Int. Jrnl. of Soc. of Agr. & Food, 2018, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 1-20

Practices of Food Provisioning in Alternative Food Networks: How Different Practitioners Engage in Different Practices, Depending on Their Emotional Energy

ESTHER J. VEEN AND SIMONA D'AMICO

[Paper first received, 15 April 2017; in final form, 31 July 2018]

Abstract. In this article we combine social practice theory and interaction ritual theory to better understand the dynamics of learning processes in alternative food networks, and how these influence levels of alternative food network engagement. We apply this combination to the study of a solidarity purchasing group in southern Italy. We show that the levels of emotional energy built up between different groups of people within this solidarity purchasing group explain the extent to which participants are willing and able to overcome the practical difficulties associated with being part of the solidarity purchasing group, and change their routines accordingly. We recognize two different groups of users, with different levels of emotional energy; they vary according to the extent to which participants share motivations and understandings. The two groups attach different meanings to their involvement and associate those meanings with different activities that solidarity purchasing group engagement entails. We conclude that the two groups engage in different social practices – even though they are part of the same solidarity purchasing group. This finding provides insights into the heterogeneity both within and between alternative food networks as described in the literature; it explains different degrees of involvement, as well as reasons not to incur the practical costs associated with solidarity purchasing group involvement by quitting. Our study applies the idea of Weenink and Spaargaren that emotional energy can function as an explanatory force regarding why people engage in certain practices, and it sheds more light on how to define a practice.

Esther J. Veen is lecturer/researcher at the Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University, Hollandseweg 1, 6706 KN, Wageningen, Netherlands; email: <esther.veen@wur.nl>. Simona D'Amico is at the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT), Amsterdam, Netherlands.
This article is based on data collected through a research cofunded with the support of the European Commission, the European Social Fund, and the Calabria Regional Government. The authors take sole responsibility for this article and the European Commission and the Calabria Regional Government decline every responsibility from the contents of the article and their use. Thanks to all GAS M members, and in particular to our respondents, for making this research possible. Thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their invaluable comments.

ISSN: 0798-1759 This journal is blind refereed.

Introduction

As a reaction to the problems associated with the industrialized food system – such as environmental effects, the long distances food travels and a disconnection between producers and consumers – food is increasingly provided and acquired through alternative food networks (AFNs), such as box schemes, community supported agriculture (CSA), and solidarity purchasing groups (GASs – gruppi di acquisto solidale) (Hinrichs, 2000; Feenstra, 2002; Allen et al., 2003; Whatmore et al., 2003; Brunori et al., 2008; Tregear, 2011). Both consumers and producers engage in such initiatives in different ways and to different degrees, interpreting and enforcing similar principles differently, such as locality, quality and environmental protection (Smithers et al., 2008; Little et al., 2009; McIntyre and Rondeau, 2011; Morris and Kirwan, 2011). As a result, there is a certain degree of *heterogeneity* both between and within AFNs. Nevertheless, engagement in AFNs always seems to require changes in participants' routines (e.g. farming and selling routines, shopping and cooking routines) and the establishment of new ones (Brunori et al., 2011, 2012): participation needs to become 'a routinized set of activities based on a new division of labour and competences' (Fonte, 2013, p. 237). Hence, AFNs have to provide consumers and producers with enough incentives to detach them from conventional networks, and attach them to alternative ones (Brunori et al., 2011, 2012).

Both Fonte (2013) and Brunori et al. (2011, 2012) describe cases in which new routines are established successfully. Brunori et al. (2011, p. 21), for instance, state that 'a new pattern of consumption is turned into routines that work [when] the weekly appointment is no longer forgotten, the quantities purchased are adjusted to weekly consumption, the price is deemed reasonable, the family adapts to the new menu and tastes, new roles in the family have consolidated, new skills are learned in cooking and conserving food.' However, integrating new routines in daily life, or changing well-established routines, is generally not an easy task (Brunori et al., 2011, 2012; Fonte, 2013). Indeed, in this article we not only portray consumers and producers who manage a change of routine, but, in order to elaborate on the heterogeneity within AFNs, we also depict people who stopped participating, either temporarily or definitively. As most literature discusses functioning AFNs and members who have successfully gone through the required routine change (although there are notable exceptions, see for example DeLind, 1999), a focus on people trying to make this change of routine – and an exploration of why they succeed or fail to do so – is an important contribution to the AFN literature.

We do so by using a combination of social practice theory (SPT) and interaction ritual (IR) theory. As a practice approach stresses the role of agency as well as that of bodies, things and mental activities, it enables a study of the transformative potential of motivations and beliefs, simultaneously trying to understand the conditioning of action by social and functional structures (Fonte, 2013). However, the growing literature around SPT has not sufficiently explored how and why practices stabilize, or fail to do so, over time. Practices are thought to compete for the attention of practitioners in order to be reproduced (Røpke, 2009), but why practitioners choose to engage in particular practices often remains unclear. Studies on the stabilization of practices focus on practical reasons/functional aspects mostly, without considering motivations and beliefs (Røpke, 2009). We agree with Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) that the concept of emotional energy, as used in IR theory (Collins, 2004), can fill this gap. Emotional energy (EE; Collins, 2004), to be built up by practitioners

participating in practices, explains why practices make people care about the doings and sayings reproduced in those practices (Weenink and Spaargaren, 2016). To our knowledge no literature as of yet applies Weenink and Spaargaren's suggestion to combine SPT with IR theory to a case study, empirically testing this combination. By doing so we will add to the understanding of why people choose to engage in particular practices rather than in others.

In this article we study one particular AFN, a GAS (solidarity purchasing group) in Southern Italy. The number of GASs has been growing in Italy since the early 1990s. A policy document written by the National Network of GASs states that a 'GAS is established when a group of people decides to meet in order to reflect on their consumption and to buy everyday products guided by the principles of justice and solidarity' (Rete GAS, 1999, p. 5, authors' translation). As systems of food provisioning in which individual consumers, consumer organizations and other civil society groups organize food provisioning with the aim to create 'better' food systems, GASs have been studied and presented in the literature as AFNs (Brunori et al., 2011, 2012; Cembalo et al., 2013; Fonte, 2013).

