Digitalization of household eating practices:
A case study of meal-boxes

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to describe and explain how meal-box, as a digital device designed to assist households in carrying out eating practices, reconfigure household practices and enable specific behavioural activities, including sustainability. Taking a socio-material and practice theory approach and drawing on an ethnographic study of three meal-box providers – The Seasons, Hello Fresh and Lina's Meal-box – the paper shows how these devices enter into a hybridised relationship with consumers through an offering of convenience, structure and inspiration. The study also examines how these devices are "scripted" to promote sustainable consumption in relation to how this is perceived by consumers. Results from this study indicate that when households integrate meal-boxes in their everyday life, a reconfiguration of practice is believed to take place that trigger change in, replace or delimit conventional practices related to eating. As a change, households would e.g. experience greater alignment and organization in practices of buying groceries, cooking and eating. This takes place through a hybridized relationship between households and the meal-box, where the meal-box come to assume agency over practices that traditionally was within the control of the households. Finally, this study illustrates how meal-boxes has different values inscribed in the device and how this encourage specific behaviors for its users while discouraging others.

Keywords: Practice theory; socio-technical scripting; eating practices; digitalization; sustainability.

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Introduction

Background

This thesis sets out to describe and explain how meal-box, as a digital device designed to assist households in carrying out eating practices, reconfigure household practices and enable specific behavioural activities, including sustainability. It thus attempts to contribute to our understanding of how digital devices can promote sustainable consumption.

Contemporary ongoing digitalisation of consumption is increasingly recognised in literature for its potential in changing consumption practices (Cochoy, Hagberg, Mcintyre, & Sorum, 2017; Hansson, 2017; Sörum & Fuentes, 2017; Spaargaren, Oosterveer, & Loeber, 2011). Human actors are not alone involved in the construction of markets; other non-human actors, including digitalisation, is being ascribed agency for influencing people's behaviour in a certain way (Hansson, 2017; Muniesa, Millo, & Callon, 2007). Changing the whole market landscape, this has become especially interesting as new cultures of consumption are emerging from digitalisation; altering, enhancing and sometimes even replacing everyday consumer practices (Cochoy et al., 2017; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019). Consumers are believed to use digital devices in different settings and practices and according to literature, digital devices intervene with and enable new kinds of social shopping that is reconfiguring the way in which retail spaces are consumed (Fuentes, Bäckström, & Svingstedt, 2017; Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017). Also outside the retail space and at home, are practices reconfigured, where the digital has come to assist consumers in day-to-day activities. Jenkins and Denegri-Knott (2017) emphasise the growing delegation of everyday practices to digitalisation with their focus on how practices are being altered and elements of practice replaced by the digital, thereby *extending the mind* of the user. Work around the concept of *extended mind* traditionally recognise how individuals often rely on external sources to enhance their cognitive abilities, and how this eventually change the nature of the practice itself (Clark & Chalmers, 1998).

The notion of how digital devices intervene with and reconfigure practices is very interesting when considering how they can display a distinctive level of 'fit' or misfit' in regard to the existing order of things that constitute a practice (Spaargaren, 2011). Especially in times with greater reflexivity among individuals feeling the urge to adopt to environmentally friendlier lifestyles, can a potential 'fit' allow digital devices to intervene with household practices and potentially change consumption practices (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hansson, 2017; Sörum & Fuentes, 2017). This is particularly interesting today, where a greater focus is placed on sustainability and consumption issues around food, and consumers increasingly are being ascribed co-responsibility for their consumption practices. The notion of how to behave sustainably has however not always proved easy. Increasing fluidity and lack of consensus around the understanding of what constitutes sustainable food consumption has made it difficult for consumers to stay informed and commit to changing their consumption practices (Connolly & Prothero, 2008). In fact, studies exist, showing that while sustainability, in all of its shapes, is increasingly gaining the awareness of consumers; this awareness has not always translated into sustainable practices (Connolly & Prothero, 2003; Michal, Benjamin, & Gregory, 2010).

Digitalisation and sustainable food consumption

According to Klintman and Boström (2011), the food sector is known for being one in which green political and social aspects are discussed the most, both in households and among other stakeholders. Assessing how "green" a product is or how sustainable the production of a product has been is difficult for consumers, why information, certificates and labels have become necessary indicators of factors of production and distribution. In dealing with this issue, digital devices are altering the market and are through apps, for instance, educating consumers in what to buy and how to consume sustainably. These apps are designed in a way to disrupt consumer's routine way of grocery shopping and make them choose sustainable products over mainstream "conventional" products. This way, these apps can act as qualifiers and assists consumers in making the "right" choice (Hansson, 2017). One might be tempted to believe, that these kinds of digital devices can close the gap by decreasing uncertainty and encourage consumers to buy 'greener'. What we know now is that digitalisation has changed practices. Household practices today are being introduced to new forms of behaviour, initially non-existent, while at the same time displacing older forms eventually leading to the emergence of new modes of social interaction (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Venkatesh & Dunkle, 2013).

For example, studies carried out by Hansson (2017) and Fuentes and Sörum (2019) explore how smartphone apps through their design that is aimed at assisting consumers in making informed sustainable grocery shopping choices, in reality enable sustainable behaviour. Interestingly, these studies found that the digital devices bring changes to the socio-material landscape of sustainable consumption. In other words, they have become market devices, as they assume specific roles and act as choice prescribers for consumers, thereby disrupting their routine ways buying groceries. That is because the apps contain a "script" through which consumers engage and is designed to shape sustainable behaviour, where the digital device work as a choice prescriber through specific functions. Through e.g. a scanning function, the devices educate consumers and make them choose sustainable products over the conventional or "bad" products. This type of relationship between the individuals and their device can, as discussed by Fuentes and Sörum (2019), be characterised as a hybridised relationship between the human and non-human, where the digital device assumes agential capabilities in solving sustainability dilemmas. While these studies are interesting and can be used to understand how digital devices are used to promote and shape sustainable behaviour, they fail to account for how the digital devices bring change to food practices in general, and eating practices in particular, as they mainly focus on how sustainable consumption is enabled in a specific setting.

This is also a more general gap in the literature. While literature on the digitalisation of consumption and practices has developed in the past decade (see e.g. Cochoy et al., 2017), studies on digitalisation's influence on eating practices remains limited. Existing literature on eating, however, suggest that changing this compound practice can be difficult. To understand how digitalisation reconfigures household eating practices, I need to first understand the *meaning* of eating practices, i.e. how they are constructed and organized in an everyday setting. This is especially relevant, as routines and habits related to eating are believed to be more than just a simple activity. Additionally, Warde (2013) argues that eating is socially complex. We can't understand practices of eating without

referring to its social embeddedness, including selection of food items, preparation of dishes and social arrangements. Showing that eating is embedded in other cultural and social symbolic meanings, also means that the surroundings/environment, is believed to play a big role in the process (Warde, 2016). Halkier, Katz-Gerro, and Martens (2011) emphasize the importance of analysing eating practices within its structural organisation as well as the constrains posed by routines and other practices, and according to Warde (2016), we cannot generate an accurate account of eating that capture habits, without understanding the relevant phenomenon occupying the environment. What these arguments reassure, is that eating practices are more than just a simple activity. Changes in practices should be analysed bearing in mind the intersection of multiple practices in everyday life and how these are influenced by e.g. socio-technical systems, social arrangement and normative expectations to food, as these can either lead to (re)structuring or constraint in the organisation of these practices (Halkier & Jensen, 2011; Halkier et al., 2011). Indeed are practices dynamic and surrounded by external conditions that encourage change in the organisation and meanings of eating practices (Warde, 2005). A number of questions emerge against this background.

How consumers ascribe meaning to the use of digitalization in everyday practices and how digitalisation reconfigures practices can, from an interpretivist perspective at least, differ among households. This is why it becomes especially important to understand how digital devices, as a phenomenon, intervene with household practices; how are meanings ascribed to the use of such practice and under which circumstances can digital devices encourage and shape sustainable consumption behaviour?

Problematization

In the literature review I have touched upon existing literature on digitalisation, eating practices and sustainable consumption. While all the literature offer extensive knowledge on respective phenomenon's, they fail to adequately explore how the three angels merge in reality and create change within more or less ordered practices, like eating. Shove (2003a), in her study about technology and consumption in everyday life, write: "pockets of habits stick fast, old ways die hard and some are obdurately resistant to change" (p.3). By exploring change in habits and practices, Shove illustrate how expectations of comfort, cleanliness and convenience have radically changed over the years and how most of these changes have reached a point, where new and extensive consumption habits have become the new 'normal', like the extensive use of laundry machines. The research presented in her book is a perfect illustration, that a technical or digital device can be multifaced. By this, I mean that a device can allow consumers to act differently and change their habits – perhaps in ways that was not intended by the device. We need to study the integration of a device in practice, before we can assess whether new habits in reality are more sustainable.

As explained in the previous section, existing literature on digitalisation fails to account for eating as a compound practice, which is very important if we want to understand the true power of digitalisation in changing such practices. Studies on apps that enable and promote sustainable behaviours are insightful, yet they take departure in a device that is designed or "scripted" to do so. I therefore find it relevant to examine other angles of the digital; test its qualities in enabling sustainable consumption

and most importantly develop an understanding of how the digital device fit with household eating practices and create change. While literature on digitalisation and sustainable consumption behaviour is still believed to be limited (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hansson, 2017), this study can also tell us something about *how* a digital device can reconfigure eating practices as a compound practice, and under which circumstances it can enable sustainability to be a change within households.

Exploring different means taken to promote certain kinds of behaviour becomes especially relevant in these times where sustainability stands high on the global agenda, and a study hereof can support with relevant literature on how digitalisation can become a contributing element and potentially support the goals towards a more sustainable future (Nations, 2018).

Through this study, I set out to understand how household eating practices are influenced by the digital. More specifically, I focus on meal-boxes as a digital device. Meal-boxes – i.e. a digital delivery arrangement with premeasured food items and recipes, is gaining increasing awareness among consumers (Hertz & Halkier, 2017). In the past decade, the Danish and Swedish markets have been introduced to an increasing number of meal-box providers, among them being The Seasons ["The Seasons"], Hello Fresh (in Sweden), and others supermarket chains like the ICAs meal-box [ICAs matkasse]. Meal-box providers most often have a wide assortment of meal-boxes, each with a unique focus on e.g. vegetarian, vegan or kids-friendly meals. Consumers can download an app and order meal-box schemes on a weekly basis and get it delivered to their homes, while they also, on different levels, can interact with meal-box providers through different social-media platforms to stay informed about their vision and learn about new assortments. As can be recognised from other smart-technologies (Guthrie, 2013), meal-boxes can as a digital device engage in a hybridised relationship with consumers and deliver food schemes on a prearranged basis. Consumers can furthermore seek inspiration on what to cook and tests new food without having to do the arrangements themselves.

Aim, research questions and approach

Against this background, I aim to describe and examine in detail how meal-boxes intervene with and reconfigure household practices. This means, that I focus both on the material aspects of the device, i.e. how household integrate meal-boxes into their routines and change habits, and how the digital device engages with consumers through home pages, social media and apps. This way, I can explore differentiations between meal-box providers and draw an understanding of the means taken to promote and shape sustainable food consumption behaviour. With that said, I aim to understand how routines and habits, in terms of cooking, preparing and eating meals, are changed with the integration of meal-boxes, i.e. how they are used within household in relation to pre-existing practices. In relation to that, I want to gain an understanding of the reasons and meanings that households connect to the use of meal-boxes, and whether or not meal-boxes are viewed as a mean through which sustainable food consumption can be realised. Hence the research questions: *how are eating practices reconfigured with the integration of meal-boxes in households? In what way, if any, does their introduction enable sustainable food consumption practices?*

I will apply a practice-theoretical and socio-material approach to conceptualise on how meal-boxes reconfigure household eating practices. I draw on socio-technical scripting to examine and describe

the meanings inscribed in some of the digital devices and explore how they are used to promote sustainable behaviour. Empirically, my analysis will build on a qualitative study constituted by semi-structured interviews and an observation of some of the digital devices (apps, home pages and social media channels) mentioned by respondents during the interviews.

