related mode to the prevailing one. Related, because of the widely shared configuration of constitutive practices; distinct, because of its discrete teleoaffective structure.

Another prevailing mode was the 'elaborate' mode generally operative when Gijs spent time with his girlfriend, either at his house or hers. This involved a more extended repertoire; the negotiation of 'menus' (Warde, 2016) between Gijs and his girlfriend; the consumption of fish and/or alcohol; eating outside; shopping in different places from normal; and selection of food based on tastiness, rather than ease of preparation or relative inexpensiveness.

The configuration of practices that constituted these meals was more fluid, involving both their schedules as well as shared trips to different places. Consequently, different ingredients were found and experimented with, which occurred markedly less frequently in the mundane mode due to the relative fixity of shopping locations and the emphases on speed and convenience. The teleoaffective structure was clearly different from the mundane mode, with its functional emphasis, yet was similar to the family visit on Fridays, in the sense that in both cases food was a means of 'making love' (Miller, 1998). However, what distinguished the more elaborate mode of eating was that its specific enactments of love and care were achieved through longer, more elaborate meals (both in preparation and consumption), contra the oven dishes of the Friday family visits.

Gijs's diet also exhibited the occasional 'unplanned deviation'. For example, when returning late from a music festival in Belgium he was unable to conduct typical shopping and cooking, and so bought a ready-to-cook lasagne from a Belgian supermarket. He reported seldom eating such a product, which was more expensive than he would typically find acceptable. However, his eating on this day was shaped by the practices of festival attendance and travelling, which meant he arrived home late, could not shop in his usual places and did not have much time to cook. A specific configuration of practices thus affected and constituted eating, and had a specific teleoaffective orientation towards ease and convenience. This constituted a mode of eating, an unplanned deviation from the mundane mode.

Apropos of their main evening meals, other participants also exhibited different modes of eating. Typically these were most pronounced among participants who lived separately from their partners, for whom a mundane domestic mode often contrasted with a more elaborate one that was operative during shared meals. Among co-resident families, a single mode tended to prevail, although others were evident, including routine variations and un/planned deviations.

Other single participants' diets exhibited clear modes. Femke, for example, had a mundane mode, shopping on Monday evenings for her meals until Friday. Its teleoaffective structure prioritised convenience, healthiness and affordability. By contrast, the 'Friday shop' was part of a distinct mode of eating conducted over the weekend, whose

principal teleoaffective orientation was towards enjoyment. This generally accommodated more elaborate meals, indulgent ingredients and alcohol. Planned deviations included visits to her mother's house on Sundays every few weeks, and unplanned deviations included impromptu meals or drinks with friends. Both involved different configurations of eating-related and other social practices, with different teleoaffective structures (such as family care or socialising): that is, different modes of eating.

Modes of Eating and Insect-Based Foods

For Gijs, Insecta products were a candidate for incorporation within his prevailing, mundane mode of eating, and were situated within the configuration of practices which constituted it. Indeed, this applied to almost all participants (exceptions being occasional consumption of Insecta at barbecues or other domestic social events). Yet Gijs had not eaten Insecta more than once, as he did not like the taste or the 'sponge-like' texture. Participants who, like Gijs, consumed Insecta as one-among-many meat replacers – which is to say, almost all of them – required Insecta to be superior in terms of the key selection criteria for inclusion in relevant food practices (price, taste, availability) that in practice they seldom met. At around €3.95 per pack, Insecta products were more expensive than most alternatives. Typically they were only intermittently available, and their taste was in general not highly regarded (House, 2016). A comparably priced plant-based range was often preferred. Although environmental and health considerations were prominent reported motivations for trying Insecta, conventional criteria (e.g. price) were operative in repeat consumption, for which Insecta was judged in relation to potential alternatives (House, 2016, 2018a).

Occasionally Insecta products were eaten regularly (once a week, or slightly less frequently) as part of a mundane mode. Jan, for example, found their price acceptable, their taste enjoyable and their availability consistent. Despite his long-term vegetarianism, he regarded insect consumption as ethically acceptable (see House, in press). Although his wife Roos ate meat, they arranged cooking in such a way that they shared most parts of a meal, and he could eat Insecta or other meat replacers while she ate meat.

