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Research article

The practice approach in practice: Lessons for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that Work Towards Sustainable Food Consumption in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the great potential of civil society organizations (CSOs) as drivers of social change, this study examines how CSOs' work directed towards consumers—in this case, to make food consumption sustainable—could be analyzed and improved through insights in practice theory. This research scope adds to the sustainable consumption literature by shifting the lens from the rich body of scholarship examining the practices of households or organizations themselves to how CSOs can influence household practices. Interviews with five different Swedish CSOs serve as the study's main empirical basis. To analyze CSO activities that target households, we use practice theorist Alan Warde's well-established categorization of four integrative social practices of eating: (1) the supplying of food, (2) cooking, (3) the organization of meal occasions, and (4) aesthetic judgments of taste. Unlike some perspectives in sustainable consumption research that focus on consumer attitudes and behavioral change, a practice theory perspective encourages a view of consumption patterns as arising from complex and necessarily social configurations of human action formed in relation to evolving infrastructures and institutions in a cultural and historical context. In agreement with this, we suggest that the CSOs would generally benefit from focusing on particular practices, practice elements, and communities of practice. The different preconditions under which CSOs operate—such as material resource constraints and symbolic power resources—should further inform their chosen types of activities. However, we also conclude that the scale of the necessary societal changes ultimately requires increased integration and coordination of practical and political activities, not just among CSOs but throughout all spheres of society. Finally, we briefly outline avenues for further research.

1. Introduction

Globally, food is a leading contributor to anthropogenic environmental change, threatening ecosystems (IPBES, 2018), and contributing to climate change (Poore and Nemecek, 2018). Scholars, concerned citizens, and organizations have raised concerns regarding the sustainability of contemporary food consumption patterns, such as the environmental impact of meat and dairy (Steinfeld et al., 2006) and food waste (FAO, 2013). The authors of this study are based in Sweden, a country that is often considered ambitious in its sustainability efforts but whose per-capita ecological footprint ranks among the highest in the world (WWF, 2016). Regarding food consumption, specifically, the country has seen a drastic change in its consumption patterns and a corresponding increase in environmental impacts during the last few decades (Cederberg et al., 2019). Food consumption now accounts for a significant portion of Swedes' contributions to environmental problems such as climate change (Axelsson et al., 2018, in Swedish). Consequently, addressing Sweden's arguably unsustainable food consumption is an important part of the overarching transition to a sustainable society.

During the last couple of decades, social scientists have adopted the social practice perspective—sometimes called theories of prac-

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tice or the practice approach—in research and publications aimed at understanding and guiding social and environmental harm reduction through changes in daily activities (Corsini et al., 2019; Evans, 2018). These activities are embedded in a wide variety of consumption domains (Breadsell and Morrison, 2020; Gram-Hanssen, 2009; Pantzar and Shove, 2010), not least of which is the food domain. Such studies often consist of directly observing or interviewing people engaged in the activities of interest (Devaney and Davies, 2017; Evans, 2012; Halkier, 2009).

However, the practice perspective's potential to contribute to societal transformation toward sustainability partly depends on whether it can provide insight into how institutionalized and shared practices need to evolve, as well as how actors who are actively aiming at sustainable food consumption could contribute. Though not in relation to sustainability, Nicolini (2013) has made key contributions to the literature on the organizational dimensions of practice theory. (Watson, 2017) has also shed important light on the power dimension of organizations from a practice perspective. Still, in terms of the specific area of sustainable consumption, relatively few scholars have used a practice perspective to examine how organizations' efforts might be developed. Some notable exceptions include Spurling et al. (2013) and Watson and colleagues (Hoolohan et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2020), who use a practice perspective to develop different ways to reframe policy interventions for sustainable consumption. Similarly, Pape and Davies (2012) utilize a participatory backcasting approach to develop a "transition framework" for designing practice-inspired interventions for sustainable food consumption, relevant for policy, education, and businesses. Following Spurling et al. (2013), Schäfer et al. (2018) compare how different German and Austrian community-based initiatives for low-carbon living try to re-configure unsustainable practices. Examples from a marketing perspective include Spotswood et al. (2017), who merge insights from social marketing and practice theory to develop an intervention planning process, and Rettie et al. (2012), who lean on practice theory to develop marketing strategies that emphasize the normalization of sustainable practices. Furthermore, Evans et al. (2017) present a critical account of how strategic actors and organizations construct and mobilize the concept of "the consumer"—a concept fundamentally at odds with the practice approach.

Still, given the significant role of civil society organizations (CSOs) as facilitators and drivers of social change (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011), sustainable consumption scholarship has not sufficiently explored how the practice perspective can inform CSOs' work toward sustainable food consumption. In an example of such research on a mainly conceptual level, Welch and Yates (2018) use the practice approach to examine the roles of different types of collective action—including but not limited to formal organizations—in socio-technical transitions toward sustainability. As another example, Seyfang et al. (2010) use practice theory—among other perspectives—to study the role of the Transition Towns grassroots movement in sustainability transitions. These important contributions notwithstanding, this research topic needs further development, especially in light of social practice scholars' call to study how "other actors" influence practices (Shove et al., 2012, p. 146; see also Halkier and Jensen, 2011, pp. 105–106). Considering CSOs' societal importance and the fact that they often have limited funding and resources, it is crucial to identify how practice theory might suggest improvements to their work directed at eating practices.

In Sweden, various types and sizes of CSOs employ a wide range of strategies in their efforts to make Swedish food consumption sustainable. This study concentrates on five CSOs that promote sustainable food consumption among households, including environmental organizations of different sizes and one national umbrella organization for consumer associations. Using a practice theory perspective, we analyze how the CSOs describe their efforts heretofore and elucidate some of the potentials of practice theory to inform the development of CSO activities so as to enhance their impact.

2. Theoretical Approach

The term *theories of practice* encompasses an extensive and not entirely homogeneous set of ideas and concepts. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper to cover them all, we briefly outline the main tenets of theories of practice here, especially in relation to the study of consumption. Then, in the following two sections, we outline the theoretical concepts we expand upon throughout the article to fulfill the aim of the study.

Traces of a practice theory approach can be found in the work of several prominent theorists, including Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Judith Butler, and Bruno Latour (Reckwitz, 2002). More recently, Theodore Schatzki and Andreas Reckwitz have made significant contributions to the approach (Røpke, 2009). Reckwitz (2002) categorizes theories of practice under the umbrella of "cultural theories," which reject individualistic norm- and purpose-based explanations for human action and social order in favor of explanations that view action and order as emergent from collective knowledge in the form of symbolic and cognitive structures. Among these cultural theories, however, theories of practice can be distinguished by their conceptualization of the practice as the smallest unit of analysis, in contrast to other cultural theories that focus on discourse or the mind (Reckwitz, 2002).