The GAS studied for this article was object of a previous study using IR theory (D'Amico, 2015). We therefore consider it specifically suitable to be explored through the theoretical lens proposed. We show that engaging in practices associated with participation in the GAS, and creating the accompanying routines, comes with practical difficulties that people are willing, and manage, to overcome to different degrees. Applying a combination of SPT and IR theory helps understanding this heterogeneity: while some GAS participants enjoy high levels of EE, others do not. Practitioners with very low, or even absent EE might decide to not incur any of the practical costs and quit the practice. Moreover, the difference in EE leads to the adoption and routinization of different practices, which require different degrees of practical adjustment, and which are associated with different degrees of engagement and different motivations. Hence, our analysis makes clear that the level of EE built up between practitioners not only determines the degree to which they are involved, but also the specific practice in which they engage.

The article proceeds with an overview of how the current literature explains the heterogeneity within AFNs. In the subsequent section we discuss how SPT and the concept of EE can be combined in order to find an alternative explanation. Then we will describe our methods and present our case study. Subsequently we present our results, showing how civic awareness as a goal of the GAS is considered in tension with more practical issues of running it, and exposing that different groups within the GAS deal with these tensions differently. Thereafter we analyse the results, arguing that the GAS consists of two groups of people who participate in two different practices, a distinction that is both caused and maintained by varying levels of EE. The analysis thus provides insights into the origins of the heterogeneity in and among AFNs, as it clarifies why some people have less difficulty than others to overcome the practicalities associated with AFN involvement. Moreover, it tries to empirically apply the idea that EE can function as an explanatory force for why people engage in certain practices, as suggested by Weenink and Spaargaren (2016). Finally, it sheds more light on how to define a practice, an issue that remains unsolved in SPT as of now (Shove et al., 2012; Dobernig et al., 2016). The final section presents our conclusions.

Heterogeneity in Alternative Food Networks

While 'AFN' is a heterogeneous category in itself – including initiatives as farmers' markets, box schemes, and GASs (Veen, 2015) – also *within* AFNs there is heterogeneity, as participants motivate and enforce their participation differently. In this section we review the different ways in which scholars have tried to explain this heterogeneity, arguing that these explanations lack a focus on the dynamic (learning) processes behind it.

Some authors link the heterogeneity of AFN involvement to different degrees of civic commitment and community engagement. Obach and Tobin (2014), for instance, found that members who were engaged in other civic and volunteering activities were more civically aware and socially involved than members who participated in a CSA only. Cox et al. (2008) reach similar conclusions when investigating the motivations of different members of a Scottish CSA. Whereas producers who started and run the initiative considered the CSA a provider of good food, for other members it was mostly an opportunity for socializing and collective engagement. Papaoikonomou et al. (2012) focus on the way civic motivations change over time. Political ideology was one of the initial motivations for members to join a responsible consumption cooperative in Spain. This motivation evolved, however, into participation as an act of militancy, a way to gain control over food provisioning. The authors argue that this evolution is a consequence of the way participants of the cooperative influence each other, as they go through a learning process that moulds their initial motivations into new shared meanings.

Other scholars explain heterogeneity in AFN involvement by the different ways in which people enforce and interpret underlying principles, such as buying local and quality products. Studying farmers' markets, Smithers et al. (2008) found that consumers, farmers and managers apply their concerns with issues of locality, quality and authenticity differently: these issues are not decisive for all consumers, while farmers and managers interpret the idea of locality and direct selling with some flexibility in order to cope with the need to guarantee product availability. Other studies argue that the practicalities of participating in AFNs impact on how principles are enforced (Little et al., 2009; McIntyre and Rondeau, 2011). Hence, even if consumers start from similar motivations, such as socio-economic fairness and environmental protection, they may end up following different consumptions paths (e.g. different ordering frequencies, different amounts and variety of products purchased), because of differences in availability of time, money, shopping spaces, and food processing skills (Little et al., 2009; McIntyre and Rondeau, 2011). Producer motivations for enforcing ecological principles and practices show similar variety. Some producers are highly motivated and enforce very strict practices aimed at on-farm ecology preservation. Other producers are less strongly motivated by ecological commitment, following softer practices in which attention to ecology is used as a marketing strategy and a way to increase product quality (Morris and Kirwan, 2011).

The studies referred to above explain the heterogeneity encountered within AFNs in different ways. Heterogeneity is linked to motivations to be involved, the ways people act upon these motivations (including practicalities) and enforcement and interpretations of guiding principles of AFNs. However, these approaches fail to consider how AFNs work as a learning process: participants influence each other's motivations, ideas and ways of engagement. Moreover, even if such learning processes are mentioned (DuPuis and Gillon, 2009; Papaoikonomou et al., 2012; Volpentesta et

al., 2012; Ammirato et al., 2013), it remains unclear how these dynamics work. Why do certain participants bond together, reach and put forward certain ideas, motivations and ways of engagement, and stabilize their participation – *while others do not*? Unpacking these dynamics can clarify how certain AFN practices stabilize while others fail to do so, as a consequence of the motivations, ideas and forms of involvement that prevail among the participants. This, in turn, will provide insights in the dynamic origins of the heterogeneity in AFNs and help understanding why some people have less difficulty than others to overcome the practicalities associated with the involvement in AFNs.

We suggest to disclose these dynamics by understanding them as a process of interactions among participants with different degrees and forms of personal motivations, looking through a lens of SPT in combination with IR theory. People with strong and similar motivations define the guiding principles and forms of engagement that, in turn, shape AFN practices. Practitioners with weak personal motivations, or with motivations and ways of engagement that are far from those of the leading participants, are less influential and may decide to quit the practice. Emotional energy between participants takes a central role in this process.

Social Practice Theory and Emotional Energy

SPT argues that people participate in practices, and that the rhythm of everyday life, routines and habits play a central role in understanding the practices in which they participate. Stemming from the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1990, 1998) and Giddens' structuration theory (1984), SPT has recently received renewed attention (Røpke, 2009; De Krom, 2015), due to an increased interest in everyday life. Recent theories of practice are heterogeneous (Schatzki, 1996; Warde, 2005; Røpke, 2009), but they share the idea that practices are the sites where understanding is structured and intelligibility articulated. Both social order and individuality result from practices (Schatzki, 1996). The often cited definition of practices is that of Reckwitz (2002, p. 249), seeing a practice as 'a routinised type of behaviour 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.' Shove et al. (2012) condense this list into three elements: meaning, material and competences.

