3. Conceptual structure

The purpose of this chapter is, firstly, to engage in the research task from Chapter 1, namely, exploring social practice theories and the connections between discourses and social practices, in order to create a framework that could help enable purposive change in unsustainable social practices both at individual and at societal levels. Secondly, this chapter provides the conceptual structure for the empirical analysis in Chapter 5 which aims to answer the more specific research question from Chapter 1.

In this chapter, I will attempt to adapt social practice theories in the context of purposive change towards sustainability. I will build a framework that is based on combining aspects of different versions of social practice theories with concepts from social psychology, philosophy, cognitive linguistics and critical discourse analysis. I aim to build a structure that connects practices and discourses closely and emphasizes the connections to values and emotions, often given less attention in social practice theories. Further, I will explore the role of *discursive consciousness* that can help combat two large obstacles standing in the way of purposive change towards sustainability, namely *strategic ignorance* (of knowledge, and of value and emotion conflicts) and often invisible, but dominant ideologies, paradigms, and frames.[1]

First, however, it is necessary for this chapter to briefly present some background to social practice theories, especially in connection with sustainability, and so, in Section 3.1, I will discuss social practice theories in comparison to other theories of change, from the point of view of sustainability transformations, and explain the notion of *meat-eating related practices* I use in this book. Following this, in Section 3.2, I will first present the, by now fairly dominant, take on social practices by Shove et al. (2012), before moving on to some potential modifications to their model later in Section 3.2 and in Section 3.3. These modifications include adding *the body* as the fourth element of practices, replacing the element of *meanings* with *general understandings*, a broader concept, and incorporating *values* and *emotions* more tightly as vital connections to the main practice elements. Last but not least, as regards the modifications, in Section 3.4 and Section 3.5, I will link practices to discourses, through the counterparts of general understandings (on the side of practices) and cognitive frames (on the side of discourses). Discursive consciousness and the concept of *discursively open practices* will be discussed in these sections, as well as ideologies and critical discourse analysis, with the latter being not only related to the conceptual structure, but also the methodological approach I will take to my data in Chapter 5.[2] Finally, before the conclusion to this chapter, in Section 3.6, I will briefly align my thoughts on the issue of agency for change, being that change is the critical overarching issue I want to tackle in this book.

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[1] I attempt to build a structure that makes sense, so to speak, and seeks to explain to a satisfactory level. In interdisciplinary work, some fences may be necessarily crossed (e.g. here, using social psychology in connection with social practice theories), and this may not always seem appropriate at first sight. However, I hope to be able to justify adequately the arguments I make. Many of the mechanisms and related phenomena to do with social practices, and human behaviour in general, are still far from being fully explained. This book is one attempt to suggest some combinations of links that may not have yet been explored fully.

3.1 Social practice theories as the basis

This section will first give a brief overview of why social practice theories might work better than more individual-based theories or even theories that tend to only focus on the system level. Further, I will illustrate how there is still no agreement on what social practice theory, in the singular form, should look like. As a consequence, interdisciplinarity may fit with the current social practice theories more easily than with some other more established theories.

3.1.1 Transformations to sustainability – Between approaches

3.1.1.1 Onwards from individual-based behaviour change models

Behaviour change policy methods by governments or other organisations have relied on, and still often rely, on models of human behaviour whereby individuals are driven to behave in a certain way by factors residing inside (e.g. attitudes, preferences) and/or outside (e.g. social norms, environmental cues, financial circumstances) of those individuals, while still being relatively free to choose which way to behave or do things. In Chapter 2, I referred to the factor model, but other names for a similar way of centralizing the individual include the rational choice model,[3] criticized, for example, as the *portfolio model*,[4] or the *ABC model*.[5] Such a model seems to be a functional way of explaining the world in which humans move about, doing things while being affected by various factors. In some circumstances, the individual-based behaviour change methods may be beneficial, and the economic theory, sociology and social psychology behind many of them offer relevant insights. However, as Welch and Warde (2015) argue (see also Southerton et al., 2004), this way of looking at behaviour:

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[2] Chapter 4 will explain in more detail how I conducted the data analysis in practice.

> …structurally overestimates the role of deliberation in routine purposive tasks, and fundamentally underestimates the extent to which individuals' autonomous action is constrained by infrastructures and socio-technical systems […by norms and…] resource constraints: social, cultural and economic.
> (Welch & Warde, 2015:88)

Especially when the question is about complex issues — with more long-term and global, rather than short-term and local benefits — and about necessary large-scale changes — whether large-scale to the individual or large-scale to society — relying on individual-based models or methods without changing the bigger picture is both inefficient and not transformative enough. Moreover, whatever the issue, small or large, when values or emotions are in conflict, a human response (including at the level of governments) is to attempt to deal with the situation by ignoring the conflict and thereby attempting to ignore the whole issue.

3.1.1.2 System-wide approaches

In contrast, system-wide theories seeking large-scale and systemic social change have often minimized the role of the individual. Hölscher et al. (2018) usefully analyse the differences between a focus on *transition* and *transformation*. The former, mainly in the form of theory on sustainable transitions or transitions management (see e.g. Markard et al., 2012 for an overview), focuses more on changing subsystems, such as energy or mobility, and examines the related social, technological and institutional interactions.

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[3] What is meant by the rational choice model here includes many recent theories about behaviour. One overview of them can be found at https://www.apsc.gov.au/changing-behaviour-public-policy-perspective.

[4] In the portfolio model (originally from Hindess, 1988), people choose their behaviour based on a portfolio consisting of more or less stable values, attitudes, norms, interests and desires (Welch, 2017).

[5] The "ABC" (in the way Elizabeth Shove uses it) comes from attitude, behaviour, and choice. Shove (2010) argues that governments hide behind this framework instead of acknowledging their role in sustaining unsustainable institutions and ways of life, and their ability to change structures.

On the other hand, global change research referring to transformations tends to focus more on "large-scale changes in whole societies, which can be global, national or local, and involve interacting human and biophysical system components" (Hölscher et al., 2018:2). In transformational systems thinking, interventions at the paradigm level — such as at the level of societal values and ideologies — is considered most efficient (Meadows, 2008). O'Brien (2018:157) contends that the dimensions of transformation are indeed best tackled collectively "to engage individuals and groups […] such that they shift from being seen as 'objects to be changed' and reduced to their carbon footprints, to viewing themselves as subjects or agents of change who are capable of contributing to systemic transformations".

In transitions research, concepts such as values, emotions, or individual agency have been largely left with little or no role. Although transitions management sees policymaking as building networks in which different actors can participate and interact (Shove et al., 2012), transitions research has been criticized for mainly being concerned with technocratic transitions. Approaches to systems-scale transformation, on the other hand, seek more radical, large-scale and long-term societal changes (Hölscher et al., 2018). Further, in systems thinking, the notion of *transformative agency* emphasizes the role of "intrinsic motivation, cognition, emotions and values as key dimensions of human agency for change" (Hölscher et al., 2018:2, also O'Brien, 2012).

3.1.1.3 Social practice theories

A strong recent focus in social practice theories is related to policy-relevant research on changes towards sustainable societies (see for example, a much quoted book by Shove et al., 2012). While some social practice theory approaches to sustainability use transitions theory to a larger extent (see e.g. Spaargaren, Oosterveer, et al., 2012b), others do not. Social practice theories, in general, could be seen as approaching the systems level, while at the same time focusing on everyday practices performed by individuals. Yet, the one idea connecting the range of practice theories is that the unit of analysis is not the individual, but practices as such, and especially the repeated performances of practices.[6] However, even when the individual is seemingly reduced to a *carrier of practices*, as is the case in some approaches, but by no means all, the individual is nonetheless in the picture, and arguably, therefore, has a role.[7]

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[6] Nicolini (2017) specifically advises against shifting the focus to large-scale abstract things, such as "institutions" or "the state", which to him are largely incompatible with a practice-based approach.

[7] Others emphasize that even as carriers of practices, individuals are not passive, but that change is constant and natural to practices, and takes place through individual performances of practices (e.g. Shove et al., 2012).

As regards the definition for a social practice, several authors have given their versions over time. The version that seems to work best in the context of this book is the following from Welch and Warde (2015:85): a social practice is “an organised, and recognizable, socially shared bundle of activities that involves the integration of a complex array of components: material, embodied, ideational and affective”. A relevant contribution of more recent practice theoretical literature has been to see practices, or “the organization of human activity as nexuses of generic types of components” (Warde et al., 2017:29) which different authors have then treated with different emphasis.

Although practice theories usually emphasize habits, routines, and *practical consciousness*, rather than discrete actions and reflection, or discursive consciousness,[8] the extent to which different aspects are highlighted, and even more fundamental ideas about what human behaviour consists of, can be large. Scholars preferring the stronger approaches may see the weaker approaches as closer to the individual behaviour change approaches.

Figure 3.1 illustrates both some of the emphases in different social practice theories, as well as the emphases between social practice theories and individual-based behaviour change approaches. While stronger social practice theories are often in opposition to individual-based behaviour change approaches, the somewhat weaker approaches in social practice theories can indeed be placed somewhere in the middle. They, for example, may consider individuals to have more agency or grant discursive consciousness some role to play.

Warde (2014) argues that the stronger versions of practice theories tend to not only emphasize the items on the left of Figure 3.1, but suggest further that some of the items on the left *precede* items on the right, so that, for example, doing comes before, and also directs, thinking, and habit, routine and practical consciousness are not only the “default mode of engagement in the world” (idem:292), as medium strong versions might see things, but “all consciousness is effectively practical consciousness” (idem:285). Medium-strong versions would see the left-hand items as more important than those on the right (but not argue for their time-wise precedence), while the weaker versions of practice theories would merely note that the left-hand items should get enough attention. Some authors purposefully claim to use weak practice theory, in particular, by not decentring the human actor with agency (see e.g. Goulden et al., 2014). Others seek to maintain a somewhat stronger position and state that agency exists but mainly transpires through practices (e.g. Welch, 2017a).

Social practice theories evolved from the 1970s onwards, partly to solve the long-term issue in social sciences of agency vs. structure, moving beyond it, without pri-

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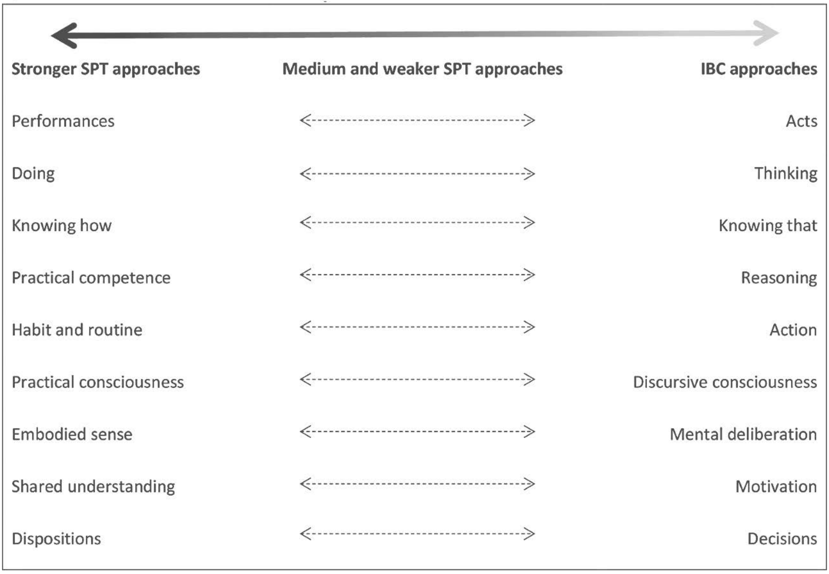
[8] The terms practical and discursive consciousness come from Giddens’ structuration theory (1984).

Figure 3.1: The emphases in different practice theories and in behaviour change approaches



Stronger SPT approaches	Medium and weaker SPT approaches	IBC approaches
Performances	<------------------------------------>	Acts
Doing	<------------------------------------>	Thinking
Knowing how	<------------------------------------>	Knowing that
Practical competence	<------------------------------------>	Reasoning
Habit and routine	<------------------------------------>	Action
Practical consciousness	<------------------------------------>	Discursive consciousness
Embodied sense	<------------------------------------>	Mental deliberation
Shared understanding	<------------------------------------>	Motivation
Dispositions	<------------------------------------>	Decisions

Source: Substantially modified from Warde (2014).
Notes: The original comparison by Warde is between practice theories and the "sovereign individual", and there is no middle position; SPT refers to social practice theories, IBC refers to individual behaviour change.

oritizing either structure or agency, and yet being able to describe and analyse both change and stability (Shove et al., 2012; Welch & Warde, 2015). Practices, practice elements and their relationships both ensure that practices are relatively stable, but at the same time perpetually changing. In a way, practices are always open to potential change within their elements, and at the same time closed due to their apparent stability. However, the stability of practices is only the "outcome of successfully faithful reproductions of a practice" (Shove et al., 2012:13).

Although today social practice theories are seen as cutting across the field of sustainable consumption (Lorek & Vergragt, 2015), applying social practice theories to consumption-related issues mainly came, soon after the turn of the new millennium, as a reaction to social sciences seeing consumption increasingly as something done by an "empowered individual, exercising freedom of choice through voluntary decisions" (Welch & Warde, 2015:86).

The question of agency is, therefore, an essential unifying, yet dividing concept in social practice theories, especially when they are applied to the issue of change. Welch and Warde (2015) argue that the question of agency indeed has roughly divided those adhering to practice theories into two "programmes" as regards sustainable consumption, change and the potential that individuals have to change things. The first programme, in their view, represented by Elizabeth Shove, and rooted in stronger practice theories, has been sceptical, while the second programme, rooted in ecological modernization, and represented by Gert Spaargaren, has been optimistic. The first programme has focused more on the dynamics of practices, why they form the way they do, and how they change, giving materialities (including infrastructures and technologies) a central role. The second programme has focused more on citizen-consumers as change agents at "consumption-junctions" where production and consumption meet. Lately, however, there has been convergence (Welch & Warde, 2015) whereby the first programme has focused more specifically on transforming practices (e.g. in Shove et al., 2012), and the second programme has acknowledged that social practices define, or "produce" individuals (Spaargaren, 2013), while at the same time, individuals as citizen-consumers retain agency for change.[9]

Related to the question of social practice theories and agency, there are differences in terms of the emphasis given to other human-related qualities or experiences potentially relevant to practices, such as emotions and values. Decentring the human tends to decentre such concepts as well. However, the relevance of both emotions and values to social practices is increasingly emphasized by some authors. Reckwitz (2017) and Welch (2017a) both consider emotions being intrinsic to all practices. Similarly, Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) tie collective agency to practices via emotions. And Welch (2017a) considers values to also be strongly connected to practices. The further development of the concept of *general understandings* by Welch and Warde (2017, concept originally from Schatzki, 2002), as an important component of social practices, helps to see both values and emotions linked to practices via such general understandings, as discussed further in Section 3.3.

The embeddedness of emotions and values in social practices makes insights from social psychology relevant to social practice theories, even if the policy priority is not to change the behaviour of individuals through psychological methods. For example, Nash et al. (2017) argue that social psychology and social practice theories can complement and enrich each other in attempts to create broader change towards sustainability. However, similar to Hargreaves (2011), Nash and colleagues point out that rather than attempt to change behaviour through changing value dispositions of individuals, "attempts to change practices seek broader, societal shifts in the organization, understandings, and/or performances" of practices, including changes in social norms (Nash et al., 2017:11).

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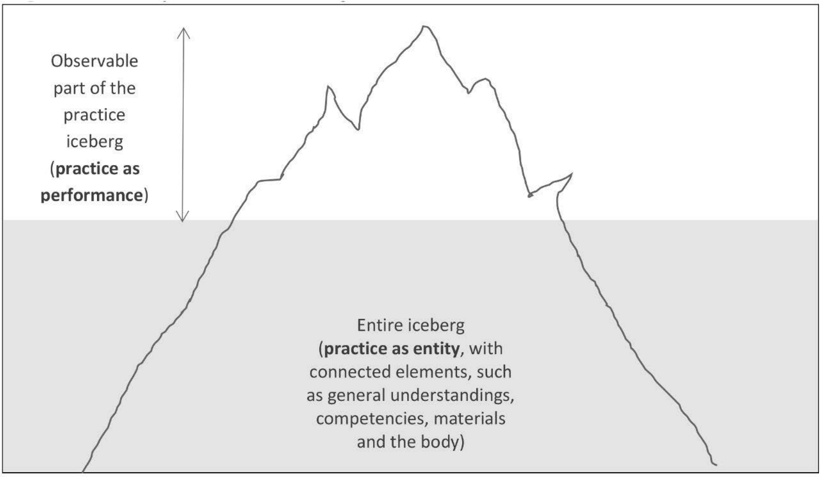
[9] Citizens in this context can be seen as prioritizing more sustainability-facilitating values (see Section 3.3.2), including a sense of responsibility, while consumers would tend to prioritize more sustainability-hindering values (e.g. Gjerris et al., 2016). Citizen-consumers are a combination of the two, supposedly able to balance different value priorities.

Regardless of the disagreements around agency, Welch (2017a) maintains that a social practice approach innovatively reframes the policy question "How do we change individuals' behaviour?" into "How do we change practices and their performance?". The latter question clearly must pay some attention to the system as well, whether "system" refers to the mesh of practices or to societal structures more traditionally. An iceberg is a useful metaphor illustrating the difference between *practices as entities* and *practices as performances* (with the latter understood commonly as "behaviour"), as provided by Spurling et al. (2013), and shown in Figure 3.2. If policymaking only focuses on the visible tip of the iceberg, i.e. the behaviour, it is no wonder that not enough sustained change can be made.

Figure 3.2: Social practice as an iceberg


Observable part of the practice iceberg (**practice as performance**)
Entire iceberg (**practice as entity**, with connected elements, such as general understandings, competencies, materials and the body)

Source: Modified from Spurling et al. (2013)

Mainly, according to Welch (2017a), practice theories offer new insights for understanding processes of social change and the framing of problems, while offering new opportunities for intervention, and challenging the common assumptions feeding into policymaking.

Although until now, practice-theoretical research has mostly analysed individual performances of practices,[10] instead of focusing on the larger system (Warde,

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[10] So, the focus has still been on the tip of the iceberg, but taking the whole iceberg into account. Social practice theoretical analysis has traditionally not centred on change.

2014), the possibilities are there. Social practice theoretical research for policy insights on practice-related norms, values, discourses, knowledge, standards and societal structures could, and perhaps should, become the central focus of investigation and intervention.[11] Social practice theories move away from framing problems in term of "false oppositions or alternatives: the individual *or* the social context; behaviour *or* technology" (Welch, 2016:238). Indeed, sufficiently broad interventions that have addressed several components of practices (rather than just one) have been more successful (Southerton et al., 2011).[12] Using social practice theory to the fullest in policymaking would, however, mean that policymakers should be capable of critical self-reflection.

Among the policymakers that do see the benefits of incorporating social practice theories, there is a tendency to use practice theories to formulate the policy issues themselves, but when it comes to motivating behaviour change, policymakers often go back to social psychology to address individual consumers (Welch, 2017a). It appears that using practice theories for actual social change is still a challenge. This may partly be because changing system-wide elements such as worldviews, meanings, or paradigms is not only challenging but often not something policymakers would even wish to do.

Sometimes reformatting policy issues and looking at them anew from a practice point of view can be beneficial. For example, Hargreaves (2011) analyses more traditional behaviour-change campaigns in a workplace through a social practice theory lens and concludes that such campaigns can be seen as interventions in the organisation of multiple connected practices, rather than attempts to change the motives and values of individual people. Although the campaign may stay the same, the focus of assessing its impact shifts more towards practices (both as entities and as performances) and away from individuals, while also better revealing the challenges in behaviour change campaigns.