In particular, our work draws on the application of practice theory to the analysis of consumption, especially the work of prominent practice theorists Alan Warde (e.g., 2016, 2013, 2005) and Elizabeth Shove and colleagues (e.g., Shove, 2010; Shove et al., 2012). According to the practice approach, consumption is a manifestation of practices that are "established, delimited, reproduced and organized through social processes of practical coordination" (Warde, 2013, p. 21). In this context, a particularly important aspect of practice theory is its opposition to the emphasis on individuals and their attitudes, behaviors, and choices as drivers of behavior (Evans et al., 2017; Halkier and Jensen, 2011; Southerton, 2013). Instead, in considering practices its central unit of analysis, practice theory conceptualizes people as "carriers" of practices (Shove et al., 2012). Consequently, a practice perspective allows for lines of inquiry that have been excluded in more individualistic foci on behaviors and choices, by understanding ecological impacts as connected to systems of practices that are enacted in relation to evolving infrastructures and institutions in historical contexts (Shove, 2010).

Drawing on Schatzki (1996) and Reckwitz (2002), Warde (2005) further distinguishes between two recursively linked but analytically distinct conceptualizations of practices: as individual performances and as coordinated entities. Whereas the former refers to each individual and their slightly different enactments of a practice, Shove et al. (2012, pp. 14–15) explain the latter as recognizable entities that can be spoken about and drawn upon in each enactment of a practice. Following Spurling et al. (2013, pp. 20–21), it is this notion of practice entities—"recognizable to many members of society whether or not they perform the activity themselves"—that is of particular interest to our study's focus on the large-scale, societal evolution of eating practices for sustainability.

2.1. Practices, elements, bundles, and communities of practice

Shove et al. highlight three elements of practice that are of particular importance when studying how practices stabi-

lize or change: competence, material conditions, and meaning (Shove et al., 2012). Elements of a practice are linked when carriers perform the practice. They co-evolve and shape each other—and consequently, the practice as a whole—in a continuous process (Shove et al., 2012). A set of elements is considered to be a practice, and not just a series of isolated performances, when acceptable ways of performance are established as publicly recognizable entities (Warde, 2013, p. 23).

The development and modification of practices depend on newly developed competencies, as well as material conditions and meanings. Competence encompasses different forms of understanding and knowledge, such as practical skills and the ability to evaluate a performance. Material elements include the body, infrastructure, tools, and other physical objects. Meanings, finally, consist of "the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment" (Shove et al., 2012, p. 23). This articulation of social practice theory not only looks at knowledge and meaning but also emphasizes the physical world as an essential part of the practices of daily life.

As with the links between elements, different practices can be connected through shared elements. Shove et al. (2012) give the example of masculinity, a meaning element that is shared across the practice of car driving and other practices such as automotive repair. Such elements serve as bridges between practices, forming complex social arrangements. A practice's continued existence is contingent upon this integration with other surrounding practices into "bundles" of practices (Shove et al., 2012).

Furthermore, just as practices are integrated into bundles, people can also be understood to belong to different communities of practice (Shove et al., 2012, chap. 4). These are informal groupings of people who are connected simply by the fact that they are carriers of the same practices. Notably, such communities of practice can be potent channels for the diffusion of new practices (Shove et al., 2012), as Shove and Mika Pantzar (2010; 2005) illustrate in their study of the diffusion of Nordic walking.

2.2. Warde's four integrative practices of eating and the idea behind them

Studying food consumption from a practice theory perspective, Warde (2013) holds that "eating" itself is a particularly appropriate focus. After all, eating is more fundamental than, say, purchasing food. Warde views eating—when considered as more than merely the physical process of ingestion—as a socially complex activity that is embedded in everyday life. To make sense of it from a practice theory perspective, Warde views the practice of eating as an entity that emerges from other "integrative practices": (1) the supplying of food, (2) cooking, (3) the organization of meal occasions, and (4) aesthetic judgments of taste.

Warde (2013) considers eating a weakly organized practice. That is, the integrative practices of eating are loosely coordinated and governed by relatively separate logics, in contrast to driving a car, for example, where legal and physical infrastructures regulate the overall performance or acceptable way of driving (Warde, 2013, p. 25). Eating, as he puts it, is a "compound practice" ((Warde, 2013), p. 24). Thus, interpreting Warde in terms of the definitions outlined thus far, the material, competence, and meaning elements that are linked in the performance of each integrative practice differ substantially between individual performances of eating. Furthermore, the integrative practices are not necessarily coordinated in a sufficiently consistent way across individual performances of eating. That is, within each individual performance of eating, the integrative practices might be performed differently or be connected in different ways, resulting in substantially different eating practices. Warde draws on a contemporary British context. Still, one could argue that this perspective on eating applies to Sweden and most other modern-day Western countries, where there is no single authoritative and widely adopted way of configuring the integrative practices that comprise eating.

This view of food consumption suggests that changing eating practices poses a unique challenge at both the individual and institutional levels (Warde, 2013). Therefore, we consider this approach to understanding food consumption to be particularly promising for the development of CSO efforts to achieve more sustainable food consumption.

3. Methods for data collection and analysis

3.1. Methodological approach

This study is based on in-depth interviews supplemented with reviews of the websites and social media accounts of the selected civil society organizations, as well as printed material obtained from the interviewees, such as policy briefs and campaign pamphlets. We can only expect such empirical sources to convey how the organizations wish to portray and communicate their activities and their rationales for them. Furthermore, the qualitative interview has been contested as a method for research using theories of practice (Halkier and Jensen, 2011). This critique contends, for example, that such discursive data at best provides a diluted representation of something that occurred in the past, in contrast to direct observations of practices as they are performed (Hitchings, 2012). Acknowledging the fact that practices consist of "doings" as well as "sayings" (Schatzki, 1996), a related critique centers on the distinct understandings that can be gained from talking about practice performance versus observing a practice being performed (Martens, 2012).

Nevertheless, we deemed interviews to be the most appropriate method for our purposes. The main reason is that we did not, in fact, intend to directly study eating practices per se, either through direct observation of practice carriers or through analysis of discursive representations collected from interviews with practice carriers regarding the practices they engage in. Instead, we are interested in the *activities of CSOs*—i.e., not conceptualized nor analyzed using practice theory—which in turn may or may not "intervene in" (Spurling et al., 2013, pp. 20–21) or affect eating practices. Our analysis addresses the question of whether these activities have the potential to do so, as we explain later in this section. Thus, our focus is on practice entities and not on individual performances, and what CSOs generally do to affect them. Following Spurling et al. (2013, pp. 20–21), these entities must be understood and intervened in to instigate changes in individual performances. Consequently, we felt that qualitative interviews were the best means to achieve an overview of the selected civil society organizations' activities addressing (un)sustainable eating practice entities on a more general level, enabling us to analyze if and how CSOs currently intervene in eating practices, as well as to discuss possible developments of their activities. We considered document analysis to be a suitable method for supplementing and corroborating the interviewees' statements regarding their activities, especially since some of the reviewed documentation (such as printed campaign posters and posts from social media accounts) formed a substantive part of their intervention activities. A staple of both qualitative and mixed-methods research, such supplementary document analysis can serve to "triangulate" and corroborate the content of the interviews (Bowen, 2009).

3.2. CSO cases and data collection procedure

The civil society organizations chosen for the study were selected using a strategic sampling method from among CSOs oper-

ating in Sweden, since it was key that the organizations have the best possible understanding of the Swedish societal context in order for the data collected and analyzed to apply to the Swedish setting. We included only CSOs whose programs specifically addressed Swedish private consumers' food consumption.