Next, I present theory on practice and socio-technical scripting that will be applied to the rest of my thesis. This will be followed by a methods chapter, where I present and discuss the methods that I use in my research; why I use them and how they contribute to the results. I then present my findings through an analysis of the data in relation to the theories shaping this study, followed by a discussion and conclusion on how meal-boxes intervene with and reconfigures household routines.

Theoretical framework: Theory of Practice and Socio-technical Scripting

In the following reading I present my theoretical framework. Departing from traditional views on the theories of practice and socio-technical scripting, I combine these theories into one framework that can allow me to examine my phenomenon in detail.

Theories of practice

Introduction to theories of practice

In an attempt to understand how the notion of meal-boxes reconfigure eating practices and how they promote and possibly enhance sustainable consumption, I will draw on notions of practice theory. According to Reckwitz (2002, p. 249), " A 'practice' (Praktik) is a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge". While this definition of practice can be broad, it indicates that a practice is constituted by different elements which configuration creates a routinized behavior. As recorded in literature, the integration of digital devices in practices is becoming a common phenomenon (see e.g. Cochoy et al., 2017). More specifically, the interconnectedness between human and non-human elements embedded in eating practices is of interest to my study, as change not necessarily is 'social' or 'material' but a combination of both (Lammi, 2018). I derive from an emphasis of the practices under investigation as 'shared behavioral routines' where the practice, instead of the individual, become the unit of analysis that matters.

The history of practice

According to Lammi (2018) theories of practice are believed to be vague. The concepts of practice and *praxis* has a long history in the social sciences where it is their revised version taken place in the 1970s by, among others, Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and Anthony Giddens (1979) that contributed to the development of practice theory. Giddens' focus on lifestyles made his work centered on analysis of individual action, emphasizing the reflexivity of lifestyle routines stemming from the flexible nature of self-identity (Warde, 2016). While work carried out by Giddens made little reference to the concept of practice, the opposite was the case in the early work of Bourdieu. Placing practice at the center, Bourdieu developed a framework claiming that practices result from individual's habitus, different forms of capital and the site of action. The concept of habitus became especially important in Bourdieu's work which he used to explain how regularities of behavior are associated with social structures (e.g. class, gender and ethnicity). While habitus was not believed to have a deterministic effect on individual behavior, Bourdieu used habitus to describe how social structures within the individual can shape how he/she perceives the world and act in it (Power, 1999).

Believed to be the more thorough and sustained work on the analysis of social practice is however that of Schatzki which marked the second phase of modern theory of practice (Warde, 2016). Proclaiming practices to be the central unit of analysis, Schatzki identified two central notions of practice: practice as a linked or organized nexus of elements and practice as performance. Emphasized by the first notion is the assumption that practices consist of both doing and saying that constitute a

nexus, meaning that they are linked in certain ways to form a recreational practice. What this means is, that an actor understands what doings and sayings are appropriate to a given practice, creating a condition of mutual intelligibility among its practitioners. The second notion, practice as performance, refers to the performing of the doing and sayings; to the carrying out of the practice. Individuals are believed to carry a practice forward through performance; expressing, affirming, reproducing and transforming it (Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005, 2016). Enactment is needed for the reproduction of a nexus to take place and according to Reckwitz (2002), a practice is made up of a multitude of single and often unique practices, where the individual acts as a bodily and mental agent in the process. Acting as the 'carrier' of a practice, the individual carries many different practices which coordination is important. Indicating that practices consist of coordinated entities that requires performance, Reckwitz (2002, p. 250) expands his saying in that individuals are not only carriers of patterns of bodily behavior 'but also of certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring. These conventionalized 'mental' activities of understanding, knowing how and desiring are necessary elements and qualities of a practice in which the single individual participates, not qualities of the individual'. Confirming that practices are the unit of analysis, practices are believed to be 'a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood' (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Applying this take of practice theory on my analysis of how meal-boxes intervene with household eating practices will contribute with an understanding of change; how it intervenes with understandings, know-how and desires related to eating practices.

Taking this view, my study contributes with an understanding of how meal-boxes reconfigures the coordination of household practices. Does it intervene with the understanding, know-how and desire originally present in such practices? Not only can such an analysis contribute with an understanding of how different eating practices 'hang together'; through the application of this theory it also becomes possible to understand the change that is likely to take place when eating practices become digitalized.

On the notion of change in practices

Now that I have established a practice theoretical understanding of what constitutes a practice and how they relate to routinized behavior, I want to discuss the rearrangement of practices and how they can relate to changes of household eating practices in the light of digitalization. Schatzki (2013, p. 31) writes: 'I believe that change in social practices are fundamental to changes in social life more broadly', where agency is believed to be the engine that drives the unfolding and the social becoming. What is meant by agency in this context, is the human and non-human agency which carries out and/or affect practices. This also means that change, according to Schatzki, must be understood in terms of practice and material arrangement (Lammi, 2018; Schatzki, 2002). Change however, does not apply to everything. As Schatzki (2002, p. 234) puts it; 'constant doing must not be equated with change', and according to him, practices and orders must be altered robustly, before we can talk about change. Hence, a change in practices can be defined in terms of both reorganization of practice and rearrangement of material arrangement. How orders of material arrangement intervene with practices

in new ways determines *change*, why it is important that I examine how rearrangement takes place in practices when a non-human element (i.e. meal-box) is integrated into routines.

Applying theory of practices to the notion of meal-boxes

As noted by Schatzki (2002), practices are a linked organized nexus of elements, which means that elements are interlinked in practice. In carrying out a practice theoretical analysis of digitalized household practices I am going to use an approach in which the multiple elements of practice are composed into three components, namely materials, competencies and meanings (Hand, Shove, & Southerton, 2005). As outlined in previous sections about the interconnectedness of practices, this remains the same through this approach. The aim is not to separate elements of practice, rather it is to show that practice is dependent on a specific configurations of materials, competences and meanings (Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017; Hand et al., 2005; Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012).

While the role that materials or 'things' hold in the interplay among elements constituting practice is barely mentioned in the early work of Giddens and Bourdieu, the opposite is the case in the work of Reckwitz and Schatzki (Shove et al., 2012). Shove et al. (2012) frames infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body itself under the umbrella of *material,* and according to Schatzki (2002, p. 106): 'Practices are intrinsically connected to and interwoven with objects', why it becomes important to treat 'things' as important elements of practice. Schatzki distinguished between four types of social relations between humans and non-human elements; those of *causation, intentionality, prefiguration and constitution*.

Causation refers to the relation of bringing about. It deals with how one entity can act or trigger another and can take place at both ends of the spectrum; human beings can affect another non-human entity and vice versa (Lammi, 2018; Schatzki, 2002).

About intentionality, Schatzki (2002, p. 44) writes: 'when an entity is directed towards an object in this way, it can be said to stand in an "intentional" relation to this object'. As a classic aspect of social theory, intentionality therefore deals with how a human being is directed toward another human or entity. Intentional relations become social when they help compose human coexistence, and hence practices.

Schatzki makes sense of *prefiguration* by comparing it to the phenomenon of constraint and enablement. He argues, that the present state of social affairs prefigures future activity by constraining and enabling it. Practices can therefore be enabled and constrained when artifacts, organisms and things are included in arrangements (Lammi, 2018; Schatzki, 2002). Specific practices related to eating within household are thus believed to be constrained and/or enabled when practices are rearranged to include meal-box schemes Whether this applies to meal-boxes or not will of course have to be empirically examined.

Finally, constitution is about how material arrangements and practices constitute one another. Are they essential or pervasive for one another in the practice? Some materials are believed to be constitutive of specific practices, as it can be imagined that the practice of eating is constitutive of entities of food (Lammi, 2018; Schatzki, 2002).

Competence, as another component of practice, refers to the multiple forms of understanding and practical knowledgeability present in practice, otherwise known as the cognitive abilities necessary to engage in and perform a specific practice (Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017; Shove et al., 2012).

The component of *meaning* is in the framework applied by Shove et al. (2012) a compressed substitution to the mental activities, emotion and motivational knowledge originally embedded in Reckwitz's definition of practice (see Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249). While these concepts are believed to be hard to characterize, Schatzki has in his writings about 'teleoaffective' structures elaborated on the central role they have in organizing and ordering practices (see e.g. Schatzki, 2002; Schatzki, Cetina, & von Savigny, 2000). People are here believed to have a history and a setting where doings a future oriented (Shove et al., 2012). This illustrates that meanings are not static in time and space, rather it is important to acknowledge that transformations do take place in social time and space, and that it can impact other elements of practice.

In using this framework, I want to address my aim of how meal-boxes reconfigures household eating practices and its potential in enabling sustainable behavior. It is the interplay between the elements; how they go together and break apart, that is important to my study. I therefore find it important to examine how meal-boxes, as bundle of material, competence and meaning are applied to, and rearrange the organization of household eating practices. Afterall, it is through the formation and disintegration of connections between elements of practices that existing practices can be altered, old practices can wear out and new practices can emerge (Lammi, 2018; Schatzki, 2002; Shove et al., 2012).

While practice theory is relevant to the analysis of how meal-boxes reconfigure and rearrange the orders and elements of practice, it fails to adequately contribute with an understanding of how meal-boxes as a digital device act and make others act, and hence, how they can enable sustainable consumption behavior. The following section will present theoretical resources through which I can analyze the role played by the digital device in the process of reconfiguring eating practices.

Market devices, digital devices and socio-technical "scripting"

Meal-boxes as a market/consumption device

A relevant conceptualization of meal-box as a phenomenon is needed to understand the role it plays in changing household eating practices. By focusing on the abilities and properties of objects, devices and technologies, we can begin to understand how consumer behavior, and thus practices, are changing (Cochoy, 2011). But how are they conceptualized in literature? Muniesa et al. (2007) writes about market devices as something crucial in practice and conceptualize it as "material and discursive assemblages that intervene in the construction of markets" (Muniesa et al., 2007, p. 2).

The concept of market device has proved efficient in studies of economic sociology. Market devices are increasingly being recognized for their *agencement* impact, i.e. how they render things, behavior and processes. Especially their calculative role in assisting consumers' rationale decision making

have been recorded in literature (Cochoy, 2011; Hansson, 2017; Muniesa et al., 2007). Other studies have also been conducted to show how market devices in different ways assist consumers and make them act in predesigned ways (see Muniesa et al., 2007).

Since market devices are believed to be crucial in practice (Muniesa et al., 2007), I find it interesting to understand *how* and *why* meal-boxes come to influence practices. This is why I furthermore borrow the concept of *consumption device,* as used by Fuentes and Sörum (2019), to analyze the platforms through which meal-box providers interact with consumers. By treating the concept of meal-box as a consumption device, it becomes possible to emphasize the socio-material aspect configuring practice, without sacrificing the economic aspect that usually is associated with a market device. Here, I mean that I want to study the digital aspect of its construction, i.e. selling platform, promotion platform, etc., as it is through the construction of these, that specific practices are enabled. To analyze how digitalization as a market/consumption device influence practices I am going to draw on literature from socio-technical scripting.

Socio-technical "scripting"

No such thing as "purely" technological is believed to exist. How technological elements are constructed is never by coincidence; rather, technological is social with no clear boundary between engineering on one hand and a world of the social on the other (E. Bijker & Law, 1992). Hence, technology cannot be explained solely by its scientific reasoning. This puts things in perspective, as technology and digitalization are believed to be ascribed agency in the same way as individuals, based on their ability to make people act in certain ways (Cochoy et al., 2017). Increasingly, consumers are using digital devices to seek guidance, compare items or find inspiration; all abilities that used to be constructed by the cognitive state of the individual.