By engaging in practices, people actualize and sustain them. That way, the performance of practices creates routinized forms of behaviour (Reckwitz, 2002), leading to a routinization of daily life. As a practice is only reproduced if it finds a place within that daily rhythm (Shove et al., 2012), whether or not new practices are taken up and transitioned into routinized behaviour depends on the extent to which people are able to revise the texture and rhythm of their daily lives (Shove and Walker, 2010). Routinization also means that performance in a familiar practice is often neither fully conscious nor reflective (Warde, 2005). Much of people's day-to-day behaviour is not directly motivated. Rather, it is based upon unconscious motivations and practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Nonetheless, people are knowledgeable agents (Giddens, 1984) who consciously choose which practices to engage in (Schatzki, 1996).

However, SPT does not fully explain *how* people choose to engage in particular

practices, or in other words, how they execute their agency. Weenink and Spaargaren (2016, p. 61) argue that agency resides in emotions: 'Emotions are (re)produced in social practices and people experience the world and engage in it emotionally.' A property of practices is, therefore, that people experience an emotional mood when engaging in them. Emotion, in turn, helps explaining how practices make individuals engage with, and care about, the doings and sayings around them. Emotions guide what people do; they 'navigate people through a world of practices' (Weenink and Spaargaren, 2016, p. 69).

In order to explain how emotions come about through the reproduction of practices, Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) turn to IR theory. Collins (2004) identifies interaction rituals (IRs) as the sites where the meaning of every social phenomenon is constructed. IRs take place when two or more people assemble and implement certain tasks that are instrumental to reach a common purpose (e.g. carrying out a task, enjoying free time with friends, having a family meal). In order to take place, IRs demand the generation of EE and symbols. EE can be interpreted as a feeling of fulfilment, or an emotion, that is generated among the participants in the ritual when their feelings and understandings toward the ritual are aligned. Symbols are described as common understandings about something, reached by people involved in the interaction. A symbol can be an idea, a practice, an item, a person and anything else that is relevant for the interaction, that attracts people's attention and that these people attach with a meaning specific for the interaction in which it is generated.

Symbols and EE are interrelated. When participants share views and understanding (hence, build symbols) they feel fulfilled and willing to get involved in the interaction time and again (hence, generate EE). In other words, sharing generates emotions, which motivates people to be involved in that or similar interactions, because they seek to maximize EE. When feelings and understandings are *not* aligned (hence, when there is no agreement on symbols and the level of EE generated is low or absent), the motivation to join a ritual decreases (Collins, 2004). Involvement in IRs also demands resources such as time, money and infrastructure. The maximization of EE through participation in IRs thus comes with certain costs, so that the maximization of EE can be continued only as long as there are resources available to do so. This implies that the replication of IRs over time is a matter of balancing the emotional fulfilment with the availability of time and material resources necessary to carry out the ritual.

Although Collins is not considered a practice theorist, by prioritizing situations over individuals, his work is in line with SPT (Weenink and Spaargaren, 2016): both theories set the analytical starting point in what happens in the practice. Moreover, being routines, IRs show similarity with practices. Translating IR theory reasoning in practice terms: people join those practices that maximize their emotional fulfilment, brought about by interacting with people who have similar motivations and understandings about those practices. Meanwhile, people balance the emotional fulfilment they get from joining the practice with the practical efforts (in terms of time, money, logistics and similar) that involvement in the practice requires.

To recapitulate, practices are not neutral for people since the engagement in practices is emotional, and being engaged in practices with others may result in the accumulation of EE between people, which will stimulate engagement in that or a similar practice again – as long as this balances with the practical costs of doing so. Conversely, some practices may *not* result in an accumulation of EE, or at least not in enough EE for practitioners to engage in the practice again or to continue

participation, given the practical costs of involvement. In this article we show how engagement in an AFN does or does not result in an accumulation of EE, resulting in heterogeneous degrees of involvement, and consequently, in participation in essentially different practices.

The main implication of using practice theory and IR theory as our theoretical starting point is that with this research we will go beyond people's initial motivations to be involved in AFNs. Studying how involvement in a particular GAS works in reality, and, especially, what people perceive this practice to be – what it entails, how it should be performed – allows outlining the dynamics of AFN involvement. Existing theoretical approaches that study learning processes in AFNs explain these processes and their heterogeneity as the confrontation of different motivations and their reciprocal influence. Our work explores learning processes in AFNs as the dynamics of the participation *in practice*, where motivations are just one of the components. Our work clarifies the heterogeneity in GASs as the result of the various ways in which the practice is perceived and performed, and the different levels of EE generated in the alignment or misalignment of perceptions and performances. Hence, the combination of SPT and IR theory illuminates the different learning processes taking place, and why the practical implications of engagement impact some more than others.

Methods

Research Strategy and Methods Used

Our analysis relies on qualitative data of GAS M,[1] a GAS operating in the South Italian region of Calabria. GAS M was selected as a case study as it shows heterogeneity between its participants regarding motivation and degree of involvement. Moreover, as this GAS was object of a previous study using IR theory (D'Amico, 2015), it was specifically suitable to be explored through a combination of IR theory and SPT. The study of GAS M evolved over two years (2012–2013). The first step was a field trip during which key figures were interviewed. These unstructured interviews led to a general understanding of the GAS, its history and its current functioning. We gained insights into the GAS's daily practices by focusing on understanding what happens during the implementation of GAS M's activities. The field trip was also used to build trust with members of the GAS and to identify possible data sources.

Secondly, the second author engaged in participant observation in December 2012 and January 2013. Field notes of these observations contain (*a*) conversations that took place during the implementation of GAS M activities, reported ad verbatim; (*b*) information on the events themselves; and (*c*) who participated.

Thirdly, we collected emails and related documents[2] circulated through the GAS M mailing list to organize activities and discuss topics relevant for the existence of the GAS. These emails are stored in a mailing list archive and are publicly available, since GAS M uses open source software to manage the mailing lists. Although the archive contained emails from a longer period, we only studied emails sent in December 2012 and January 2013. We selected this specific time frame as our empirical as well as theoretical aim was to understand which forms of attention were generated, what attracted attention and why that attracted attention. This meant

that we needed to analyse conversations taking place during the entire process from organization to implementation of activities. The selected period is the only time frame within which data are available on conversations covering both organization and implementation. The representativeness of the selected field notes, emails and related documents is supported by the fact that the very same themes of conversations return time and again in the data.