In a single case Insecta was accommodated by addition of a routine variation to a prevailing mode of eating. Pieter and his wife Mirjam ate meat- and fish-based meals from a relatively limited repertoire during the week. A routine variation was their 'vegetarian day', involving a similar configuration of practices to their mundane mode (the same weekly shopping trip in a particular supermarket, work and childcare obligations, kitchen, cooking equipment and culinary competencies). The difference was that it involved the consumption of plant-based meat replacers rather than meat. Thus, in addition to involving different materials, this mode had a different teleoaffective structure to the mundane mode of eating (i.e. ethically, environmentally oriented, at the expense of the preferred taste of meat).

A second routine variation was also added: 'no meat Monday'. This was, in terms of configuration of practices and teleoaffective orientation, very similar to 'vegetarian day'. However, on this day Pieter ate Insecta products – considered neither meat nor vegetarian – and Mirjam, averse to insect consumption, ate typical 'vegetarian day' meat replacers.

Attention to modes of eating, and how they are configured (both in terms of constitutive practices and teleoaffective structures), indicates that the integration of novel foods into established dietary practices is dependent upon, and affected by, such modes. Positioning of insect-based foods within mundane modes subjected them to relevant selection criteria (e.g. price, taste), on which they often struggled to compete; insect-based foods could be integrated into mundane modes, or new modes, but this involved processes of negotiation that were seldom undertaken.

The concept of modes helps to furnish an understanding of how routines in food consumption are constituted, relate to each other and 'hang together'. A second analytic concept, phased routinisation, introduces a degree of historicity to the analysis.

Phased Routinisation

Here I introduce the concept of 'phases', conceptualising how diets are constituted through social practices. A phase is defined as a largely stable configuration of particular modes of eating (themselves modes of arranging the compound practice of eating by way of configurations of integrative practices, both food-related and otherwise). A phase thus refers to the prevailing manner in which one eats, including the mundane mode(s) and accounting for routine variations (e.g. gym attendance on Tuesdays) and occasional un/planned deviations (e.g. spontaneous drinks with a friend one evening which disturb planned eating). Although the present explanation focuses on individual diets, the concept also applies to larger social units (e.g. couples, households) who share relatively stable modes of eating organised in routinised phases.

Phases are conceptually distinct from specific time periods such as months or years (although a phase may certainly be measured in these). Rather, a phase refers to an enduring (which is to say, recurrent) configuration of practices which constitutes the prevailing manner of eating at a given point during the life course.

When there is an enduring shift in the constitution of eating (beyond routine variations), as a consequence of an enduring shift in the configuration of constitutive practices and/or teleoaffective structures (i.e. modes of eating), the phase can be said to have changed. Whereas an individual's current phase of eating may be considered a synchronic phenomenon, changes in phases are diachronic. Phases conceptualise how eating changes over time, but undergoes periods of relative stability (which is to say, the recurrence of configurations of practice which constitute the practice of eating). Eating is routinised in particular ways during a particular phase and in different ways during a different phase. Eating is thus subject to *phased routinisation*.

For example, Gijs's diet was – despite occasional unplanned deviations – relatively stable, and was shaped by everyday practices relating to living, working, exercise and relationships. However, the recurrent organisation of his diet was distinct from earlier phases, such as before he entered a new relationship (introducing routine variations) or received a high cholesterol diagnosis (affecting his mundane mode of eating).

The term 'stability' requires qualification. Routine practices are repeated performances of a practice, involving improvisations and gradual changes in the practice's constitutive elements (Shove et al., 2012; Warde, 2016). Consequently, stability in practices is always emergent and provisional (Shove et al., 2012). Stability in a dietary phase

does not, therefore, imply inertia in its constitutive practices. Rather, it conceptualises the way in which, despite variation in the *performances* of constitutive practices, it is the *configuration* of practices that remains stable.