It is important to look at how digital devices are constructed. As market actors, they are believed to alter existing market dynamics, through a specific design that is embedded in the way it is "scripted". Technical objects are according to Akrich, believed to "define a framework of action together with the actors and the space in which they are supposed to act" (Akrich, 1992, p. 208), i.e. the device is inscribed with ideas of specific meanings, which in turn can shape action (Hansson, 2017; Jack, Elizabeth, & Matthew, 2007). While this can sound like a simple equation; design – implementation – action, it is not always as simple in the social world. Bringing in the perspective of social sciences, it becomes problematic when processes of consumption fails to be accounted for by designers. While designers often rely on tacit and explicit ideas about actual and potential users, a chance still exists that consumers will not act, as intended by the device in the first place. With that said, "scripts" can go both ways; they can either be intentional or not, and they can be relatively open (flexible) or closed (prescriptive) (Jack et al., 2007). Depending on the "script" then, it becomes clear that it can guide the user in a specific direction. According to Carrington (2012) however, we must not forget that it is within the everyday life on consumers, that objects or devices, are taken up, consumed and redesigned.

So, "scripts" are embedded in devices to make consumers act in predesigned ways. How consumers interpret the device is believed to be through "text". This means that the 'reading 'of a script can be like the reading of a text through which the author guides the reader in a specific direction (Carrington, 2012; Hansson, 2017; Jelsma, 2003). Just as a text is designed to steer the reader in specific directions intended by the reader, so is a device designed to steer a user (Jelsma, 2003). This also means that limitations exist to how a device can be read, thereby limiting its possible actions. These limitations are guided with structural features of the device; encouraging certain actions while counteracting others, also known as a *prescriptive force* of a script. By playing an active role in the relationship between humans and their world, devices can thus be inscribed with what can be called "morality" or "ethics" (Guthrie, 2013; Jack et al., 2007; Jelsma, 2003; Verbeek, 2006). Reijonen and Tryggestad (2012, p. 216) use the notion of *qualification* in analyzing "what enables or disables environmental friendliness to become a quality of interest for the involved actors and to eventually achieve relative significance over other qualities". Here it is the visual images and text signs inscribed in the meal-box, that enable environmental friendliness to become a quality of interest for consumers. Qualification takes place through a process, where the qualities of the product are attributed, stabilized, objectified and arranged in relation to each other. This allows for judgement and evaluation to take place, eventually leading to consumers acting as anticipated by the device through attachment or the opposite, through detachment (Hansson, 2017; Reijonen & Tryggestad, 2012).

From a sustainability perspective, this means that digital devices can be inscribed with specific meanings to what constitutes sustainable consumption behavior and thereby they involve marketing practices of displaying and selling. By materializing the notion of sustainability as it is promoted by specific meal-box providers, it becomes possible to understand their viewpoint and how they communicate the idea of right or wrong in this matter, i.e. how they build qualification. Acknowledging that the meaning behind sustainable consumption is fluid in nature, and thereby interpreted differently by different people (Neyland & Simakova, 2009) is what becomes interesting to my study. How meal-box providers inscribe meaning into the digital device concerning their take on the "right way" of consuming food, can therefore be appealing to some customers and not for others. It is the "*how*" that can change otherwise fixed routinized practices.

The concept of *qualification* will be used to examine how meal-boxes, as a digital device, becomes a market choice among consumers. Examining how sustainability is inscribed in the device through visual images and text signs, allows for an understanding of the tools used to transfer meaning and thereby encourage a specific set of action that eventually reconfigure the meaning of eating practices among households.

Providers of meal-boxes can however also choose to materialize and promote other qualities that can create meaning for their consumers. Aspects of convenience for instance, are often attributes that characterize this type of market offering (Hertz & Halkier, 2017), why the theory of socio-technical scripting will be applied in different contexts. This will provide me with an understanding of how other (not sustainability related) meanings are "scripted" and qualify as a quality over others.

Relating theories of socio-technical scripting to theories of practice

As presented in the introduction, digitalization has become an integrated element in many practices, where some kind of hybridization between the human element on the one hand, and digitalization as the non-human element on the other, is interfering with the way consumption takes place today (Cochoy et al., 2017; Hansson, 2017). This increasing interaction between digital tools and consumption is believed to trigger change, and as practices are not fixed (Schatzki, 2002, 2013), we need to establish an understanding of the role played by digitalization in this process of change. How does interaction take place between households and the digital, to create changes in eating practices? In my study, I take departure in the assumption, that if meal-boxes reconfigure household eating practices, then there must be *something* driving that change. To widen my perspective and not only study the consumer in this process, I need to pay attention to the role of providers in the consumption process, i.e. what actions are taken by the digital device in order to promote a desired action. As emphasized by Cochoy et al. (2017) it is the examination of the two; consumers on the one side and providers on the other (in my case meal-boxes), that contributes to new knowledge on how digitalization intervenes with household practices.

Methodology

I want to gain an understand of how household eating practices change with the integration of meal-boxes, and how the digital device can shape sustainable behaviour. As a social phenomenon, I will investigate it from both sides; i.e. how the digital phenomenon change eating practices and how it is constructed to do so. For this purpose, I will draw on an ethnographic study of meal-boxes including both interviews and digital observations. Interviews will be carried out on households residing in Denmark and Sweden and will be followed by a digital observation of the meal-boxes mentioned by the respondents. This means that different meal-box providers will be observed, potentially creating a variation in results.

This qualitative research is conducted inductively, since I have not stated any theory or hypothesis in advance of carrying out this study (Bryman, 2012) about *how* the digital device potentially can reconfigure eating practices and whether or not it enables sustainable behaviour. Using an open-ended approach is important since I am exploring a rather new area in research. This research design is furthermore based on considerations related to constructivism. I want to grasp the subjective interpretations behind the use of meal-boxes in comparison to conventional modes through which eating practices are carried out. By assuming that social phenomena and meanings are accomplished through interaction, and excluding the assumption that material arrangements and structure within households are objective and pre-given, constructivism can potentially be a useful ontological standpoint to understand change (Bryman, 2012). In relation hereto and since I aim to *understand* and not *explain* how meal-boxes as a digital device reconfigure practices relating to eating, I depart from an interpretivist epistemology. Interpretivism is believed to acknowledge the differences between individuals in carrying out eating practices and emphasizes the importance of grasping subjective interpretations related to the use of and interaction between individuals and meal-boxes. This research approach forms the basis of my choice of method, as it allows me to understand *change* and the role played by the digital device in that process. It furthermore harmonizes with the theoretical reasoning presented in the previous chapter, where a triangulation of methods allows me to grasp different meanings and interpretations (Björklund & Paulsson, 2014; Bryman, 2012) that likely is behind the use of meal-boxes from both sides.

Interviews

I evaluated different methods upon arriving on a choice for my study. As presented above, emphasis has been on collecting data that could lead to an *understanding* of change within household. Since this can be a rather private matter and due to difficulties in finding respondents, the principal and most central method used to collect my primary data is *interviews.* Focus group interviews were also considered based on their potential in allowing for greater reflectiveness between respondents and more depth. This was however not possible due to limitations caused by the current pandemic (COVID-19) and geographical distance between respondents.

My respondents belonged to households sizing from 1-4 from both Sweden and Denmark. A total of ten interviews was conducted lasting between 35-70 minutes, where four of the interviews was on

Swedish users. I recruited Swedish respondents through network and Danish respondents through different social media platforms (see table below).. The main requirement for selection was that the respondents had used meal-boxes more than once and preferably from more than one provider. Due to time restraints and difficulty in finding respondents as well as my choice in going with triangulation, the number of conducted interviews has been limited to ten people. I acknowledge that a higher number of respondents could offer greater diversity and potentially more depth to the analysis, but since this is a qualitative research, emphasis was placed on exploring the meanings related to the integration of meal-boxes to every-day practices.

Interview number	Date of interview	Age	Gender	Origin	Recruitment method
1	03/19/20	26	Female	Capital Region of Denmark	Direct contact on Instagram
2	03/20/20	53	Male	Southern Denmark	Direct contact on Facebook
3	03/20/20	48	Female	Northern Denmark	Through public post on Facebook
4	03/20/20	51	Female	Southern Denmark	Direct contact on Facebook
5	03/24/20	66	Female	Central Denmark Region	Direct contact on Facebook
6	03/25/20	51	Female	Southern Sweden	Through a mutual friend/colleague
7	03/27/20	55	Female	Southern Sweden	Through a mutual friend/colleague
8	31/03/20	45	Female	Southern Sweden	Through a mutual friend/colleague
9	31/03/20	49	Female	Central Denmark Region	Direct contact on Facebook
10	03/04/20	42	Female	Southern Sweden	Through a mutual friend/colleague

Table 1 Overview over respondents

The interviews were conducted in two different languages; Danish and English. This was a deliberate choice, as I wanted the respondents to share with me their experience within their own frame of reference, without sacrificing any useful data getting lost due to language barriers. Respondents from

Sweden speaks English a lot on in their profession and were therefore comfortable not speaking their native language. I do however believe that richer interviews would have been conducted if all the respondents were to answer questions using their native language.

The interviews were conducted in a virtual manner, mainly due to COVID-19. While I conducted the majority of the interviews though video call on Skype, Facebook Messenger and Facetime, two of the respondents preferred to avoid disclosure of their face and were therefore conducted through the phone. The interviews lasted between 35-70 minutes, and additional non-directive questions were asked in short-answered interviews, to enhance depth and encourage reflexivity of answers (May, 2011).

Theoretical considerations

For the interviews I went with the format of semi-structured interviews as it allowed me to explore understandings related to . The interpretivist position applied in this study, wherhow meal-boxes are implemented and used in practice in a flexible yet structured way. Using an interview guide (see appendix 1), I followed a structure that allowed for specific issues to be addressed and the respondents to answer within their own frame of reference (Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2013). This was important to my study as it gave room to explore meanings that were important and of particular interest to the respondents.

The interview questions were divided into specific subcategories like grocery shopping, cooking – and eating routines, consequently creating some kind of order and categorization that later in the process could allow for coherence and cross-case comparability to take place between obtained results. The questions included in the interview were open and basic in the sense that the mainstream consumer could easily understand and answer. In developing the questions, with assistance from my supervisor Christian Fuentes, emphasis was placed on how to begin the interviews with structural questions about how they carry out different activities. This allowed me to explore specific areas of their life and elaborate on experiences related to their use of meal-boxes. Unless it was necessary, like in cases where the respondent failed to understand the question, questions were asked in an non-directive and general manner to avoid directing and probing with the answers (as also explained by May, 2011). Questions would therefore sound like 'how do you carry out your grocery shopping activities?', without giving them any examples of answers. This way allowed me to probe beyond short answers and ask additional follow-up questions to reflect back; i.e. to elaborate further on topics that were interesting to the study and confirm interpretations on respondent's accounts (Bryman, 2012). Often, I would ask additional questions about how the respondents include the meal-box in their activities and how, in their view, it changes the nature of the practice. Asking the question in this way allowed me to gain a solid understanding of *how* my phenomena interfere with, and change eating household practices.

To increase effectiveness of my interview guide, I initially started off by running a pilot-test interview with the first of my respondents. The pilot test allowed me to test the depth of my questions in relation to the aim of my study. After listening to the recording and reading the transcript of the interview, some of the questions were adjusted including my way of asking the questions. I do however

acknowledge that a greater number of pilot-test could potentially have contributed to a better formulation of questions and thereby a better understanding of *meaning* related to the phenomena from the perspective of the respondent's (Bryman, 2012). One of the reasons why this have not been possible, is due to the difficulty in finding valid respondents why small adjustments to the interview strategy was done throughout the process instead. It should be noted, that the pilot test interview produced useful results and was therefore included in the overall results.