Finally, we executed a content analysis, using (*a*) the notes from the participant observation, and (*b*) the emails sent among GAS M's members. This combination of observations and content analysis is considered an appropriate method when studying what actually happens in the daily dynamics of cases, and in the context in which they operate (Schensul et al., 1999; Punch, 2005; Jupp, 2006; Yin, 2009; DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). We used Atlas.ti software for coding and analysis. To examine the process of generating a common understanding of interactions we defined a coding frame following IR theory guidelines. The starting point was to identify the themes that raised attention during the conversations. For each theme we captured: (*a*) the kind of attention generated (codes were defined to characterize the conversations around different themes, finding out whether these conversations reflected agreement or disagreement, what the sphere of the conversation was (e.g. hostile or friendly), and whether common values were produced); (*b*) the intensity of the attention (codes were defined to capture the frequency of conversations about each theme); and (*c*) the variety of attention (codes indicating occasions when conversations on different themes take place and who is involved). Other codes were defined deductively, starting from IR theory. Combining inductively and deductively derived codes is a strategy to mediate between the need to ground the analytical codes in the material of study and the need to ensure that the codes can provide theoretically informed results (Berg, 2001).

It was impossible to obtain formal consent from each of the more than 400 people registered in the mailing list. Moreover, as the data to be used would not be reconnected to any of its members we decided against such an endeavour. Nonetheless, we emailed all participants to inform them about our work and its implications (in terms of the use of personal information), allowing them objections and questions. We received a few reactions, all of them supporting the work.

Case Study Description

GAS M was initiated by a group of civil society activists and critical consumers (none of them producers) involved in various Calabrian fair trade initiatives, looking for options to contribute to the Calabrian economy. They used the principles of fair trade to select Calabrian producers and create a regional market for them, as well as create a market for fair trade producers from around the world. GAS M was established in 2004, starting with a box scheme for the weekly distribution of local and fresh food products. In 2006, the founding fathers of GAS M coordinated some initiatives they were part of, or interacting with, to become a network. These initiatives include fair trade organizations, producers of artisan, non-food products and services, several organizations working on social promotion through art, and several organizations with a civic stand promoting social awareness of various themes of civic relevance (e.g. politics, society, culture, economy, environment). The network

aimed at promoting principles of reciprocity and cooperation, trust, social and environmental justice as well as active participation in the political, cultural, social and economic life of the territory where the network operates.

Over the years, GAS M members have been using several information and communication technology tools to manage the GAS. There is a website, a Facebook page, a Google Docs account, an email account, a forum and a system of mailing lists. The latter is particularly relevant to understand the structure of GAS M (Figure 1).

- The *Co-management* list includes 19 people. They form the core of GAS M and most of them are included in the group of founding fathers. They are engaged with GAS M as a whole; they take care of the organisation of all activities as well as of addressing issues of principles and vision. Moreover, they engage with activities and debates around issues of civic relevance with respect to both food provisioning and other social, economic, cultural and political topics.
- The *Box Exchange* mailing list consists of 426 subscribers. These people are interested in joining the food exchange activities organized by the co-management group. They do not contribute to the organization of GAS M.
- There are 280 subscribers in the *Awareness* mailing list. This list is meant to exchange information of civic relevance (e.g. events and activities in the political, cultural, and social spheres). Subscribers of this list are motivated by civic interests and willing to engage with discussions and initiatives of civic relevance.
- Finally, the *Connecting GASs* list counts 185 subscribers. Its registered people are engaged with coordinating the integration of different GASs.

Some people register to more than one mailing list, meaning that they are inter-

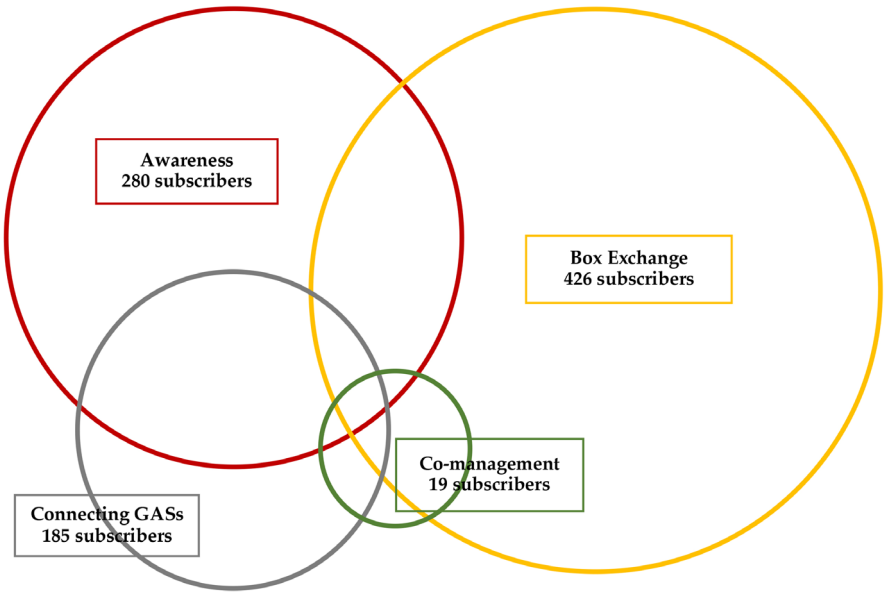

Figure 1. Structure of GAS M per mailing lists and their subscribers (own elaboration).
Source: D'Amico, 2015.

ested in different aspects of GAS M. In particular, subscribers to co-management subscribe to all other mailing lists as well, because they want to contribute to all that is of interest to GAS M.[3]

Balancing Practicalities and Motivations

Engagement in an AFN – such as being a member of a GAS – can be seen as one of the potential practices people engage in to acquire food, just as supermarket shopping or gardening. It is also one of the potential practices to provide food to consumers, just as selling to the world market is.[4] However, involvement in a GAS often includes other activities than the pure exchange of products, such as the organization and implementation of civic and cultural events (Brunori et al., 2012). Our material shows that for some of GAS M's members (mostly people in the co-management group) such additional activities, mainly those associated with raising civic awareness, are more important than for other members. Moreover, some members have more abilities and motivations than others to deal with the practical inefficiencies of being involved in the GAS and, consequently, to stay involved in its food acquisition and provisioning. The subsections below show the tensions that may arise because of these differences: tensions between raising civic awareness and practical inefficiencies, and tensions between raising civic awareness and economic viability. In the analysis that follows, we examine what these tensions tell us about what is behind the different decisions of GAS M participants regarding which activities to undertake, and what they tell us about the extent to which participants are able and motivated to tackle the practical efforts that the activities demand. We show how different decisions relate to different levels of EE acquired through GAS M participation. Moreover, we argue that both the acquisition of food through, and the provision of food to, a GAS cannot be seen as two singular practices; both practices include different activities, motivations, meanings and practicalities, and therefore are in fact different practices to different people.