Welch and Warde (2015) see essentially three outstanding issues calling for further development of practice theories, especially in terms of making them into more useful policy tools. Firstly, the relationship between production and consumption is problematic, as production is mostly neglected in practice theories. However, Welch and Warde argue that the recent attempts for a synthesis with socio-technical transition approaches might help in this respect.[13] Secondly, the relationship between collective agency and everyday routines has largely been neglected in practice theories. Welch and Warde suggest that one way to get away from this theoretically tricky relationship is to see sustainable consumption as an "organized field of strategic interventions"[14] (original quote from Barnett et al., 2011:13), whereby unsustainable consumption is "taken up as the object of problematizing discourse" (Welch & Warde, 2015:97). Thirdly, the relationship between the micro-level of everyday performances and the macro-level of institutional context is an issue for sociology as a whole, but it is especially so for the stronger practice theoretical programme discussed above. Indeed, usually adhering to *flat ontology*,[15] stronger practice theories tend to see no division between individual practices and the system level, yet they often stay at the level of practice performances for empirical (and even theoretical) research.[16] Welch and Warde conclude by saying that practice theories still lack fully persuasive conceptual answers to how to make change, especially due to the third point above.

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[11] This would be close to the system change approach described above, in terms of most efficient interventions being at the paradigm level (Meadows, 2008).

[12] An example of a successful campaign is the Cool Biz initiative in Japan (see Shove et al., 2012).

[13] See Geels et al. (2015) for another attempt to synthesize. Geels and colleagues also look for synergies between the capitalism and efficiency-based approaches and full sustainability transformation approaches.

Spotswood and Marsh (2016) assume that the future of behaviour change is transdisciplinary. Although incompatibility may not necessarily be an issue in transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary research, I would argue that even when it is, compatibility need not always be a first priority (Colyvan, 2008), if certain concepts around a phenomenon nonetheless represent ideas that may achieve results. This is somewhat in the spirit of *bricolage*. I would add that compatibility between issues may also be found later on. Colyvan (2008:119) argues that ontological consistency is "just one virtue among many", and in natural sciences in particular, inconsistency is sometimes unavoidable. In any event, my purpose is to contribute to new insights into complex and urgent problems through working in an interdisciplinary manner.

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[14] This is in the sense of political consumption whereby everyday consumption is seen "as a surface of mobilization for wider, explicitly political aims and agendas" (Barnett et al., 2011:13).

[15] I do not follow flat ontology (rejecting a hierarchy of societal entities) in this work as such, even though I agree with the view of the world consisting of a near infinite number of interlinked social practices. I would rather see that many of those practices form what can be called "the system" (such as in the "meat system").

[16] Regarding applying social practice theories to large-scale phenomena, Nicolini (2017) notes that it is not always clear what is large and what is small: for example, there can be large-scale phenomena that are not "big" as such. He gives the example of greetings as apparently small scale, but at the same time "ubiquitous, pervasive and critical to sustain the fabric of social relationships and its orderliness" (idem:100).

3.1.2 Meat-eating related practices

Although the focus of this chapter is more general, it still seems necessary to define here what the meat-eating related practices are that I examine in this book before embarking on building the fuller conceptual structure.

The components mentioned in the above definition for social practices (Welch & Warde, 2015) include material, embodied, ideational and affective components. In meat-eating related practices, the material components would include the food that is eaten, cooking equipment, supermarkets, farms, processing facilities, and so on. The embodied components would include, for example, skills and practical knowledge for all the related activities. The ideational components would include meanings, understandings, knowledge and values, and these would be connected to the affective components which would mainly relate to different emotions related to food and eating.

Most if not all practices are more or less closely linked to, and overlapping with other practices (e.g. Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016) to the extent that any particular practice is usually part of a complex, interconnected mesh of practices. So it is with meat: meat-eating related practices are part of a mesh of practices, most closely related to shopping, socializing, family raising, cooking, disposal and digestion related practices, but they are equally part of the larger meat system of breeding, feeding and killing domestic animals; production, processing, distribution, trading, wholesale, retail, marketing and advertising of meat, further connected to the larger agricultural systems, subsidies, governmental policies, and so on. I am therefore greatly simplifying the picture by focusing on meat *eating* as a practice, but by "meat eating" I do not only refer to the bodily consumption of animal flesh (or the new plant-based meats), but also the relatively closely related practices — described above and generally taking place after the *consumption junction*, while being connected to what comes before the consumption junction. Since according to the dominant "demand hypothesis", meat production in intensive systems is driven by the demand for meat to be eaten, the "eating side" of the consumption junction should certainly be relevant to examine for radical change. The eating side reflects the dominant values and worldviews related to the production side, including ideologies such as *carnism* (discussed in Section 3.5.3).

Eating as a practice is both similar and dissimilar to other practices, especially those seen as consumption practices. It is dissimilar in the sense that (together with other bodily consumption of substances) it is the only form of consumption where the human body literally does the consuming. But much of other consumption is also related to (perceived and often real) bodily needs, such as domestic heating or water consumption related to cleaning our bodies. The bodily consumption of food for sustenance is of course not the only reason people engage in eating practices. Other reasons include many of the same reasons people engage in other consumption practices: to satisfy emotional needs or to form and maintain social connections. Further, eating involves similar linked practices as other consumption practices such as shopping, and knowledge related to what to purchase. Generally, it is performed as a means to an end, similar to most other consumption practices. Finally, similar negative emotions can be related to eating as compared to some other forms of consumption, feelings of guilt, for example.

Warde (2013) defines eating as a particularly complex social practice, a *compound practice*, i.e. a combination of four component integrative practices: supplying of food (nutrition), cooking, organisation of meal occasions (etiquette) and aesthetic judgements of taste (gastronomy). Warde points out how eating is a generally disorganised and weakly regulated practice (no clear standards exist). As exceptions, he mentions traditional eating in France, the Slow Food movement, and eating out as a treat. When viewed as a product of history, eating is a practice that has changed enormously over time, and even currently differs significantly between cultures and geographical areas. From a long-term historical point of view, eating practices — similar to many other social practices — are in a constant process of change.

As regards the practices of eating meat, the reason I more frequently use the term “meat eating” rather than “meat consumption” is primarily threefold. Firstly, “consumption” in general can be a more ideological term than “eating”, on the positive side seen as supporting the functioning of economies, and on the negative side seen as contributing to the destroying of nature. Secondly, “consumption”, similar to “consumer”,[17] infers materialistic values that are potentially not beneficial as regards sustainability-related communication (Crompton, 2016, see also Section 3.3.2). Thirdly, Wilk (2018) warns against using abstractions — and “consumption” is an abstraction — in connection with attempts for radical societal change towards sustainability.[18] However, I do refer to “consumption” at times, especially when referring to the quantifiable amounts of meat being produced and eaten.[19] Additionally, I refer to “eating animals”. In general in this book, I reserve this last expression to contexts where the (often hidden) animal origin is the main point, for example, in connection with strategic ignorance.

To note, most of the concepts or topics discussed in this chapter will be relevant to meat-eating related practices. Therefore, at certain points, there will either be an unnumbered subsection entitled *Meat-eating related practices and...* in which the links from the concepts to meat will be explored, or the meat-eating related issues will be discussed directly in the main discussion.[20]

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[17] In opposition to “consumer”, “citizen” implies more sustainability-facilitating values, such as co-responsibility. See more on values in Section 3.3.2.

[18] According to Wilk, abstraction — making abstract concepts into personified reality, e.g. “the market” — can make arguments less convincing to the lay person. Using more concrete and real terms, such as “weather”, are closer to the everyday than more abstract and virtual terms, such as “climate”. Weather is experienced, climate is not.

[19] This is especially so in Chapter 2.

3.2 Modifications to the elements of social practices

In this section, I will explain how I have adapted the model of social practices contained in Shove et al. (2012). Detailed explanations will follow, but Figure 3.3 provides first an illustration.

Compared to the simplified model of practices shown in Figure 3.3b, and originating from Shove et al. (2012), Figure 3.3a still maintains the one-to-one connections between elements, as it moves from two dimensions to three dimensions. However, as modifications, it includes a fourth element, *the body*, and additionally, *meanings* has been replaced by *general understandings*, a term representing a component of practices, originally from Schatzki (2002), and developed further by Welch and Warde (2017). Moreover, Figure 3.3c illustrates the coupling between general understandings[21] and *cognitive frames*, importantly connecting practices to discourses. As Figure 3.3c illustrates, values, emotions, and knowledge connect to both general understandings (on the side of practices) and cognitive frames (on the side of discourses), as discussed later.

3.2.1 A brief overview of Shove et al. (2012)

The 2012 book by Elizabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson has become a classic in social practice theory literature in a short time, even though it has also received some criticism (see e.g. Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016; Welch & Warde, 2015). Apart from its approach in addressing the crucially important policy side, its emphasis on certain old and new aspects of social practice theories themselves have in part helped to solidify some parts of the rather diverse field. The main new theoretical contribution of Shove and colleagues lies in the dynamics of practices and in emphasizing materialities as an element of social practices. The main points that Shove and colleagues highlight include the following:

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[20] This is, in particular, the case in Section 3.3.3.2.

[21] Schatzki (2002) distinguishes between "practical understandings", more specific to certain individual practices, and "general understandings", shared between practices.

Figure 3.3: Social practices and their connections to discourses

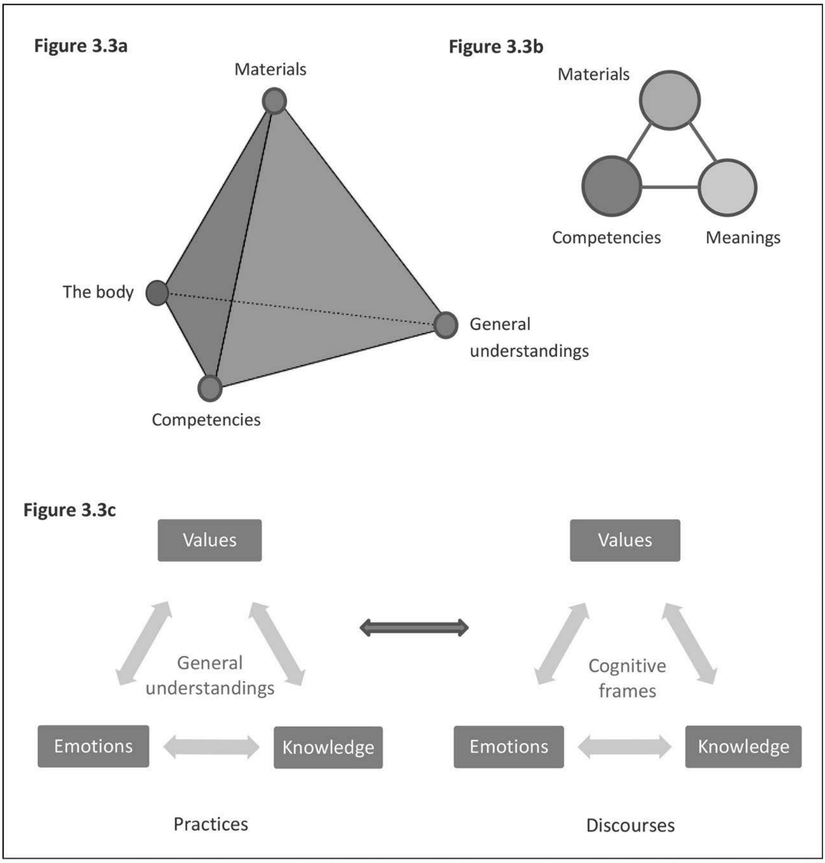
Figure 3.3a
Materials
The body
General understandings
Competencies
Figure 3.3b
Materials
Competencies
Meanings
Figure 3.3c
Values
General understandings
Emotions
Knowledge
Practices
Values
Cognitive frames
Emotions
Knowledge
Discourses

Source: Figure 3.3a is inspired by Shove et al. (2012), Figure 3.3b is based on Shove et al. (2012), and Figure 3.3c is by author.

- Practices are composed of elements, which in the simplified model[22] are comprised of meanings, materials and competences
- Materiality is key to social practices
- People are carriers of practices, although not passively so
- The distinction between practice-as-entity and practice-as-performance is central

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[22] The model contained in Shove et al. (2012) is simplified in order to focus on the dynamics of practices, on stability and change. See Figure 3.3b.

- Practices emerge, persist, change and disappear, and this largely happens through the links between different practice elements being made, remade or broken
- Stability of practices only comes from faithful repetitive performances of practices and is therefore always provisional
- The unit of enquiry for research and/or policymaking are practices, not individuals.[23]

As regards issues I focus on in this conceptual structure, Shove and colleagues do recognize both agency and emotions as residing in social practices. They talk about the relevance to many sustainability-related policy issues such as climate change of profound changes in social practices, *including* dominant worldviews and discourses. Further, they argue that the ABC model is a political position downplaying the role that governments often have in maintaining unsustainability. However, they do not focus specifically on values, more obviously not at an individual level, but also not specifically at a societal level.[24] This is likely to be partially a result of their aim of overturning the dominant behaviour change policy framework for which the *value-action gap*, for example, would be a key question. In recognizing discourses as relevant to changing practices, for example, when "dominant discourses crumble" (Shove et al., 2012:58), they touch upon my concern with connecting practices and discourses more tightly.

To speak more specifically of the process of change: as stated above, the way Shove and colleagues see practices changing is mainly through reconnecting elements. In fact, while practices are in a constant state of change, elements may be more stable. Shove and colleagues make a distinction between a proto-practice and a disintegrated practice, in both of which relevant elements exist without being linked. In the former, they are not yet connected, and in the latter, they are no longer connected. The point is that elements may be replaced, and links remade one by one, and during this process, the practice may not go through any sudden and radical change as such, but still in the end, it may be radically different from what existed before. The example Shove and colleagues use is the change from horse-driven carriages to automobiles, while arguing that the only truly new element *during this change* was the petrol engine itself, and the skills for its maintenance and repair.[25]

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[23] Many of these points come from earlier practice theory literature, such as Reckwitz (2002), e.g. the carrier concept and seeing practices as consisting of elements. The main unit of enquiry was seen already earlier as practices. And the original idea for the formulation of practice-as-entity and practice-as-performance goes back to Schatzki (1996). However, Shove et al. (2012) have further enforced these positions, and brought them together in a digestible whole.

[24] However, in other writing, e.g. in Shove (2003), the meanings of value concepts such as comfort, cleanliness and convenience are a central focus, with the message being that the meanings have been, and can be redefined, and that diversity in meanings would be better for sustainability than sticking to the current resource-intensive Western meanings of these value concepts.

In the following sections, and later in this chapter, my focus is necessarily selective. I discuss materialities mainly from the point of view of power and agency, relating to stability and change. Similarly, as regards competencies, I focus on their connection to practical consciousness, as the counterpart to discursive consciousness (relevant to discourses, as well as change). Finally, I discuss the suggested additional fourth element to the simplified model of social practices in Shove et al. (2012), i.e. the body, largely concerning the ways the body connects to emotions and values, which are a key focus for me, together with the element related to meanings (which I expand to "general understandings").

To recap what Shove and colleagues see as constituting the streamlined elements (as shown in Figure 3.3b): *materials* to them consist of objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the human body itself; *competencies* include background knowledge and understanding, know-how, skills, and practical consciousness; and *meanings* consist of meanings of practices as such, but also emotions and motivational knowledge, ideas and aspirations.[26]

Finally, it is noteworthy that I refer to "behaviour" sometimes seemingly in the same way as I refer to "practices". Shove (2010), however, warns against such usage, as practice theories are specifically *not* behavioural theories. She sees the two concepts theoretically in opposition to each other. However, I see "behaviour" in most cases as the observable performances of practices, the tip of the iceberg in Figure 3.2 (and in Spurling et al., 2013; Welch, 2016), whereas normally when referring to "practices", I refer to the whole body of the iceberg, the practice as an entity. With this distinction in mind, it seems justifiable to speak of both "behaviour" and "practices" in certain contexts.

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[25] Later on, of course many more elements changed in the new practice of car driving.

[26] These lists may not be exhaustive.

3.2.2 Adding emphasis – Distributed agentive power

Section 3.6 will return to *agentive power*,[27] but in this subsection, I want to clarify how I see agentive power in relation to the elements of social practices as depicted in Figure 3.3a.

Even though Shove et al. (2012), in line with practice theoretical arguments, seek to decentre individual humans and bring out practices as the defining unit of social life, they see agentive power as part of practices in several ways, although the reader needs to search fairly attentively for the instances where the topic is discussed. Further, and notably, change is not specifically attributed to agentive power.

Firstly, Shove and colleagues see agentive power distributed within practices. They acknowledge that human agency exists, and it is:

> …loosely but unavoidably contained with a universe of possibilities defined by […] complexes of practice. It is in this sense that practices make agency possible, a conclusion that is not at all incompatible with the related point that practices do not exist unless recurrently enacted by real life human beings.
> Shove et al. (2012:126)

Humans as carriers of practices are therefore not passive, and in fact, practices themselves are "active" in a way, and form "inherently dynamic" integrations of elements. Practices do not exist without human action, and humans could not act effectively without practices.

Secondly, Shove and colleagues emphasize the material element of practices, and go some way towards Actor Network Theory (e.g. Latour, 2000), in assigning things and materials an important role. Therefore, Shove and colleagues are "broadly sympathetic to the view that agencies and competencies are distributed between things and people" (Shove et al., 2012:10). However, instead of giving materiality a larger agentive role in the way Actor Network Theory does, Shove and colleagues integrate materiality tightly as part of social practices.

Discussing social practice theories in connection with sustainability, Sahakian and Wilhite (2014) refer to agentive power distributed across different *pillars of practices*, comprised of the body (including embodied physical and mental knowledge), the material world, and the social world (social context, including social norms and values, institutions and legal frameworks). On the one hand, the deeper a practice (or a habit) is fixed on these pillars, the harder it is to change, and on the other hand, when change (intentional or not) takes place in more than one pillar, it is more likely that a change in practices will be persistent and successful. Importantly, Sahakian and Wilhite do not take issue with practices being in a constant state of change (as Shove and colleagues do), their focus is mostly on *purposive* change. Crucially for them, all the pillars have *distributed agentive power*. This type of agentive power is what makes purposive change in practices possible, as changes in just one pillar are usually not enough.

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[27] A useful definition of agentive power for this book: "the capability or power to be the source and originator of acts" (Sahakian and Wilhite, 2014: 28, with reference to Ortner, 1989). I see *agency* as agentive power of human actors, implying some form of (potential) intention and planning, whereas non-human actors (including "things") can have agentive power, rather than agency, as they do not intend and plan to use such power (artificial intelligence excluded).

Shove et al. (2012) perceive practice elements somewhat differently from Sahakian and Wilhite (2014), and the foci of these two approaches to change are different as well. Nonetheless, the idea of distributed agentive power remains relevant in both, and this is the idea I wish to build on, emphasizing, along with Sahakian and Wilhite, the importance of such power for purposive change.

Meat-eating related practices and material agency[28]

In line with the idea of material things having agentive power, there can be little doubt that Mark Post's cultivated meat patty from 2013, or the cultivated meat products from Memphis Meats since then, or the plant-based Impossible Burger,[29] can all be seen as having agentive power: "the mere idea [of cultivated meat] is enough to stimulate thought on our present and future meat consumption" (van der Weele & Driessen, 2013:653) when normally such thoughts tend to be kept hidden through strategic ignorance (see later in Section 3.3.3). Expectations are performative (Magneson Chiles, 2013), and so, expectations of the new meats have agentive power. In addition to affecting our minds already before their physical existence — as mere ideas of materialities — these new meats have now started to reorganise the food industry. Conventional meat companies are now taking alternatives to meat seriously, as competitors, and as something to invest in. Moreover, plant-based meats, such as the Impossible Burger, already existing materialities, are currently being eaten more or less consciously as something actually called "plant-based meat" by thousands of Americans. Due to the marketing and media attention, most customers in the restaurants serving the Impossible Burger would likely be aware of what they are eating. Further, these material things have indeed entered various discourses, not only in the Western public discourses but also beyond that, even though on a smaller scale, as mentioned in Chapter 2.[30] Most importantly perhaps, these new meats have already significantly contributed to questioning the future of intensive animal farming (van der Weele, 2017). Although material things lack "intelligibility, intentionality and affectivity", they can have performative power to influence the ways practices unfold (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016:66)[31] — in the form of both expectations and actual materialities.