We approached the selected organizations by seeking out employees whose positions gave them an overview of their organization's initiatives related to food consumption. We did preliminary interviews to rule out organizations whose activities turned out to be outside the scope of the study. Thus, about one-third of the original eight organizations we contacted were excluded, mostly because they did not prioritize food consumption in particular or because they had an explicit focus on food production but not consumption. Five organizations remained (Appendix A): Responsible Consumption (RC) and Swedish Food and Environment Information (SFEI) (both smaller organizations); the Swedish Consumers' Association (SCA), which is a national umbrella organization for consumer associations; and The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and WWF Sweden (WWF), which are two of Sweden's largest environmental organizations. A total of nine interviewees from the different organizations were selected based on their positions within the organizations (Appendix A). Where possible, we interviewed one or more high-ranking employees or members who could provide an overview of their organizations' activities in our area of interest. Interviewees included the general-secretaries of two organizations (RC, SCA), one organization's president and two active members (SFEI), and two project managers each from two organizations (SSNC, WWF). The combined interviews of these actors provided an overview of their respective organization's relevant activities.

We then conducted seven in-depth interviews that served two purposes: to glean information about the design and execution of the organizations' work on sustainable food consumption and to provide data on the interviewees' reflections for areas where the organizations lacked official stances on the matters discussed. In-depth interviews are particularly useful for gaining insight into the breadth of "subjective meanings" (Silverman, 1998): in our case, how the CSOs perceived their ways of addressing sustainable food practices. "Objective" accounts were not considered vital to the analysis, since the CSOs' reported activities could give an idea of what types of activities CSOs might engage in, which provides a valuable basis for a general analysis. The interviews were recorded on a mobile device, with the permission of all interviewees, and later transcribed. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes, and all were conducted in Swedish, roughly following the topics outlined in an interview guide (Appendix B). These topics revolved around the food consumption issues that the CSOs had worked on thus far, what this work had entailed, and which societal actors their work had targeted. The interview guide was sent out to the interviewees beforehand. This gave them an initial idea about the topics to be discussed and allowed them to prepare their answers. Before the interviews, we were given the interviewees' consent to use the interview material, and the interviewees were ultimately also given the opportunity to consent via email to the specific quotes used.

3.3. Analytical procedure

We coded the interviews in an iterative process that involved reviewing the interview transcriptions and then linking them to the study aim and the basic principles that Shove et al. (2012) outline in their conceptualization of practice theory. Interview coding was a crucial part of the analysis and not an isolated activity separate from it (Weston et al., 2001). The codes included general codes, such as "activity" for quotes about CSO activities, as well as codes specific to practice theory, such as "material," "competence," and "meaning," for quotes about how the CSOs' activities seemed to address these practice elements. Importantly, all activities were grouped without regard for which CSO had reported what activity, to more readily allow for conceptual generalizations. The activities were then sorted into Warde's (2013) four integrative practices of eating. We used Warde's categorization rather than develop an alternative one because Warde's categorization constitutes a clear, well-established, and indisputable example of practice theory conceptualization at work. In our study we use this well-established conceptual lens to analyze how the CSOs describe their efforts and to further elucidate the potential of practice theory for understanding and improving CSO activities.

We then analyzed the documentation collected and categorized their contents based on the practice we deemed them to address, then compared these findings to the interview contents. This allowed us to discern patterns or gaps in the general work of the CSOs from a practice perspective. We note, in particular, that we did not subject the CSOs' *activities* per se to practice theory analysis. Rather, we analyzed how these activities would affect eating practices. To further facilitate this distinction, we consistently refer to the CSOs' efforts as *activities* and only use the term *practices* to refer to the eating practices that private consumers engage in. Consequently, our analysis notably does not focus directly on eating practices. Still, it does so indirectly, by analyzing how CSOs' activities generally could change eating practices, as Warde conceptualizes them. Spurling et al. (2013) use practice theory in a similarly "practical" way when discussing UK public policy interventions from a practice perspective. We thus sought to employ a "constructive" approach to our analysis by examining the CSOs' various activities as a means to identify aspects that could be developed using a practice perspective.

We employed these methods—grounded in qualitative social science methodology—to achieve a deep and rich understanding of the relevant case organizations' activities and enable proper analysis and interpretation based on social practice theory (section 2). We then use this analysis as the basis for conceptual generalizations. For example, we isolated CSO activities that target eating practices as a basis for a generalized discussion of "ideal type" CSOs and CSO activities in the organizations' context, as social actors with certain cultural influence but limited material resources (Halkier, 2011). That being said, this study does not generate any basis for statistical generalizations, as we deliberately—in accordance with the purpose of our study—forego the broader empirical basis of a larger sample-size for our chosen methods. However, the preliminary patterns we identify here could be investigated in subsequent statistically orientated studies.

To ensure compliance with ethical requirements, we consulted the legal text that pertains to research that involves human subjects. The interviewees were asked—and answered—questions only in their roles of volunteers or employees in the CSOs. Personal issues were beyond the scope of this study and were not discussed, including topics and questions that would be defined as sensitive personal data that would require formal ethical approval from a research ethics committee, as stated in EU, 9:1 "Processing of special categories of personal data."

Finally, we did not evaluate the ecological impact of our suggestions for CSO activities, and these suggestions should instead be seen as potential organizational strategies for CSOs.

4. Results

Our analysis looked at how the CSOs' reported activities seemed to address each of Warde's (2013) four integrative practices of eating. These activities are presented under each corresponding integrative practice heading below.

4.1. The supplying of food (integrative practice 1)

For this analysis, we broadly interpret the practice of supplying food as encompassing the selection and provisioning of food from grocery stores and restaurants, which is where food in Sweden is most commonly accessed. Food storage—most commonly in refrigerators, freezers, or pantries —is included in this practice.

Some of the CSOs' work is aimed at the material elements of food procurement and seeks to increase the assortment of sustainable options in grocery stores, restaurants, and cafés. These CSO activities include, for example, lobbying grocery stores to stock organic coffee and bananas and working with restaurants to develop more sustainable meals for their menus.

> We strive to make more organic food available. That is, there should be a greater supply, but also a higher demand… [Retailers] have an effect through the products' placement in the stores. Those are well-known, old tricks, to place the milk at the back of the store. That's how you nudge people. (Secretary-General, SCA)

In isolation, these CSO-activities seem to be rooted in the traditional goal of altering individual behavior. Still, there are activities that have a greater potential of converging with the principles of practice theory. One CSO, for instance, provided people not just with general information but with practical, competence-oriented recommendations for how to plan grocery shopping so as to avoid over-purchasing that can lead to food waste, as well as to minimize the use of private vehicles ((Responsible Consumption 2020); (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation 2020)). Further examples include helping consumers improve their competence in selecting "more sustainable" products, such as in-season vegetables. CSOs supplement this information activity by pushing retailers for clearer labeling, certifications, and marketing.