Changes in the mode(s) of eating that constitute an individual's diet at a given point in the life course are likely to have effects on the substantive aspect of an individual's diet, as when the birth of a child affects other household members' eating practices (Plessz et al., 2016: 112). Changes do not need to be in practices directly associated with food consumption to have a considerable effect: they may, for example, relate to a change in employment (Warde, 2016: 133–134). Phases are thus relatively fragile. In this way, they are similar to practices themselves: recurrently performed, necessarily improvised and liable to change. A shift in the routinised performance of the practice of eating (i.e. its constitutive elements or teleoaffective structure) entails a changed mode of eating, and consequently a changed phase. Modes forge a theoretical connection between individual, improvised performances of the practice of eating and the 'higher level' analysis of prevailing dietary tendencies afforded by phases.

I now discuss two empirical examples. These illustrate how phases are constituted and change, and how shifts in phases affect the integration of insect-based foods into diets. The first example, Margot, stopped eating Insecta following a shift to a new phase of routinisation.

Shifting Phases: Excluding Insect-Based Foods

Margot was a student, living in a shared house in a suburban area. She was usually in university until around 5 p.m. on weekdays. She enjoyed both cooking and food shopping, and she bought food almost daily in different places across the city. She ate mostly vegetarian food, although this was a result of her upbringing (and was thus familiar) rather than deriving from explicit ethical principles. In 2015 Margot worked in a restaurant, with shifts starting at 6 p.m. and ending between 10 p.m. and midnight. In 2016 she changed jobs, and was always finished by 8 p.m.

In October 2015, Margot ate Insecta relatively often (around once a week). It fitted into her 'mundane' mode of evening meals, which involved meat replacers two or three times per week. However, by June 2016 Margot had completely stopped eating Insecta. Indeed, she ate meat replacers in general with much less frequency. A primary reason was her change in employment. Previously she had little time to prepare food between finishing university and starting work, necessitating quick and easy meals in which meat replacers (often cooked in around five minutes) featured prominently. Her new job left her evenings free, enabling her to spend much more time cooking (she estimated 1.5 hours per evening meal, on average), and thus able to make dishes from basic ingredients. She still ate meat replacers occasionally, but much less often than before.

Margot's cessation of Insecta consumption was also prompted by other considerations. By 2016 the novelty of eating insect-based products had worn off, and she reported finding the price rather high relative to alternative products. Nevertheless, the shift in phase of eating engendered by her changing employment had reduced the 'window of opportunity' for Insecta to fit into. This exacerbated the effect of Insecta's perceived inferiority to alternative meat replacers, and Margot stopped eating them.

Margot's example demonstrates how the consumption of novel food products is dependent upon propitious configurations of social practice that constitute the prevailing manner of food consumption: a particular phase of eating. Changes in practices – which may be socially, spatially and temporally dispersed and of only indirect relevance to the consumption of food – effect changes in phases of eating, which in turn affect the ways in and extent to which novel food products are consumed. However, shifting phases are not the only operative factor. For Margot, Insecta's perceived inferiority relative to potential alternative meat replacers also contributed to her no longer consuming them.

These points are illustrated in an inverse fashion with the example of Willemijn, explained in the following section. Like Margot, shifting phases of routinisation significantly reduced the 'window of opportunity' for Willemijn to consume Insecta. Unlike Margot, however, Willemijn's fondness for Insecta – its perceived superiority relative to potential alternatives – contributed to sustained (albeit occasional) consumption.

Shifting Phases: Retaining Insect-Based Foods

Willemijn was a vegetarian student living in a shared house, who considered insects to be ethically acceptable food. In September 2015, Willemijn ate Insecta 'quite often'. By September 2016, she ate them – and meat replacers in general – much less regularly.

Willemijn's earlier phase of consuming meat replacers very frequently was connected with her prevailing manner of eating at the time. During that phase, Willemijn had very stable routines that were constituted amid and through a stable configuration of practices. She attended regular university classes and an internship; she did regular exercise deemed to require a high protein intake (possibly in accordance with contemporary discourse around the dietary importance of protein); she had lived in the same house with the same housemates for some time, and they had established shared cooking routines; her shopping routines fitted in around her other practices, and were largely conducted in the same supermarket; and her cooking routines were adjusted to the social and material circumstances of her domestic environment.