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[28] As mentioned earlier, these Chapter 3 sections exploring meat-eating related practices are unnumbered.

[29] The Impossible Burger is a product from Impossible Foods, see https://impossiblefoods.com. For Memphis Meats, see http://www.memphismeats.com.

3.2.3 Adding a fourth element – The body

Shove et al. (2012) include the human body as part of the material elements of practices, so in fact, the body is included. However, it is given very little weight, possibly on purpose, to keep to the principle of decentring the individual. Similarly, Shove and colleagues seem wary of incorporating Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*[32] (idem:5). It is hard to see habitus residing in any particular element of practices conceptualised by Shove and colleagues, but rather partly in all of them: in materials (which include the body), in competencies (which include skills and practical consciousness), and meanings (which include other aspects often seen as part of the habitus, such as aspirations and values). In contrast, Sahakian and Wilhite (2014) explicitly bring out the significance of habitus. To them, it resides in the body pillar of practices and plays a crucial role in the habitual and routine performances of practices.

Moving back to Shove et al. (2012), when combining "body" with other "materials", Shove and colleagues, not only decentre individual humans but appear to nearly exclude them entirely from the world of practices. However, all of the three practice elements in Shove et al. (2012) have bodily connections. I, therefore, argue that, *without* having to involve the concept of habitus as such, the "body" works well as a fourth element of practices together with the conceptualisation of practice elements by Shove and colleagues. Since in a tetrahedron all corner points are connected, in Figure 3.3a, the body is also connected to the other three practice elements, as it is in actual practices. The body connects to competencies via skills, embodied knowledge and practical consciousness, to general understandings via values, emotions, and discursive knowledge (including meanings), and to materials via the close connections between human bodies and materials (technologies, infrastructures, things, including food) that are made for and used by human bodies.[33] The body is involved in some way in the performances of all practices. No social practices exist without human action and experience. Including our physical and mental capabilities, our bodies enable us and restrict us in our practice performances; the body is an essential part of them. The body cannot, therefore, be sensibly omitted as a relevant component of practices, even if it may draw unhelpful attention to individuals in a practice theoretical scheme that tries to focus away from the individual.

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[30] See Section 2.2.2.

[31] I would equate performative power with agentive power in this context.

[32] Habitus is understood here as various dispositions mediating thought and action, and acquired through past experiences (Sahakian and Wilhite, 2014).

[33] Importantly, I would include nature or non-human animals in materials only to the (unfortunate) extent that they are objects to be used by humans, such as "meat animals". This brings the conflict between humans and the natural world in view. On the other hand, perhaps non-

However, reflexivity, discursive consciousness or conscious decisions (bodily processes as well) are not involved in the performances of all practices. In fact, they are not involved in *most* routine performances of practices. I will return to the theme of reflexivity and discursive consciousness in more detail in Section 3.4.1.

3.2.4 Replacing an element – General understandings

When streamlining the elements of practices, Shove et al. (2012) give "meanings" a large role. One of the practice elements, meanings relate to the "significance of participation" (idem:23) in practices, and as said, they also connect to motivational knowledge and emotions: "states of emotion have been folded into 'meaning'" (idem:121). It is clear from the discussion by Shove and colleagues that competencies do not include conscious mental activities, but meanings might do so, on occasion at least. Further, Shove and colleagues do not discuss values, but to the extent that they are properties of practices (see later in this chapter), they would be likely to connect to meanings as well.

Welch and Warde (2017) elaborate on the concept of *general understandings.*[34] To Welch and Warde, general understandings account for "how very general ideas are incorporated into practice", thereby accounting for meanings. They are "experienced, articulated and negotiated in […] embodied activity", thereby connecting to the body. Moreover, they "inform and shape practices, and in turn […] are themselves conditioned by practices" (idem:195), thereby able to be conceptualised as an actual element of practices. Finally, they include values, and they are connected to emotions: "values — a particular kind of general understanding — combine conceptual, pre-reflexive and affective components" (idem:189).

In most of the above, the role of general understandings is similar to how Shove et al. (2012) conceptualise meanings. However, general understandings are conceived as a broader and therefore arguably more advantageous concept by Welch and Warde (2017). Importantly for the connection between practices and discourses (discussed further in Section 3.4), general understandings also connect different

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human animals could be thought of as engaging in social practices, and in such cases, the "body" would include the bodies of non-human animals.

[34] As mentioned earlier, the concept comes originally form Schatzki (2002) who distinguishes between practical and general understandings.

practices to each other as they can “inform multiple practices”, and help us, therefore, understand how both closely and distantly related practices “borrow from and change one another” (idem:195). In fact, Shove et al. (2012) see meanings connecting practices as well.[35] This similar function further supports incorporating general understandings into Figure 3.3a and replacing meanings with them.

3.3 Concepts linking to general understandings

In this section, I will first continue on the topic of meanings, as it remains important for social practices and change towards sustainability. Meanings carry particular relevance to the issue of new meats, discussed below. In the two sections thereafter, I will focus on values and emotions, and to some extent on knowledge.[36] These are all concepts that link to general understandings as an element of social practices and are therefore necessarily part of the discussion in this conceptual structure.

3.3.1 Changing meanings and sustainability

Shove et al. (2012) argue that while changing competencies often takes time, meanings as forms of association can emerge, change and travel far and fast. Therefore, while Shove and colleagues emphasize the stability of practice *elements* in general — as opposed to practices themselves which have a natural tendency to change — they see meanings as often delicate, and not necessarily stable. As Lehtonen (2000:117) states, meanings are ”always temporary, bound to a certain time, place and context”.

Examples given by Shove and colleagues on natural change — natural, in the sense that it has taken place through other changes in practices or societies, and has not been purposive — but still rather radical change in meanings over time include car driving (from luxurious to the everyday), home baking (from a necessity to a hobby), and writing with ink (from normal to special).

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[35] As an example, they discuss how the meaning of being overweight connects practices such as shopping, exercising and eating (Shove et al., 2012:113).

[36] Knowledge is connected to general understandings in Figure 3.3c, in the same way as values and emotions. Theories of embodied knowledge also connect knowledge directly to emotions and the body (see Ignatov, 2007). Knowledge will be discussed in this section implicitly or explicitly when relevant. For example, knowledge is connected to meanings, and ignoring knowledge is relevant to strategic ignorance. My focus is on purposive change, and while knowledge is important for practices as such, it is most challenging for change to the extent that its existence might or might not produce seemingly beneficial or necessary change; hence the connection of knowledge to strategic ignorance, for example, is relevant.

A further example on meaning changing naturally, and, in fact, rather rapidly is how the meaning of misplaced plastic has in the last few years shifted from simple, but perhaps ugly "litter" to something "pervasive and sinister" and a "source of contagion". This is argued to have taken place due to the realisation — first among scientists and then among the publics — of the ubiquitousness of plastic microbeads, initially, in various cosmetic and cleaning products, and subsequently, in nature: "the realisation that microbeads were pouring down millions of shower drains was a key moment in the public turn against plastic".[37] As a consequence, in less than five years, a global revolt against plastic, in discourses, in action, and at governmental levels, has developed.

However, Shove and colleagues emphasize that meanings can also have their persistent lives. Meanings can even swap practices — such as the meaning of being chauffeured in horse carriages to being chauffeured in automobiles in the early days of the car. Meanings can reappear as well — such as cycling in certain locations, for example in the Netherlands, where it was reborn in around the 1980s, after decades of a minor role, as the normal method of moving around.

Further, meanings can be changed on purpose. On this, Shove and colleagues give two examples: Nordic Walking and Cool Biz, as explained below.

Nordic Walking was popularised in Finland in the 1990s. For it to become popular, "walking with 'sticks' had to be disassociated from meanings of frailty and somehow connected to concepts of vitality and wellbeing" (Shove et al., 2012:53). The manufacturers succeeded in this by using two established narratives, one of personal health, and the other of fresh air, nature and outdoor life. Although the transformation of Nordic Walking into an internationally popular form of exercise was a success, Shove and colleagues maintain that such a process tends to be uncertain and local, constrained and enabled by existing contexts. It can also take time, as cultural meanings are often slow to change.

Nordic Walking was originally only partly about public health, and partly about selling new equipment. As an example of policymakers taking action to reduce CO_2 emissions, Shove and colleagues discuss the Japanese Cool Biz and Warm Biz campaigns in the 2000s. Although not purposefully applying practice theories, these campaigns were precisely about changing elements of practices, most importantly, by changing meanings — and, thereby changing behaviour as well. Efforts were made to change the meaning of normal office clothing in order to affect the material technologies (how much air conditioning and heating was needed in offices, and increasing the acceptable range of temperatures) and competencies (how people dressed for the office, and how facilities management handled the temperature control). In less than five years, for example, "running air-conditioning 'cold' and wearing a tie and jacket in the summer turned from being a normal to an exceptional thing to do" for many (Shove et al., 2012:158).[38]

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[37] See https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/13/the-plastic-backlash-whats-behind-our-sudden-rage-and-will-it-make-a-difference, an in-depth article by Stephen Buranyi in the online Guardian, 13 November 2018.

For achieving sustainability, Shove and colleagues argue that the focus of policymakers might usefully shift towards facilitating the breaking down of old unsustainable practices, including redefining meanings of certain "bad" elements of practices, such as the meaning of "comfort". They contend that this may seem radical, but maintain that policy methods focusing on practice elements such as meanings have long been used in public health policies.

Meat-eating related practices and changing meanings

There are many ways to understand the meaning of meat, including the more literal, the more symbolic, and the meaning regarding what is normal or not normal.[39]

As regards the literal meaning, etymologically the English word "meat" (from Old English "mete") is related to the word "meal", referring generally to food. Other old languages (Old High German, Old Saxon, Old Islandic and Gothic) have similar histories with the word. At some point, however, a "meal" (by then, ground grain) became perceived as incomplete without animal flesh (Marder, 2016). In some other languages, the corresponding word for meat may have originally referred to "flesh as food", such as in ancient Greek or Latin. Only from around 1300, however, has the English word "meat" referred to "flesh as food". In light of history then, the literal meaning of "meat" has changed over time, and is likely to change again, even if not intentionally, as meanings do change.[40]

In fact, and as mentioned in Chapter 2, due to the meat crisis, there are current efforts to change the meaning of "meat". Promoters of the new meats (companies, organisations, individuals) are keen on expanding "meat" to cover cultivated meat and plant-based meat,[41] whereas the conventional meat industry is keen on restricting "meat" to conventional animal-based meat. There is, therefore, a fight going on about what meat is — together with other, up-to-now animal-derived products such as milk — and the fight has extended to the courts in several countries.[42] The fight can be seen as being over profits, but it can also be seen as a fight over power in discourse — for example, who gets to decide what meat, or milk, is and is not? It is, in this sense, also a fight over power in society.[43]

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[38] For more details and discussion of Cool Biz and Warm Biz, see Shove et al. (2012).

[39] I introduced the 4 Ns — Normal, Natural, Necessary and Nice — often associated with eating meat, already in Chapter 2. I will discuss them again in connection with strategic ignorance later in Section 3.3.3, as the 4 Ns are usually seen as rationalizations for a practice that causes cognitive dissonance (see Piazza et al., 2015). I will discuss them again in Section 3.5.3 in connection with the ideology of carnism.

[40] Considering sustainability and purposive change, a future meaning for "meat" could even be something like "protein food resembling animal flesh".

[41] This expansion of course covers the very name "plant-based meat", used, for example, extensively in the book The future of meat without animals, edited by Donaldson and Carter (2016).

Figure 3.4 illustrates the new meats and the older options on a two-dimensional scale, measuring conventional meat character — various sensual experiences of "meatiness" that has until now defined whether something is considered meat or not — and the amount of animal protein in the food in question. The latter has until now been seen as important for what meat is. Looking at the issue as in Figure 3.4, it becomes easier to appreciate that, firstly, the definitions for the literal meaning of meat are not necessarily clear-cut, and secondly, that variety and change in the meaning is quite possible, perhaps even including the possibility that pulses could eventually be considered enough meat-like to be enjoyed as "meat". Further, I have included "hybrids" as a potential cross-over between cultivated and plant-based meat, or any other combination, for that matter.[44]

One popular name for cultivated meat has been "clean meat". This term was created in 2016 by the Good Food Institute, an organisation involved in advancing the development of cultivated and new plant-based meats. "Clean meat" has been seen as a term that is catching on: "clean meat, clean conscience".[45] Some instances have extended "clean meat" to cover also the new plant-based meats.[46] Adopting "clean meat" as a larger category consisting of cultivated and plant-based meats could further erase the strict definition of meat, and facilitate a transformation away from conventional meat eating. Another recent term for cultivated meat, "cell-based" meat, when compared to "plant-based" and "animal-based" meat, might also have some agentive power to make different meats more equal and to narrow the psychological distance between the production and consumption of any kind of meat.[47] Ferrari (2016) notes that cultivated meat promises to bring the meat pro-

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[42] One significant court case has been with plant-based milk product manufacturer Oatly and the EU, see e.g. https://theconversation.com/vegan-dairy-products-face-eu-ban-from-using-milk-cartons-and-yoghurt-pots-and-uk-could-be-next-153564

[43] See e.g. Wilson (2015) for a discussion on political discourse.

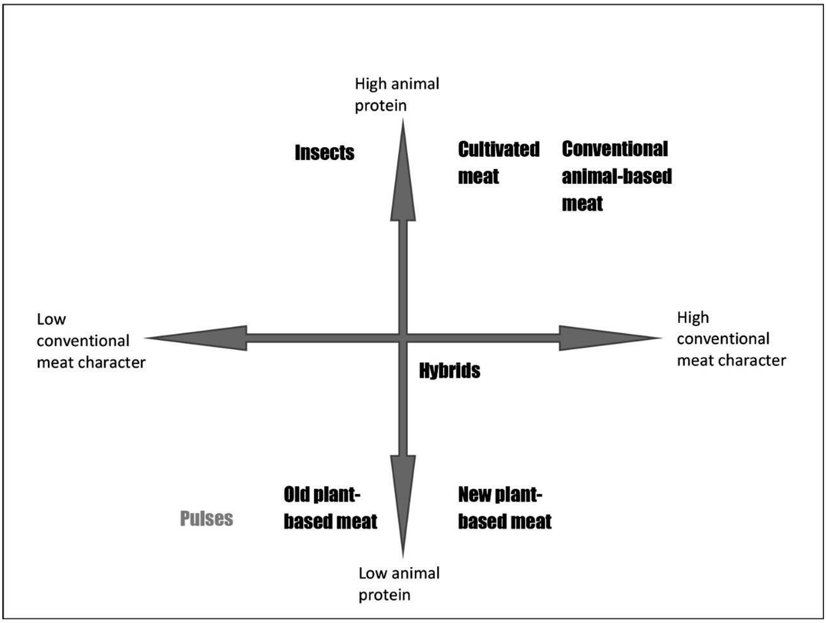
[44] Hybrid products with cultivated meat have been discussed. In fact, hybrids already exist as a combination of animal-based meat (conventional meat or insects) and plant-based protein in certain processed products.

[45] See https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/sep/20/lab-grown-meat-fish-feed-the-world-frankenmeat-startups in the online Guardian on 20 September 2017.

[46] See e.g. https://a16z.com/2016/11/23/meatless-meats-clean-meats/, a podcast from 2016, or https://www.cbinsights.com/research/future-of-meat-industrial-farming/ from 16 January 2019.

[47] The term "cultivated meat" is one that the Good Food Institute decided to try to advance in 2019 as the best term so far. See https://www.gfi.org/cultivatedmeat.

Figure 3.4: Mapping old and new meats


High animal protein
Insects
Cultivated meat
Conventional animal-based meat
Low conventional meat character
High conventional meat character
Hybrids
Pulses
Old plant-based meat
New plant-based meat
Low animal protein

Source: Figure by author.

duction process (this time in shiny copper bioreactors) again to the midst of people, as it used to be, especially in rural settings. Animals, on the other hand, would no longer be present at all, at least if such production took place on an industrial scale.[48,49]

The idea (a conceptual metaphor) of a *continuum* (see Jallinoja et al., 2016) of different ways to eat meat is related to the literal meaning of meat as well. I see the meat continuum covering every meatway from a strict vegan (eating only pulses and/or plant-based meat) to someone who restricts their "meat" to large amounts of conventional animal-based meat. The bulk of the continuum consists of different

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[48] The envisioned "pig in the backyard" production of cultivated meat would be different, however: small-scale, local, even at-home production. The animals would be very present (see van der Weele & Driessen, 2013).

[49] A pioneering company Solar Foods promises to make even plants unnecessary for food production, with their "farm-free" fermented protein called Solein, produced directly from CO_2, water and electricity. See e.g. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/08/lab-grown-food-destroy-farming-save-planet.

versions of flexitarians, eating conventional meat only occasionally (strong flexitarians), or more often than not (weak flexitarians).[50] The important point Jallinoja et al. (2016) see in such a way of conceptualising different ways of eating meat is that it can decrease the polarization between conventional meat eaters and those that prefer to eat less or no conventional meat. Further, it can help flexitarianism be an acceptable and positive way to eat much less conventional meat. With a continuum kind of thinking, all ways to eat meat become only points on the continuum. I would add that moving along the continuum — as a *journey* — into whichever direction, is easier to see as normal. So for example, some months one may eat almost no conventional meat, and some other months a bit more. When such processes become normalised, and less moralized, they become easier. In the end, it can become simpler to eat less conventional animal-based meat, even radically less.

Applying the practice element thinking from Shove et al. (2012) to the above, normalising the new meats as material elements, and normalising flexitarianism as a new competence element of meat-eating practices, can be important for change. Thereby Jallinoja et al. (2016) call for a new "bean-eating practice" to develop in Europe, with elements of "positive meanings, appropriate materials, and skills and competences" (idem:6) being facilitated by change agents such as NGOs, politicians, celebrity chefs and teachers of home economics. This can be seen as reanimating an old bean-eating practice, but importantly, with new skills, and new positive symbolic meanings. Jallinoja and colleagues emphasize that new associations are necessary between plant-based proteins (including pulses) and "festive, fulfilling, energizing and pleasurable food", instead of the old associations between plant-based proteins as a choice for vegetarians and vegans only.[51] Moreover, the old meaning of animal-based meat as the only "festive, fulfilling and satisfying" protein food needs to be challenged.[52]

Further on the links between literal and symbolic meanings of meat, Donaldson (2016a) argues that calling the new plant-based protein products "meat" (or "milk" or "eggs") may on its own help change the more symbolic meanings as well.

On the other hand, the conventional meat industry may indeed wish to keep the more literal meaning of meat as stable as possible, also because that may help keep the (arguably rather outdated) symbolic meanings intact. The image of happy cows helps to keep the origin of conventional meat in the dark, and fuels the distance between production and consumption, which is beneficial to the industry. Similarly, promoting meat as healthy and symbolizing power is favourable to industry growth.

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[50] This continuum is discussed again in Section 3.5.3 in relation to ideologies.

[51] On the same issue, Schyver and Smith (2005) argue that significant improvements in the image of soy could increase the human consumption of soy.

[52] There would seem to be an inherent problem, however, with using the word "festive" for something to be eaten regularly (pulses with a new image). However, meat has retained the meaning of "festive", although in many societies, it is currently eaten on a daily basis. In strong flexitarianism, of course, "festive" for meat is entirely appropriate, as meat is something eaten only rarely in this meatway.