Transcription and analysis of the results

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. As the researcher of this study, I choose to do the transcription myself. This encouraged a greater memory of the events discovered during the interviews while allowing for a more thorough examination of the answers, hence bringing me closer to the data. The transcription produced roughly 100 pages, consequently calling for a structured method of analysis. Themes began to come through already during the transcription phase, subsequently followed by other steps where I used different highlighters to mark findings that could be interesting for my analysis. During this process, I kept in mind some of the main concepts from practice theory (e.g. the reorganisation of practices) and socio-technical "scripting" (e.g. notions of *qualifications*), as they would guide me towards developing an argumentation to support the aim and theories of my study. An example hereof was how practices related to grocery shopping stood out in terms of how meal-boxes change habits, leading to structure in *when* and *how* grocery shopping trips take place. Some of the data from the different interviews produced results that could be related and/or discussed against each other. This was especially apparent when comparing the use of one meal-box provider with another in terms of their focus on sustainability, and how this came to influence behaviour and practices related to eating.

After several screening processes, the processes proceeded through a thematic analysis. While this method in research fails to identify as an approach to analysis (Bryman, 2012), structure and order in how themes were identified and discussed has been important. Following recommendations by Ryan and Bernard (2003), it has been possible for me to thematize my data using scrutiny techniques focused on finding *repetitions and similarities & differences*. I have used The Framework Approach as illustrated by Bryman (2012), to organize and analyse themes standing out from the transcripts. As exemplified in table 2, focus has been on managing and identifying subthemes in relation to each theme to gain a better overview and flow in analysis.

Theme1: Convenience

	Structure	Cost-efficient	Time-saving	Sustainability
Interviewee 1				
Interviewee 2				
Interviewee 3				
Interviewee 4				

Interviewee 5				

Table 2 The Framework Approach to thematic analysis

Ethical considerations, interviews

Finally, my study ensures anonymity of the respondents, and informed consent was gained prior to any recording taking place. By informed, I mean that all of the respondents were provided with a description of the study, also in terms of their anonymity and how I planned on using the data. Apart from the importance of considering the ethics of my study, I deliberately expressed gratitude for their participation, to make them feel valued and thereby encourage openness and participation. Also known as rapport (May, 2011), I devoted much of my attention on engaging with the respondents by for example welcoming humour, hence contributing to a pleasureful experience for both parties.

Object ethnography

In her article, Akrich (1992) emphasize the importance of studying technical objects from different perspectives. Applying object ethnography on my study means that, in order to get a better understanding of how digital devices shape behaviour and change practices, I must take a look at the digital devices inherent in my study, instead of focusing on the consumer side only. In examining a digital device, it is important to bear in mind that the visions of designers when developing an object are inscribed in a specific way which may or may not create meaning for the user (Akrich, 1992). This is why I focus on the digital devices that respondents regularly use to purchase a meal-box or read about and engage with, to see how their "script" aligns with the interpretations of the respondents. Basing my study on meal-box providers mentioned by the respondents can however lead to some limitations, as it means that I exclude other providers which "script" could offer a different insight to my study. In shaping this research, I did test the possibility of focusing only on the meal-box providers that had an explicit focus on sustainability. This proved to be difficult however for several reasons, as I would need to further limit my requirements in searching for volunteering respondents which I couldn't afford, while it was also difficult to distinguish between and determine which meal-box providers that had the greatest focus on sustainability without further analysis. Finally, I believe that this research benefits from diversification in results, as it better illustrates how the digital device creates meaning within households across different settings.

The objective of the digital observations has been to understand how certain forms of behaviour are promoted and "scripted" into the digital devices; i.e. what actions they encouraged and enabled. I carried out a digital observation by examining the various apps, home pages and social media pages (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) used by different meal-box providers for promotion and selling purposes. In carrying out this method, meal-box providers were narrowed down to Hello Fresh, The Seasons, Lina's Meal-box and Skagen Food. The observation took place periodically over a period of one month, to capture both older and recent data to support my analysis. The observation entailed screenshots of social-media posts, homepages of selected meal-box providers and finally an examination of the interface design from a user's perspective recorded in screen-videos. Obtained data from the observations accounted for roughly 100 screenshots and six screen videos.

Observation analysis

My use of object ethnography begins with the premise, that while digital devices contains scripts reflecting the values and worldviews of its designers, these are taken up and redesigned in the everyday lives of its users (Carrington, 2012). This is relevant to my analysis, especially from an interpretivist viewpoint, as it clearly underlines that individuals bring in different worldviews when ascribing meaning to an object. From the interview I also learned that the digital device was used to seek inspiration and/or place an order of a meal-box, hence confirming my previous writing about treating meal-boxes as market/consumption devices. Acknowledging this in my analysis is important, as it guides me to better understand what the "scripts", from a socio-economic perspective, are designed to do, i.e. attract consumers to buy their products.

The initial step in the analysis is the "reading" of the text in relation to the intention and expectations of the object. Taking departure in writings by Akrich (1992), I focus on the 'script' embedded in the artefact, as every artefact is believed to contain a message that outlines its intended use and meaning. I used my triangulation technique to draw coherence between findings from both the interview and observation, to reach a greater understanding of how the digital device lead to change in household eating practices. This also means, that I derive from the respondent's own interpretation of how and why they use the device, as this not only supports my observation analysis, but also the overall arguments that I carry out through my analysis.

Based on this, I looked for how different values are "constructed" into the device, for example convenience, sustainability or cost. Other messages that can be read by users and experienced through the interface design was furthermore examined, as it provided an understanding of how consumers use the device and what they use it for. I furthermore carried cross-analysis of selected digital platforms/devices that was most commonly mentioned during the interviews, where a comparison between different devices provided me with an understanding of the different levels through which the notion of sustainability is emphasized and embedded in the devices. This resulted in findings that showed how different meal-box providers can be distinguished from one another based on their diverse focus on sustainability and and/or other qualities. They encouraged different behaviours and thereby also consumed different consumers, which was interesting to my analysis considering how they aim towards creating change to household eating practices in different ways.

Ethical considerations, observation I took no specific ethical consideration related to the observations of the digital platforms/devices. The social media accounts, apps and homepages that I did my observation on were all accessible to the public, why ethics related to anonymity and privacy has not been a concern. Observing public objects furthermore means that I got to analyze the artifacts as they seemingly are intended to be promoted and viewed by potential consumers. In other words, I had no contact with any of the meal-box providers and therefore haven't received any direct information about the design of the artifacts which otherwise could have intervened with how I, as a researcher, approach and analyze the data.

Research quality and generalisation

My research design has been developed with emphasis on quality of results and how they can be useful in supporting the aim of my thesis. Research quality is not a technical problem when applied to qualitative research and measures to assess quality cannot be standardized (Flick, 2007). Research quality ha however been an important element for my thesis, as it supports my argumentation for choice of research design and theory in studying my aim. I have used different strategies and criteria to assess and improve the quality of my research, like for example triangulation. Triangulation allowed me to align my theoretical and methodological background with my methods, by applying two methods that in their respective ways explore different aspects of the same issue, i.e. the integration of meal-box in household practices, which in turn supported the overall aim of my thesis. Other consideration, like the choice of language used in carrying out the interviews, has furthermore been deliberate as it allowed respondents to answer within their own frame of reference about issues that are normally taken up in one's native language. Since my topic, for some individuals, is rather private I do acknowledge the potentiality of having skewed information that can interfere with the quality of the results. Anonymity was however ensured to avoid or reduce such issues.

Another issue when dealing with qualitative research are those of generalizability across time and space. Malcolm (2000) however talks about *moderatum generalisation* as something that applies to results deriving through interpretive methodologies. Following interpretivism I focus on household's individual interpretation of how meal-boxes has changed the order of things constituting eating practices and how the digital device potentially has shaped sustainable behaviour, which is an issue that fails to fall within objective claims. Thus, with moderatum generalisation findings are a representation of the reality of those for whom it is intended, and not for a whole population (Geoff & Malcolm, 2005; Williams, 2000). This means, that the scope of what is claimed is moderate and I don't aim to produce a statement that applies over a long period across ranges of cultures. Also, my findings are open to change, and can be retested and confirmed/refuted through further studies.

Results and analysis: the reconfiguration of household practices

Results from my analysis showed that meal-boxes reconfigure eating practices in different ways among households. Within more or less ordered practices, meal-boxes trigger change, replace or delimit conventional practices related to eating. Main themes that I discovered carrying out my thematic analysis were how meal-boxes enables convenience, convenience through structure, inspiration and finally, how meal-box providers promote and shape sustainable behavior. I will in the following sections elaborate on my findings, touching upon how the meal-box change practices, what this led to, and how the digital device enabled change within practices.

I have deliberately chosen to include three meal-box providers from my findings to my analysis. These were the most mentioned and therefore also most relevant in relation to the interview findings: The Seasons, Hello Fresh and Lina's Meal-box [Lina's Matkassa]. The Seasons operate in both markets and has a core vision about decreasing meat-consumption, provide healthy alternatives and decrease CO_2 emissions within the food industry. Hello Fresh is an international company that through its focus on convenience offer their consumers variation in food from kitchens around the world. Lina's Meal-box is family-oriented with a focus on fresh produce, healthy meals and decrease in food waste.

The enablement of convenience (through structure)

From the results, I was able to identify two big themes in my findings namely *convenience* and *structure.* Upon further analysis however, it appeared that the two themes in many cases interlink through the integration of meal-boxes in household practices. Many of the respondents emphasized, that meal-boxes changed their routines in a positive way, by providing a structure which in turn was convenient for them.

Changes in eating practices

The main practices that was influenced by the implementation of meal-box in households was those related to grocery shopping. All of the respondents experienced significant changes in habits after implementing the meal-box at home. Interestingly, the respondents reflected on their grocery shopping behavior in very different ways with different meanings ascribed to these kinds of practices. Borrowing from Shove et al. (2012), *meanings* are important elements of practice and represent the symbolic and social significance of participation in any one moment. Upon reflecting on change, respondents emphasized that *structure* in shopping habits became a significant practicality within their households. The respondents would buy less food and go less often to the supermarket. When asked about grocery shopping activities, one of the respondents said:

> Usually, when we have the meal-boxes, then the rest becomes more or less planned. When we don't have the meal-boxes, it very often becomes so, that we end up standing in the store and deciding on what to eat for dinner.
> (Respondent nr. 3, translation from Danish)

The implementation of structure through meal-box was however not limited to grocery shopping activities alone. Another respondent mentioned that her household were driven by a busy schedule and little time to cook during the weekdays:

> *To confirm what you are saying, it was a source of inspiration with the meal-box to cook quick meals in less time?* Yes. So, we have them because of the convenience and little time we have to prepare something decent and filling before all activities gets going. So, the timeframe from coming back from home, to the time when kids' activities and my own activities starts, is usually quick. So, I can't spend an hour or two cooking so that was the key reason for choosing meal-boxes.
>
> (Respondent nr. 10, interview conducted in English)

In her writing Shove (2003a) relate to the notion of *convenience*, as something that enhances people's control over scheduling. Applying this take on my analysis would indicate that households engage in change, i.e. meal-boxes, for reasons other than shifting rationales; rather it is the ambition of maintaining standards, leading to new routines and the use of other more convenient solutions. How is it however, that households engage in change and how does it come to influence the nature of the practice itself? Warde (2013), in his extensive work about eating practices, argue that if we want to understand the mutability of practices, it is important that we consider how practices are socially and purposefully coordinated. Practice formation of eating especially is characterized by its dynamic nature, where practices are not believed to be given, rather they are consolidated and fabricated in cultural contexts. Schatzki (2002) furthermore emphasize how practices change over time. In his own words: "through the doings of human and nonhumans, practices are carried out and engage with orders, arrangements take form and channel practices, and the mesh they compose incessantly modulates" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 233), where *change* is believed to take place when the order and arrangement of practices are altered robustly by other activities. How 'robustly' meal-boxes can create changes in the organization of eating practices can however be different from household to household. According to Schatzki (2002) for example, *change* is relative if household's use of meal-boxes is only temporary or short-sighted as it would fail to adequately alter the organization of practices and become routines. This I acknowledge have been the case with some of the respondents, while for others, meal-boxes has been a fixed routine for years. Nevertheless, we can say that meal-boxes in many situations is used to implement routine and structure within household's daily life, permanently or shortsighted.