Raising Civic Awareness versus Practical Inefficiencies

The adjustments practitioners need to make to integrate the practice of food provisioning and acquisition through GAS M in their routines, are (partly) determined by its logistic system. This system is generally considered inefficient. Consumers complain about the limited occasions and locations for box delivery. Potential improvements thus concern more flexibility and variety in terms of when and where boxes can be picked up, as well as having locations for box exchange that are more easily accessible. These topics are discussed on several occasions:

> 'We need to plan. How many people are we? What do we need? We need a place where people can go every day to collect their boxes. We need more product variety and availability. We need price stability.' (Consumer in the co-management group)

As a reaction, GAS M's co-management group started looking for new distribution points. However, as the management group foresaw, if not accompanied by a commitment for its vision and mission, improving logistic efficiency does not stimulate people to engage in GAS M's food provisioning and acquisition practice. Indeed, while the initiative to open new distribution points and deliver boxes at different days of the week had initially brought in new consumers – curious to experiment with this food acquisition practice, finding the new delivery locations and days logistically convenient – eventually it resulted in a drastic *fall* in the ordering of boxes because overall commitment with the project was low. Below, two members of the co-management group comment on this issue, suggesting that people quit the practice because there was insufficient attention to raising awareness on the civic mission of GAS M:

> 'The number of consumers has crumbled. The opening of [the new box distribution points] has just resulted in a dispersion of energy. We have started very strange dynamics.' (Consumer in the co-management group)

> 'We were supposed to do more awareness campaigning.' (Consumer in the co-management group)

In other words, the mere interest in food products was not sufficient to ensure durability of the adoption of GAS M's food provisioning and acquisition practice, even though the activity of the box exchange had become more efficient. A similar dynamic emerges from the following quote:

> 'Maybe [the squat area] has a special meaning to [two consumers in management group supporting the choice of this place as the GAS location] but… this is not a good place for the GAS and this is also the reason why the GAS is not expanding. This place is closing the GAS rather than opening it up to the neighbourhood… [It is closing], for instance, to the bourgeoisie people… who may think of the [squat area] as a dodgy place.' (Consumer in co-management group)

This extract concerns the fact that some people in the co-management group decided that the best location for the implementation of the box exchange would be a building located in an area squatted by organizations committed to carrying out civic battles beyond food provisioning. These organizations pursue their aims primarily by means of activities for socio-economic integration of disadvantaged people, artistic performances, parades, strikes and other sorts of civic mobilization. Members of the co-management group who support the idea of setting up a permanent location for the GAS in this area are also involved in some of these organizations. Moreover, they have been participating, since the early stages, in the squatting action. They justify their decision to use this location by arguing that it is logistically effective, i.e. easy to reach and containing a parking lot. However, other members of the co-management group point out that the logistic aspect will not compensate for the political orientation of the place. In other words, the political meaning attached to the area would prevent consumers interested in the box exchange system but not sharing the political views of the co-management group, to adopt the GAS M food provisioning and acquisition practice.

Raising Civic Awareness versus Economic Viability

Another practicality that surrounds the practice of food provisioning and acquisition through GAS M is reaching economic viability. As for the case of logistic inefficiency, producers who are not involved in the co-management group attach high importance to this practicality, to the point that they may decide to quit the practice of provisioning through GAS M when economic viability is not reached. For example, two producers not involved in co-management answer to a request from a co-management group member to contribute to organizing and implementing the box exchange scheme and related activities, by saying that they join these activities as far as they allow them to sell their products. Members of the co-management group criticize what they see as producers' lack of commitment beyond this economic scope:

> 'We stay until we have products to sell and costumers to sell our products to; then we go.' (Producer not involved in the co-management group)

> 'Ha, ha, ha… these producers are not responsible yet!' (Consumer in the co-management group)

In contrast, members of the co-management group continue their involvement in the GAS, even if not economically viable. Although they recognize the importance of economics, they also value the accomplishment of GAS M's civic mission. Hence, even if economic viability is not reached, they participate in the practice of food provisioning and acquisition in GAS M, as long as this brings the civic mission to the core. Two quotes show these opposing reactions. The producer talking in the following quote – a member of the co-management group – regrets that the box exchange activities do not generate enough orderings of her products to justify economically her participation in this activity on a weekly basis. However, she remains engaged in the practice by proposing to organize more civic activities, such as moments of encounter among producers and consumers, theatre and similar:

> 'I want to say that I am really sorry for not being able to join the product exchange every week, but I cannot cover the expenses. However, why don't we open the doors to other realities? Why don't we do some theatre? I think that we need more moments to meet and share our experiences. This is an official invitation to come and visit me at [the farm]. Sharing makes us strong.' (Producer in the co-management group)

In contrast, the following producer – not a member of the co-management group – justifies his withdrawal from GAS M by arguing that selling products via the GAS does not generate sufficient income:

> 'I need first of all to guarantee myself a secure income. I had to choose money first, so I found some local, small shops to sell my products and I have not joined the products exchange and other activities in GAS M any more.' (Producer not involved in the co-management group)

A similar dynamic concerns the message of the solidarity economy. A producer and co-management member stresses his engagement with GAS M by pointing towards

the promotion of the principles of the solidarity economy – even if this implies having limited sales. He argues that it is more important to build social relations in order to spread the solidarity economy message, than to generate income at the expense of the principles he believes in and tries to promote.

> 'Solidarity goes beyond a good price. You have to come up with the best price, given the available resources. I don't think that we can talk about solidarity when we offer a good price but the wheat [for the flour] comes from Northern Italy. With the organic wheat available here, this is the price [I can offer].' (Producer in co-management group)

> 'But the result is that only one loaf of bread has been ordered… We have to find a solution!' (Consumer in co-management group)

> 'I don't want to earn money by making bread. By becoming a slave of the bread production and work seven days out of seven. Rather I want to make money by building up social capital.' (Producer in co-management group)

In contrast, another producer –not a member of the co-management group – prioritizes money generation over civic engagement. She proposes to change the date of a market because this would bring more visitors and, thus, more selling opportunities. However, the date shift would not be ideal for spreading the civic mission of GAS M. Therefore, people in the co-management group refused the change and the producer decided not to join the market anymore:

> 'I suggest to choose… every second week of the month for economic and opportunity reasons. As far as the economic reasons are concerned, people reach the fourth week of the month and are financially exhausted in terms of their families' bills; concerning the opportunity reason, [the second Saturday of next month] is the Saturday before carnival.' (Producer not in co-management group)

> 'I disagree with both the method and the matter… I disagree with following festivities. We don't have to sell… we have to let people know about [GAS] and in the mess people don't understand anything. We must do calm and far-sighted work.' (Consumer in co-management group)

Analysis: Different Groups, Different Energies, Different Practices

Above we showed that the practical difficulties of engaging in GAS M (logistic inefficiency and economic unviability) have more effect on the involvement of GAS M's general members than on the involvement of the members of the co-management group. In this section, we explain this difference, how it relates to the EE that GAS members acquire, and to what extent this means that the two groups participate in different practices.