Lastly, and as already discussed in Chapter 2, the symbolic meaning of *not* eating meat has changed remarkably even in more recent history. For example, some years after vegetarianism spread from the United Kingdom to the United States in the early 19th century, an image of vegetarians as "frail, weak and sexually impotent" (Shprintzen, 2011:9) was popularised in the US media, supposedly as an attack for vegetarianism's role in social reform. By the end of the 19th century, however, partly due to larger changes in society, and partly to the movement itself, vegetarianism had become connected to physical strength, fitness, athletics, individualism, and masculinity. Similar strong and relatively fast changes in symbolic meanings may be possible in today's societies as well. The pace of change in technologies is much faster today than it has ever been. Perhaps, meanings can change faster too. In any case, one pathway to change may be through the important value and emotion connections discussed further in the following sections.

3.3.2 The relevance of values, value priorities and value dispositions

In the following, I will outline several value-related concepts, using arguments especially from social psychology, but also from social practice theories. Interdisciplinarity is necessary in this context, as practice theories alone do not offer enough material for the discussion, especially as regards purposive change towards sustainable practices. I will first consider the emphasis given to values relating to sustainability. After that, I will discuss values more specifically in connection with social practices. The attention given to values in this chapter is fairly extensive. I see it, however, rather necessarily so, considering the relevance of values to several key concepts in the framework built in this chapter (general understandings and cognitive frames, along with strategic ignorance), and their argued importance regarding a transformation towards sustainability. Crompton (2016:219) notes that, despite there being a substantial body of research "establishing the importance of values in motivating public expressions of concern about social and environmental causes", this particular literature is often overlooked.

Connecting values to the above section on meanings, symbolic meanings are about values as well, as a symbolic meaning refers to something valued or not valued. Values are complex and, similar to some other issues related to cognition, their role and functioning are not yet fully understood.[53] Schwartz and Bardi

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[53] The complexity of values and value systems is evident, for example, when referring to a 2017 social psychology monograph *The psychology of human values* by professor Gregory Maio.

(2001:269) define values as "desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives". In more abstract contexts, such as regarding the overall importance of protecting nature, attitudes — evaluating something positively or negatively — are, in fact, very similar to values (Maio, 2011).[54]

Finally, I want to emphasize that the societal level as regards values is likely to be more important for a transformation towards sustainability than the individual level would be. However, the individual level is significant as well and is likely to be greatly influenced by the societal level, in terms of discourses, institutions, laws and ideologies. Most value related studies in social psychology refer to the level of the individual.

3.3.2.1 Values and sustainability

According to the Schwartz basic value theory (see e.g. Schwartz, 2012), *basic human values* (see the value map in Figure 3.5) are shared across all people and cultures. Further, among these, *self-transcending values* — showing in Figure 3.5 as *universalism* and *benevolence* — are hierarchically higher across cultures than *self-enhancing values*, such as *achievement*, *power* and (partly) *hedonism*.[55] According to Schwartz (2012), in the cross-cultural value systems, "hierarchically higher" values are considered more important to the functioning of society.[56] Schwartz notes further that the social function of values is to "motivate and control the behaviour of group members" (idem:14, original reference to Parsons, 1951). More specifically:

> The high importance of benevolence values (ranked 1st) derives from the centrality of positive, cooperative social relations in the family, the main setting for initial and continuing value acquisition. Benevolence values provide the internalized motivational base for such relations. They are reinforced and modeled early and repeatedly. Universalism values (2nd) also contribute to positive social relations. They are functionally important primarily when group members must relate to those with whom they do not readily identify, in schools, work-places, etc. [...] Behavior based on these values is intrinsically motivated. It satisfies individual needs without harming others. Hence, it rarely threatens positive social relations.[57]
> Schwartz (2012:15)

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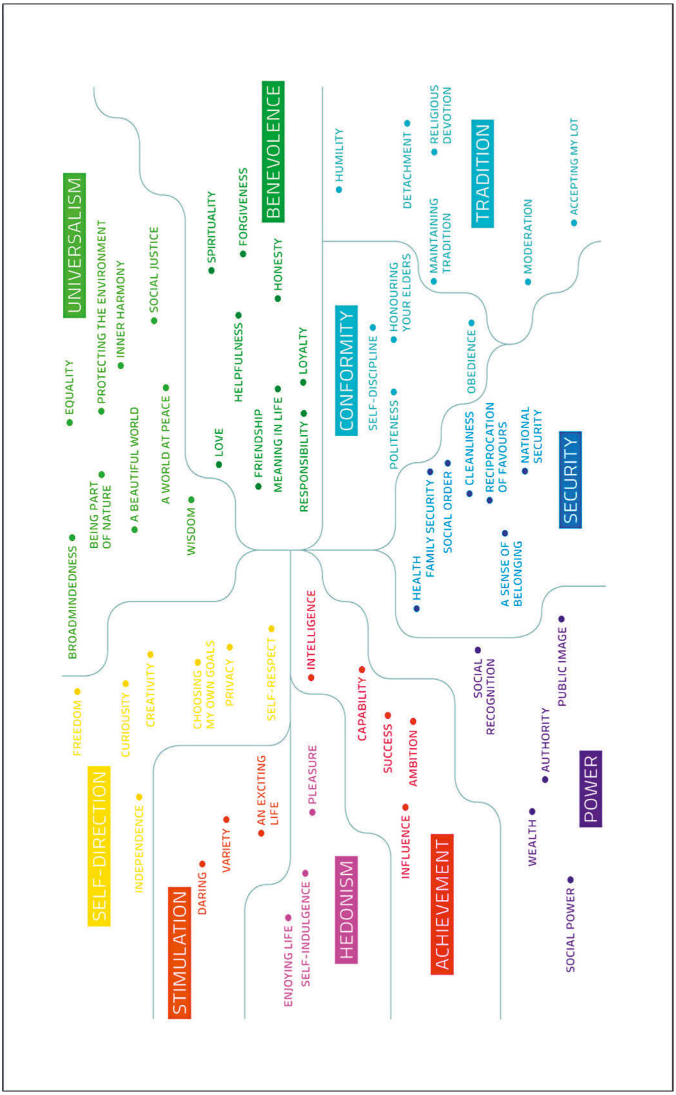
[54] In addition to attitudes, *norms* are another practical application of values.

[55] In the Schwartz value circle (see e.g. Schwartz, 2012:9), hedonism falls partly on self-enhancing values and partly on values grouped as *openness to change*.

[56] Irrespective of the social desirability of survey answers, see Schwartz et al. (1997).

[57] A third group of values sometimes seen together with benevolence and universalism is *self-direction values* which "foster creativity, motivate innovation, and promote coping with challenges" (Schwartz, 2012:15), and which are also intrinsically motivated and socially beneficial.

Figure 3.5: The structure of basic human values shared across cultures


UNIVERSALISM
EQUALITY
PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT
INNER HARMONY
SOCIAL JUSTICE
BROADMINDEDNESS
BEING PART OF NATURE
A BEAUTIFUL WORLD
A WORLD AT PEACE
WISDOM
BENEVOLENCE
SPIRITUALITY
FORGIVENESS
HELPFULNESS
HONESTY
LOVE
FRIENDSHIP
MEANING IN LIFE
RESPONSIBILITY
LOYALTY
CONFORMITY
HUMILITY
SELF-DISCIPLINE
POLITENESS
HONOURING YOUR ELDERS
OBEDIENCE
TRADITION
DETACHMENT
RELIGIOUS DEVOTION
MAINTAINING TRADITION
MODERATION
ACCEPTING MY LOT
SECURITY
HEALTH
FAMILY SECURITY
SOCIAL ORDER
CLEANLINESS
RECIPROCATION OF FAVOURS
NATIONAL SECURITY
A SENSE OF BELONGING
SELF-DIRECTION
FREEDOM
CURIOUSITY
CREATIVITY
CHOOSING MY OWN GOALS
PRIVACY
SELF-RESPECT
INDEPENDENCE
INTELLIGENCE
STIMULATION
DARING
VARIETY
AN EXCITING LIFE
HEDONISM
PLEASURE
ENJOYING LIFE
SELF-INDULGENCE
ACHIEVEMENT
CAPABILITY
SUCCESS
AMBITION
INFLUENCE
POWER
SOCIAL RECOGNITION
PUBLIC IMAGE
AUTHORITY
WEALTH
SOCIAL POWER

Source: Holmes et al. (2011), based on the Schwartz basic value theory (Schwartz, 1992).

Note: The structure is based on data from over 80 countries and 65,000 people.

Maio (2017:32) describes these two groups of basic values as follows: universalism involves "understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all", and benevolence involves "preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact".[58]

To explain the structure of values in Figure 3.5, the further apart two values are on the map, the less likely they are to be prioritized at the same time. And vice versa, if two values are close to each other on the map, they are more likely to be prioritized at the same time. This is not to say that values placed far away from each other on the map *could not* be prioritized at the same time. It is, however, less likely that they are. Further, it may be that such somewhat opposing values cause conflict within an individual, or a society if they *cannot* be prioritized at the same time (e.g. in connection with eating meat, see later in this chapter), or they cause a conflict in a larger context if prioritizing them simultaneously does not work in reality (e.g. prioritizing material overconsumption at the same time as nature protection).

What is also relevant to note about the value map in Figure 3.5 is that, although at the individual level there is much variation between prioritized values, the *structure* of the map, i.e. how close or far two values are in relation to each other, is consistent across cultures. Moreover, the values in the map are all given at least some importance across cultures, hence the name "basic human values".

At the level of individuals, how values are expressed, and how important each of them is, varies, both between individuals, and between situations or contexts, and over time, even though certain value priorities tend to transcend specific situations (Schwartz, 2012). People have therefore more permanent *value dispositions* that may or may not correspond to the more stable priorities in the surrounding society (but often correspond to family environments), and people have *value priorities* which can change on a moment to moment (or day to day) basis, but still have some correlation to the more permanent value dispositions.[59,60]

Those values that behaviour change policies might want to prioritize among the public are often crowded out by other situational cues, such as advertising, limiting infrastructure, personal situations (e.g. limited cognitive, financial or time resources), or social situations (expectations, demands, emotional needs). As the Schwartz basic value theory states:

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[58] Originally adopted from Schwartz (1992).

[59] As an example, a person who values self-discipline, would still be likely to want to let go and relax every now and then, but would be unlikely to want to do that on a continuous basis. Living in a society or family valuing self-discipline, a person in general would be more likely to have that value in his/her more permanent value disposition than in another societal/family setting valuing self-indulgence, for example. In the value map in Figure 3.5, self-discipline and self-indulgence are placed fairly far from each other, and are less likely to coincide at the same time.

[60] Many of the literature references I have used do not separate between value priorities and dispositions. However, I have made this distinction in my writing.

> The *relative* importance of multiple values guides action. Any attitude or behavior typically has implications for more than one value. For example, attending church might express and promote tradition, conformity, and security values at the expense of hedonism and stimulation values. The tradeoff among relevant, competing values is what guides attitudes and behaviors […] Values contribute to action to the extent that they are relevant in the context (hence likely to be activated) and important to the actor.
> Schwartz (2006a:4)

As the concept of the value-action gap indicates (see also Box 3.1), it seems that people often do not act according to values they would consider important. This is, however, not entirely a fair assessment, and Maio (2011) argues that the debate of recent years regarding the value-action gap has somewhat missed the point. Values do have much to do with how we act (together with emotions, see Section 3.3.3), but at any particular moment, several different values are competing for our attention, and only some of those values are expressed in what we do. The society we live in promotes and prioritizes certain values, and these are often those that ultimately end up influencing our actions. Maio maintains that individual value dispositions do have the power to explain our actions when looking at a *broad* range of behaviour, whereas one single value has much less power to explain any specific action. The question, therefore, is less to do with trying to solve the value-action gap, and more to do with how to engage or prioritize certain values in daily practices, and in society at large.

Box 3.1. On the value-action gap

The value-action gap (concept from Blake, 1999) has been frequently claimed as the basis for individuals or even societies not making better choices. The often seemingly unbridgeable gap has become a defining discourse frame among many policymakers and some academics, and Maio (2011:1) suggests that it is a "potentially paralysing cultural truism" preventing human progress. In the last 15 years or so, it has turned policymakers from having to bring about more regulation into trying to make people cross the gap with persuasion (e.g. with nudging, choice architecture).

However, there are a variety of approaches to this phenomenon arguing that the value-action gap is the wrong focus as such, as explained below.

As mentioned elsewhere in this section, Maio (2011) argues that the match between values (or attitudes) and action is fairly good when looking at a broad range of behaviour, rather than a particular concrete action. A practical example with liking fruit: Someone who likes fruit will generally eat lots of them, but predicting, based on that attitude, whether he/she will eat oranges on Thursdays is impossible. Too many other variables, some of which are conflicting values, come into play. Similarly, someone who values protecting nature very highly might still drive to work at least a part of any month, as it may be much more convenient than other options for achieving the particular objective of getting to work those days. Moreover, the problem may be related to mentally translating particular values into very specific actions. People are not always motivated or able to do the translation. Additionally, particular values may not be salient enough in the context of a particular action, and people may not even recall their more permanent value dispositions at the right moment. Generally speaking, there are often several competing values, making the application of any particular value more challenging (see also Burford et al., 2015; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Besides, the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance and strategic ignorance can affect value priorities on their own, when a conflict between values is seemingly solved by ignoring the conflict.

Social practice theories approach the value-action gap from a different angle, arguing that it is not a relevant concept, due to the dynamics of practices, and due to their focus on practices instead of individuals. Behaviour is not seen as an expression of individual values or attitudes, but the observable performance of a practice, the tip of the iceberg (Figure 3.2), whereby the body of the iceberg includes worldviews and societal value priorities, among other things. Practice theories have until recently (but see e.g. Welch, 2017a for an exception) tended to not focus on values, due to much of recent practice theoretical literature in the area of sustainability being a reaction against the focus on individual behaviour change policies, and due to the relationship between these policies and attitudes (the abstract form of which are values). However, practice theories have, at the same time, maintained that societal worldviews and values are important for how practices thrive or change (see e.g. Shove et al., 2012). Viewing social practices through the pillar concept (Sahakian & Wilhite, 2014) likewise helps one to appreciate why changing values are not enough to change practices without larger-scale changes in more than one pillar. This is especially so in the case of stronger individual or societal "habits" which often include unsustainable practices, such as consuming large amounts of meat. Further, as discussed in this chapter elsewhere, social practice theories argue that action can affect values, rather than the other way around, and some empirical studies in social psychology point to this important mechanism as well.

Yet another way to explain the value-action gap (relating to the issue of competing values mentioned above) is to focus on value priorities and decision-making processes taking place in individuals. The concepts of the want- and should-selves (Bazerman et al., 1998), along with ethical mirage (Tenbrunsel et al., 2010) help in this. In short, the should-self (similar to the ideal self, and holding certain value priorities) dominates both before and after an, often unconscious, decision to do something is made, but the want-self (often holding different value priorities) dominates during the actual decision. The concept of ethical mirage refers to how we view our action both beforehand and afterwards. Beforehand, we may think we will act with different value priorities (according to the should-self) than we, in fact, do when the action moment comes (and the want-self decides). Similarly afterwards, it is the should-self that reflects back on the action, and therefore, we may think we have made a choice with different value priorities than we did in actuality. This separation of want- and should-selves implies that there is a gap, but it is a gap between our different "value selves", rather than between values and action. The value priorities of the want-self tend to be more impulsive, and involve more self-enhancing values, whereas the value priorities of the should-self are often more self-transcending, and determine what we consider the appropriate thing to do in a particular situation, also relating to social norms.[61] The want-self tends to involve more emotions and the should-self more thoughtfulness.[62] This distinction can partly help explain related phenomena, such as why surveys can fail to capture actual behaviour. Moreover, the common concepts of citizen and consumer identities can be aligned with the should- and want-selves.

Tenbrunsel and colleagues have some recommendations about how to better realign the want- and should-selves so that the should-self values can have more influence on action. For example, they suggest that asking why the want-self is not aligned with the should-self can be beneficial, as becoming conscious of the issues (engaging in discursive consciousness) can help to realign the value priorities. Additionally, combining being more aware (of the value conflict and the should-self values) with the planning of action can be useful.

Importantly for issues involving societal value conflicts, uncertainty and doubt let the want-self dominate more easily (Tenbrunsel et al., 2010). So, when there is uncertainty about facts (e.g. to do with climate change), the should-self may play a smaller role in decision making. While the approach of Tenbrunsel and colleagues does not consider contextual constraints (or the main part of the practice iceberg), it does help explain some of the variety in the ways people engage in practices, as well as what the core dilemma may be in situations where there indeed is some choice.

Combining these approaches then, I would argue that the value-action gap is almost always about a conflict between values, between different individual values, between different societal values, or between individual and societal values. The distinction between individual value dispositions and priorities and societal value priorities is important, with societal value priorities being more stable, yet still changeable. Further, reflecting on how values compete for attention could help align not only the want- and should-selves of individuals, but also societal value priorities and more sustainable practices.[63] The phenomenon of strategic ignorance of value conflicts is, however, a crucial further complication to be addressed in connection with climate change, or other complex issues where values are in stark conflict.

Lamenting the gap between values an action is counterproductive. It is misplaced, and therefore, takes away the focus on the real issues. Further, it legitimizes lack of progress towards sustainability as something that cannot be helped due to human nature.

The division between self-transcending and self-enhancing values mentioned above is not only relevant socially for group functioning, but self-transcending values are related to affinity to sustainability-related issues as well (Crompton, 2016; Sanderson, 2014).[64] Engaging with and prioritizing particular values, such as *unity with nature*, and a desire to *protect the environment* (both in Figure 3.5) can, in particular, help build public acceptance of ambitious change towards sustainability, and create public demand for such change. A review of literature on the association between self-transcending values and the environment is provided in Crompton (Crompton, 2010:84-86; see also Kasser, 2004, 2011; Crompton, 2016). The centrality of self-enhancing, and especially *materialistic values* (focusing on image, status, wealth, possession) among those, on the other hand, tends to be associated with little concern for the environment (e.g. Hurst et al., 2013; Kasser et al., 2004), in addition to decreasing individual and societal well-being, as Kasser et al. (2004:22) suggest: "materialistic values not only heighten our vulnerability to

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61 Other research (e.g. Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999; Zimmerman & Shimoga, 2014), has explained the want-self phenomenon so that when cognitive processing resources are limited (e.g. when we are tired), emotions get to have a bigger impact on our choices, and when our cognitive resources are not limited, the reflexive side gets a bigger share of the decision-making. However, research reviewed in Tenbrunsel et al. (2010) indicates that it is not simply a question of availability of cognitive resources, but indeed, the want-self can have bigger role in certain situations than in others.

62 However, it would likely be wrong to say that the want-self is all about emotions and the should-self is all about reason. Science still has not yet fully explained emotions as such, but they are heavily involved in many things we do, including decision making. There are cognitive theories of emotions, and emotion-based theories of cognition (e.g. Edwards, 1999). These two selves match, roughly speaking, and with fewer moral undertones, with the concepts of *fast* and *slow thinking* of Kahneman (e.g. 2011).

63 Reflecting on values has indeed been found effective for affecting value dispositions (Lekes et al., 2012).

64 Some related literature uses terms such as *we-centred* values and *ego-centred* values for a similar, but not exactly the same grouping (see e.g. Power & Mont, 2013).

serious social and environmental problems but also undermine our ability to work cooperatively in finding solutions to these problems".[65,66,67]

Drawing further from social psychology literature, pro-environmental or pro-social *actions* as such are argued to reinforce our self-transcending values, therefore making it more likely that we involve in new similar actions. In fact, only thinking about values can make them stronger. Based on a study by Lekes et al. (2012), people reflecting on their particular self-transcending values for a few weeks led them to prioritize these over self-enhancing values, and to feel that their well-being had increased. So, it would appear from this that value dispositions can be changed consciously.