> [Certification] has so far been our main way to affect consumption, indirectly; something else is offered, and then you try to get companies to shift to that. (Manager of Corporate Partnerships, WWF)

In summary, some parts of the CSO campaigns extend beyond encouraging "environmental awareness," which is often a focus in traditional social psychology. Social scientists have long known that information aimed at raising awareness is an insufficient and very weak trigger of changes in attitudes, let alone behavior, ever since Wynne (1991) criticized what he called the "cognitive deficit model." Instead, many of CSO's efforts promote consumer competence and skills so they can integrate sustainable practices into their daily lives. Some examples are the development of simple guides with intuitive selection criteria to be used when shopping for meat, fish, and vegetables ((WWF Världsnaturfonden 2020)) and organic food ((Responsible Consumption 2020); (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation 2020)). However, such activities, on their own, do not qualify as a practice-style strategy, since they do not consider the simultaneous integration of Shove et al.'s (2012) three elements of practices in their daily performance.

Another CSO strategy is lobbying for the removal of public funding from unsustainable food production methods and for the removal of the most harmful products from the marketplace altogether. A related strategy is lobbying for funding for the transition of current mainstream agriculture.

> What we want to do is encourage politicians to support the agricultural sector in the transition now, before catastrophe strikes, in an organized and comfortable way, so that everybody can continue being farmers and producing food—just different food. (Active member, SFEI)

In connection with a few instances of their annual Green Action Week campaign (Swedish: Miljövänliga veckan), the SSNC communicated to grocery stores ahead of time.

> "In a year, we will be doing a campaign on coffee, and describe how coffee is produced, with all those pesticides and the environmental impacts."… And we said, "We want you to stock organic coffee so that you have it in the stores, because we reach a lot of consumers." (Project Manager for Environmentally Friendly Shopping, SSNC)

The campaign simultaneously included activities that informed individuals about the existence and benefits of organic alternatives, thus increasing their competence in acquiring such products. The campaign also addressed the element of meaning associated with a change in practice. One example is when the campaign touched on ethical norms regarding worker health and emotional responses to the impacts of non-organic products, which the campaign asserted were very harmful. From a practice perspective, this illustrates one way in which this particular CSO arguably targeted all three elements of the integrative practice of food supplying, albeit not from every possible angle.

The WWF meal certification scheme One Planet Plate addresses the material element by encouraging both private- and public-sector restaurants to make changes to existing meals and serve new ones. The organization also showcased these meals through a certification that indicated they were a more sustainable option, thus targeting consumers' competence to identify this option. The meaning element is addressed by encouraging participating restaurants to increase their associated marketing. At the same time, interviewees claimed that this was currently a challenge for the organization.

Importantly, however, the distinct practice perspective—which considers not only individual choices but also conventions, resource constraints, everyday routines, institutions, and physical infrastructure (Spurling et al., 2013)—is mostly absent.

4.2. Cooking (integrative practice 2)

Warde (2016) characterizes the integrative practice of cooking as "a set of instrumental procedures for transforming foodstuffs into items for final consumption."

Activities related to cooking practices were markedly fewer and more disparate in nature: for instance, several CSOs provided informative aids such as guides and recipes to individuals. The WWF runs a project together with the Swedish Olympic Committee that develops vegetarian diets for Olympic athletes, which are then evaluated for nutrition and climate impact ((The Swedish Olympic Committee 2020)).

> The idea is that if it works for them, then it's a little harder for us who might run five kilometers to think "I must eat a big steak to cope with this". … We try to demonstrate through good examples, through nice dishes, that it's possible, and maybe even delicious, and that it's often good for your health too. (Manager, Sustainable Food, WWF)

This illustrates one way to address the competence and meaning elements associated with vegetarian cooking simultaneously. Recipes can provide practical knowledge, and the meaning element is modified by normalizing vegetarian eating through an association with health, fitness, and public figures such as athletes.

Other examples include sharing advice on preventing food waste on the CSOs' websites and social media outlets—for instance,

by cooking with leftovers or reheating coffee instead of making more, or making use of often-wasted yet edible parts of vegetables (Responsible Consumption 2020).

CSOs also lobby for more stringent regulation on toxins in plastics. This could arguably be relevant to household products used for cooking and thus constitutes a modification of the material elements of the practice in the form of utensils and other plastics used in the cooking process. According to practice theory, changes that involve legislation are likely to entail a greater reduction in environmental harm than shifts in consumer behaviors or choices—the latter being a focus in much cognitive social psychology scholarship. Once stricter regulations are in place, the harmful material elements will simply not be available for purchase anymore.

At the same time, even with stricter regulation on plastics, it would take years for current plastics in cooking utensils, lunch boxes, and other cooking-related items to be phased out from all households. Perhaps this is why the SSNC also engages in campaigns directed at the competence of the general public to identify which cooking utensils and ways of using them pose health risks, thus changing the meaning of these utensils and their uses.

> We have worked with plastics, for instance, for many years, talking about what's in plastics, like bisphenol A, and that it can migrate to your food. (Head of Division, Environmental Toxins, Oceans, and Agriculture, SSNC).

From a practice perspective, this could enable the simultaneous reshaping of aspects related to all three elements that comprise the practice of cooking.

4.3. The organization of meal occasions (integrative practice 3)

According to Warde (2013, p. 24), this integrative practice can be formalized as "etiquette." The majority of the relevant activities here are related to eating practices not performed in the home. One example is mapping out restaurants and cafés with more-sustainable offerings. Another is the SSNC's Organic Coffee Break (Swedish: Ekofika) concept, which encouraged alternative practices for organizing meal occasions. The two-pronged concept included discussion kits that contained facts and discussion aids, such as flashcards, on the topic of organic production, as well as samples of organic coffee provided by a Swedish coffee company. Anyone could order these kits and arrange a get-together—for example, in the workplace or at a study site— offering organic coffee, buns, cookies, and so on as an occasion to learn about and discuss organic food. The second part of the concept focused on cafés across the country and provided similar informative materials,

> We wrote to all the café chains, and our active members around the country talked to smaller cafés… [who] were able to contact [a Swedish coffee company] for a limited-time discount on organic coffee. (Project Manager, Environmentally Friendly Shopping, SSNC)

With this concept, the SSNC attempted to strengthen the material element by increasing availability. There were also attempts to improve awareness of organic options and their attractiveness—actions that resonate with the meaning and organization of meal occasions elements—through in-café marketing and infographics focused on biodiversity and worker and consumer health in relation to coffee production and consumption.

4.4. Aesthetic judgments of taste (integrative practice 4)

Aesthetics are considered a vital part of eating in all cultures. As Warde (2013) puts it, the practice of making these judgments is formalized as "gastronomy." We interpret this as the practice of determining what is "good food," including what is deemed acceptable to eat in terms of health and not just taste. To facilitate more sustainable eating practices, then, practices of making aesthetic judgments of taste arguably need to change as well.

Here, significant parts of the CSOs' reported activities concern schools and mainly consist of lobbying. One of the goals is to influence schools to serve vegetarian food and to present it in appealing ways.

> We try to challenge people to think one step further and dare them to try. That's why we think it's so important to work with schools too, to kind of teach the kids from the start that "this is food. This isn't primarily climate-friendly or organic; it's, first of all, good food. Go ahead and eat it," so that it becomes natural to them. (Manager, Sustainable Food, WWF)

Another CSO reported that it provides training for people to give lectures on plant-based food,

> We are recruiting more speakers to go out and speak at schools, and we're going to encourage them to accept speaking offers in general, perhaps focusing on political parties, youth associations…going to their local [church] congregation…and we have basic teaching materials that they can use. (President, SFEI)

Several of the CSOs also advise people to assess food's edibility using smell and taste instead of relying on the package expiration date ((Responsible Consumption 2020); (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation 2020)).