Meanings related to the desire for convenience and structure can thus be understood as cultural values that through meal-boxes can create better alignment between practices. According to Warde (2013), practices are tightly organized and coordinated, where stronger coordination seems to exist where instrumental production is present, as within practices of buying groceries and cooking. Interestingly, these are the practices where meal-boxes got the most to offer; i.e. convenience and structure in the

buying of food products and food preparation activities. Said with other words, meal-boxes can be seen as a bundle of materials, meanings and competences that contributes to greater alignment and coordination between eating practices, i.e. structure, which in turn creates *meaning* within households.

Convenience for a change

Upon examining how meal-boxes offer convenience through structure within households, I want to now examine convenience from another perspective. Brunner, van der Horst, and Siegrist (2010) have examined the notion of *convenience food* arguing that saving time and effort only, fails to adequately account for the notion of convenience food. Rather, the authors define convenience food products as "those that help consumers minimize time as well as physical and mental effort required for food preparation, consumption, and cleanup" (Brunner et al., 2010, p. 498). From my findings, I recognize how mental efforts often were used to describe notions of convenience related to meal-boxes. For respondent nr. 4, mental efforts seemed to be delimited a lot when having meal-boxes in her household:

> She [respondent's daughter] is very picky when it comes to food. Actually, she has OCD, so everything is of meaning to her. From what I buy, what the products have touched and if it has been in the right bag. So, this is how it is, and The Seasons have indeed been the best solution for us. In her head, she believed that no body have touched those products. She believes in the precise composition of food, what we can eat and how the meals are constructed so we don't have to have the discussion about what to eat every evening. A lot of things become easier when we have The Seasons.
> (Respondent nr. 4, translation from Danish)

Warde (2016), in his writing about eating practices, touched upon food selection as being a multifaced phenomenon. What is meant there, it that it can be difficult to explain food selection; that it is personal. It is difficult to conceptualize the process of selection and no occasion of event automatically prescribes exactly what shall be eaten. In relation to the finding I got from respondent nr. 4, it appears that food selection has always been an issue within her household. While there were no rules guiding the selection of how different components should make up a dish, The Seasons could still offer them a desired solution. As reported by the respondent, many of the practices, including food selection, became easier when having the meal-boxes and decreased many of the mental efforts associated with practices of eating. Hence, it makes sense to conclude that convenience is not necessarily an issue of time. While one thing doesn't exclude the other, it remains important to acknowledge other forms of *convenience* that can be meaningful for households.

With that said, many of the respondents emphasized that they were not interested in decreasing their efforts in the kitchen cooking dinner; convenience in relation to meal-boxes wasn't always about

saving time on eating practices. Household would, on the contrary, spend more time in the kitchen for different reasons when they had the meal-boxes.

> When we have The Seasons, cooking takes at least one hour. That is because it has a lot of vegetables that needs to be chopped and so. But yes, I spend a lot of time in the kitchen actually when I have them, because of these things. But I save that time in grocery shopping actually.
> (Respondent nr. 4, translation from Danish)

Clearly, it becomes apparent from the interviews that households attach different *meanings* to convenience, where it comes in different shapes in relation to how it is used and intervenes with household routines. Here, it is important to note, that meal-boxes differ in their level of complexity, why physical efforts and time saving in some situations can fail to adequately explain the level of convenience related to meal-boxes. The *mental efforts* from the definition of convenience food products as provided by Brunner et al. (2010), have however proved to provide rich insights in explaining the notion of *convenience* in relation to meal-boxes. Whether or not meal-boxes can be conceptualized as a convenient change within households would again depend on situational factors. Here I am not only emphasizing the importance of repetition in use, as convenience can be needed more in different periods of people's lives. Rather I try to show how meal-boxes can bring changes to household's eating practices through convenience in time and space, and in physical as well as mental efforts.

The aftermath of meal-boxes

From the interviews it furthermore became apparent that *convenience* comes in different shapes. Other households reported positively on the sustainable changes that meal-boxes enables within their household. For one of the respondents, meal-boxes contributed with easier means through which she could assure sustainable food provisioning for her household. When talking about habits related to grocery shopping, I got the following answer:

> Organic food is very important to us. I have always bought organic food. And I also try to not buy products that have been flown in, although that can be hard to see on the products. But then you can say, this is something that is always ensured when you but meal-boxes from The Seasons.
> (Respondent nr. 9, translation from Danish)

Respondent nr. 9 was not the only one to emphasize that meal-boxes made it "easier" to live a more sustainable life, thus enabling convenience in terms of maintaining sustainable consumption habits. The meal-boxes would provide structure and alignment in the need to maintain sustainable grocery shopping habits and decrease uncertainty. According to Kjærnes and Torjusen (2011), food consumption is characterized by growing reflexivity. Along with increasing awareness about

sustainability and health issues in relation to food consumption, consumers are taking more reflexive and conscious choices. One of the providers of meal-boxes, The Seasons, only sells organic produce and has a no-fly policy to their products. This is a promise that several of the respondents choose to trust, and the interviews indicated that meal-boxes enabled a more convenient solution for households wanting to pursue a sustainable lifestyle. From a practice-theoretical point of view, Schatzki (2002) writes that things or objects are crucial elements of a practice and that the coexistence among human beings cannot be restricted to humans alone. Schatzki termed these arrangements, between the human and the non-human as *social relations*, where for example in this case it can be argued, that a distinct level of fir or misfit, can exist between the meal-box and households in regard to the existing order of things constituting a practice. This aspect becomes very interesting when examining how meal-boxes, as an element of several practice, can come to display either a fit or misfit, when replacing or intervening with other elements of a practice. In the case where respondent nr. 9 emphasized that, in her household, digitalization in the form of meal-boxes, enabled an assurance that all food products that they consumed were of organic produce, Schatzki (2002) would call this kind of social relation as one of *prefiguration*. With "prefiguration", he means "how the world channels forthcoming activity" (p.44), i.e. the present state of social affair *prefigures* a forthcoming activity by either enabling – or constraining it. It is believed to be a relation among the components of arrangements that, as indicated by respondent nr. 9, enables a specific kind of activity. Putting this in perspective to the case presented in this thesis, I argue, that through meal-boxes, prefiguration between the human and the non-human component qualify the enablement of a practice. When talking about practices related to grocery shopping and sustainable consumption, the interview indicates that the digital device linked to the meal-boxes enables a replacement of otherwise conventional practices, that in reality makes it more convenient to consume organic produce. In other words, the digital device *prefigures* sustainable consumption to take place within households, and it displays a level of fit in relation to the existing order of things within related practices. More on how digital devices are scripted to enable certain kind of capabilities or action, will be presented later in the analysis.

The role of digitalization in changing habits

Changes can furthermore be analyzed in relation to *habits* and the environment in which practices takes place (Warde, 2016). As presented previously in the theoretical framework, habits are linked to previously acquired forms of action (Giddens, 1984) and are believed to be influenced by their environment to different extent. For example it is believed that one can distinguish between habits being either strong or weak, depending on the degree of reflection anchored in the habit (Warde, 2016). Putting this in perspective to the answers presented above, it would appear that habits in relation to grocery shopping originally were weak and with lacking structure. These were habits that, upon further reflections, appeared flexible and therefore also became subject to change through the application of meal-boxes, hence leading to more structure. According to Warde (2016), the environment has played an important role in allowing room for reflectiveness on existing habits. As something existing in the environment, this is where the aspect of digitalization, becomes an important element for my analysis. How is it, that digital devices, come to alter with existing habits related to eating practices? I have gathered some pictures from my digital observation, which "script" can allow for reflection on current habits and practices of eating:

Figure 1 Picture from digital observation, Linas Meal-box, deducted from Facebook

From figure 1 it appears that the messages inscribed in this device encourage recipients to reflect on their eating practices, and especially activities related to food waste. In Swedish, the message emphasizes that meal-boxes from this provider are well-planned and with minimal food-waste, while also the "script" calls for action through the offering of a promotion code of 30% on the first two meal-boxes. According to Akrich (1992) the "script", this embedded knowledge, has both an enabling and limiting effect on human actions, where the socio-cultural environment, according to Wilhite (2012), is believed to be agentive in changing or reforming habits. In other words, it is not only the body that has agency over habits; rather the social and material context can play important roles in changing habits by offering means through which reflection can take place. This means that agency can be assigned to the meal-box, where the messages inscribed into the device can alter with, and change habits, routines and eventually also the coordination and fragmentation of eating practices.

Digital devices for co-ordination and fragmentation

Shove (2003a) write about the relationship between social challenge of co-ordination and the value of convenience. Convenience becomes a matter of "scheduling and coordination of people and objects in time and space" (p.171), where issues of control is the most important in determining success or failure. How is it, that meal-boxes allow for scheduling and coordination, and most importantly; how much control does households hold over the process? Many of the respondents emphasized how they found it easy and convenient to schedule and plan for meal-boxes. Several of the respondents noted

that they use the app to plan their meal-boxes, choose meals, pause and cancel their deliveries. Many characterized the use of the app as 'easy', thus indicating that households indeed are carriers of the practices, which in the situation of meal-boxes allows them to remain in 'control' of when and what to receive.

> I have the app. Maybe I get an email first, but I also downloaded the app so I can do everything there. *Is it on subscription sometimes or on offer?* It can be both. With Hello Fresh I have that app, so I just pause the deliveries. I haven't tried to cancel yet, but I don't have it now. But I could easily just open it up again.
> (Respondent nr. 8, interview conducted in English)

While conveniences in literature often is related to reasons for buying a service or a good that contributes to the organization of everyday life (Warde, Shove, & Southerton, 1998), it can be interesting to look at how the digital aspect of meal-boxes are "scripted" to display convenience and thereby motivate a purchase. Respondent nr. 8 is not the only one to point out the simplicity of planning the delivery of meal-boxes, and images from my observation illustrates the use of the app that repeatedly was mentioned during the interviews. It should however be noted, that the app itself was out of order at the time I was writing this thesis, why example images from Appstore are used to exemplify the use of the app. I do however acknowledge that such an observation can pose limitations in terms of getting the full user experience.

Figure 2 Observation of Hello Fresh's visual interface

Figure 2 illustrate how the meal-box provider choose to inscribe values of simplicity in relation to several practices, as for example food measuring, scheduling of deliveries and selection of dishes. Based on these values and the text that appears on the images, the message of the "script" offers notions of convenience, as it allows for structure and time-management around core-activities of eating practices (Shove, 2003a). A reminder from Carrington (2012) does however tell us that it remains within the everyday life of consumers, that the digital device is taken up, consumed and redesigned. This is a valid point, as it illustrated the importance of understanding how consumers of these devices perceive and consume the script, before I can understand the effectiveness hereof. One of the respondents commented on her own experience with the meal-box:

> It is the time savings I would say. Both in terms of not having to shop all of that also. It is also time saving in the sense, that you don't have to think about and plan the meals you have to cook because someone else does it for you. It is also a way to try out things that we maybe wouldn't try if it wasn't for meal box. We tend to go wild in a way, a bit out of the box, then if we plan the week ourselves.
>
> (Respondent nr. 7, interview conducted in English)

This view is interesting, as this respondent's perception of the values that the meal-boxes has introduced to her household, corresponds to the meanings and values that can be read from the "script". We must however not forget, that convenience always comes in relation to something else. When talking about the convenience of a product or a service, it becomes a claim, that one agents' purpose purposes that of other agents (Shove, 2003b; Warde et al., 1998). In this case and for the sake of this study, it becomes necessary to look into existing household routines; how meal-boxes has changed the social order of existing eating practices, and what this means for the notion of *convenience.* In the case of this respondent, the meal-box became a replacement of several practices. Physically and cognitively, the meal-box changed the order within existing practices in a way that she described as convenient.