Although drawing attention to self-enhancing values (e.g. concerning saving money) may lead to pro-environmental behaviour, this is argued by some to only yield short-term benefits (e.g. Bolderdijk & Steg, 2015; Power, 2011). Further, it may not be as likely to lead to positive spillovers to other pro-environmental or pro-social behaviours (Nash et al., 2017), and it may be more likely to cause the rebound effect[68] than a focus on self-transcending values (e.g. Mont & Power, 2013).

Significantly, in social psychology, drawing attention to self-enhancing values is claimed to diminish the impact of self-transcending values, and vice versa, in a *see-saw effect* (Kasser, 2016; Maio et al., 2009). Moreover, engaging with certain

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[65] Kasser and colleagues demonstrate in their work that "when materialistic values become relatively central to a person's system of values, personal well-being declines because the likelihood of having experiences that satisfy important psychological needs decreases" (Kasser et al., 2004: 13). Likewise, at societal or community levels, a strong materialistic value orientation is associated with less civil, pro-social, or pro-environmental behaviour.

[66] I am not making any moral claims about an absolute inferiority of certain values, such as self-enhancing values. However, from the point of view of sustainability in the current global context, a strong and exclusive focus on self-enhancing values is likely to be problematic. It seems an open question whether self-transcending and self-enhancing values can work in combination. In any case, in order for such combinations to work within the context of sustainability, self-transcending values need to have a more permanent priority. For example, protecting nature in order to obtain wealth from it (e.g. responsible forest management) can fit within the sustainability frame. However, unless protection of nature is prioritized (e.g. in laws), another more attractive way of obtaining wealth from the same piece of nature (e.g. turning it into a mine, grazing area for cows, or holiday lodges) may lead to the destruction of it.

[67] It is of course important to remember that association is not causation. However, this book assumes that value dispositions at the individual level, and value priorities at the societal level, do have an impact on the range of social practices engaged in, and therefore, associations found in empirical studies are important. Further, literature (e.g. Kasser et al., 2004) points to pathways whereby particular value systems have influence.

[68] Rebound effect refers to, for example, savings (more fuel-efficient car) leading to more spending (driving more, buying a second car) whereby the total amount of (natural) resources spent is the same or more than to begin with.

values — regardless of which type — repeatedly seems to make them stronger, i.e. they are prioritized more often as a result (Sandel, 2012). This is particularly important in connection with the discussion in Box 3.3 on the concept of *dominant social paradigms*. Values such as a focus on financial wealth, competition and power (self-enhancing values), are repeatedly engaged with in most current societies. As culturally dominant values, they are more readily incorporated in the more permanent value dispositions at the individual level (original claim for this connection from Rogers, 1964), while also impacting social practices engaged in.

Further, communications framed with emphasis on self-transcending values seem to be effective in strengthening these values (i.e. increasing their priority) *regardless* of the more permanent value dispositions of people. Research indicates that while drawing attention to self-enhancing values has the result of strengthening them, engaging with both self-enhancing *and* self-transcending values is not found to be helpful in this respect (Crompton, 2016). This could be because self-transcending values are generally focused on less within, for example, Western societies, and therefore, an equal emphasis between the two value groups in a certain narrow context, in the end, still keeps self-enhancing values more prioritized, due to the larger context where they are much more present, in discourses, for example.

There are at least two important situations in which it may be beneficial to combine matters, however. The first has to do with combined motivations, *motive alliances*, between different issues. Underpinning values can connect issues such as poverty, inequality and climate change. The *bleed-over effect* helps to strengthen values between different issues (Chilton et al., 2012; Kasser, 2016; Maio et al., 2009). Therefore, it makes sense to address issues together, rather than in isolation, at least when they are linked by similar values (Sanderson, 2014). Additionally, action towards sustainability need not always involve altruistic motives; it can also, for example, be about responsibility towards one's own health and wellbeing along with benefits to others.

Secondly, and importantly, *social labelling*[69] may be able to extend across the divide between self-transcending and self-enhancing values, so that some of the potentially negative effects of self-enhancing values on pro-environmental or pro-social behaviour could be overcome. Engaging self-transcending values by labelling people as pro-environmental or pro-social — even though originally the behaviour was motivated by other reasons — can change their view of themselves, and with this, change their more permanent value dispositions. The phenomenon of social labelling can make people justify their previous behaviour according to the new label (Cornelissen et al., 2007), possibly leading to stronger positive spillover effects to other pro-environmental or pro-social behaviours (Lacasse, 2016). Social labelling can, therefore, lead to an environmentally or socially beneficial practice, originally associated with other values, but being associated with self-transcending values later on.

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[69] Social labelling is different from "ecolabelling", a field that is about labelling products, and considered controversial by some in terms of its usefulness for change towards sustainability (see e.g. Gjerris et al., 2016). Social labelling is about labelling behaviour (not products), and it is argued to have power because of our social connection to other people.

Additionally, this phenomenon of *value change following behaviour change* has been observed in other empirical contexts. Hoff-Elimari et al. (2014) concluded from their study on European countries that pro-social government policies can drive public value prioritizing, making the public potentially more accepting of future harsh policy measures. Similarly, the study by Hargreaves (2011), applying practice theories to organisational behaviour, indicates that value change need not always precede pro-environmental behaviour change. In his study, people specifically rejected environmental values as motivators, but nonetheless, were favourable to certain pro-environmental practices for their organisation.

As shown in several contexts above, changing behaviour can, therefore, change attitudes and value dispositions, so the arrow from values to behaviour is reversed, and doing affects thinking. Indeed, social practice theories (e.g. Warde, 2014) argue that doing *can* precede thinking, in other words, that value dispositions can change after certain related practices are already enacted. Shove (2010) contends that both new attitudes (and values) and related new behaviours may be the results of changed practices and their performances. Social psychology and social practice theories at least partially agree on this.

To conclude the above, the discussion on the relationship between value change and behaviour change is by no means settled, and one should take a rather critical approach to the view that individual value change must precede individual behaviour change. Instead, the view — aligned with social practice theories — that value dispositions can change during and after behaviour change, or after a change in practices, is worth considering more widely. As Berzonsky and Moser say when discussing the importance of values for transformation towards sustainability:

> Emphatically, we do not propose a sequential process, wherein values must change first before other changes in practice and policy can be initiated. One is always implicated in and intertwined with the other. Values change in some and then inspire others; behaviors change values and values change behaviors; those passionate to spread certain values use bully pulpits, policies and markets. Inner change is in these ways linked to outer change. Ignoring the psycho-cultural component [involving values] of the transformation, however, risks missing what may well be the most obstinate obstacle to the change so many call for as humanity enters the Anthropocene.
> Berzonsky and Moser (2017:21)

As Berzonsky and Moser imply above, the precise modes of influence are less relevant than the overall focus on values. It can be argued that, when taking a wider view of different literatures, there may be more pathways to achieving a transformation of values that are important for solving the ecological crisis and transforming societies towards sustainability. However, more relevant that concentrating on day-to-day value priorities might be to concentrate on the more permanent value dispositions people hold. These then are likely to be greatly affected by societal value priorities, and therefore, changing societal discourses as well as "norms, standards and institutions" (Warde, 2014:295), up to the level of social paradigms or master frames (see Box 3.3) is increasingly believed to be necessary (see e.g. O'Brien, 2018).[70] As Berzonsky and Moser (2017:15) put it, many calls are made for "society to move away from values that drive environmentally unsustainable and economically and socially unjust trends to a new set of values supporting the emergence of true ecological, economic, and social sustainability".

I would add that at the societal level, consistency in values is a key issue in terms of policies and discourses. One reason (among many) why behaviour change policies often do not produce long-term results may be that the promoted actions (and the related values), at the level of individuals, tend to be misaligned with the values that the same policymakers — and societies at large — embrace and promote otherwise (see e.g. Crompton, 2016).

Schwartz has worked on societal level values in his cultural value theory (see e.g. Schwartz, 2006b).[71,72] In this theory (see Figure 3.6), the self-transcending and self-enhancing value groups correspond to *egalitarianism* and *harmony*, on the one hand, and *mastery* and *hierarchy*, on the other. Cultures that prioritize egalitarianism prioritize values such as equality, social justice, responsibility, helpfulness, and honesty; and cultures that prioritize harmony, consider values such as world at peace, unity with nature, and protecting the environment important.[73,74] Comparing these cultural, or societal level values to the individual level values (as shown in Figure 3.5), the similarities are obvious. The structure of the circle in Figure 3.6 is built the same way as the structure of the map in Figure 3.5 (often also presented as a circle), in other words, distance matters for the co-incidence of values. One distinction between the two models is worth mentioning, however. At the individual level, benevolence values include *dependability* (called "responsible" in Figure 3.5). This refers to one's immediate social group, and not to wider society. However, at the cultural/societal level, the same value shows up as *responsibility*, and in particular, as *collective responsibility* within the egalitarianism value group (see Schwartz, 2006b). Further, the hierarchy value group includes responsibility, but there it is in the form of *conformity*.

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[70] In the language of social practice theories, these would involve the practices-as-entities, the larger part of the iceberg in Figure 3.2.

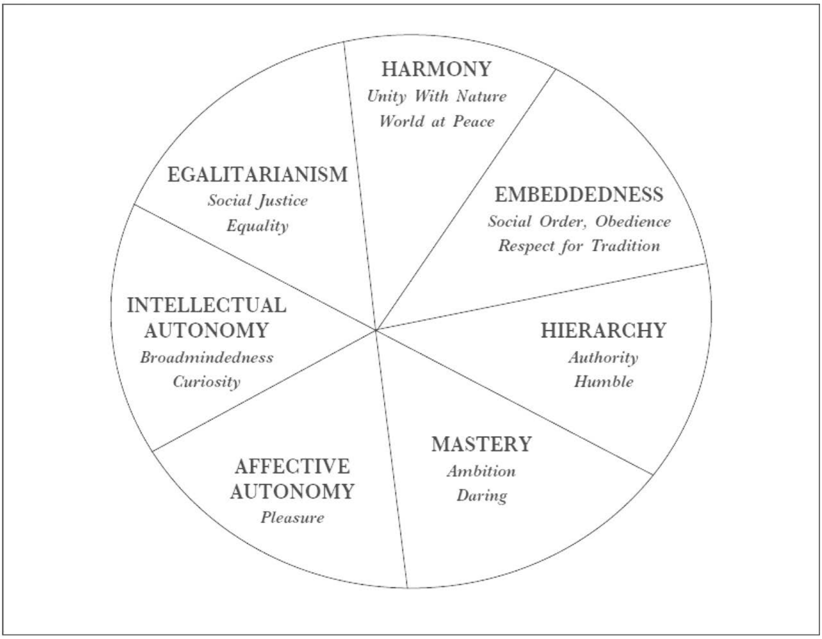
[71] Hsu (2013:150) offers a comparison of different cultural value theories (of Hofstede, Inglehart, Schwartz and Steenkamp) and concludes that, at least in the consumption behaviour context examined in the study, in general, the Schwartz cultural value theory is "more theoretically and empirically useful" than the other three.

[72] Schwartz (2006:138) defines a culture as "the rich complex of meanings, beliefs, practices, symbols, norms, and values prevalent among people in a society". Further, he notes that "in addition to a dominant culture, subgroups within societies espouse conflicting value emphases" (idem:139).

[73] On the other side, cultures prioritizing mastery, consider values such as ambition, success and competence important, and cultures prioritizing hierarchy prioritize values such as social power, authority and wealth (Schwartz, 2006).

[74] An example from the grouping of cultures according to the Schwartz cultural value theory (Schwartz, 2006): there are clear differences between the English-speaking countries and

Figure 3.6: Cultural value dimensions


HARMONY
Unity With Nature
World at Peace
EMBEDDEDNESS
Social Order, Obedience
Respect for Tradition
HIERARCHY
Authority
Humble
MASTERY
Ambition
Daring
AFFECTIVE AUTONOMY
Pleasure
INTELLECTUAL AUTONOMY
Broadmindedness
Curiosity
EGALITARIANISM
Social Justice
Equality

Source: Schwartz (2006b)

In the rest of this book, I will generally refer to values either *facilitating* or *hindering* sustainability. By these terms, I refer to the individual, but especially the

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western Europe as regards harmony — it is high in western Europe, but lower than average in English-speaking countries, especially the United States.

societal (cultural) level, and to the value groups discussed above. The values facilitating sustainability include values such as unity with nature, protecting the environment, and collective responsibility (co-responsibility), as well as social justice and equality.

3.3.2.2 Values and social practices

While human actors have individual value priorities and dispositions, values themselves reside more within social practices (Welch, 2017a), and these often reflect (more stable, yet changeable) societal value priorities, rather than necessarily individual priorities. Practices can, in fact, be seen to have a range of *potential* values. When performing practices in a certain way in a certain context, human actors (usually unconsciously) match their own value priorities with at least some of the values residing in practices. For example, the practice of showering in a Western everyday context holds certain values. Comfort, cleanliness and convenience (from the title of Shove, 2003) are certainly among those. All performances of showering are likely to prioritize cleanliness, but some performances by the same person might prioritize convenience (short and efficient shower) over comfort (long and enjoyable shower). What is important for (un)sustainability, however, is that all of those values belong to everyday showering as a practice (and can lead to excessive resource use).

On a daily level, value priorities (and emotions, see more in Section 3.3.3) are significant determinants on the ways we do things and perform practices. This also holds within the same practice, at least when it is not a very strong habit (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2. Social practices as habits

Sahakian and Wilhite (2014:28) contend that "all habits are practices, but not all practices demand habitual reproduction". The habitual nature of practices can, therefore, be either weak or strong. With weaker habits, there is more variation in the performance of practices, we make more choices, using some discursive consciousness and fewer automated strategies than with strong habits. In general, many practices — at least those practices that are not entirely dependent of other people, and where there is at least some choice — boil down to processes similar to the food choice processes discussed below in the chapter text. Many of the choices are automated, as they are part of habits and routines, but there is variation, especially with weaker habits, and in these situations, we make more conscious choices. We may consciously choose a longer shower over a shorter one, or oatmeal over bacon, even though we are unaware of the majority of actual choices made,[75] as we employ various strategies to help us through our daily lives. In such weaker habits, value dispositions are argued to have more influence on what we do (see e.g. Dahlstrand & Biel, 1997; Matthies et al., 2002).

Sayer (2013) sees practices existing on a continuum, where at one end are the most habitual practices (i.e. strong habits), and at the other end, practices to which a certain amount of deliberation and variation is typical (weaker habits).

Stronger unsustainable habits are a particular problem for sustainability (e.g. Sahakian & Wilhite, 2014; Verplanken & Roy, 2015). Stronger habits are performed with much less variation and much less discursive consciousness. Only bigger changes (such as life changes involving new employment, marriage, birth of children, moving house, retirement) are often believed to disrupt the stronger habits enough on their own. Sahakian and Wilhite (2014) would see stronger habits potentially shifting when one of the three pillars of practices — the body, the social world and the material world — goes through change, but dissolving only when larger changes take place in more than one pillar.

Stronger practice theories would be likely to maintain that consciously trying to change, especially a strong habit, would be the wrong approach, and focusing on the structure of the practice, and what changeable societal elements support that structure, would bring more results.

While social practice theorists tend to downplay the importance of individual values (being principally against the ABC model), societal values are nonetheless critically important for social practices, as argued above. What is also noteworthy is that until recently, practice-theoretical research has mostly analysed individual performances of practices, instead of focusing more on "the norms, standards and institutions which produce shared understandings and common procedures" (Warde, 2014:295), while at the same time arguing for the importance of worldviews and discourses (as e.g. in Shove et al., 2012). Societal value priorities reflect worldviews and are reflected in discourses, while impacting on the value dispositions of individuals, societal structures, and practices as entities and as performances.

Going back to the elements of practices (see Figure 3.3), values "inform the cognitive and affective dispositions through which individuals respond to their environment [… and] values illustrate how general understandings may combine the tacit and the discursive" (Welch & Warde, 2017:6). Values, therefore, link to general understandings, as well as to practical (tacit) and discursive consciousness, and to emotions (see Section 3.4).

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75 For example, regarding food-related decisions, we tend to be aware of only a very small proportion of them (see Wansink & Sobal, 2007).

Meat-eating related practices and values

In the case of choosing which food to eat, or whether to eat meat or not, values turn into *food choice values* (see Sobal et al., 2006). Food choice values are about what makes us want to eat or not eat certain foods. If something tastes very nice, we are likely to want to eat it, so taste is a food choice value. Similarly, price, convenience, variation and healthiness are food choice values. Many people prioritize price, even if they could afford something more expensive.[76] However, in other cases, people do not value taste, price or convenience more than quality, safety, ethics, or how a particular food fits with the social eating situation (related to the basic value *conformity*). So, in those cases, the relevant food choice values may make a person choose not to eat a particular food, meat, for example, no matter how tasty it is. Or vice versa, a person who would normally prioritize animal welfare (and not eat meat) eats meat on occasions in which avoiding social conflict is considered more important. In many cases indeed, food choice values are in conflict, in which case it depends on the situation (and whether the want- or the should-self is dominating, see Box 3.1), which values win. However, in many cases, certain situations repeat. For example, every weekday morning a person may be faced with the same situation between healthier, but perhaps less tasty, and potentially tastier, but arguably less healthy foods (e.g. oatmeal or bacon). In such situations, people tend to develop strategies for themselves, so that they do not have to consciously deliberate about the choices every time. These strategies[77] make the choices automatic and routinized, and when using such strategies, only a more or less new situation makes people rethink their food choices and food choice values.

At the societal level, the issues discussed in Chapter 2 relating to different factors potentially increasing or decreasing meat eating are, in fact, ultimately about food choice values. For example, urbanization tends to make people prioritize convenience, and therefore pre-packaged convenient cuts of meat.

At the individual level, more permanently prioritizing universalism values may be directly related to reduced meat eating (de Boer et al., 2007). Eating organic meat may not necessarily have an impact on reducing meat consumption, but it can emphasize the related food values, such as sustainability, fairness and animal welfare (de Bakker & Dagevos, 2012). The new meats (cultivated or plant-based meats and insects) could have a similar effect.

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[76] In such a situation, price is considered more in a symbolic way, and in this situation, we may buy either cheap or expensive items, depending on the situation. When price is only about true ability or inability to buy something, it is not a similar kind of value.

[77] Such strategies include only focusing on one value every time, or using heuristics where certain foods are always excluded from the choices, or conversely, are always added as an extra item. See Sobal et al. (2006) for more examples.

On motive alliances regarding meat eating, if expressed motivation to not eat meat depends on the context (see Wilson et al., 2004), then trying to motivate people with multiple motivations (environmental, human health, animal welfare) could make it more difficult for people to continue ignoring or denying the issues related to eating animals; and vice versa, it could make it easier for people to be motivated to change their meat-eating related practices and support wider changes. Indeed, Hartmann and Siegrist (2017) conclude from their systematic review of 38 different research articles that it seems that focusing on several reasons to eat less meat can produce better results than focusing only on the environment.

As regards social labelling, calling occasional meat eating flexitarianism — rather than not calling it anything in particular, or calling it "failed vegetarianism" — can help people view themselves more positively, and continue to engage in this behaviour, as long as "flexitarianism" is seen as a positive label. The effects can spill over to other practices.

It may also be that social norms (and therefore societal value priorities) change due to societal discourse. In the United Kingdom, for example, it seems that an increasing number of people feel that they *should* eat less or no meat (irrespective of whether they do). This is evident in survey answers which report increasing numbers of vegetarians, flexitarians and vegans.[78,79] And significantly, there are currently no real government policy actions supporting such changes.

3.3.3 Linking values and emotions

In this section, I will focus on the links between values, emotions, and social practices. I will cover emotions in this particular setting, rather than in a broader context.[80] Suffice it to say that emotions are another critical area where, despite recent advances, for example, in measuring emotions in brain activity, there is still much to discover on their role and functioning. On the connection between emotions and thought, Ignatov (2007) claims — along the lines of theories of embodied knowledge — that people are first and foremost feeling and only sometimes also re-

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[78] At least until now, meat consumption statistics do not show a significant enough decrease that would be in line with such survey results.