However, by early 2016, the stability of this phase was affected by shifting configurations of practice. Willemijn began a relationship, which meant regular travel to another city, as well as a new mode of eating negotiated with another person. Significantly, around this time, she also suffered an injury. This obliged her to stop intense exercise, and necessitated substantial reconfiguration of eating practices to accommodate the sudden drop in necessary protein. Frequent consumption of meat replacers – of which Insecta was the highest in protein – was no longer appropriate. The injury in particular had precipitated a shift in phases of eating, which directly affected the extent to which novel food products were consumed.

In subsequent months, Willemijn's previous routines were almost completely dismantled. She finished university, and began working in a different location. She also moved house. This disturbed her established routines of shopping and shared meals, and entailed changes in the material context of food preparation (in particular, a faulty oven) that required reconfiguration of cooking practices.

Like Margot, the ways in and extent to which Willemijn consumed novel food products were shaped by shifting configurations of practice that inaugurated a new phase of

eating. Like Margot, Willemijn's consumption of Insecta was negatively impacted upon by shifting phases. However, the crucial difference in Willemijn's case was that she continued to eat Insecta, albeit less frequently.

Despite the disintegration of her earlier routines, Willemijn did occasionally shop at a large Jumbo near her workplace which sold Insecta. She liked the Insecta burger, which was one of the four burger-type meat replacers she still occasionally ate. Although still 'looking for a new routine' with shopping, Insecta had become part of her new phase of eating. This was despite her reduced consumption of meat replacers, and despite the supermarkets nearest to her new house – where she mostly shopped – not stocking the products.

While phased routinisation strongly affects the consumption of novel food products, it is not completely determinative. In Margot's case, Insecta's high price and waning novelty combined with shifting phases of eating to stop her eating the products. In Willemijn's case, the enjoyed taste of the products led to an enduring, semi-routinised place within a new phase of eating, albeit in a significantly reduced quantity.

Thus if novel food products are to be successfully integrated into diets, they must be able to 'withstand' the vagaries of phased routinisation. As with the preceding discussion of modes, such durability requires novel foods' superiority to potential alternatives on a range of basic criteria.

In sociological terms, the focus on dietary shifts conceptualised here as 'phases' is not wholly novel. As Plessz et al. (2016: 103) observe, 'biographical transitions' and progression through the life course engender shifts in food practices, intentionally or otherwise (cf. Paddock, 2017). More generally, changes in practice have been theorised as 'transitions', when configurations of elements shift, leading to alterations in practices (e.g. Shove et al., 2012).

The utility of phased routinisation as a distinct concept is that it introduces *periodisation* to the analytic vocabulary of practice-theoretic analysis of food consumption – and indeed of human activity more generally – and thus offers a new analytical resource. For example, it helps to theorise how phases are not necessarily sequential (e.g. Plessz et al., 2016), but may be cyclical or recurrent (Wahlen, 2011). Phased routinisation also sheds lights on how nascent 'normalisation' of a food (Halkier, 2017) may be thwarted by shifting configurations of practice, effecting a kind of 'reversal'.

Discussion

This article has introduced two analytic concepts – modes of eating and phased routinisation – which, I argue, are a fruitful means of analysing how food practices are established, maintained, interdepend and change. Analysis of the consumption of Insecta provides empirical support for these concepts, alongside substantive data regarding the integration of novel foods into established dietary practices.

In substantive terms, the concept of modes demonstrates how the 'place' in eating practices where new foods 'fit' substantially affects whether and how they become routinely consumed. Future research might profitably explore the comparative sociologies of novel foods introduced and routinised through mundane modes versus those channelled through more elaborate modes, such as dining out (cf. House, 2018c).

The concept of phased routinisation is also instructive in substantive terms, supporting other research emphasising the precariousness of sustainable or healthy diets (e.g. Paddock, 2017). It directs attention to the fragility of the 'window of opportunity' for the introduction of novel foods (cf. Plessz et al., 2016), and the precariousness of the process by which their consumption is sustained and routinised.