While households can adopt and digitalize their household practices in different ways and to different extents, one of the respondents emphasized how and why digital devices have come to alter his grocery shopping routines, in a way that is more convenient to his household:

> Yes, but I use the internet. And I use, yes funny enough this is also the reason why we use The Seasons, but I use the internet as much as possible when I buy our groceries. It also depends a lot on how I get the products delivered, when I get the products delivered and the quality of them.
>
> (Respondent nr. 2, translation from Danish)

As emphasized by Cochoy et al. (2017), the development of digital devices, and its adaptation, interact with consumption and "promote and trigger change within more or less ordered practices and institutions" (p.3). This inspires for an examination of the dynamics of the elements that influence how and why households implement meal-boxes and transform otherwise conventional practices. Respondent nr. 2, attach different meanings to his grocery shopping practices as compared to other respondents and thereby also adapt to digitalization for other reasons besides the implementation of *structure.* For him and his households, it became a question of eating preferences. This respondent and his wife have both transitioned to a vegan lifestyle and have for the past few years found it more convenient to use digital devices for the ordering of their food as it, according to the respondent, had more to offer in terms of inspiring vegan food alternatives than the conventional shops where he resides. This likely indicates a process through which the digital is performed and stabilized within practices and routines, as described by Cochoy et al. (2017), thus leading to the establishment of social order. Social order, is according to Schatzki (2000) not necessarily related to regularities. Rather; we should look at the arrangement of people, artifacts and things. Schatzki et al. (2000) argue that social practices govern the meanings of arranged entities as well as the actions that brings these arrangements about, and that this governance is the basis of social order. Through this lens it can be argued then, that the order of things constituting a practice is governed by the social practice itself. This means, that eating practices related to specific kinds of eating preferences, e.g. veganism, becomes powerful for the governance of social order. In other words, the use of digital devices for this social practice, is more meaningful and has more agency over other conventional grocery shopping channels, eventually leading to change within the household of respondent nr. 2. For this respondent, it can be said that meal-boxes and other digital devices have changed eating practices more robustly than with many other respondents. This is mainly because this respondent has come to rely on the digital in many ways, hence replacing it with conventional performances of eating practices.

According to Warde (2016), elements of activities comes to the forefront of analysis of practices, and effective and relevant performances (e.g. the use of digital devices in grocery shopping practices)*"are triggered by dispositions and recognition of the demands of particular situations"* (p. 150). Here an emphasis is placed on the notion that new performances can be introduced to a practice, driven by demands, as was the example with respondent nr. 2. It remains important to note however, as explained by Warde (2016), that repetition of new performances are important in the process of learning procedures. Even with each performance being different and unique, they still exhibit patterns where for instance individuals repeat themselves over time and similar manners and behaviors are exhibited by members of a social group. Practice theory appears to provide an acceptable interpretation of these patterns, one that attempts to go beyond the explanation of individual choice and decision. Another example where meal-boxes introduced new routines and habits is when respondents would gather with family members in deciding what to order for their meal-boxes:

> … I was really pleased with the setup. And we actually take turns
> where we look into the coming weeks together, so we choose
> together what we think is interesting and what suits us best.
> (Respondent nr. 6, interview conducted in English)

Respondent nr. 6 explains how the digital device changed household routines in regard to practices of food planning. In her household, planning for the coming week would, without meal-boxes, typically be done in a less planned way and with many grocery shopping trips. Borrowing from Schatzki (2000) once again, a rearrangement between people, artifacts and things, appear to take place when routines in relation to eating practices *change*. Through this lens it therefore becomes apparent that meal-boxes reconfigures the social order of eating practices, where several elements of eating practices are changed and eventually replaced by the digital, eventually leading to more structure and greater convenience in relation to existing practices.

Meal-boxes as a source of inspiration

Inspiration is another theme that stood out from the findings. Many of the respondents noted that they use meal-boxes to gather inspiration on what to cook and eat. Phrases like *"having someone to take the decision for me"* in relation to seeking inspiration, is furthermore also something that illustrates how meal-boxes in several practices were used as *mind extenders*.

Meal-boxes as mind extenders

In analyzing how the digital device led to the reconfiguration of eating practices, the element of *competence* stood out. *Competence*, i.e. the cognitive abilities necessary to engage and perform a specific practice (Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017; Shove et al., 2012), is an element that, especially within cooking practices, is reconfigured with the meal-boxes. In this thesis, I relate elements of *competence* to the notions of *inspiration,* in that meal-boxes, according to the interviews, was a source of inspiration to new food and new cooking techniques. In other words, the digital device come to replace the cognitive abilities usually pursued by individuals carrying out this activity. While cooking practices in literature has been recognized for their high level of organization, perhaps even the most organized one when examining eating practices, several agencies are believed to be affecting its realization. This means, that several material elements, objects, things, come to affect the organization of cooking, as for example recipe books or educational programs aimed at coordinating individual performance with collective institution (Warde, 2016). With the meal-boxes, some of the respondents noted that meal-boxes extended their *competence* when it came to cooking practices.

> With the meal-box you are forced to cook something that you
> haven't thought of, instead of cooking the same.
> (Respondent nr. 9, translation from Danish)

> … you learn new techniques on how to cook vegetables. Just take
> a celery for example you'll find so many different ways to cook

it. We have learned salt-baking where you cover it with 1 cm salt
and bake it in the oven. Amazing tastes.

(Respondent nr. 2, translation from Danish)

If you are not used to vegetarian, it is a good way to get inspiration
on what you can eat and the ingredient you can use, compared to
what you are used to. I did find some recipes from the meal-boxes
that helped us a lot.

(Respondent nr. 7, interview conducted in English)

For me it's about having a source of inspiration. I like to cook
food, but with meal-boxes I just receive a pre-planned menu that
I just need to cook, and not come up with myself. And I get much
more variation in my food. I mean, we get much more taste
impressions and spices, and we get to try new vegetables that we
most probably wouldn't have bought ourselves, because we
wouldn't know how to use it.

(Respondent nr. 3, translation from Danish)

Respondents' found themselves inspired by the meal-boxes. Jenkins and Denegri-Knott (2017, p. 86) write: "a consumer using a digital device to construct desire for an object, or seeking knowledge to carry out practices, like cooking or motoring, is a very different consumer, with a new repertoire of capabilities and skills". Once again, it becomes apparent that materials, i.e. digital devices, come to hold agency in the course of carrying out a practice. To elaborate, Watson and Shove (2008) illustrate how *competence,* an element of practice, is something that can be found in humans and non-humans alike. When humans and non-humans are brought together in the course of a practice, they can be said to form a human-non-human 'hybrid', where humans rely on and utilize external sources to enhance their cognitive abilities (Akrich, 1992; Jenkins & Denegri-Knott, 2017; Watson & Shove, 2008). Meal-boxes acts as a device that many of the households use to extends their imagination and find inspiration on what to cook for their households, meaning that the meal-box does some of the desiring work as they become human-digital device hybrids. By also extending the *imagination* of consumers, meal-boxes reconfigure eating practices by allocating some of the cognitive work needed to carry out eating practices. This also means, that less agency is needed from the consumer, because the meal-box can provide "better" options; options that the household would have had a hard time finding and organizing. Several of the respondents noted, that they got inspired to eat better, i.e. healthier and more sustainable, through the meal-boxes. This corresponds well to what has already been recorded in literature (e.g. Jenkins & Denegri-Knott, 2017) about how consumers use digital devices to find inspiration or fulfill existing desires for specific kind of food. Here it is furthermore important to note that the "script" through which digital devices portray their offering, plays an important role in the process. That is, consumers looking for something specific, e.g. vegetarian, organic or conventional food, would be more tempted to engage and hybridize with devices that appeal to their needs. In other words, it becomes possible to assume that meal-boxes, as a digital

device, reconfigure household eating practices when household's needs align with the "script" through which they engage.

Meal-boxes as a continuous I source of inspiration after use

When digital devices are used to carry out practices related to eating, these practices change. They become different from conventional modes used to carry out eating practices as it involves a different combination of material, meaning and competences (Fuentes & Svingstedt, 2017). From the findings I recognized, that meal-boxes remained a source of inspiration, even after its use.

> In reality, I think that I get my inspiration from those meal-boxes.
> So, the next time I have to cook something I think back on what
> we have had before which we liked. In reality the meal-boxes also
> inspires me to cook something on my own. There is a lot of spices
> and components that I have never thought of cooking myself.
> Something like gnocchi, which we ate yesterday; I have cooked
> that many times because we got it in a meal-box. I am not sure I
> would have thought of cooking it otherwise.
> (Respondent nr. 3, translation from Danish)

From the study of consumer's use of digital devices by Jenkins and Denegri-Knott (2017) it was furthermore found, that consumers tend to return to a choice and evaluate it, why it is believed that their ability to imagine is enhanced *after* the use of the device. This was also the case experienced with respondent nr. 3, in which she emphasized how her imagination become enhanced after using the meal-box. According to Røpke and Christensen (2013), individuals make linkages between a diverse set of heterogeneous elements when carrying out a practice. This means, seen from the perspective of *extending the mind/imagination*, that meal-boxes has changed this bundle of material, meaning and competence associated a practice. In other words, meal-boxes has changed the elements configuring a practice, by for example expanding the repertoire needed within such performances.

Households can continue to seek inspiration from meal-boxes in different ways. Some of the respondents mentioned that they hold on to their favorite recipes from the meal-boxes:

> We have saved a lot of recipes from the former meal-boxes. So
> sometimes you go back and see. And we have actually marked
> the ones that we liked. So being able to pick and choose, plan and
> discuss those
> (Respondent nr. 6, interview conducted in English)

This respondent mention that they in their household have marked the ones that they favored the most. This was done in an attempt to recreate a prior food experience, a practice that was carried out through the use of a meal-box. Referring back to Schatzki et al. (2000) and part of his original definition; practice as performance through doings and saying, indicate that households continue to

carry a practice forward, this time however with another bundle of material, meaning and competence than with the meal-box present.

In sum, it appears that meal-boxes has brought change to existing eating practices through inspiration on what and how to cook untraditional dishes, or traditional dishes cooked in an untraditional way. It is within the device itself, the meal-boxes, that households adapt and change conventional elements of eating practices. In other words, the digital device encourages households to carry out their eating practices in a specified way that, most often, is different from the original practices and the existing order of thing. *Inspiration* is what drives many households to purchase meal-boxes, why Schatzki (2002) would call this relation one of *intentionality.* Households intentionally engage with this digital device for a specific purpose, where the device in return help compose practices through the right arrangements (Lammi, 2018). Hence, both the in – and after-use of a meal-box, the human-non-human social relation enable inspiration and mind-extension to take place in a way that alter the existing order of things constituting eating practices, i.e. change.