[79] See e.g. https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/01/third-of-britons-have-stopped-or-reduced-meat-eating-vegan-vegetarian-report—report in the online Guardian on 1 November 2018.

[80] Some specifically prefer to use the term "emotion" (e.g. Scheer, 2012) in connection with social practices, while others prefer to use "affect" (e.g. Reckwitz, 2017). There are somewhat conflicting definitions of affect, but e.g. Stangor (2010) sees that there are two components of affect: emotion and motivation, while Chatterton (2016) defines affect as the experiencing of emotion. I prefer to use the term "emotion", instead of "affect".

flexively thinking.[81] Emotions have been defined as embodied thoughts (Rosaldo, 1984), among many other things, but generally, they are defined as including a bodily component and a thought component, and psychology sees them mostly as directing attention and guiding action (e.g. Stangor, 2010). They can, therefore, be seen to have an important role in performances of practices.

Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) argue that emotions link to not only general understandings (in the form of *emotionally charged general understandings*), but to competencies and material elements as well.[82] Further, emotions literally move people into action, including thought; they are what we care about, and human agency resides in emotions. Bodily action systems and emotion processing systems in the brain are closely connected, and emotional reactions are always bodily reactions, however, differing in intensity, duration and awareness. Our "relentless emotional processing [...] directs our acting, thinking and feeling", to the extent that humans can "only 'be' through the emotional experience of practices" (idem:71). However, we are mostly unaware of our emotions.

To Weenink and Spaargaren (2016), practices, in fact, produce *emotional energy*, and the more emotional energy a particular *emotionally-charged* practice produces, the more likely we are to want to engage in it, and vice versa. Humans, on the other hand, have emotional agency, and Weenink and Spaargaren see that *collective emotional agency* can help change practices. These two concepts can be seen to link so that the emotional energy — a form of agentive power — produced by practices turns into emotional agency in people. Change can originate in high-intensity emotions that generate new ideas, and through changing general understandings shared by different practices.

Meat-eating related practices and emotional energy

Meat-eating practices have traditionally produced a lot of emotional energy (for most people), and following Weenink and Spaargaren (2016), this has made people more likely to want to continue engaging in them, regardless of the downsides. Further, strategic ignorance of emotion conflicts related to meat eating is likely to prevent any sense of emotional agency for changing these practices. On the other hand, movements such as the vegan movement could be seen as having a significant amount of the collective emotional agency for change that Weenink and Spaargaren discuss.

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[81] This can in fact fit well with stronger social practice theories.

[82] Figure 3.3 provides for connections between emotions and other elements of practices, including via the fourth element of body.

3.3.3.1 Some concrete ways that values and emotions link

Similarly to values, practice theories have tended to side-line emotions. Reckwitz (2017) suggests this to be related to social theory long relegating emotions to psychology, and to the overall preference of reason over emotion in modernity. I would add that, in practice theories, emotions may have been seen even more to do with individuals than values, and therefore, not the main focus. However, in the last few years, more practice theory literature has paid attention to emotions. Welch (2017a), for example, calls for better incorporation of emotions to practice theories. Like values, emotions are inherent to practices (Reckwitz, 2017; Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016; Welch, 2017a).[83]

Values and emotions are often intimately connected to both each other and to our goals. We may express our prioritized values in our action seemingly for the sake of those values (values as motivators), but we may also have other, perhaps more basic goals, and the values are expressed in the process of reaching those other goals. Such more basic goals are often related to emotions (emotions as motivators). As the etymology of the two words would suggest, motivation has a strong link to emotion (Welch, 2017a). Further, “motivation without a process of being [emotionally] affected by something is not thinkable” (Reckwitz, 2017:120). Sayer (2013:171) argues that values “merge into emotional dispositions” to inform our valuations of various things, including people, ideas, behaviours and practices. Schwartz notes that the basic human values (see Figure 3.5) in particular link to emotions, as “when values are activated, they become infused with feeling” (Schwartz, 2006a:3).[84]

In many cases, when making a usually unconscious choice for practice A rather than practice B, we prioritize certain values, and often (unconsciously) *want* certain emotions (in a way then, we have emotion priorities as well). Once performing the practice, we experience these emotions as bodily sensations, whether conscious or mindful about them or not. Emotions are therefore obviously part of us, in both the wanting and the experiencing of them. Many practices may be performed because they have to be. For example, we have to eat. However, value priorities and emotional wants have a role in *how* we perform the practices we have to perform. Emotional wants can be linked to the emotional energy that Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) see in practices. We *want* the emotional energy of certain practices.

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[83] Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) talk about practices having “emotional mood”, and Reckwitz (2017) refers to practices having “affects”.

[84] For example, even when we attempt to tell the truth in a certain situation for the sake of being honest (i.e. honesty as a prioritized value), we may, in fact, aim for our action to be in line with our prioritized value mainly for the sake of feeling content with ourselves and our behaviour, or of not feeling guilty. If we, on the other hand, do not feel guilty about lying, we may be less likely to aim for honesty.

Meat-eating related practices and moral emotions

Some concepts blend in both values and emotions. *Moral emotions* are linked to *moral values* (in some way referring to right and wrong). Moral values tend to be on the right-hand side of Figure 3.5. Moral emotions include anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, shame and embarrassment, but also positive emotions such as elevation, gratitude, and pride (Rozin et al., 1997; Tangney et al., 2007). On the negative side of moral emotions, especially guilt and moral disgust are linked to eating animals, as well as to the alternatives to meat, such as cultivated meat.

There are several ways that guilt relates to eating animals. The phenomenon of strategic ignorance (see later in this section) often arises as a result of guilty feelings about eating animals. Further, Stanescu (2016) argues that eating meat from organically farmed animals, may, have more to do with assuaging guilt, and less to do with prioritizing self-transcending values to do with nature (i.e. animal welfare in this case). Moreover, people who are not full vegetarians, but occasionally eat meat, seem to feel/express more guilt about their food practices than those eating meat on a daily basis (Verain et al., 2015). This is possibly so because such people are more consciously aware (engaging in discursive consciousness) of their eating practices and the consequences of those than regular meat eaters are. The occasionally meat-eating vegetarians are likely not engaging in as much strategic ignorance about meat, and therefore, feelings of guilt may be more acute.[85] Finally, the presence of vegetarians often causes guilt, and other negative emotions, such as anger and resentment, in regular meat eaters, as it reminds them of their morally problematic behaviour of eating animals (Adams, 2001; Rothgerber, 2014).

Guilt has been linked to pro-environmental action as well, in the way that this negative moral emotion could be used as a motivating tool for persuading people to change their behaviour towards sustainability (see Rees et al., 2015).

One could theorize that being in the presence of people who eat such new meats might cause even more guilt (and anger) in those eating conventional meat. This would be so as there would now be even less reason for the meat eaters to *not* join those who eat the meat-like alternatives than before when the options were either eating a completely vegetarian or vegan diet or eating animal-based meat regularly. It was easier, then, to justify not choosing a full vegetarian or vegan diet.

Moral disgust is linked, among other things, to eating animals being wrong, expressed by some vegetarians and vegans (e.g. Loughnan et al., 2014). It likely has its roots in another more basic form of disgust which has probably originally functioned as a survival tool, warning humans of dangerous items (see e.g. Rozin & Haidt, 2013). Further, moral disgust can be felt towards new meats such as insects

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[85] Such people might feel less guilt, however, if they saw themselves as flexitarians, rather than failed vegetarians.

(see e.g. Tan et al., 2015)[86] and cultivated meat (see e.g. Verbeke et al., 2015). However, exposure, curiosity and knowledge, and changing meanings of normality may lessen feelings of moral disgust (see also van der Weele & Driessen, 2013).

Lastly, the concept of *moralization* is relevant in connection with meat. Moralization is a process which converts preferences into values, and in which a previously value-neutral issue can become morally disgusting (Rozin et al., 1997). Rozin and colleagues use cigarette smoking in the United States as an example of this process. Applied to the case of intensive animal agriculture, a process of moralization could, with time, turn this way of meat production into being immoral, and disgusting. At the same time, the alternatives to industrial meat production, such as cultivated meat, could become the morally acceptable choices, and disgust could, therefore, be redirected from cultivated meat to conventional animal-based meat (Driessen & Korthals, 2012).[87]

3.3.3.2 Further conflicts between values and emotions

This subsection will focus more heavily on meat-eating related practices — rather than have them as specific examples, as is mostly the case in this chapter — since meat eating illustrates extremely well issues to do with value and emotion conflicts, and the resulting tension and cognitive dissonance, and ambivalence regarding how to resolve the conflicts, as well as strategic ignorance and other coping mechanisms, as ways to deal with the conflicts. Moreover, I will discuss the related challenges to do with changing practices. For example, strategic ignorance often leads people to ignore the problem of meat, rather than just their internal conflicts. Other coping mechanisms can further close practices, keeping them from changing, and lead to unhelpful conflicts between people, for example, between meat eaters and vegetarians or vegans. When examining meat eating as a "moral practice", it is possible to shed light on how emotions, cognitions, values, beliefs, and identities intimately combine (Loughnan et al., 2014). Other topics in this context, similar to meat, include climate change and (un)sustainable practices more generally.

Ambivalence and strategic ignorance

Ambivalence is another concept bringing values and emotions together, however, as a result of a conflict. Maio (2017) identifies ambivalence as arising in situations when we feel conflicted about an issue; we feel both positively and negatively about something. He notes that ambivalence is evoked towards issues which put values into conflict.[88] In everyday contexts, ambivalence is often seen either as a conflict between values or as a conflict between emotions. But as emotions and values are closely connected, it's more a question what kind of a frame is used, i.e. a value frame or an emotion frame. To give an example from the online Merriam-Webster English dictionary (for the term "ambivalence"): "I'm ambivalent about going to the show. On the one hand, it would be fun. On the other hand, I really should stay home and get some work done". Merriam-Webster refers to this as a conflict between feelings, but, in fact, it is also about values (and about want- and should-selves): valuing a positive social experience, a pleasant evening (perhaps related to hedonism or benevolence values, see Figure 3.5) more than the feeling of accomplishment from work completed (perhaps related to self-discipline, a conformity value; or ambition, an achievement value) at that particular time, will make a person select the first option. Vice versa, valuing the work accomplishment more on that particular day will make the person select the second option.

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[86] In some cases at least, disgust related to insects may be more basic disgust than moral disgust.

[87] However, some argue (see e.g. Ferrari, 2016 or Miller, 2012) that cultivated meat would support the immorality of eating animals, rather than offer a moral alternative.

We are often aware — at some level — of a feeling of ambivalence, but not necessarily of the reasons for it, especially not regarding the value conflict. Ambivalence does not need to (and often does not) lead to any action that would correct the value conflict; the conflict can stay, and we may eventually suppress the related conflicting emotions and the feeling of ambivalence itself, and it changes into strategic ignorance. But the more aware of it we become, the more likely we are to do something about it, in terms of more consciously choosing action in line with one value over another. Figure 3.7 illustrates a simplified process that often arises from conflicting values.

To describe the process in Figure 3.7,[89] the two values that are in conflict may both be prioritized by us, but one of them is more likely to be linked to our ideal selves, our more permanent value preferences (the should-self), and the other one is more likely to be linked to our (perhaps more immediate) wants and needs (the want-self). For example, "I know I should not eat meat, but I want it anyway", or "my partner wants us to eat meat" are examples of this. The value conflict may also arise from differences between individual and societal value priorities (e.g. Sanderson, 2014). The *cognitive dissonance* (psychologically uncomfortable conflict) and more general ambivalence that result especially from longer-term inconsistent behaviour, are addressed by either changing behaviour (Action 1), so that there is

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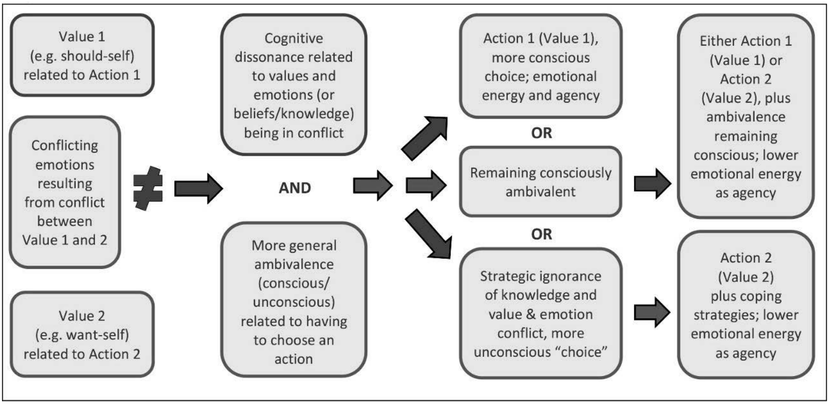
[88] Maio (2017) argues that ambivalence can, however, also arise when two values pull to the *same* direction, if they are in principle far from each other (e.g. in terms of the value map).

[89] Chatterton (2016: 42) criticizes flow charts explaining behaviour, as well as "the language of barriers", as it reflects the ABC-model kind of approach. However, Figure 3.7 is only meant to illustrate the phenomena of strategic ignorance and ambivalence. More generally, I do not discuss "barriers to desirable behaviour" in this book.

Figure 3.7: Sketching a process of value and emotion conflict


Value 1
(e.g. should-self)
related to Action 1
Conflicting emotions resulting from conflict between Value 1 and 2
Value 2
(e.g. want-self)
related to Action 2
≠
Cognitive dissonance related to values and emotions (or beliefs/knowledge) being in conflict
AND
More general ambivalence (conscious/ unconscious) related to having to choose an action
Action 1 (Value 1), more conscious choice; emotional energy and agency
OR
Remaining consciously ambivalent
OR
Strategic ignorance of knowledge and value & emotion conflict, more unconscious "choice"
Either Action 1 (Value 1) or Action 2 (Value 2), plus ambivalence remaining conscious; lower emotional energy as agency
Action 2 (Value 2) plus coping strategies; lower emotional energy as agency

Source: Figure by author.

no conflict, or by ignoring the conflict to the extent that it can be coped with in connection with the behaviour that may have been originally more desirable (Action 2). A further, although perhaps less common option (included in Figure 3.7) is that one remains consciously ambivalent, but still chooses one of the actions. In this situation, consciousness about the conflict situation regarding choices made might stay. Both of the situations where either ambivalence or strategic ignorance are present in the "end state" in Figure 3.7 have some emotional costs, and therefore the action that resolves the conflict (Action 1 in Figure 3.7) results in more experienced emotional energy than the other two options.

Eating animals is an excellent example of value conflicts. Loughnan et al. (2010) coined the term *meat paradox* to describe our love for meat (dead animals) and our love for (live) animals as pets, for example.

According to the theory of cognitive dissonance (concept originally from Festinger, 1957; see also e.g. Onwezen and van der Weele, 2016), people attempt to solve conflicts between value priorities concerning action, by changing the actions, changing the value priorities, or changing thoughts or beliefs related to the action. In a way, the last option relates to changing accepted "knowledge". In connection with meat, this could involve believing, for example, that animals are not worthy of moral concern (e.g. Bratanova et al., 2011), often regardless of whether the person would overall prioritize moral concerns. Or, it can relate to justifying meat eating by arguing that it is necessary. It may sometimes be easier to change what you think than what you do, and so, in this context, addressing cognitive dissonance by changing otherwise desired behaviours tends to be more difficult than the other ways to address the dissonance (e.g. Nash et al., 2017), so Action 2 in Figure 3.7 is often more likely than Action 1.[90] Both resulting actions — behaviours or practice performances — have emotional energy, as all practices do (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016), but this energy may be experienced differently in different situations. Critically, strategic ignorance itself costs emotional energy which makes Action 2 more resource intensive than Action 1 (van der Weele, 2013). Additionally, strategic ignorance of the original emotion conflict is likely to prevent a sense of emotional *agency*.

The simplest form of strategic ignorance is avoiding thinking about the related issues in the first place. In connection with eating animals, avoiding thinking about anything to do with meat production is such strategic ignorance (see e.g. Rothgerber, 2014). This is likely to relate to avoiding information about any negative consequences from eating animals (see the next subsection). Many coping strategies can be regarded as forms of strategic ignorance (van der Weele, 2013). Regarding eating animals, a variety of strategies have been identified over the last years (discussed e.g. in Loughnan et al., 2014; Rothgerber, 2014; van der Weele, 2013).[91] They mainly fall into the three basic approaches described above. First, radically reducing (in the form of strong flexitarianism) or stopping eating animals altogether (vegetarianism or veganism) is the approach in line with Action 1 in Figure 3.7. Second, in addition to what was mentioned above, changing value priorities can be realised by *rejecting* certain moral behaviour (such as not harming animals) on the basis that it cannot be absolute, or consistent. For example, there is no way to eat so that no living creature would ever be harmed; therefore, eating animals regularly is all right. Paying attention to any real or imagined inconsistencies among vegetarians or vegans, or, devaluing them to the extent that their behaviour is supposedly less moral than our own behaviour (e.g. by calling them hypocrites or fanatics), are part of the same strategy.[92] Moreover, giving a lower moral status to certain animals (meat animals) as compared to others (e.g. pets) is also related to values. Third, changing thoughts and beliefs (or accepted knowledge) is often related to the dissociation of the food product from the animal it originates from, including calling them by different names (e.g. beef vs. cow). Further, denying that meat animals (including fish) experience pain, or that they can have feelings such as fear, or have similar intelligence to pets, for example, is about changing beliefs.

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[90] Even when changing behaviour (e.g. stopping eating meat), strategic ignorance, together with *confirmation bias* may continue in other forms. For example, vegetarians may deny ever liking the taste of meat, or believe that no amount of meat is healthy to eat (van der Weele, 2013).

[91] In a way, this research was started by Rozin (1996) when he appealed for psychologists to "take meat eating seriously" (Loughnan et al., 2014: 107).

[92] Minson and Monin (2012) call the putting down of vegetarians and vegans by meat eaters *do-gooder derogation*.

Beliefs about our behaviour can function as coping strategies. For example, eating "humane" meat (often not produced essentially differently from other meat, see Stănescu, 2016) may only be about *perceived* behaviour change. Similarly, believing in, and proclaiming our intentions to reduce meat eating in the future, or belittling the extent of the amounts of meat we have eaten in the past (related to the concept of ethical mirage, and therefore values) can operate as coping strategies. Additionally, some negative emotions could function as further coping strategies. Feeling disgust towards insects or cultivated meat may work as a justification to continue with our current meatways, as the new ways are not conceivable. Likewise, *environmental melancholia* (Lertzman, 2015) is related to feeling disempowered (and unable to act) regarding overwhelming issues, such as the miserable lives of meat animals, environmental destruction, or climate change.

Rationalizations or justifications of behaviour can also function as coping strategies, whereby the value conflict is ignored, as the behaviour or practice performance is too central to not pursue. In connection with eating animals, Joy (2010) identified three such justifications, to which Piazza et al. (2015) added a fourth. Together these are the four Ns: meat being Normal, Natural, Necessary and Nice.[93] These justifications are very common, and used alongside other coping strategies (Piazza et al., 2015). Interestingly, men tend to use more direct justifications, such as the four Ns, and claim to not generally mind as much to think about animals dying for their food — correlating with how masculine men perceive themselves — whereas women tend to prefer more indirect justifications, such as dissociation and avoidance (Rothgerber, 2013).

At times, cognitive dissonance can resurface. A rather common and interesting context in which this happens is when meat eaters and vegetarians and vegans confront each other. In such situations, vegetarians activate the meat eaters' inner conflict surrounding meat consumption, causing guilt, anger, and other negative emotions, and thereby reinforcing the coping strategies in meat eaters. Rothgerber's empirical study (2014) supports these arguments originally made by Adams (2001).