Practice theory contends that such activities could be fruitful if performed in a coordinated manner. This could happen if they facilitated the simultaneous integration of the practical skills of making taste judgments (competence) with the use of people's senses and provided equipment (material) and conceptions of "good" food (meaning).

5. Discussion

Scholars such as Shove (2010) and Evans et al. (2017) present critical accounts of the dominant perspective on social change toward sustainable consumption found in conventional policy, as well as in different strategic organizations and actors: a focus on attitudes and behaviors, with individual consumers as the main target for interventions. It seems reasonable that CSOs would also operate according to this paradigm and that this would be reflected in how they work towards sustainable food consumption. Indeed, the results—especially when contrasted with the previous discussion of practice theory alternatives—show that CSO activities largely align with the individualistic, consumer-focused prescriptions of fields such as social psychology and do not account for consumption as a manifestation of systems of practices that unfold in everyday life. It is likely that the specific preconditions such organizations are subject to constitute important additional factors for why CSOs operate this way. Smaller CSOs, for example, may be limited to relatively low-cost activities such as information campaigns for financial reasons, and other CSOs may focus on certain activities as a means to retain the support and funding of their members. To delve deeper into preconditions such as these that may constrain or otherwise affect how CSOs can utilize practice-inspired strategies for sustainable food consumption merits independent investigation and therefore will not be discussed in detail here.

Though conventional CSO activities mostly do not align with a practice approach, the immediacy of the ecological threats that unsustainable food consumption contributes to motivates the use of a practice perspective not to dismiss conventional activities entirely but rather to identify those that have some potential to be developed into full-fledged practice-style strategies for sustainable eat-

ing practices. Indeed, if no such potential exists and no conventional activities can be developed that can be reconciled with a practice approach, it would call into question the practice perspective's usefulness to real-life sustainability work. But—as we will show in the following sections—we argue that it is fruitful to try to put practice theory into practice by addressing how one social sphere can try to stimulate the evolution of eating practices towards sustainability.

However, given the challenge that CSOs face in continuously integrating all three elements of eating practices—especially while taking into account a specific scientific perspective, such as Warde's (2013) conceptualization of eating—one key question is what activities have the highest potential to contribute to practice change. In contrast to the individualistic interventions for sustainable consumption advocated for by the social psychological perspective, the practice perspective views consumption as a manifestation of systems of practice linked to historically grounded infrastructures and institutions. This suggests that quick fixes cannot achieve substantive and lasting impact on practices. Instead, practice theory–inspired interventions need to consider the complexities of everyday life and be "continuous and reflexive, historical and cumulative" (Spurling and McMeekin, 2014, p. 79). The design of such interventions also needs to apply insights from previous studies focused on everyday performances of eating practices (for examples, see section 1) in order to properly account for the intersections of practices and their constituent elements as they are integrated into daily performance. Foden et al. (2019), for example, approach the (re)framing of sustainable consumption policy interventions by reconciling "nexus thinking" with a practice perspective, specifically focusing on the water-energy-food nexus and how its associated practices intersect at the household level. In summary, a practice perspective seems to suggest a substantive rethinking and restructuring of how (un)sustainable food consumption is addressed. In addition—following Keller et al. (2016, p. 85)—it seems to imply that lasting change requires comprehensive coordination among societal spheres. Therefore, advocating for such coordination between private, public, and civil society actors should arguably be one of the CSOs' highest priorities.

This comprehensive task notwithstanding, we argue that CSOs themselves might be able to stimulate changes in practices in various ways. Hosting social cooking events that are informed by a practice approach may serve as an example of integrating all three practice elements of cooking: competence, material conditions, and meaning. Such events should furthermore be carried out on a large scale and over a period of time, or the CSO promoting such events could provide the event templates or guidelines to other CSOs or municipalities for emulation. On the level of integrating multiple integrative consumer practices, the analysis showed that schools and other public institutions could be useful collaborators. Needless to say, such integration would be anything but a quick fix. Moreover, the insight of practice theory concerning the importance of making resource systems in the food sector and elsewhere "intersect with everyday practices," giving consumers experience with "making, sorting, treating, [and] coordinating" (Strengers and Maller, 2012, p. 760) is certainly within reach of the current ambitions of the CSOs in the stages from the grocery store to the plate. If, however, such experiences are to be expanded all the way from the pre- to post-consumer stages, it becomes more challenging if the goal is large-scale mainstreaming of such reinforcement of the elements of meaning, competence, and materiality.

Despite the complexities involved, it nevertheless seems interesting to further explore the opportunities for practice theory to inspire CSO activities. Making use of the insights from the previous sections, we now turn to discuss three different general approaches inspired by a practice perspective. For the sake of maintaining constructive discussion and conveying a general point about opportunities available to CSOs today, these approaches necessarily simplify processes of practice change and should not be understood as more than general indications of what overarching approaches CSOs might utilize.

5.1. Practice-approach 1: overlooked or modestly covered elements

A practice perspective can be utilized as a strategic framework: for instance, to identify the elements of certain practices that are currently not being addressed by other actors and that therefore need the CSOs' attention. One example would be the practice of plant-based eating. A growing number of companies are producing plant-based proteins. A strategic framework for CSOs might generally address the material elements of plant-based food procurement (integrative practice 1) through the product offerings available in grocery stores. Such a strategic framework might also address competence in plant-based cooking (integrative practice 2) by providing cooking instructions on the product packaging. It would touch on the meaning of appealing food (integrative practice 4) by developing and marketing new flavors. Furthermore, public actors such as municipalities could, for example, select plant-based foods in their public procurement, perhaps thanks to CSO lobbying. Such a change in the everyday eating practices of many people could modify the meaning of what constitutes socially acceptable ways of eating, which is arguably an aspect of all the integrative practices of eating.

The example above indicates that not all aspects of the practice of plant-based eating in Swedish society have been addressed. CSOs could then make use of the practice framework to guide which activities they engage in. This could, for example, entail lobbying public and private actors to "fill in the blanks" of the elements not being addressed. It could also involve more traditional CSO activities such as large-scale and long-running campaigns that take a specific aim at, for example, the meanings and competencies that are linked to the integrative practices of plant-based eating. Importantly, however, a practice perspective could just as well highlight ways that eating practices are being addressed that run counter to the aims of CSOs, such as livestock farming subsidies. The dismantling of such unsustainable eating practices could be just as deserving of CSOs' attention.

Another benefit of strategically targeting elements is the potential to recognize certain crucial elements that connect important eating practices, as well as other related practices. For example, all four integrative practices share a meaning element. This concerns the culturally embedded reasons for subscribing to a particular eating practice, such as vegetarianism. Furthermore, the CSOs' reported activities—presenting vegetarian recipes for Olympic athletes, for example—arguably represent a way to connect several of the integrative practices of eating with other, related practices: in this case, the practice of exercise. This activity would, accordingly, help modify the shared meanings of health and the proper treatment of the body. Similarly, CSO lobbying for bans on junk food advertising directed at children could plausibly help modify the meaning element of making aesthetic judgments of taste, in the form of weakening social conventions that encourage unhealthy eating.