The promotion of sustainable consumption

Recent literature has acknowledged the potential of digital devices in enabling and enhancing sustainable consumption habits (e.g. Hansson, 2017; Sörum & Fuentes, 2017). Digital devices are believed to be "scripted" in a way to persuade users to act in a certain way, change their behavior or make decisions for them (Guthrie, 2013; Verbeek, 2006). Putting this in context with my findings, would entail that the meal-box enhanced a specified set of behaviors. From the interviews, it became evident among many of the respondents that sustainability was high on the agenda within their household and meal-boxes was a great source motivation to eat healthier and more sustainable at the same time.

On the qualification of greener living

From the interviews, I recognized that several of the respondents talked about the sustainable aspects promoted through meal-boxes. One meal-box provider stood out however on their vision and ambitions for increasing sustainable consumption behavior, both internally and externally to their consumers. Repeatedly, respondents talked about the sustainable promises that The Seasons gives to their customers. One of the respondents showed excitement about the no-fly policy, as this was something she too cared about, where she said:

> As the first ones in Denmark, they [The Seasons] drive with battery-driven trucks. This is something they have invested in. So, through The Seasons you can always find information on how to do things differently and more sustainable. And what sustainability is.
>
> (Respondent nr. 5, translation from Danish)

From a socio-technical perspective, ethics is something that can be inscribed in a device aimed and designed to enable consumption and shape consumers (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hansson, 2017). Fuentes and Sörum (2019) write about the potential of digital devices in shaping consumers and their behavior. The ethical consumer can be directed towards specific consumption behavior and the device is believed to play a crucial role in the process. Earlier, I wrote about the increasing reflexivity and uncertainty related to sustainability in general and within food consumption. From the response above (respondent nr. 5), it appears that the digital device has become an informative source for her on how she can become more sustainable. Other respondents said that they *became* more sustainable when they had those meal-boxes by limiting their food intake to consume only organic food, eating more vegetables, decreasing food waste and decreasing meat consumption.

> I am sure I eat almost double as much meat, if I were to buy my dinners myself. And the way they plan everything for you, how the dishes are constructed, you don't feel you need anything. sometimes I also buy the vegetarian meal-box, because then you don't miss the meat. And that is a big part of sustainability you know that you don't eat as much meat. So*, you would say you feel more sustainable when you have the meal-boxes from The Seasons?* Yes, indeed. And I also don't really have any food waste either.
>
> (Respondent nr. 4, translation from English)

These two examples (respondents 5 and 4), indicate that meal-boxes from The Seasons enables specific behaviors through their focus on sustainability. From respondent nr. 4, I learned that meal-boxes was a way for her to control her buying and eating habits. The respondent emphasized that meal-boxes put an end to their routine-practices of placing meat at the center of attention in every meal, while also enabling greater reflexivity around their food intake. How is it however, that these issues are addressed through the digital, to enable and shape behavior? In an attempt to see how aspects of sustainability are inscribes into the object, I carried out a digital observation on The Seasons. Below are some screenshots:

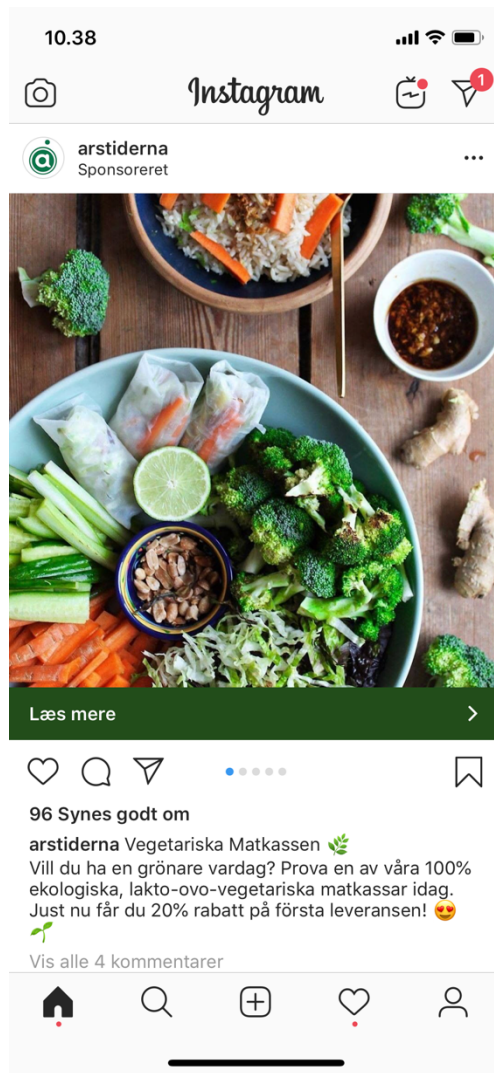*Figure 3 Instagram post on The Seasons's Instagram account, Denmark*

Figure 4 Instagram post on The Seasons's Instagram account, Sweden

According to Muniesa et al. (2007), markets are co-constructed. Market devices has been acknowledged for assisting consumers in their rationale decision making, which is especially interesting to the data I gathered. The pictures above are from the same company but distributed through two different Instagram accounts in Denmark and Sweden respectively. It appears that the visual objects align with the meaning of the texts on both pictures, where the picture to the right calls for a challenge to *"eat greener for five weeks".* Through the text, the provider encourages users to share their meals as part of the challenge. This could, according to Reijonen and Tryggestad (2012), be an indication of *qualification.* Qualification displays something that is gradually acquired, i.e. a process of becoming and transforming. This is only one of many posts on the company's Instagram profiles, where an attempt is taken to promote sustainable food consumption behavior. In other words, the "script" of the devices enables environmental friendliness or a greener food consumption to become a quality of significance over other qualities. The picture on the right was taken from a

sponsored post that is "scripted" in a way where sustainable consumption and vegetarian food becomes the point of attention once again. With an offered discount of 20% its likely to believe that the "script" once again is encouraging *qualification* of this product, where a discount code can create relative significance over other qualities and thereby encourage a specific act, a specific behavior, which in this case clearly is about eating greener. Taking into account the channel through which these messages were "scripted" and distributed, it becomes important to note that social media often is used to help consumers focus their awareness and attention on different options for social change (Albinsson & Yasanthi Perera, 2013; W. Belk & Llamas, 2013). Relating this to the findings I present in figure 3 and 4, it appears that The Seasons through their choice of media channel encourage consumers and other viewers to consume more sustainable, by fostering a community that in addition can increase the awareness and attention towards creating a *change.*

The concept of meal-boxes in general and how it is "scripted" to promote sustainable consumption

While it has appeared evident from the analysis, that meal-boxes has introduced new practices while eliminating others, a number of the respondents noted that their choice of meal-box provider wasn't coincidental. From their experience with different meal-box providers, they could recognize how some of the providers stood out on the notion of how much sustainability was promoted and anchored within the concept of the individual providers.

When asked about reflections on packaging waste for instance, many of the respondents who used the same meal-box also shared the same meanings. Meal-box users of Hello Fresh in Sweden for instance made it clear that the meal-boxes came with a lot of packaging.

> Yes. Far too much … I could feel it was too much package waste
> to be honest. It was all from spices, to smaller ingredients and
> smaller products that was packed in small packages. It doesn't
> make sense. At least from an environmental perspective.
> (Respondent nr. 6, interview conducted in English)

The reason why this is interesting from a socio-technical perspective, is that users of other meal-box providers, e.g. The Seasons had different perceptions about the use of packaging. Since packaging is an issue when it comes to the promotion of sustainable consumption, it becomes relevant to look into the connection that potentially exist between how meal-box providers promote themselves and their sustainability values and how this is perceived by its users on the other side of the spectrum.

> I actually think they handle this issue nicely, because they have
> two different kinds of packages. They have this wood container
> and flamingo container with all the cold stuff, and they pick them
> both up when they deliver the next meal-box.
> (respondent nr. 1, translation from Danish).

> … I mean, you receive many different things because everything
> is premeasured, and that is wrapped in plastic. But they are aware
> of that. And they are developing all the time and coming up with
> new alternatives to what they are using. So, in that way, there is
> a development going on there.
>
> (Respondent nr. 5, translation from Danish)

Not only did find that respondents reflected differently on how issues around packaging waste was accounted for from the supplier-side, it also became evident, that this is only an example of how meal-box providers market and promote values of sustainability. Two meal-box providers specially stood out in my findings from my digital observation, each on their end of the spectrum, when it came to the promotion of sustainability issues.

Figure 5 Overview of Hello Fresh's Instagram account, Sweden

Figure 6 Overview of The Seasons' Instagram account, Denmark

From the two figures, an overview screenshot from two meal-box providers, it appears that the two providers use their Instagram platform to promote different values. That is, the values inscribed into the digital devices portrays different behaviors, where it appears from figure 5, that *food* is in the focus, as compared to *nature/vegetables*, in figure 6. Digging deeper into the two accounts, it becomes clear that The Seasons use their platform to educate their viewers primarily about vegetables, and they furthermore engage with their users by encouraging them to try out new recipes and visit them at their farms to buy fresh produce. This means that they, through their "script", attempt to bring their users closer by getting to know who they are and vice versa, hence they take a specific and narrow position in promoting a more radical form of sustainability as compared to some of their fellow players. Interestingly, Hello Fresh takes a different approach. They use their platform, also to guide a specific behavior, but this time around the objective appears different. Through tempting pictures of food, Hello Fresh focuses on variation in food, taste and setup. As a consumption device, these digital devices are ascribed agency that can make their users act according to their "script", and it appears from the observation that sustainability is inscribed more strongly on The Seasons's Instagram account; which, borrowing from Reijonen and Tryggestad (2012), means that they act in a prescriptive way in qualifying sustainable consumption habits. In support to these arguments and to create greater alignment between consumer's interpretations and provider's "script", the interviews showed that users of The Seasons are more enthusiastic about changing their behavior, as compared to users of Hello Fresh. Users of Hello Fresh primarily noticed the low price and the higher level of service provided, as compared to other meal-boxes they have used. The respondents who have used Hello Fresh furthermore choose not to engage with their provider on social media channels; they would only use the Hello Fresh application to make their orders and receive campaigns through their e-mails. The opposite was the case with The Seasons' consumers, where a greater interest was present. The respondents followed the company permanently or from time-to-time on various social media channels. This great variation in the level of engagement between user and provider is interesting from a socio-technical perspective as it has to do with the "script" through which the companies provide useful information or build a relationship with their users.

Figure 7 Instagram-post from Hello Fresh about sustainability   Figure 8 Instagram-post from The Seasons about sustainability   By digging a little deeper into the posts of the two companies it becomes possible to distinguish between the two approaches that are taken to promote sustainability. Consumers can, through the digital platform, engage more with The Seasons on sustainability issues. While Hello Fresh writes that they "are not perfect" when it comes to addressing sustainable issues and that it is something that they work towards enhancing, The Seasons use a different approach again. They engage with their users differently by praising them on decreasing their meat intake and informing them about the low level of CO_2 emission their vegetarian meal-box has had on the environment (figure 8). Elisabeth and Jacobsen (2013) in their writing about food marketing and branding argue that there is no clear boundary between the material product and its message. In other words, the material product *is* the message, just as much as the message resides in the materiality of the product. Generally speaking, my observation indicated a greater presence of engagement initiatives on The Season's social media platform, compared with Hello Fresh (figure 7). It can be argued then, that the meal-boxes examined here are differentiated not only in their messages and focus on sustainability, but also how this is translated to the materiality of the meal-box itself.

Consumers of the two meal-boxes respectively have different perceptions of how sustainability has become anchored within the concept and it becomes clear from the findings of the digital observation as well as the interviews, that The Seasons are greater enablers of sustainable behavior, and thereby also in changing routines within household to become more sustainable.