Even though strategic ignorance and the related coping strategies help keep a practice more solid, or closed to changes, things are not set in stone, and the process in Figure 3.7 can indeed start all over again when something changes. In addition to confrontations between crucially different practices (meat eaters vs. vegetarians), new information, or a particular life event, can sometimes challenge a particular coping strategy, and return the process to addressing the conflicting values and emotions again (e.g. de Boer et al., 2016). In connection with meat eating, the new meats may also have this impact. Further, linking several issues together, for example, related to eating less meat being good for animal welfare, one's own health, and the health of the planet (see e.g. de Boer et al., 2013) can make persisting with strategic ignorance more difficult, as values and emotions can link together in new ways in such *motive alliances*. It may be important, however, that whatever is "new" is not forced upon anyone in large quantities, but can be taken in little by little, to avoid strengthening the coping strategies further. Doubt about our own practices can in some circumstances make resistance stronger (e.g. Zaraska, 2016a).

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[93] Nice comes from Piazza et al. (2015).

The concepts of cognitive dissonance and ambivalence are not often addressed in the same literature. Meat eating is, however, one such instance where somewhat more attention has been paid to ambivalence. Together with strategic ignorance, ambivalence is believed to be particularly wide-spread in connection with eating animals, and possibly increasing in society in general (van der Weele, 2013; van Harreveld et al., 2009), and Moreover, true ignorance about the impacts from eating animals is likely to be rarer than it appears (see also Holm & Mohl, 2000).[94]

Confronting the meat paradox by acknowledging and embracing the ambivalence may help us to be conscious about, and potentially change, our eating practices (Zaraska, 2016b). It may decrease polarization, often present in connection with controversial issues, and increase our willingness to look for solutions. Van der Weele (2013) argues that cultivated meat (together with other new meats) can help in this process by making us acknowledge our ambivalence about meat, question current practices, and bring meat eaters and vegetarians closer to each other. It can also give energy to look for new solutions. Flexitarianism as a recognized practice can work in the same way.

Finally and importantly, not everyone experiences cognitive dissonance about eating animals (Monteiro et al., 2017; Onwezen & van der Weele, 2016). Those people that do not, tend to be *indifferent* to the conflicts other people have in this context, as their own prioritized values are not in conflict. Sometimes the 4N justifications may, in fact, have little to do with strategic ignorance regarding eating animals, and more to do with a need to justify socially something that other people disapprove of (Piazza et al., 2015). In the first study of strategic ignorance in a real-life context, Onwezen and van der Weele (2016) emphasize that to support changes in practices, it is important to try to tell apart those who are truly indifferent from those strategically ignoring the issues. One way they suggest to do this is to focus on the feeling of responsibility which they argue is present in the strategically ignorant.

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[94] Holm and Møhl (2000) found already more than 25 years ago in their interviews of the Danish public that meat eaters voiced concern about factory farming.

Strategic ignorance of knowledge

Strategic ignorance is multifaceted in the sense that it is, first and foremost, ignorance of the value and emotion conflicts, or difficult emotions as such, and as a consequence, it translates into ignorance of information and knowledge, as a coping strategy. Strategic ignorance, therefore, combines all three aspects of values, emotions, and knowledge linked to general understandings as an element of social practices (Figure 3.3).

Strategic ignorance is usually related to very ordinary daily situations, not only more extreme ones, such as ignorance of atrocities or disasters (van der Weele, 2013). Nonetheless, it is by no means a minor phenomenon. Among all the ways to deal with cognitive dissonance, to "deny, obscure or deform threatening forms of knowledge in more or less automatic and subconscious ways [... strategic ignorance is] a paradoxical phenomenon, for in order not to want to know, one has to know enough to know that knowing more would be undesirable or dangerous" (van der Weele, 2013:292; see also Bankier, 1996).

Another name for strategic ignorance is *wilful ignorance*, and from this term, it becomes obvious that "will" or "want" is a relevant component of this form of ignorance, as it is really about wanting (or not wanting) something (Wieland, 2017). For example, a meat eater does not want to consider the negative effects of his/her meat eating, because he/she *wants to go on eating meat*. Considering all the negative impacts would question the practice, and endanger it. In a way, this could be seen as a kind of a permanent want-self situation, whereby the should-self never gets a say. Wieland emphasizes the strength of wilful/strategic ignorance by arguing that "the claim that it is implausible that people could [stay] wilfully ignorant for so long underestimates the force of wilful ignorance" (idem:118). Wieland argues that wilful/strategic ignorance is motivated by *backward-looking* and *forward-looking self-interest*, which again can be seen relating to a more permanent reign of the want-self values while the should-self values (and the resulting emotional conflict) get strategically ignored:

> We do not want to consider whether our practices are wrong, first because we have engaged in them for too long, and realizing this will seriously affect the image we have of ourselves. Second, we do not want to consider it, because it's in our interests if we stay ignorant: slaveholders want to keep their cheap workers, and consumers want to keep on buying cheap clothes.
> Wieland (2017:118)

As I argued in Chapter 2, the low awareness of issues to do with meat is very likely linked to strategic ignorance and denial of the related knowledge and information. Similarly to people not wanting to know how meat animals are treated, people do not want to know — even though they actually do, in some ways at least — the environmental impacts of intensive animal agriculture. Such a theory is supported by some empirical data. A study using data from the 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey[95] found that *more than a third* of those who continued to eat meat as before and had no intentions to change their practices, did not have an opinion on a question regarding whether eating no meat or less meat is better for the animals themselves, the environment, or human health (Lee & Simpson, 2016). Usually such a large proportion of "neither agree nor disagree" answers would be a sign of a poorly phrased question, but in this case, the authors suspect it relates to either lack of awareness, or "perhaps a feeling of not wanting to engage with [the issues]" (idem:11). I believe that indeed, rather than a case of true low awareness, this is a case of strategic ignorance of knowledge. Further, in this group of respondents (continuing to eat meat as before), only 25% thought that eating less or no meat would be better for animals, whereas 45% of all respondents thought so.[96] Moreover, de Boer et al. (2016) found in their study that meat eaters were less likely than those eating less or no meat to think that meat has a big impact on climate change.[97]

Steg (2015) argues that one situation where values facilitating sustainability may be strengthened is when scientific evidence indicates that unsustainability seriously threatens the current way of life. This, however, requires that such evidence is not ignored. Related to the value-action gap, the concept of a *knowledge-action gap* revolves around the dilemma of why knowledge — long the building block behind *public understanding of science* and a supposed cure for the *knowledge deficit* — does often not create the desired action. This is of course partly related to the same reasons why the value-action gap is an issue (but see Box 3.1). However, the difference is that no matter how much new knowledge is poured into society, this may have little or no impact when it is ignored to begin with: "it's always possible to wake someone from sleep, but no amount of noise will wake someone who is pretending to be asleep" (Foer, 2009:102). Strategic ignorance can, therefore, be seen as an enemy of sustainability.

When *uncertainty* of knowledge exists, it is easier to remain strategically ignorant (e.g. van der Weele, 2013). Tenbrunsel et al. (2010) argue that uncertainty and doubt let the want-self dominate more easily, and so, engaging with behaviour more in line with the should-self, and the knowledge it may hold, is not necessary. In the case of industries wanting to sustain themselves, maintaining, creating or *manufacturing uncertainty* (Michaels, 2008) about the negative effects of their business-as-usual is therefore greatly beneficial, as already mentioned in Chapter 2. Similar to climate change as a whole, the meat crisis is complex (even regarding the contribution the meat system makes to climate change), and therefore, the easily created uncertainty gives an advantage to those opposing reductions in meat production and consumption, such as the related industries (Wellesley et al., 2015).

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[95] Performed annually since 1983.

[96] Even so, 45% is a low proportion thinking that not eating meat, or eating less meat, would be better for the animals, at least if "animals" refer to "animal welfare". Out of all the respondents, 31% thought that eating less or no meat would be better for the environment, while 21% out of the regular meat eaters thought so.

[97] It may of course be that those believing in the impacts from meat had reduced their meat eating, while those not believing in it had not reduced their meat eating. But this would imply straightforward rational behaviour in a matter (eating meat) not usually thought of as rational.

Strategic ignorance does not only exist at the level of the individual. It is collective as well (van der Weele, 2013). Norgaard (2011) argues that the denial of climate change has been socially and culturally organised. It has been supported by the current *dominant social paradigm* (e.g. Peattie, 2011, see also Box 3.3) and by the strategic nature of the denial. It connects to societal value priorities that, as more stable, can be difficult to influence, but easy to ignore (in terms of value conflicts), and emotions that are difficult to confront, yet *not* easy to ignore altogether.[98] Mont and Power (2013) note that cognitive dissonance itself has been largely ignored in policymaking.[99]

Huddard-Kennedy et al. (2015) refer to the potential of discursive consciousness to question and potentially change unsustainable practices. This relates to discourses (the topic of the next section), but discursive consciousness is likely to drive change only when the related values and emotions are addressed. Without this, strategic ignorance can block the awareness that reflexivity requires.

On addressing values, value priorities and dispositions, and conflicts, Macdiarmid et al. (2016) conclude from their study in Scotland on the awareness of impacts on the environment and climate from the meat system that a certain *moral disengagement*[100] around meat is obvious. Regardless of evidence against meat eating, people want to keep on eating it. Macdiarmid and colleagues emphasize the importance of considering the many strong "meat values" related to eating meat, such as pleasure, identity, status, masculinity, tradition and sociality.[101] For any change to take place, these values must be addressed first, they argue.

On addressing emotions, van der Weele (e.g. 2013) believes in the potential of more awareness of feelings of ambivalence in lessening strategic ignorance. Further, unless we allow ourselves to feel negative emotions, for example, climate-change related fears, and the emotional conflicts, for example, regarding the practice of eating animals, or other unsustainable practices, and unless we allow ourselves to be motivated by these emotions rather than demotivated by ignoring them, the inertia that has impeded adequate global responses to big sustainability challenges so far will not be overcome (Andrews, 2017b; Andrews & Hoggett, 2019).

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[98] Hence the lower emotional energy in connection with strategic ignorance in Figure 3.7.

[99] Is this a case of strategic ignorance of strategic ignorance?

[100] The concept of moral disengagement is originally from Albert Bandura (1986). See also a discussion on moral engagement and meat eating in Graça et al. (2014).

[101] Meat values, as opposed to more general food values discussed earlier in this chapter.

3.4 Linking practices to discourses

Drawing on from insights in the above section on values, emotions, and knowledge, all in connection with general understandings and social practices, this section will make the link from practices to discourses, via correspondence between general understandings (on the side of practices) and cognitive frames (on the side of discourses). This section, however, starts with discussing the concept of discursive consciousness, critical for purposively changing practices. Later the concept of discursively open practices will be introduced, before making the final jump between practices and discourses.

3.4.1 Discursive consciousness

In Giddens' duality of consciousness, practical consciousness is comprised of "the mental states and knowledge that allow individuals to engage in routine everyday activity" (Huddart Kennedy et al., 2015:8), such as riding a bike. These mental states allow us to perform most of our daily activities without much effort. Strong versions of practice theories argue that practical consciousness is our "default mode of engagement with the world" (Warde, 2014:292). Discursive consciousness, on the other hand, is about being able to verbally express what, how and why we and others do what we do. In discursive consciousness, everyday practices can be (not effortlessly, but nonetheless) "questioned or challenged, and as they are reconsidered, dismantling (and changing) a practice becomes possible" (Huddart Kennedy et al., 2015:9). To Warde (2014:292), discursive consciousness consists of "irregular and occasional" moments of attention, reflection and decisions — normal to practices as such, even when only rare.[102]

Giddens (1984) argues that the line between discursive and practical consciousness on the one hand, and the unconscious on the other, is strong, and stronger than that between discursive and practical consciousness. However, it may be that the line between the unconscious and practical consciousness is not very strict at all (or does not even really exist), being that it seems likely, from studying brain activity, that at least some of our decisions are, in fact, first made unconsciously, and only rationalized afterwards (e.g. Chatterton, 2016). The rationalization leads us to believe that we have made such decisions consciously. Structuration theory maintains that much of our decision making regarding our daily routine practices takes place in practical consciousness, and so, combining brain sciences with Giddens, these two states of mind — unconsciousness combined with rationalization, and practical consciousness — may not be so far from each other, and we use them more than we might assume. However, even if a significant amount of decision making does not take place within discursive consciousness, there is little doubt that reflection on issues, our own practices, or those of others, does take place in conscious thinking, where we are also able to put ideas, knowledge, emotions, preferences, attitudes, value priorities or dispositions, etc. into words.[103]

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[102] To Warde (2014), social sciences should focus on the more common "mindless" action, including routine thinking and saying. He does not, however, discuss what impact a changing situation (new problems, new elements of practices, new discourses) could have, e.g. by making discursive consciousness more common.

When connecting discursive consciousness to the concept of strategic ignorance, they can be seen to an extent as opposing situations. When we are being strategically ignorant, we cannot fully reflect on our practices, and we tend to repress (into the unconscious) the conflicting emotions rising from the value conflict. Warde (2014) argues that social sciences should not focus all their attention on the exceptional moments of discursive consciousness. However, I would say that for purposive change in practices involving strategic ignorance, those rare moments can be greatly beneficial, and therefore, worth focusing attention on. In addition to strategic ignorance, the issue of dominant paradigms, frames, and ideologies can keep individuals and societies from engaging in discursive consciousness.[104] This is a topic returned to later on in this chapter.

In connection with everyday practices, discursive consciousness normally only arises when things go wrong (Spaargaren, 1997), and some new, corrective action or actions need to be performed. Perhaps the practice in question even requires larger changes. The corrective action is likely felt necessary, due to a “threat” of some sort. Spaargaren uses the example of a system that delivers water to people. We are likely to become aware, discursively conscious, of the system only when tap water turns brown, the pipes are leaking, or there is some similar threat to the continuity of our water use practices. Instead of engaging in strategic ignorance of the problem, we normally do something to take care of it, and once that is done, we are able to return to practical consciousness regarding using tap water. There are importantly, however, no real value conflicts involved, and therefore, wanting to take care of the problem is straightforward. In terms of sustainability, it is, in principle, evident what is "going wrong", but at least until now, and for most people, the threats are not enough to counter strategic ignorance, due to the significant value conflicts and repressed emotions involved.

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[103] In the model of social practices contained in Shove et al. (2012), practical consciousness falls within the element of competencies, and discursive consciousness would potentially fall within the element of meanings, although this is not discussed. By using general understandings instead of meanings in Figure 3.3a, it is easier to see discursive consciousness connecting to general understandings which Welch and Warde (2017) argue display both discursive and tacit components.

[104] One could argue that the invisibility of dominant paradigms, ideologies, or frames could even be a bigger problem than strategic ignorance. However, there are attempts, e.g. via the degrowth movement, to address the paradigm side. There seems to be much less discussion of strategic ignorance in the sense discussed in this chapter. An earlier example of such discussion as regards climate change can be found in Norgaard (2011).

Likely, discursive consciousness arises more easily in connection with weaker habits where performances of practices have more variation, and value priorities change more easily, and more conscious choices are made in any case. Therefore, some people may experience engaging in more sustainable practices, such as eating less or no meat, easier than others do.

It may also be that when enough things start changing at the level of practice elements, the impersonal "something going wrong" — e.g. pollution, harm to animals, climate change — starts to feel more personal, especially, if the changed practice elements offer ways to change performances of practices. In the case of eating animals, this can be a question of new material elements (the new meats), new competencies (learning how to cook in a flexitarian way), or new general understandings (new meanings of meat, new discourses emphasizing values that facilitate sustainability, new social norms for expressing difficult emotions).[105]

As discussed in Section 3.3.2, focusing and reflecting on values facilitating sustainability can make them more often prioritized (Burford et al., 2015; Crompton, 2016; Lekes et al., 2012), in everyday practices as well (Maio, 2001). This can happen at the level of the individual, and, more importantly for sustained change, at the level of organisations (Hargreaves, 2011), and at the societal level, through discourses and the actions of governments (Hoff-Elimari et al., 2014).

Addressing (individual and societal) value priorities and dispositions, however, may not be enough, if the related emotions are not addressed. Andrews (2018) sees possibilities for this through the building of new social norms for expressing emotions related to climate change or other sustainability-related threats. The meat system is involved in most large-scale environmental issues. So, if we are able to be more aware of our ambivalences — express not only anxieties about threats, but also feelings of loss of our current way of life which must be transformed, and perhaps hope for a future — we may be able to ignore knowledge less and do more corrective actions. All of the above could be facilitated by societal discourses on sustainability-related issues focusing on value priorities and dispositions, and expressions of emotions, in order to address the strategic ignorance. Most likely one could help the other, so that focus on values could bring up related emotions, and focus on expressions of emotions could assist in clarifying values.

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[105] Regarding new social norms for expressing difficult emotions about the ecological crisis, see Andrews (2018).

Meat-eating related practices and discursive consciousness

An example specific to meat eating where practices have entered discursive consciousness and produced change can be seen in the case of *conscious flexitarians* who, according to the study by Verain et al. (2015), place the responsibility for change on regular people (including themselves), *more* than on other societal elements, including governments, supermarkets and various organisations, such as corporations more widely. These all get their share of responsibility. A conclusion may be made that, having changed their practices consciously, these people accept responsibility for themselves as well. This can be seen as conscious flexitarians showing their *political agency* which requires both intentionality and autonomy (Halkier & Holm, 2008).[106,107]

Finally, reframing climate change discourses by paying more attention to human-animal relations, such as those related to eating animals, could give us a more accurate picture of both the causality and effects of climate change (Twine, 2014). Specifically, it could encourage reflexivity — discursive consciousness — about responsibility and the urgency of change towards sustainability.

3.4.2 General links between practices and discourses

Even if only an occasional state of mind, discursive consciousness of either practice performances, or practices as entities, is one way that social practices and discourses are linked. Further, discourses help to “shape the practical ways that people and institutions define and respond to given problems” (Tonkiss, 2004:375). In terms of practice elements, discourses can be said to shape general understandings. Moreover, central to the sociology of expectations (Magneson Chiles, 2013:514) is the idea that ”speculation upon what might happen tomorrow makes things happen in the present day”, in other words, expectations are performative. So, what we expect from tomorrow, for example, in terms of how humans will get their protein in 2050, influences our actions, practices and policies today, even though 2050 is still far in the future. Discourses, and their boundaries, define what is deemed possible, what the range of issues and their solutions are. As an example, discourses regarding cell- or plant-based meat push the boundaries of what meat is, and the

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[106] The study by Halkier and Holm indicated that 20% of the Danish people would identify with such political agency.

[107] More recently, Koch (2020) examines political consumption in the case of the popular plant-based milk product manufacturer Oatly.

mere *idea* of flexitarianism produces a workable solution to the issue of sufficient future protein for the world.

Although not focusing on discourses in her own writing on social practices, Elizabeth Shove (personal communication, 26 February 2018) agrees that discourses can be seen as part of practices, and as means of connection between them as well.

Most practices as such involve a smaller or larger component of discourses. Some practices involve more discourse only temporarily, or in some cultures more than in others. Discourses can be an inherent part of many practices, for example, legal practices or teaching practices, whereby discourses and practices are "enmeshed with each other" (Daniel Welch, personal communication, 5 September 2017). Importantly, the discourse *within* a practice and the discourse *of* a practice are often not separable. For example, in food practices, we talk about the food we buy, cook and eat, but talking (about food and other things) is also a big part of social cooking and eating. Much of this is intertwined, and these discourses remake the practice performances while sometimes affecting the practices as entities.