CSO activities that push for vegetarian food in schools and other food-serving public institutions, if addressed in a coordinated manner, could be examples of connecting integrative practices of eating, mainly through overlapping elements. Indeed, public institutions such as municipalities are considered to have a high potential to shift consumption patterns: for instance, through schools (Wahlen et al., 2012). Frequent consumption and aesthetically pleasing presentation of vegetarian food might have a normalizing effect on the meaning of integrative practices 3 and 4. This could furthermore be combined with the skills needed to cook

these foods—that is, competence—in integrative practice 2. Establishing consumption of vegetarian food as a routine together with classmates could, moreover, serve to enhance the social acceptance of the practice, enabling a change in meaning within integrative practice 2. Given that the necessary cooking skills are intimately related to knowing the essential ingredients, integrative practice 3 connects with integrative practice 1 through knowledge of what to procure. This resonates with competence in integrative practice 1. Inspiration for what to cook and which ingredients to purchase through experiences in school would tie into the elements of meaning and competence in integrative practice 1. Finally, in the example of a plant-based diet replacing an omnivorous diet, the material requirements are mostly the same in terms of cooking and food procurement.

5.2. Practice-approach 2: specific practices

The conception of eating as a compound practice means that its performance draws on its integrative practices. To change eating practices, then, necessitates the modification, removal, or addition of any one of the integrative practices based on how it connects to the others. So, considering eating as a compound practice allows CSOs to focus their work on selecting and adequately addressing certain integrative practices instead of spreading their limited resources thin. For example, the secretary-general of Responsible Consumption specifies meat consumption and food waste as prioritized areas for the organization's work toward promoting sustainable food consumption. By viewing eating as a compound practice, the organization could identify and focus its efforts on the integrative practices that contribute the most to food waste. For example, they could address the oversupply of food (integrative practice 1: supplying of food), the inefficient use of ingredients in cooking (integrative practice 2: cooking), the coordination of family mealtimes to avoid overproducing food or having to prepare and serve food on multiple occasions (integrative practice 3: organizing meals), or aesthetic judgments of what is "good" and "fresh" food (integrative practice 4: taste judgment). Of course, their efforts could also be designed to address all four integrative practices more systematically.

5.3. Practice-approach 3: communities of practice

Although Shove et al. (2012, chap. 4) point out that it is generally not feasible to plan for and engineer communities of practice, identifying them could be an essential way to encourage the spread of sustainable practices or stop unsustainable ones (Sahakian and Wilhite, 2014). Several of the CSOs focus on the public sector, especially schools. Clearly, most people spend significant and formative parts of their lives in school, where they perform many of the same practices, and this arguably makes schools not only formal institutions but also homes to distinct communities of practice. Communities of practice favor the development of specific skills and expectations (ibid.). that could reasonably translate into related practice communities. For example, schools might encourage eating practices associated with the maintenance of family life, such as family dinners and weekend meals. From a practice perspective, then, schools might be especially fruitful targets for CSO attention.

5.4. Different approaches for different CSOs

Although some organizations enjoy an advantageous position in being able to shape their own social practices and affect those of others (Watson, 2017), CSOs are often limited in terms of staffing and resources. At the same time, the organizations we studied also vary with regards to their limitations and their operational strategies (briefly outlined in Appendix A). It seems feasible that these variations should inform which practice theory recommendations are appropriate for each organization.

It stands to reason that larger CSOs, with more resources and personnel, such as the WWF and SSNC, have a better chance of addressing all three elements of an integrative practice or bundles of practices, either by themselves or through collaborations with other societal actors. In such partnerships, they might be better suited as coordinators than their smaller counterparts, as exemplified by the WWF's coordinating role in the Sustainable Food Supply Chain initiative (Swedish: "Hållbar livsmedelskedja," (Livsmedelskedja, 2020)), a network of food supply chain actors. Organizations that can engage different societal actors in this way might find it easier to implement challenging, practice-style activities. Smaller CSOs with fewer resources might find it more difficult to overcome the logistical and resource-related challenges involved in affecting entire practices or bundles of practices. However, smaller CSOs might still benefit from utilizing a practice perspective. They could use this perspective, for example, to identify certain key elements and attempt to modify their circulation in society, an approach that Shove et al. discuss, albeit in a policymaking context ((Shove et al., 2012), pp. 146–151). When engaging in such activities, CSOs could make use of the particular resources—aside from limited material ones—that the CSO literature identifies. These include symbolic power resources (Boström, 2006), which are often embedded in the name or reputation of a CSO and reflect its moral authority, as well as each organization's specific, often alternative, expertise (Hall and Biersteker, 2002). CSOs that focus on sustainable consumption can use their ability to provide practical, meaningful advice, hence strengthening the competencies of households.

One example of this would be in attempting to shift the meaning of heteromasculinity, which has strong cultural associations with meat consumption, especially as the "normal" way of eating for "normal" men (Buerkle, 2009). Indeed, the scientific literature has linked cultural meanings of masculinity to higher levels of meat consumption (Dowsett et al., 2018; Rothgerber, 2013). RC, for example, currently focuses primarily on providing individuals with information—although not necessarily the "practical competence" of practice theory—and inspiration, which exemplifies the social psychological perspective on behavioral change. A practice theory suggestion could be for RC to focus these and other public opinion-shaping activities on key practice elements, such as the meaning of masculinity. From the practice perspective, however, it is important that the meaning element not be addressed in isolation, but rather as a masculine conception of acceptable ways of eating that is evoked in the performance of meat-eating and its integrative practices.

Consequently, other CSOs also employ specific strategies, which—when considered from a practice perspective—could be adjusted in different ways. For instance, the WWF is a large environmental CSO with significant experience with corporate partnerships and product certifications. Given that significant parts of people's lives are spent in the workplace, the WWF could, for instance, develop certifications for larger companies that set specific requirements for how the company works to affect changes in the eating practices of its employees. Furthermore, the WWF has a broad membership base, but unlike the SSNC, its members only provide financial support, while its activities are carried out by staff. Thus, the SSNC might be better suited for activities such as arranging countrywide cooking and tasting events of the sort we have suggested earlier, which could help achieve large-scale changes in the meanings of what constitutes acceptable, and ultimately normal, ways of eating.

5.5. Practice theory alternatives to current CSO activities

Finally, our findings and the observations above allow us to use concrete examples to discuss how practice theory could inspire ways for CSOs to address how aspects of all three practice elements could become integrated into more sustainable variations of the different integrative practices. A crucial prerequisite for such practice-inspired activities is that the CSOs acknowledge that (un)sustainable consumption manifests from systems of practices. Consequently, a practice perspective would suggest that these activities take into account—if not address directly—all three practice elements and how they are integrated in the processes of practical coordination that form people's daily lives (for other empirical examples, see, e.g., Sahakian and Wilhite, 2014). With this as a starting point, we conclude this section by discussing some possible practice theory–inspired alternatives through which CSOs could address the different integrative practices of eating.