In order to do so we must first explain what EE means in GAS M's practices. The quote below is from a producer and member of the co-management group. It ex-

plains EE as energy created when people do things together, moved by shared goals, understandings and interests. When this energy is created, people are motivated to stay involved:

> 'I am here thanks to networking. [GAS M's organizers] met me while I was doing a market. From then on, I became involved in other GASs, in the national network of GASs and in its southern stream. Networking is important…: managing things collectively…, organizing meetings in the different farms to meet and talk to each other, in other words, make energy circulate.' (Producer in co-management group)

Hence, this producer explains the EE created within the co-management group, and how that energy keeps the group going. EE is indeed widely available in this group: members share a vision of GAS M having a civic mission of advocating for, and contributing to, the creation of sustainable food systems. Moreover, GAS M's civic mission implies involvement in political, social, cultural and similar issues of relevance for the territory in which it operates. Several members of the co-management group were involved in founding GAS M and many of them knew each other before its start-up. At that time, they were involved in several other civil society organizations, setting up GAS M in continuity and expansion of these civic activities. The remaining members of the co-management group share the civic vision promoted by the founding fathers. Hence, members of the co-management group show the highest engagement in activities related to the practice of food provisioning and acquisition within GAS M: they joined them all since GAS M's inception. Their participation is stable over time and not challenged by practical miss-functioning such as economic uncertainties and logistic inefficiencies.

In contrast, several other people joined GAS M mainly because of an interest in buying and selling products with specific characteristics through the box scheme. Some of these people have a certain degree of sympathy for the civic mission propagated by the co-management group. However, they do not share the same level of interest in these civic aspects. Moreover, their interactions with other members, including the co-management group, is limited to once a week, is recent, and does not imply reflection on GAS M's civic mission. Their participation is mainly limited to food box delivery and pick up; they do not join the organization phases, nor the merely civic activities. In other words, these members do not share in the EE created by and perpetuated within the co-management group. These box scheme members therefore prioritize practical issues such as economic viability and logistic efficiency. Hence, when practical expectations are not fulfilled, their participation in GAS M's food provisioning and acquisition practice is challenged, and some members decide to suspend or quit their engagement because of this.

Let us now zoom in on EE and its operational interpretation: we see that the two groups described above (the co-management group on the one hand, and the other members on the other hand) have different levels of EE. The members of the co-management group have been involved in GAS M over a longer period of time, which means that they have engaged in long-term interactions during which they built symbols, and generated energy. They reached a shared understanding on matters of civic relevance and on how GAS M can contribute to these matters. They share a vision of what GAS M should be, share the idea that the GAS's civic role is a priority, and commit to bringing this vision forward. These shared visions and ideas moti-

vate them to get involved and continue their involvement in the GAS as a whole and over time – regardless of the adjustments required in their routines in order to fit the practice of acquiring food through, and providing food to, GAS M. Moreover, their management of GAS M is guided by these shared visions and ideas. Conversely, people not involved in the co-management group do not share this understanding and its accompanied level of energy. They have been primarily involved in delivering and collecting boxes with produce, and interactions around these activities primarily focus on practical aspects. As a result, the civic meaning of GAS M is not as important for this group of people. In fact, they see these civic aspects as conflicting with their main interest, as promoting the civic mission distracts attention of the co-management group from improving practicalities as logistics and economic performance. The result is that their willingness to adjust to the practice of providing and acquiring food through the GAS, with all its practical miss-functioning, is lower than that of the co-management group. Hence, these members do not share the same level of EE as the co-management group. In the words of Weenink and Spaargaren (2016, p. 76): 'their stock of symbols does not connect to that of [the co-management group] very well, so that they are not able to contribute to the bodily/emotional attunement process, with the result of less emotional energy being generated.' These participants share little, if any, of the motivational aspects for GAS M's activities besides the box exchange. As a result, they have little emotional energy, are less committed, and might quit the practice of providing food to or acquiring food through GAS M for much lower practical inconvenience than people in the co-management group would.

We argue, therefore, that heterogeneity (in terms of degrees of involvement and adherence to the underlying principles) in AFNs, such as GASs, relates to different stocks of EE, which is again derived from different degrees of involvement and different levels of common understanding. This is, therefore, a perpetuating situation. The co-management group has high levels of EE and engages in the organization and implementation of several activities surrounding GAS M food provisioning and acquisition, reinforcing these high levels of EE. The other members have low levels of EE, so that rather than contributing to the organization of GAS M's activities, they join their implementation only. Moreover, these participants mainly join those activities that are strictly connected to box exchange, and generally skip activities of civic engagement. Finally, they are less willing to overcome the impracticalities associated with creating new routines of food provisioning and acquisition in GAS M.

These differences in stocks of EE and the accompanying consequences such as different views on what involvement in GAS M entails, implies that the practice of food provisioning and acquisition in GAS M has different meanings to different people and results in distinctly different activities. For some, the practice of being engaged in GAS M (either by provisioning food or by acquiring food) is a *form of civic engagement*, which is its most important meaning. For others, the practice is nothing more than an *alternative exchange system* – the meaning of the practice lies in buying or selling. Considering that 'meaning' is one of the three elements that make up a practice (Shove et al., 2012), we argue that we should in fact speak of two distinct practices: the practice of civic engagement, on the one hand, and the practice of buying from and selling through the GAS, on the other. Hence, even though at face value food provisioning and acquisition in an AFN, or more specifically in a GAS, may seem one specific practice (although admittedly different for producers and consumers), the way in which this practice is *perceived* by its practitioners – and

the ideas about how the practice is *supposed* to be performed (i.e. is civic engagement required, or not) – shows that this is not the case. Consider the following interaction, in which two members of the co-management group discuss the organization of the work needed to improve the venue that would become the new location for the box exchange:

> 'I have heard [a producer] is going to help tomorrow with the cleaning work.' (Consumer in the co-management group)
> 'I don't believe this. Nobody generally helps.' (Consumer in the co-management group)

The quote illustrates that the co-management group is used to other members not contributing to activities beyond buying and selling. This shows that the two groups hold different ideas about what it entails to participate in the practice. We argue, therefore, that engagement in a GAS combines different practices under one single heading: it can be seen as an example of a compound practice (Warde, 2013).