Discussion and conclusion

In my thesis I have examined the different ways in which eating practices are reconfigured by the implementation of meal-boxes in households. In accordance with the aim of my thesis, I have also explored how meal-boxes as a digital device shape sustainable consumption. Since eating practices are socially and culturally coordinated which makes them rather complex to define (Warde, 2013, 2016), I found that households also attach diverse meanings to the use of meal-boxes. This means, that meal-boxes reconfigure household eating practices differently; to different extents and in different ways. I.e. meal-boxes shape different behaviors among households through a changed bundle of meaning, material and competence. According to theory (see Schatzki, 2002), meal-boxes reconfigure the social order of eating practices by changing several elements and replacing it with the digital. As a digital intervention, meal-boxes introduce change to habits and routines, and from the analysis it appears, that meal-boxes are a convenient way through which households can implement structure in busy and already difficult weekdays. Households furthermore use meal-boxes to break free from bad habits; to seek inspiration and learn new cooking techniques.

This is however not all; meal-boxes has in some situations furthermore been used to enable the above performances in a more sustainable way. With that said, it is important to note that the whole concept behind meal-boxes, in itself, fails to enable sustainability practices. In other words, meal-boxes are *not* sustainable standing alone. It is up to the individual provider, the "script" through which behavior is shaped, to determine how sustainability should be inscribed in the device. Findings show that meal-boxes has a tendency to produce excess packaging for example, which not all meal-box providers account for in their "script". A meal-box provider, The Seasons, stood out in terms of how the digital device enabled sustainable behavior in the reconfiguration of practices. Often seen as a solution, this meal-box can decrease uncertainties related to sustainable food production and consumption, and thereby guide consumers towards more environmentally friendly practices in everyday life. The Seasons have developed a very informative "script", where initiatives are taken to communicate how their meal-box create less of an impact on the environment. The analysis therefore showed, that values through which meal-box providers qualify themselves are connected to the performances and changes that households interpreted, as some households found themselves adopting to more sustainable practices because of their meal-box, while others . This is important, because it shows how meal-boxes, with its bundle of materials, meanings and competences, enter into a hybridized relationship with households and make them act in a predesigned way through a socio-material "script". Success and alignment between the "script" and consumers does depend on the socio-material landscape in which it operates, i.e. the context, and the set of practices in which it is employed (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019).

Realigning with the aim of this thesis, how meal-boxes reconfigure household practices, it remains important to note that while meal-boxes reconfigure practices during use, this does not mean that practices can be reproduced without the meal-box. In other words, meal-boxes can enable

convenience, inspiration and sustainability within practices, but it fails to ensure stability in any of those after-use, since these qualities are embedded in the "script" of the device. Consequently, it can be said, that changes relate to the times where meal-boxes are in-use, why conventional eating practices in reality, to a great extent, can go back to normal circumstances when meal-boxes are not present.son ing This also means, that my study has some limitationsto. While meal-boxes in my study have proven to reconfigure household practices to different extents, the results fail to adequately explain *how* meal-boxes enable more *permanent* change. The setup, including the tangible and intangible aspects of meal-boxes cause limitations to whether or not I can conceptualize meal-boxes in the same way as other digital devices like apps, since they potentially require more involvement and are not equally easy to access. With that said, I find it important to note that eating practices are dynamic and therefore open to change (Warde, 2013), which on the other end can have an effect on the extent to which eating practices can be changed permanently.

With that said, and as I presented in the theoretical framework of this thesis, Reckwitz (2002, p. 250) write: "conventionalized 'mental' activities of understanding, knowing how and desiring are necessary elements and qualities of a practice in which the individual participates, not qualities of the individual". Linking this to my findings it can be said, that households expand on their knowledge from using the meal-box; whether it is on cooking skills or imagination, or on sustainability issues that can be applied to everyday life, these qualities remain embedded in the practice itself. In other words: understanding what doings or sayings are appropriate for a given practice opens up the possibility for a practice to be recreated. Although it can be an interesting phenomenon to explore in the future, my study fails to examine how and whether or not digital devices can ensure stability within practices and the recreation hereof after-use. In addition, hereto, I suggest that researchers expand on the area of exploring *why* households, or consumers in general, would detach from a digital device, and what this means in relation to the practice itself. Can practices ever go back to how they were before using the digital device? This could be a very interesting subject that explore *change* in more depth; how digital devices create change within organizations of practice both during use and most interestingly, after use.

Theoretical contribution

In relation to previous research, this thesis offers a relevant socio-material analysis of a widely used consumption device in Denmark and Sweden, i.e. meal-boxes. My analysis shows how a digital device can be a physical object and a digital platform at the same time, which in correlation creates new practices, expands on existing practices and/or exclude old practices. This means, that I not only focus on the pure digital aspect of the device and how it is implemented in practice, as has been the case in more recent publications (e.g. Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hansson, 2017; Jenkins & Denegri-Knott, 2017; Sörum & Fuentes, 2017), rather I examine how an interplay between the material and digital aspects coalesce in practice and create change. This, I believe, is a new take of studies on digitalization and consumption where the practice-oriented perspective come to dominate the integration of the digital in everyday life. In other words, digital devices are consumed through practices, why I use these to explain how meal-boxes with its characteristics enable specific kinds of behaviors and thereby create change within existing practices.

While meal-boxes relates to notions of convenience (Hertz & Halkier, 2017), my analysis also shows that offers much more than that. An examination of meal-box as a phenomenon contributes with relevant knowledge on how digitalization intervenes with the many practices of eating. Therefore, my study examines how meal-boxes change the existing order of things within the different layers constituting eating practices. Hence my thesis extends on existing knowledge about digitalization and consumption through an examination of a phenomenon that belongs to an area where no or limited prior research is published.

Societal relevance

Meal-boxes has become a common use among households in Denmark and Sweden. Understanding where a market device like meal-boxes belong in the socio-technical and economic landscape of the two countries is therefore important, as it explains consumption practices. Increasing attempts are taken to decrease consumption (Nations, 2018), where my study shows how practices, related to consumption, changes with the implementation of meal-boxes in household practices. Being aware of this and having it empirically identified therefore becomes an advantage in terms of planning for the future and planning for how to influence consumption behavior for the better good. This is interesting because innovators, businesses, consumers and retailers along, can all benefit from understanding the dynamic process through which consumers adapt to digitalization and change their practices. Not to forget, this is also very important from a sustainability perspective. It has become a public concern both locally and nationally that initiatives are taken limiting consumption to levels through which the environment can cope (Nations, 2018), where my study offers an insight to how digitalization can be used as means through which consumption habits can be transformed. I provide an example of how meal-boxes can be used as a promoter of sustainable behavior which in fact is appreciated and lead to change among its users. I also show how meal-boxes can be just another digital device that is both "scripted" and perceived as an invention of convenience. This distinction is important because it shows how services and products can be "scripted" to promote a specific behavior. I believe this is essential knowledge that consumers and businesses alike can use and develop further on, and I believe that further development and studies of this kind can lead to new inventions, which in turn can decrease consumption patterns and cause less harm to the environment, hence supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Managerial implications

The analysis carried out in this thesis providers useful insight to management as well. My analysis shows that consumers not always associate the use of meal-boxes with time-savings. I found, that convenience comes in different shapes and that other issues can be solved through the integration of meal-boxes in households, including mental efforts of figuring out what to eat or where one's food comes from. These are interesting aspects, as it illustrates the diverse nature that lays behind the integration of meal-boxes, which all are attributes that meal-box providers can account for as well in "scripting" the device. Also, my analysis shows that a clear potential exists for the meal-box to create change within household; a potential that I believe can successfully sustain alignment between user and provider. What I mean here is, that providers should utilize the full potential of digitalization by adapting to the rhythms of their users. Pantzar and Lammi (2017) note that success doesn't come to

those who can adapt to issues of price and product qualities to remain raised by their competitors. Rather, success lies in the ability to synchronize users' activities, which could be to propose timely offers of a desired meal-box at the right time and with at an appropriate price. For the retailers that offer meal-boxes, I would like to point out that consumers also care about getting to prepare and eat exciting and new food. Eating practices are personal and meal-boxes are often a conscious choice for consumers un the hunt for an alternative prepacked menu to fuel their desires. Retailers who want to succeed with their meal-box offerings and reach out to a greater consumer segment, should therefore know and acknowledge the current food trends and challenges that to a great extent has an influencing effect on consumers purchase decision and return rate.

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Appendix I: Interview guide: Semi-structured interviews
(Also translated in Danish)

1. **Introduction**

   - Can you tell me about yourself/your household?
   - Can you take me through how a typical week looks like for you? How much time is allocated to food related practicalities during a week?

2. **Buying groceries (how are meal-boxes interfering with routines?)**
   - How would a typical grocery shopping trip look like? Has anything changed after introducing meal-boxes at home?How often do you buy groceries? With and without meal-box.
   - Where do you buy your groceries, with whom, and when?
   - How did you go around planning your trip to the grocery store? (meal-plan, do you allocate time, plan your choice of transportation)
            How does this change when you order a meal-box?
   - Do you receive or get food from other places that is not purchased?
   - How important is the sustainable aspect to you, when you purchase food?
   -       If it is important, how do you feel about some of the meal-box offerings on the market?How would you describe some of the advantages that you gain from purchasing a meal-box compared to traditional grocery shopping? Any disadvantages? Why do you prefer one way over the other?

3. **Preparing food (what effects are meal-boxes having on household routines: better, worse, changing)**
Follow-up question will be asked after each of the questions below, to compare routines with - or without meal-boxes (How did meal-boxes affect this?)
   - What was the last meal that you prepared at home? (when and with whom?)
   - Who is usually the cook at home? Is it a joint activity? (who decides on what to cook?)
   - Do you appreciate order when you cook? Being told what to do?
   - How much time do you spend on cooking? How do you spend your time in the kitchen?
   - How do you usually seek inspiration on what to cook? (cookbooks, internet, blogs..)
   - Do you consider the proportions that you cook? What do you think of when you measure your cooking?

4. **Eating habits food (what effects are meal-boxes having on household routines: better, worse, changing)**
Follow-up question will be asked after each of the questions below, to compare routines with - or without meal-boxes (How did meal-boxes affect this?)
   - Tell me about the last meal that you ate at home (when, what, with whom).

- How would you characterize a good dish? What do you usually opt for when you get to choose?
- What **else** characterizes a good dish in your opinion? (taste, ingredients, company, richness, time spend on cooking it)

5. **Dealing with food waste**

Follow-up question will be asked after each of the questions below, to compare routines with - or without meal-boxes (How did meal-boxes affect this?)

- When was the last time you dealt with food waste? What type of food was it? What did you do with it?
- When were the last time threw out something eatable? What were the reasons why you threw it out?
- How well do you feel the food proportions fit with the meal-box? Many leftovers? How is it different from when you cook without a meal-box?

6. Do the meal boxes come with much packaging? How do you manage it (recycle or bin)?
   Questions related to meal boxes

- Can you tell me about the last time you purchased a meal-box?
- What kind of meal-boxes do you go for and why?
- How do you order your meal-box? (on subscription, when you get an offer)
- What is important to you when ordering a meal-box? (level of convenience, deliveries, commitment to environment, choice of food...)
- How often do you receive a meal-box? (what time a day, how do you go around unpacking it and organize it)
- Have you tried ordering food online that was not preplanned? How would you say it is different from the ordering of a meal-box?
- Could you tell me of an instance in which the ordering of the meal boxes did not go well?
- Could you tell me of an instance in which the delivery of the meal boxes did not go well?

7. **Meal box companies and relations**

- How do you keep up with updates from meal-box suppliers?
- Do you follow them on social media? Where and why?
-
- If you would to describe Meal box provider X (the one(s) the household use) how would you do that?
- Do you know of any other meal box companies? How would you describe them?

8. **Sustainability**

- How clear do you think the message of sustainability comes across the different platforms of meal-box providers
- Would you say that you handle groceries, cooking and eating in a sustainable way? What role do you think meal-boxes play in this?