5.5.1. The supplying of food (integrative practice 1)

As one example, CSOs' political lobbying to reduce or ban what they claim to be unsustainable products could target the material element of food procurement. This could be carried out in conjunction with lobbying to shift marketing campaigns to alternative products. Such a strategy would be in line with the market constructionist approach that is used within market studies. This approach holds that unsustainable consumption arises primarily out of market construction and not individual consumers' values and attitudes and that social movements should reshape specific markets or create new alternative markets (Holt, 2012). One key aspect of this approach is the mobilization of meanings—or "cultural codes"—associated with specific practices (Weber et al., 2008). In terms of the practice approach, then, such strategies could entail a modification of the meaning element in "supplying of food" practice entities. Finally, consumers must have appropriate competencies to perform a practice—in this case, knowledge of which alternative products to buy and where to find them. Thus, CSOs could lobby supermarkets to market and prominently display sustainable products instead of others. In terms of food waste generation in the home, collaborations with municipalities could facilitate the development of long-term strategies that are adapted to the specific conditions of their communities and the daily lives of residents. One example would be to adapt the physical waste management infrastructure to help integrate less wasteful practices into existing food supply and home management practices. Indeed, material infrastructures such as waste bins may be ascribed agency in relation to households' waste management practices and exert a significant influence over them (Metcalfe et al., 2012). As Metcalfe et al. point out, such infrastructure needs to be undisruptive to household practices, where knowledge about how to use it is provided and easily assimilated. A supplementary activity could then be to provide residents with "food waste kits" containing the necessary practical competence for how to use the new infrastructure, and materials such as labels and stickers, specially designed containers, brief guides, and other aids to help residents organize their food at home to avoid inadvertent waste (e.g., Hebrok and Heidenstrøm, 2019, pp. 1438–1445).

The SSNC is able to mobilize members nationwide, as exemplified by the Green Action Week campaign. This capacity could become an essential part of a practice-style strategy by, for example, coordinating the mobilization of its network with political lobbying efforts focused on the integrative practice of supplying food as it pertains to specific eating practices, such as eating organic food. To sustain a certain practice, Shove et al. emphasize the importance of continuously supporting integration among its elements (Shove et al. (2012), p. 24). The SSNC reportedly works continuously with issues of biodiversity and organic food. Yet, practice theory would suggest a coordinated effort targeting an integrative practice as a whole. Moreover, the practice approach emphasizes the importance of moving beyond education and toward enabling consumers to experience sustainability-oriented factors as material 'things' "on which routines and practices depend" (Strengers and Maller, 2012, p. 761). If we translate Strengers and Maller's suggestions in the water and energy sectors into food practices, CSOs could engage consumers in urban agriculture and food gardening, which would allow them to experience proximal materiality, as well as possibly scarcity and vulnerability resulting from various environmental pressures on plants.

5.5.2. Cooking (integrative practice 2)

When it comes to reducing food waste, Hebrok and Heidenstrøm (2019) point out that household food waste primarily occurs when food falls outside of daily food consumption patterns. This means one important aspect of reducing food waste is integrating low-waste cooking practices into normal consumption patterns and finding what the authors call "use-occasions"—opportunities in everyday life where food can be used. In this vein, the SCA's lobbying to teach cooking competencies in schools could be broadened to include competencies on minimizing food waste when cooking (see, e.g., Schanes et al., 2018, p. 984). To further this goal and go beyond solely raising awareness and knowledge, which in such campaigns is inadequate by itself (Hebrok and Heidenstrøm, 2019), the aforementioned municipal strategy using adapted infrastructure and food waste kits could be coordinated with the development of low-waste cooking competencies in schools as a way to simultaneously provide the competences and material elements required to minimize cooking waste. Doing this on a municipal level could aid in the normalization of such alternative practices, and combining these activities with recurring campaigns to "reposition" (Rettie et al., 2012) food waste as "unjust" or "wrong" could further address the cultural significance and normalcy of performing low-waste cooking practices.

Alternatively, CSOs might organize periodic social events centered on cooking using the above-mentioned recipes, which could strengthen relevant practical cooking skills (competence). They could even provide the venues, ingredients, and equipment needed (materials), perhaps in collaboration with restaurants or municipalities. Ensuring that a diverse range of people participates in performing alternative cooking practices—rather than catering to a niche segment of the population that may already be enacting the practice—could serve to normalize them (meaning).

5.5.3. The organization of meal occasions (integrative practice 3)

The previously mentioned use-occasions point to the importance of having meal occasions that can use food that might otherwise be wasted (Hebrok and Heidenstrøm, 2019). A practice-based alternative to the activities that CSOs currently report might be for them to establish partnerships with specific restaurants seen as leaders in sustainability who can leverage existing brand credibility (e.g., Fuentes, 2015; Järventie-Thesleff et al., 2011)—perhaps evaluated through the One Planet Plate initiative—as a way to help reshape meanings of "normal" eating. Such partner restaurants could offer lower-priced sustainable meals to consumers in general, or CSO members, with the aim of long-term normalization. Addressing the meaning and material elements in this way could be combined with the production of discussion kits similar to the SSNC's Organic Break, where information on food sustainability (competence) and other materials could prompt discussion of different norms and ways of eating (meaning) in connection with the actual performance of the practice in question.

Combining these cooking event and food waste kit ideas, CSOs with many active members, such as the SSNC, could organize regular potlucks in their local communities and distribute food waste

kits to participants, including food containers to take home leftovers. This addresses the material elements by providing the venue and food containers, while the practical guides included with the kits address the competence needed to prepare for and attend the event. CSOs could also host topical film screenings and discussions at such events, stimulating practical knowledge exchange and personal interactions and in this way integrating meanings such as a sense of community and purpose in the enactment of the practice.

5.5.4. Aesthetic judgments of taste (integrative practice 4)

Following Warde (2016, chap. 7), "tastes" are far from fixed. Making judgments of taste is, instead, guided in different directions by shifting conventions (such as changes in global cultural trends) and the environment where practices are performed. Warde points to the rising popularity of "foreign cuisine" in recent decades as an example of this phenomenon. Though these are often large-scale processes of change, CSOs could arguably harness such processes in their activities as well. The previously mentioned activity of hosting social cooking events could take the form of tasting events or gastronomy festivals that could also serve to shift judgment-making about the taste of sustainable foods in a positive direction. In addition to using recipes (competence), the events could evoke historical yet still culturally significant meanings in the form of past norms and Swedish traditions by portraying sustainable foods such as beans and peas as "traditional" or "local" historical Swedish agricultural practices. Additionally, such events could include informative tastings that serve "expired" but still-edible food, thus providing the necessary competence and cultural meaning linked to avoiding unnecessary food waste.

6. Conclusions

Previous sustainable consumption scholarship has applied a practice lens to policymaking, marketing, and strategic organizations, as well as to social movements, to see how different societal actors might contribute to sustainable consumption. However, scholarship on civil society organizations, specifically, is insufficiently developed. Our study contributes through a concrete look at how civil society organizations can adopt a practice approach to promote sustainable food consumption at the household level. More specifically, we focus the practice lens not on organizational practices but specifically on the practices directly associated with food consumption: i.e., eating practices. We then analyze the potential of CSO activities to affect these practices, following Warde (2013) and conceptualizing eating as a compound practice emerging from four integrative practices: (1) the supplying of food, (2) cooking, (3) the organization of meal occasions, and (4) aesthetic judgments of taste.