Our study also shows that the existence of different practices within the same initiative might hamper its stabilization. Different understandings about what involvement in GAS M entails decreases the level of energy and, therefore, the commitment to fulfil the associated practices repeatedly. The co-management group seems to understand this risk, as it suggests to embrace a broad understanding of GAS M and its practices (i.e. with both civic and food provisioning aspects), seeing this as the only way to generate sufficient energy for the experience of GAS M to be continued:

> 'We risk dispersing our energy. We have to be Producers and Consumers with capital letters… and hug the initiative in its totality.' (Producer in co-management group)

Discussion and Conclusion

With this article we aimed at both an empirical and a theoretical contribution to the literature. Starting with our empirical insights, our research has shown that the heterogeneity within and between AFNs can be explained by the fact that motivation in the form of EE is not dispersed evenly amongst participants so that, in turn, not all of them manage to continue participation. In our case study we saw a difference between the co-management group, moved by civic motivations, and the rest, motivated by product provisioning and acquisition. The first group is involved in several civic activities that complement the exchange of products: involvement in GAS M is a practice of civic engagement to them. The other group, instead, participates in the implementation of box exchange only. The GAS, then, is nothing more than an alternative exchange practice, whose meaning lies in buying or selling. In other words, both groups attach such different meanings to and include such different activities in the practice of food provisioning and acquisition in GAS M that it is more appropriate to talk about two different practices.

Moreover, given their different stocks of motivations and EE, the different groups react differently to practical inefficiencies that involvement in AFNs may generate. In practice terms, practitioners motivated by buying and selling practices may be more easily discouraged by these inefficiencies, and by the difficulties of fitting these practices within their daily routines. Practices of buying and selling will compete

with other practices of buying and selling, often more convenient, which mostly have already acquired a place in people's daily lives. Disrupting these routines and keeping up the new ones will be difficult, precisely because of the inefficiencies mentioned. For other practitioners, convenience around buying and selling is less important, as the practice as such is not recognized as a practice of buying and selling and therefore does not need to be compared to other buying and selling practices. Furthermore, they find their motivation for keeping up the practice in the EE they get when, despite the practical inefficiencies, they stay involved in the GAS, accomplishing a civic mission.

Our study gives empirical evidence to Weenink and Spaargaren's (2016) argument that social practice theory can be complemented with emotional energy as developed in interaction ritual theory. We have shown that the co-management group shares a high level of EE because its members have been able to build this up amongst each other for several years and because they share their civic motivations. As other members do not share this EE, they do not get taken up in this continuous cycle of energy creation and do not get the opportunity to collectively develop symbols. The concept of EE therefore helps us understand what determines the establishment of certain practices in people's daily routines, and why it can be so difficult to radically change those routines.

Furthermore, our study contributes to the discussion on how to define practices. We argue that practices that show similar practicalities and activities can be considered two different practices when the meaning attached to them is radically different. Just as cycling may be seen as a practice of commuting for someone who does so to go to work, and a practice of leisure for someone who makes a day trip through a beautiful landscape, involvement in GAS M means different practices to different people. As there are two such distinct meanings of engagement in GAS M, accompanied by differing ideas about what are important elements of this engagement and how the practice is to be performed, our assertion is that it cannot be seen as a single integrative practice. As argued before, Shove et al.'s (2012) elements of a practice are useful to distinguish and delimit practices. In this article we have emphasized the *meaning* the practice has for two groups of people, which we understand to be different. However, this difference will also lead to differing competences between the two groups, as the activities people engage in diverge. Then, also the role of material will be different, seeing that one group places more importance on the boxes than the other. Nevertheless, as the focus on meaning showed such substantial differences between the two groups, we argue that the element of meaning is essential in distinguishing practices, also because a practice is defined by people – both practitioners and outsiders – recognizing it as such (Shove et al., 2012). It is most likely that the two groups would describe differently what involvement in GAS M entails, and so the practitioners *themselves* would describe it as different practices.

Finally, our work raises some concerns about the inclusiveness of AFNs. Several authors (Slocum, 2006; Macias, 2008; McIntyre and Rondeau, 2011; Alkon and Mares, 2012; Gibb and Wittman, 2013) have argued that AFNs are exclusionary and only accessible for certain groups within society. GAS M, with its strong core, has difficulty bridging the gap with other potential members because of its strong rhetoric, and specific understanding of what involvement in the GAS entails. In this case, it is not so much socio-economic status, but a lack of EE (due to a shorter length of involvement and a lack of a particular motivation), that hinders people's engagement. If the co-management group would be able to adjust its vision just a little to

better respond to the vision of the other members – and to the inefficiencies that hinder their involvement – these others might become more energized, more willing to deal with those inefficiencies, and better able to adjust their routines. It would improve GAS M's inclusiveness. In the current situation new members would have difficulty entering the energy perpetuating, but (as a result) closed, circle of the co-management group.

Notes

1. This name has been invented to guaranty confidentiality of the case studied.
2. Related documents refer to any documents attached to emails or linked in the email (e.g. reports, flyers, website pages, video, images).
3. The names of the lists are invented. The number of people registered were reported by the end of February 2013, when the data collection was concluded. Although those numbers have been changing over the period of study and they still will be, the overall rank of the lists in relation to subscriptions stays unchanged.
4. Hence, we see 'involvement in a GAS' as a food acquisitioning practice for consumers, and a food provisioning practice for producers.

References

Alkon, A.H. and Mares, T.M. (2012) Food sovereignty in US food movements: radical visions and neoliberal constraints, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 29(3), pp. 347–359.

Allen, P., FitzSimmons, M., Goodman, M. and Warner, K. (2003) Shifting plates in the agrifood landscape: the tectonics of alternative agrifood initiatives in California, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19(1), pp. 61–75.

Ammirato, S., Della Gala, M. and Volpentesta, A.P. (2013). Alternative agrifood networks as learning communities: some issues for a classification model, in: M.D. Lytras, D. Ruan, R.D. Tennyson, P.O. De Pablos, F.J.G. Peñalvo and L. Rusu (eds) *Information Systems, E-learning, and Knowledge Management Research*. Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 293–300

Berg, B.L. (2001) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 4th edn. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Brunori, G., Cerruti, R., Medeot, S. and Rossi, A. (2008) Looking for alternatives: the construction of the organic beef chain in Mugello, Tuscany, *International Journal of Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology*, 7(1/2), pp. 126–143.