Both modes and phased routinisation have broader theoretical relevance, providing distinct analytic purchase compared to other concepts and approaches. The concept of modes provides a conceptual tool for explaining how the compound practice of eating is organised. It also introduces a comparative analytic unit for practice-theoretic research into food consumption that does not, a priori, privilege particular eating events. In relation to the routines which practice-theoretic accounts identify as central to food consumption, the concept of modes theorises how dietary routines are constituted by a diverse and dispersed range of practices, how they are organised around particular teleoaffective structures and how they 'hang together'. Modes could be applied to the investigation of other novel foods, or other aspects of eating-related phenomena, such as waste (cf. Southerton and Yates, 2014). Although developed in relation to the notion of eating as a compound practice, the concept of modes may be compatible with conceptualisations of eating as a 'complex' or 'bundle' of practices as well (e.g. Meah, 2014).

Phased routinisation also offers a distinctive contribution to practice-oriented theorisations of food consumption. Building on research identifying the provisional nature of diets (e.g. Paddock, 2017) and observations that changes in one's life may engender transitions in food practice (e.g. Plessz et al., 2016), phased routinisation theorises how food practice transitions are periodised, or episodic (cf. Wahlen, 2011). Phases may fruitfully be applied to other sociological analyses of the consumption of specific food products or types, as well as to research into other aspects of food practice such as eating 'well' or 'healthily'.

Beyond the theoretical resources of practice-theoretic food research, the two concepts also have broader applicability. Modes may be employed to understand and explain how other compound practices, such as work or mobility (Southerton and Yates, 2014), are organised and 'hang together'. Phased routinisation may be used to analyse other periodised transitions in practice, such as those in or out of phases of smoking, taking exercise or transport use. Both concepts may also be relevant to other forms of consumer practice, beyond food consumption, where novel forms may be introduced. For example, the regular use of new wearable technology – such as fitness trackers – is dependent upon successful integration of such technology into complexes of social practice (e.g. working or socialising), hinting at the analytic relevance of the different modes by which such practices are organised (see Cohn and Lynch, 2017). Similarly, regular use of wearable technology is evidently constituted through a propitious, recurrent configuration of mundane social practices that – in a similar way to the food-related examples above – may be conceptualised as particular phases (see Cohn and Lynch, 2017).

In providing substantive data on the sociological basis of public acceptance of novel foods, this article has sought to demonstrate both the utility of practice theories for the understanding of food consumption, and the utility of food consumption for the development of practice theories. It has also introduced two new concepts which aid sociological understanding of the introduction of novel foods, and potentially of consumption practices more broadly.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to everyone who participated in the research. I would also like to thank Peter Jackson, Megan Blake and three anonymous reviewers, who provided valuable constructive comments on earlier versions of this article.

Funding

This research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, grant number ES/J500215/1.

Notes

1. For examples, see https://web.archive.org/web/20180423135453/http://www.bugburger.se/foretag/the-eating-insects-startups-here-is-the-list-of-entopreneurs-around-the-world/ (accessed 16 August 2018).
2. The range can be viewed at https://web.archive.org/web/20170109124949/http://www.damhert.be/en/shop/producten?categorie=insecta (accessed 16 August 2018).

ORCID iD

Jonas House https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6003-8276

References

Cohn S and Lynch R (2017) Falling into a routine: From habits to situated practices. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 39(8): 1398–1411.

Delormier T, Frohlich KL and Potvin L (2009) Food and eating as social practice – understanding eating patterns as social phenomena and implications for public health. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 31(2): 215–228.

Evans DM (2018) What is consumption, where has it been going, and does it still matter? *The Sociological Review*. Epub ahead of print 7 March 2018. DOI: 10.1177/0038026118764028.

Halkier B (2017) Normalising convenience food? The expectable and acceptable places of convenient food in everyday life among young Danes. *Food, Culture & Society* 20(1): 133–151.