An overview of the data gathered from the CSOs reveals a diverse array of activities, ranging from political lobbying and private-sector collaborations to informational campaigns directed at the general public. Generally, CSO activities do not consistently target specific practices as they are integrated into daily life. Instead, their current activities largely demonstrate a behavioristic focus, with an emphasis on individual choices as vehicles for change. From a practice theory perspective, CSO activities often target certain elements of practice but not others, and such targeting is sporadic rather than ongoing in its impact on the elements of a practice and the links between them.

Our analysis of how practice theory could contribute to our understanding of current and potential CSO activities shows that CSOs need *increased integration and coordination*. Indeed, practice theory could inspire CSOs to approach their work towards sustainable private food consumption in several ways: focusing on crucial practice elements, particular practices, groups of practices, and communities of practice. Furthermore, some activities that CSOs reported have the potential to be adapted into practice-like approaches. The discussion of our findings shows that conceptualizing eating in terms of its integrative practices helpfully illustrates how such approaches could be developed. However, a practice-inspired approach also needs to take into account the real-world conditions of CSOs, which may limit their capabilities in various ways. Even though CSOs may have other unique strengths—such as moral authority—they are only one type of actor and often have limited material resources when compared to private and public actors. Consequently, activities inspired by practice theory ultimately seem contingent on the successful coordination of many or all spheres of society.

Our findings are also relevant outside of the Swedish context. Even if some specifics of our results—especially specific practice-inspired CSO activities—may not be directly applicable or appropriate in all other countries or contexts, we claim that the application of a social practice perspective to the activities of interest organizations such as CSOs is still helpful and relevant. This is particularly true in 1) contexts where such organizations figure prominently in public debates, engage in political campaigning, and otherwise have a role in shaping the daily lives of significant parts of the population—"practice carriers"—who are the ones engaged in practices of eating, and 2) the many other Western countries and contexts with eating practices that are loosely organized in a manner similar to Sweden, including Warde's (2013) British context.

It is worth mentioning that there are several bodies of literature that address CSOs—research on governance or the resource mobilization of social movements, for instance (Benford and Snow, 2000; Boström and Klintman, 2006; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011). Additional theories drawn from such scholarship, however, are beyond our scope.

There are a number of appropriate paths for future research in any country with CSOs involved in sustainable consumption, considering the comprehensive coordination among societal actors that the practice perspective calls for. An analysis similar to ours that addresses different societal actors, such as companies or public authorities, could produce a synthesis of different actors' roles in enabling sustainable eating. Relatedly, an investigation of various forms of coordination among these actors would be beneficial. Research focusing on CSOs could also look to identify impactful ways that such actors could advocate for such coordination. Relatedly, the focus on CSOs could also shift the practice lens from eating practices to the practices of CSOs' food consumption-related activities—i.e., taking CSO activities themselves as the practices to be analyzed.

Practice theory undoubtedly suggests that a more comprehensive understanding of how CSOs can address sustainable eating requires us to analyze how eating connects to other practices and thus fits within the larger bundles of practice that constitute daily life. In addition to highlighting useful foci for their work, this panoramic approach could better illuminate what kind of sociocultural and material structures currently inhibit the adoption of sustainable eating practices. Examples could include institutional formalizations of acceptable forms of performance related to the prioritized work areas of CSOs discussed in the previous sections. Conversely, delimiting a study to specific eating practices or elements of practices might yield insights into specific challenges related to those different eating practices and how they are integrated into daily life. Another important area of research would be how the specific preconditions of different CSOs affect their ability to utilize practice-inspired strategies.

Author contributions

The study conception and design were developed by Vishal Parekh, in close collaboration with Mikael Klintman. Vishal Parekh

conducted the data collection and initial analysis, and both authors contributed to the subsequent analyses and the discussion. The first draft was mainly written by Vishal Parekh, with significant contributions and comments from Mikael Klintman. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendices

Appendix A. – case descriptions

Appendix A
Brief case descriptions of the CSOs and interviewees

CSO and Acronym	Description	Interviewee(s)
Responsible Consumption (RC)	•→Nonprofit association founded in 2008 and based in Stockholm. •→Employs three people and has approximately 60 volunteers. •→Works across the country and aims to raise awareness of the social and environmental impacts of Swedish consumption, including food consumption. •→Operations are performed by staff and volunteers.	Secretary-General
Swedish Consumers' Association (SCA)	•→A national umbrella organization for 21 consumer organizations in Sweden, including Responsible Consumption. •→Founded in 1994 and based in Stockholm •→Employs 13 people. •→Operates regionally, nationally, and internationally, prioritizing food and sustainable consumption initiatives. •→Activities are carried out by staff and member organizations.	Secretary-General
Swedish Food and Environment Information (SFEI)	•→Nonprofit association founded in 2007. •→Employs one person and has 262 members and a number of active non-members who participate in their major campaign "VegNorm" (Swedish: "Vegonorm"). •→The campaign constitutes the bulk of the association's work, which is mostly focused on lobbying the public sector, primarily municipalities and the national government, to increase the use of plant-based food and make it the default in procurement.	President and two active members
The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)	•→Nonprofit association founded in 1909, with secretariats in Stockholm and Gothenburg and regional offices across Sweden. •→Approximately 226,000 members; together, the secretariats employ approximately 170 people. •→Operates locally, nationally, and internationally, with marine and terrestrial food production and consumption as some of its prioritized areas of activity. Large-scale operations such as national campaigns are coordinated by staff, while local "fieldwork" is performed by active members organized into "local circles." This CSO also does extensive work with political lobbying and corporate partnerships and dialogues.	Project Manager for the "Environmentally Friendly Shopping" project (Swedish: "Handla Miljövänligt") & Head of Division for Environmental Toxins, Oceans, and Agriculture
WWF Sweden (WWF)	•→Foundation established in 1971. •→Employs approximately 100 people at its secretariat in Stockholm, with about 195,000 supporters/members across the country. •→Operates regionally, nationally, and internationally, with food as a prioritized area. •→Operations are performed mainly by staff, with an emphasis on sustainable food sourcing and corporate partnerships and dialog.	Manager of Corporate Partnerships & Manager for the Sustainable Food program

Appendix B. – interview guide

The following is the interview guide, translated from Swedish by the authors:

- Are there any specific food consumption patterns or any specific types of food consumption that you think are especially important to affect? E.g. food waste, organic, meat consumption etc.
- How do you work to change consumption? What's the reasoning behind your approach?
  - Do you have any specific projects, campaigns, initiatives, collaborations etc.—ongoing or already completed—that address this consumption?
- Do you direct yourselves towards any particular societal actors to affect household consumption? For example, the private sector (e.g. stores, restaurants), public sector (e.g. politicians, public servants, public sector organizations), directly towards individuals. Why?
- How do you adapt your way of working based on your target group? Why?
- Are there any obstacles?
- How do you judge a successful versus an unsuccessful effort on your part?
  - Can you give any examples of successful or unsuccessful efforts?

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