Brunori, G., Rossi, A. and Malandrin, V. (2011) Co-producing transition: innovation processes in farms adhering to solidarity-based purchase groups (GAS) in Tuscany, Italy, *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 18(1), pp. 28–53.

Brunori, G., Rossi, A. and Guidi, F. (2012) On the new social relations around and beyond food: analysing consumers' role and action in gruppi di acquisto solidale (solidarity purchasing groups), *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52(1), pp. 1–30.

Cembalo, L., Migliore, G. and Schifani, G. (2013) Sustainability and New Models of Consumption: The Solidarity Purchasing Groups in Sicily, *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 26(1), pp. 281–303.

Collins, R. (2004) *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cox, R., Holloway, L., Venn, L., Dowler, L., Hein, J.R., Kneafsey, M. and Tuomainen, H. (2008) Common ground? Motivations for participation in a community-supported agriculture scheme, *Local Environment*, 13(3), pp. 203–218.

D'Amico, S. (2015) *Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) in Calabria. A Sociological Exploration of Interaction Dynamics*. Ph.D. dissertation, Wageningen University.

De Krom, M.P.M.M. (2015) Governing animal–human relations in farming practices: a study of group housing of sows in the EU, *Sociologia Ruralis*, 55(4), pp. 417–437.

DeLind, L.B. (1999) Close encounters with a CSA: the reflections of a bruised and somewhat wiser anthropologist, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16(1), pp. 3–9.

DeWalt, K.M. and DeWalt, B.R. (2011) *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 2nd edn. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Dobernig, K., Veen, E. and Oosterveer, P. (2016) Growing urban food as an emerging social practice, in: G. Spaargaren, D. Weenink and M. Lamers (eds) *Practice Theory and Research: Exploring the Dynamics of Social Life*. London: Routledge, pp. 153–178.

DuPuis, E.M. and Gillon, S. (2009) Alternative modes of governance: organic as civic engagement, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 26(1-2), pp. 43–56.

Feenstra, G.W. (2002) Creating space for sustainable food systems: lessons from the field, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 19(2), pp. 99–106.

Fonte, M. (2013) Food consumption as social practice: solidarity purchasing groups in Rome, Italy, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 32, pp. 230–239.

Gibb, N. and Wittman, H. (2013) Parallel alternatives: Chinese-Canadian farmers and the Metro Vancouver local food movement, *Local Environment*, 18(1), pp. 1–19.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hinrichs, C. (2000) Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16(3), pp. 295–303.

Jupp, V. (2006) Documents and critical research, in: R. Sapsford and V. Jupp (eds) *Data Collection and Analysis*, 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 272–289.

Little, J., Ilbery, B. and Watts, D. (2009) Gender, consumption and the relocalisation of food: a research agenda, *Sociologia Ruralis*, 49(3), pp. 201–217.

Macias, T. (2008) Working toward a just, equitable, and local food system: the social impact of community-based agriculture, *Social Science Quarterly*, 89(5), pp. 1086–1101.

McIntyre, L. and Rondeau, K. (2011) Individual consumer food localism: a review anchored in Canadian farmwomen's reflections, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(2), pp. 116–124.

Morris, C. and Kirwan, J. (2011) Exploring the ecological dimensions of producer strategies in alternative food networks in the UK, *Sociologia Ruralis*, 51(4), pp. 349–369.

Obach, B.K. and Tobin, K. (2014) Civic agriculture and community engagement, *Agriculture and Human Values*, 31(2), pp. 307–322.

Papaoikonomou, E., Valverde, M. and Ryan, G. (2012) Articulating the meanings of collective experiences of ethical consumption, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 110(1), pp. 15–32.

Punch, K.F. (2005) *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, 2nd edn. London: SAGE Publications.

Reckwitz, A. (2002) Toward a theory of social practices: a development in culturalist theorizing, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5(2), pp. 243–263.

Rete dei Gas (1999) *I gruppi di acquisto solidale. Un modo diverso di fare la spesa*. Published online <http://www.economiasolidale.net/sites/default/files/allegati/1999_Gas_DocumentoBase.pdf>.

Røpke, I. (2009) Theories of practice: new inspiration for ecological economic studies on consumption, *Ecological Economics*, 68(10), pp. 2490–2497.

Schatzki, T.R. (1996) *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schensul, S.L., Schensul, J.J. and LeCompte, M.D. (1999) *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Shove, E. and Walker, G. (2010) Governing transitions in the sustainability of everyday life, *Research Policy*, 39(4), pp. 471–476.

Shove, E., Pantzar, M. and Watson, M. (2012) *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*. London: SAGE Publications.

Slocum, R. (2006) Anti-racist practice and the work of community food organizations, *Antipode*, 38(2), pp. 327–349.

Smithers, J., Lamarche, J. and Joseph, A.E. (2008) Unpacking the terms of engagement with local food at the farmers' market: insights from Ontario, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(3), pp. 337–350.

Tregear, A. (2011) Progressing knowledge in alternative and local food networks: critical reflections and a research agenda, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(4), pp. 419–430.

Veen, E. (2015) *Community Gardens in Urban Areas: A Critical Reflection on the Extent to Which They Strengthen Social Cohesion and Provide Alternative Food*. Ph.D. dissertation, Wageningen University.

Volpentesta, A.P., Ammirato, S. and Della Gala, M. (2012) Knowledge exchange and social learning opportunities in direct agri-food chains, in: L.M. Camarinha-Matos, L. Xu and H. Afsarmanesh (eds) *Collaborative Networks in the Internet of Services*. Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 340–348.

Warde, A. (2005) Consumption and theories of practice, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 5(2), pp. 131–153.

Warde, A. (2013) What sort of a practice is eating?, in: E. Shove and N. Spurling (eds) *Sustainable Practices: Social Theory and Climate Change*. London: Routledge, pp. 17–30.

Weenink, D. and Spaargaren, G. (2016) Emotional agency navigates a world of practices, in: G. Spaargaren, D. Weenink and M. Lamers (eds) *Practice Theory and Research: Exploring the Dynamics of Social Life*.

London: Routledge, pp. 60–84.
Whatmore, S., Stassart, P. and Renting, H. (2003) What's alternative about alternative food networks?, *Environment and Planning A*, 35(3), pp. 389–391.
Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.