Halkier B and Jensen I (2011) Methodological challenges in using practice theory in consumption research: Examples from a study on handling nutritional contestations of food consumption. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 11(1): 101–123.

Hitchings R (2012) People can talk about their practices. *Area* 44(1): 61–67.

House J (2016) Consumer acceptance of insect-based foods in the Netherlands: Academic and commercial implications. *Appetite* 107: 47–58.

House J (2018a) Insects are not 'the new sushi': Theories of practice and the acceptance of novel foods. *Social & Cultural Geography*. Epub ahead of print 19 February 2018. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2018.1440320.

House J (2018b) Insects as food in the Netherlands: Production networks and the geographies of edibility. *Geoforum* 94: 82–93.

House J (2018c) Sushi in the United States, 1945–1970. *Food and Foodways* 26(1): 40–62.

House J (in press) Are insects animals? The ethical position of insects in Dutch vegetarian diets. In: Linzey A and Linzey C (eds) *Ethical Vegetarianism and Veganism*. London: Routledge.

Kusenbach M (2003) Street phenomenology: The go-along as ethnographic research tool. *Ethnography* 4(3): 455–485.

Martens L (2012) Practice 'in talk' and talk 'as practice': Dish washing and the reach of language. *Sociological Research Online* 17(3): 22.
Meah A (2014) Reconceptualizing power and gendered subjectivities in domestic cooking spaces. *Progress in Human Geography* 38(5): 671–690.
Meah A and Jackson P (2017) Convenience as care: Culinary antinomies in practice. *Environment and Planning A* 49(9): 2065–2081.
Miller D (1998) *A Theory of Shopping*. Cambridge: Polity.
Mylan J and Southerton D (2017) The social ordering of an everyday practice: The case of laundry. *Sociology*. Epub ahead of print 8 September 2017. DOI: 10.1177/0038038517722932.
Nicolini D (2016) Is small the only beautiful? Making sense of 'large phenomena' from a practice-based perspective. In: Hui A, Schatzki T and Shove E (eds) *The Nexus of Practices: Connections, Constellations and Practitioners*. London: Routledge, 98–113.
Paddock J (2017) Household consumption and environmental change: Rethinking the policy problem through narratives of food practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 17(1): 122–139.
Plessz M, Dubuisson-Quellier S, Gojard S, et al. (2016) How consumption prescriptions affect food practices: Assessing the roles of household resources and life-course events. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 16(1): 101–123.
Reckwitz A (2002) Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2): 243–263.
Sahakian M and Wilhite H (2014) Making practice theory practicable: Towards more sustainable forms of consumption. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 14(1): 25–44.
Schatzki TR (2002) *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change*. Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Shove E (2010) Beyond the ABC: Climate change policy and theories of social change. *Environment and Planning A* 42(6): 1273–1285.
Shove E, Pantzar M and Watson M (2012) *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*. London: SAGE.
Southerton D and Yates L (2014) Exploring food waste through the lens of social practice theories: Some reflections on eating as a compound practice. In: Ekström KM (ed.) *Waste Management and Sustainable Consumption: Reflections on Consumer Waste*. London: Routledge, 133–149.
Truninger M (2011) Cooking with Bimby in a moment of recruitment: Exploring conventions and practice perspectives. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 11(1): 37–59.
Twine R (2018) Materially constituting a sustainable food transition: The case of vegan eating practice. *Sociology* 52(1): 166–181.
Van Huis A, Van Itterbeeck J, Klunder H, et al. (2013) *Edible Insects: Future Prospects for Food and Feed Security*. Rome: FAO.
Wahlen S (2011) The routinely forgotten routine character of domestic practices. *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 35(5): 507–513.
Warde A (2016) *The Practice of Eating*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Jonas House is a lecturer in the Sociology of Consumption and Households group at Wageningen University, and a PhD candidate in human geography at the University of Sheffield. His research interests centre around food: in particular, novel foods, edibility and changing public tastes. His recent work has investigated public acceptance of insects as food in the Netherlands, and the establishment of sushi in the United States.

Date submitted January 2018
Date accepted August 2018