Welch (2017b) refers to *practice-discourse assemblages*, and he agrees that practice related ideologies such as veganism or carnism can be seen as such assemblages. Regarding the dynamics of veganism and carnism:

> …in European societies most […vegans…] choose to become vegan […] through exposure to discourse around veganism, and vegan discourse is tightly enmeshed with the practice of being vegan, whereas for carnism, the discursive elements are both more culturally widespread and perhaps less tightly integrated with practice.
> Daniel Welch, personal communication, 5 September 2017

While critical, the relationship between practices and discourses, and the ways discourses can affect practices, have until now, however, not been widely studied. Davide Nicolini (personal communication, 26 February 2018) suspects that this is partly because the issue falls between disciplines. Discourse scholars do not focus on the effects of discourse on social practices in general, and especially contemporary social practice theorists rarely discuss discourse.[108]

3.4.3 Discursively open practices

Concluding from the above, it seems indeed that practices can change partly through changing discourses. Although at the level of practice performances changes are often slow and resisted by the complexities of the web of practices as entities, at the level of discourses things may move faster. With the term *discursively open practice,* I refer to a practice that may be well established and discursively dominant in society but is still increasingly being questioned, creating tensions between different values, affecting general discourses and creating openings to different ways of going about the practice. Welch (personal communication, 5 September 2017) formulates this as practices potentially being opened up for change by "moving from the doxic/pre-reflexive to the discursive/reflexive".[109]

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[108] Foucault did work on both spheres, and their combinations. However, as I noted in Chapter 1, I am focusing in this book on the contemporary social practice theories and their views on change towards sustainability.

Especially notable in such discursively open practices can be different and new meanings (replacing or) co-occurring alongside old meanings. The discourses also disseminate the new meanings and potential new ways of doing things to a wider social group or society. I would argue that meat-eating related practices are an emerging case of discursively open practices.

Shove (personal communication, 26 February 2018) states that "in a way, all practices are 'open' […] though some are perhaps more so, at particular times, than others". If all practices are open in principle, then differences between more stable and changing practices may partly lie in the discursive openness/closeness of practices. Discursively open practices may be purposively challenged, whereas, practices that are discursively closed may change on their own, or not. Discursive consciousness can be seen to be a key component of discursively open practices.

3.4.4 General understandings and discourses

As Foucault has stated, discourses produced knowledge, beliefs and "truths" (Seppänen & Väliverronen, 2012), and thereby they contribute to producing general understandings within social practices. Welch and Warde (2017:184) argue that general understandings may originate in either discourses or practices, sitting "somewhere across the boundary between the discursive and the non-discursive". Further, they contain both tacit and discursive elements, therefore, connecting to (embodied) competencies as an element of social practices. General understandings as a concept focus attention on the relationship between practices and discourses, a "thorny" problem for social practice theories, according to Welch and Warde.

Welch and Warde (2017) see general understandings as components of individual practices and as connections between different practices, similar to Schatzki (2002). New general understandings, as well as new practices, can be seen as results of problematized existing understandings, "commonly in the context of socio-technical and political-economic change" (Welch, 2017b:9).

In conclusion, general understandings connect discourses to practices, and change in practices can start from changing general understandings, for example, the meaning of "meat". Additionally, we may be able to become *aware* of the general understandings of particular practices through discourses, i.e. through discursive consciousness which can result in discursively open practices. The next section will continue with the discussion on the side of discourses.

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[109] In sociology, *doxic* refers to something taken for granted, being unquestioned.

3.5 Further to the side of discourses

In this section, I will first present the discourse counterparts to general understandings, i.e. cognitive frames, and then go deeper into some discourse theory, discussing framing, ideologies and critical discourse analysis, all linked to this conceptual structure and to the empirical data analysis in Chapter 5.

3.5.1 Cognitive frames

With reference to Figure 3.3c, the way general understandings are conceptualised by Welch and Warde (2017), and further elaborated on above as regards their connections to values, emotions, and knowledge, bears a strong resemblance to the way cognitive frames are conceptualised, for example, by Lakoff (2010). I, therefore, propose considering general understandings and cognitive frames to be counterparts, representing similar elements common to both practices and discourses.

Kuypers (2010:301) explains that "when highlighting some aspect of reality over other aspects, frames act to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest remedies". Cognitive frames are stored in our long-term memories, and connected to meanings, experiences, emotional components and values (e.g. Darnton & Kirk, 2011; Lakoff, 2010). Semino et al. (2016) argue that frames are connected to agency and empowerment (or lack of agency and disempowerment).[110] When a particular frame is activated, the whole structure (of related knowledge, values, and emotions) it is connected to in our brains is also activated. Lakoff (e.g. 2010) states that human thinking, feeling and social interaction is fundamentally structured by cognitive frames.

While general understandings (in the form conceptualised in this book) are related to practices, cognitive frames are very often related to practices as well, but in principle, cognitive frames are a broader concept. To give an example related to practices, if we see a pig in a neighbour's backyard, this may activate different long-term cognitive frames in us. It may activate a pig-as-bacon frame, and all the value, emotion and knowledge connections to it, including all the practices related to it (e.g. slaughtering, shopping, frying, eating a Sunday breakfast with family), some of which we may be engaged in as a result, or alternatively, we may only think or talk about them.[111] The pig may also activate a pig-in-need-of-rescue frame, and lead us to potentially engage in practices related to animal protection (talk to our neighbours, educate our kids, join a local organisation). Or the pig may activate a pig-as-pet frame, which may lead again to different consequences, perhaps we end up getting our own pig for our backyard, or we manage to ban our neighbour from having one, as we imagine pigs to be smelly. Since seeing the pig itself can carry very different frames, which frame the animal ends up activating most robustly in us, and what the consequences are, depends on the long-term frames stored in our brains, and our value priorities and dispositions which assist in the activation process, as well as our knowledge, and our emotional wants.

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[110] Semino et al. (2016) connect agency and empowerment so that empowerment or disempowerment equate to the degree of increased or decreased agency a person has, or perceives him/herself to have.

In discourses, on the other hand, things work out slightly differently. If a newspaper has a photo of a pig in someone's backyard, we tend to use the ready-made frames offered in the attached news article in order to interpret the theme of the photo (although the concrete framing of the photo has its impact too), and the meaning of the article. Some of these frames offered match our own long-term frames, and some of them do not. The ones that do match will activate the values, emotions, and knowledge attached to them, the ones that do not match may still eventually enter our long-term system of frames if they are persistently enough being offered through different discourses. For example, what can be called *sustainability-facilitating value frames* can engage the related values in individuals and may motivate for pro-environmental action. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, importantly, action itself may lead to changes in value dispositions, for example, in connection with social labelling.

Lakoff (2010) points to the key difference between short-term and long-term cognitive frames. We all have a large number of frames within our minds, some short-term (recently formed, but possibly disappearing when there is not enough reinforcement), but most long-term. When something we do, hear, read, or see (or taste, smell or touch) activates a certain frame, this tends to be one of the long-term frames. Long-term frames are well-established, whereas new frames are first short-term frames before some of them may become new long-term frames. This process may take quite some time, however (Lakoff, 2010).

At the societal level, long-term societal (or cultural) frames produce long-term societal (or cultural) meanings, both linking to societal value priorities. As Lorek and Fuchs (2011) argue, societal actors with discursive power (such as non-governmental organisations) may be given a task of drawing attention to sustainability-facilitating societal value priorities, in connection with a sustainability transformation. This can then also be in opposition to the discursive power corporations and industries have (see also Fuchs et al., 2016).

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[111] In the future, seeing such a pig might indicate the production of cultivated meat (see van der Weele and Driessen, 2013).

To conclude from points made above and earlier in this chapter, there are several ways general understandings and cognitive frames are conceptually similar. First, general understandings are elements of individual practices, but they are also common to and connecting different practices. Correspondingly, cognitive frames can be part of single discourses while connecting different discourses as well. Further, frames can connect different practices. For example, a *sustainability frame* connects different sustainability-related practices, such as recycling, avoiding private car use, or not eating meat (see Box 3.3). Second, through their bodily connection, general understandings relate to values, emotions, and knowledge, and produce meanings, all similar to cognitive frames. Third, general understandings are argued to sit between discourses and practices. It can be equally said, for example, that cognitive frames interpret discourses for the benefit of various practices. And finally, *ideologies* can be reproduced in everyday action through general understandings (Billig, 1995; Welch & Warde, 2017).[112] Likewise, ideologies are reproduced (and represented) by frames, and frames can reflect ideologies, as I will discuss later in this chapter. But first, Box 3.3 discusses the concepts of societal master frames and dominant paradigms. In the next section, I will focus on framing devices (Strydom, 2000) which are relevant to analysing frames, and therefore the data analysis in Chapter 5.

Box 3.3. Societal master frames and dominant paradigms

Strydom (2000) refers to three historical *master frames* of modernity, from the 16th century onwards. They are the rights frame, the justice frame and the current responsibility frame, around from the late 20th century. All three master frames are still present, but the first two have currently less dominance. These frames have provided a structure for various *crisis discourses* during each historical period, including the current crisis discourse of responsibility where the main concern is the survival of society in its natural environment. Indeed, a responsibility frame is present in different forms in current societies, either as consumer/individual responsibility, societal responsibility or co-responsibility, with the last one being the original sense in Strydom (2000, but originally from Apel, 1991). Co-responsibility "brings a public level of responsibility for common or shared problems into play without disburdening individuals of their personal responsibility" (Strydom, 1999:67).

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[112] Welch and Warde refer, for example, to *banal nationalism* which refers to the ideology of nationalism expressed in everyday actions and practices of people.

However, from another angle, a *dominant social paradigm* (term originally from Pirages & Ehrlich, 1974) can be seen as related to societal master frames as well, perhaps as an umbrella term. Although as a concept, a dominant social paradigm does not specifically link to any particular ideologies (or frames), it supports and reflects the dominant ideologies that are present at any particular time or location. A dominant social paradigm "helps make sense of an otherwise incomprehensible universe and […] make organized activity possible" (Pirages & Ehrlich, 1974:23). The current dominant social paradigm in the globalized world is in conflict with a potential sustainability master frame (e.g. Peattie, 2011), as it understands humans as superior to other species, and the Earth to provide unlimited resources for humans (Park, 2007). Moreover, disconnection from nature, dependence on and faith in technology and markets, along with consumerism and materialism are considered to be part of the current dominant social paradigm (Peattie, 2011). Berzonsky and Moser (2017; the below list is directly quoted from p. 16; see also for a list of further sources Berzonsky and Moser used) list the values relating to the current dominant social paradigm that they see being problematic for sustainability as follows, with the descriptions giving the *extreme expressions* of each value:

Anthropocentrism Gives humans absolute superiority over any other part of nature, ultimately devaluing all things non-human; becomes speciesism and human chauvinism that rejects all human embeddedness in and dependence on non-human nature.

Dominion over nature Justifies human appropriation of and control over non-human nature for human benefit only.

Scientism Claims that the positive natural sciences provide the only model of explanation of the phenomena (natural and social) of the world and tie the rational, detached, science-based exploration and understanding of the world to the modernist ambition of becoming all-powerful, freeing humanity from the bonds of nature.

Dualism Insists on the physical and moral separation of humans from nature, fostering a distancing of the material from the divine, of mind from matter, and devaluing all that which is believed to be embodied in the material (feminine, indigenous, body, Earth) relative to its opposite (masculine, rational, mind, God).

Individualism Elevates the individual over the communal, insisting on individual rights over mutuality and responsibility; it glorifies egocentrism and selfish achievements while negating the psychological and social benefits of altruism and self-transcendence or even denying equal rights to and responsibility toward other humans and non-humans.

Freedom Gives licence to live beyond or without limits and consume without restraint or regard for others, the environment or the future, and as such insists on human exceptionalism.

Never-ending progress and growth Expresses a future orientation that unwaveringly anticipates improvement over the past and present; has become virtually synonymous with economic development and higher levels of material consumption.

Further on frames, Strydom (2000) argues that discourses tend to move societies from one master frame to a new master frame, and during the transition period, there is competition between different frames. In his thorough analysis, Strydom shows how such competition has happened in the past between different master frames. This concept of competing frames can be applied to the conflict — playing out in discourses — between the current dominant social paradigm and a potential future sustainability master frame. The former tends to blur and obscure the idea of responsibility, seemingly placing it largely on consumers, on the one hand, but relying on market mechanisms to solve problems, on the other hand. The sustainability master frame, however, contains the idea of co-responsibility — including individuals, but heavily also other societal actors, such as governments and businesses — and does not rely on “the system” to solve problems on its own.

A final point about frames as such, Olsen (2014) notes that frames that work together can build a longer *narrative*, or a *story*. Creating new narratives can be an important part of normalising something new. An increasing amount of calls are indeed made for positive frames and narratives about sustainable futures, both in academic literature (e.g. Stibbe, 2015), within global organisations (e.g. Corner et al., 2018)[113] and in the media.[114]

While there is no categorical proof yet that hope is effective in making change happen (Chapman et al., 2017), positive narratives are not only producing hope, they are also about being able to imagine the future to aim for.[115] Lakoff (2010) stresses the importance of stories — for effective change in society — that exemplify values and rouse emotions. Co-responsibility could be one useful value to include in such stories. Further, discourse regarding sustainability is argued to more usefully focus on the positive side effects, and gains rather than losses (Lorek & Vergragt, 2015). For example, well-being has already largely decoupled from economic growth in the Global North, and similarly, well-being does not have to be tied to consumption.

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[113] A report commissioned by Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

[114] See e.g. https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/blog/telling-positive-stories-sustainability-marketing, in the online Guardian, 21 January 2013.

[115] Backcasting works in a similar way, starting with a desirable future, and subsequently identifying policies etc. that lead to such a future (see e.g. Vergragt & Quist, 2011).

Meat-eating related practices and narratives

There are calls for new stories about positive futures where animals are no longer farmed for food. Currently, we have difficulties imagining a world without meat animals, arguably hindering change. In his 2017 film, Marc Pierschell tries to portray narratives of such futures.[116]

The meat and dairy industry has used stories to successfully sell their products for decades as "healthy, delicious, masculine, natural, and a path to love" (Stibbe, 2018:1). Stibbe calls for such stories to now be resisted, and instead, a negative image of meat, and positive visions of animals as "beings deserving respect and consideration" to be conveyed, together with positivity regarding plant-based foods.

Finally, Ferrari (2016) discusses cultivated meat, whereby several narratives already exist. On one hand, instead of focusing on the novelty of this meat, Mark Post, the scientist behind the first cultivated hamburger in 2013, emphasizes continuity with conventional animal-based meat, in that cultivated meat is different only in the way it is produced, going directly from cells to meat, skipping the animal part. On the other hand, cultivated meat is often cast as an ethical product — both in terms of sustainability and animals — of new science, better able to meet the great challenges of our time, and a sign of moral progress for humankind. Cultivated meat offers "the material basis for a profound change in culture" (Ferrari, 2016:267). Van der Weele and Driessen (2013:647) suggest that the slate is still rather blank, and with different visions, we can explore the possibilities for cultivated meat, and "ethics can take an active part in these searches, by fostering a process that integrates (gut) feelings, imagination and rational thought". One of the visions they found in their workshops is "of a hybrid community of humans and animals that would allow for both the consumption of animal protein and meaningful relations with domestic (farm) animals" to continue.

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[116] See the discussion in the film *End of Meat* (by Marc Pierschell).

3.5.2 Framing devices

Welch (2017b) criticizes social practice theoretical research for using practices as the nearly exclusive focus of analysis, especially when the research is related to sustainability:

> The focus on practice-as-unit-of-analysis tends to militate away from the use of concepts that capture the kind of large-scale configurations of discourse and practice that enable engagement with […] concerns with consumer culture.
> Welch (2017b:3)

Instead, he finds that concepts that connect different practices may be more illuminating in this.[117] I argue that cognitive frames — being rather similar to general understandings — can work in this regard as the focus of analysis related to the societal discourses relevant to purposively changing social practices. This is especially so, due to the connections from cognitive frames to values, emotions, and knowledge.

Strydom (2000, drawing from Klaus Eder and William A. Gamson) suggests a useful method for frame analysis based on the idea of various frames building larger discourses, while themselves being built by different *framing devices*. A sentence within a particular discourse can contain one or more framing devices which reflect one or more frames, while a frame is often part of a larger discourse.

Strydom conceptualises three main cognitive framing devices that appear in different proportions, and with different emphasis, to build frames in all public discourses. These three framing devices include empirical objectivity (the factual world), moral responsibility (the social world) and aesthetic judgement (the subjective world). So, it can be said that people justify some action based on facts, based on duty or morality, and/or based on aesthetics (including meaningfulness, emotions, and sensations). Environmental action, for example, can be based on facts: recycling is necessary to have enough material resources, and less pollution; on morality: as citizens, it is our responsibility to recycle; and/or on meaningfulness: a desire towards balance with nature. As regards environmental inaction, however, people often reject facts through denial or strategic ignorance; do not want to be told what to do, in effect, avoiding responsibility; and are far removed from feeling, or even wanting to feel a connection to nature as such.

I call the three framing devices here, and in my analysis in Chapter 5, as *factual*, *normative* and *emotive*. The factual framing device relates to knowledge, the normative framing device relates, at a more abstract level, to values,[118] and the emotive framing device relates to emotions.[119] As Strydom argues:

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[117] For Welch (2017), one such connecting concept is *teleoaffective formations*, based on Schatzki's *teleoaffectivity* (2002). Teleoaffective formations are "characterised by a nexus of general understandings" (Welch, 2017:6).

> Employing the factual […] framing device, actors rely on empirical knowledge of the world in order to form a concept of it. The [normative] framing device is a cultural tool by means of which actors lay down certain principles according to which they behave towards the world. By means of the [emotive] framing device, actors organise their subjective experience and perception of the world in a way that makes it meaningful to them.
> Strydom (2000:64)

However, the division into three distinct framing devices simplifies matters to some extent, as there can be overlaps between them. Firstly, factual and normative can overlap, in situations where facts are used to convey a message related to normativity or morality, for example, "meat alternatives are better for the environment" (therefore you *should* eat meat alternatives instead of meat).[120] Further, normative and emotive can overlap, when the result of behaving in a normative or moral way produces something virtuous, for example, "not eating meat is the right thing to do" (and doing the right thing will make me happier). Despite these relevant overlaps, I keep the framing devices separate in the analysis, to explain and explore the structure more clearly. More specifically, I group statements *presented* as facts belonging to the factual, statements focusing *overtly* on the normative, as normative, and statements that are mainly related to emotional experiences belonging to the emotive, even if all of these may have some more hidden secondary elements. Analysing hidden elements is relevant, and in the data analysis, I do look for implicit meanings and hidden ideologies, for example. However, at the level of framing devices, I take the *apparent* framing device, for example, apparently factual statement, as contributing to a particular frame which can then contain hidden elements to be analysed further.

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[118] To Schwartz (2006a:3) values "transcend specific actions and situations. Obedience and honesty, for example, are values that may be relevant at work or in school, in sports, business, and politics, with family, friends, or strangers. This feature distinguishes values from narrower concepts like norms and attitudes that usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations". I consider the connection between values and norms therefore to be similar to that between values and attitudes. Values are a more abstract concept that can translate to either norms (how to behave in a certain situation) or attitudes (how to think about something particular and concrete).

[119] Strydom (2000) also calls the aesthetic framing device a conative framing device, with "conative" referring to effort, desire or striving for something. As both "aesthetic" and "conative" have a strong emotional content, I use the term "emotive".

[120] Using "alternative facts", or propaganda, in order to influence people also mixes these framing devices.

Table 3.1 shows an example of how discourses, frames and framing devices relate. The crisis or solution discourse related to a problem such as "there are lots of people on Earth, how can they have enough protein to eat?"[121] may be answered by the currently dominant frame of "meeting the demand with meat" or with what can be seen as a *counter* frame of "transformation to new meatways". These two frames tend to be then constructed with one or more of the three different types of framing devices (as explained above and depicted in Table 3.1), emphasized in different proportions.

Table 3.1: Linking discourses, frames and framing devices

Discourses	**Frames**	**Framing devices**
Crisis/solution discourse Problem: There are lots of people on Earth, how can they have enough protein to eat?	Meeting the demand with more meat	Factual: Demand for meat is strong and will be even stronger; obstacles to more production can be overcome
		Normative: Demand for meat must be met
		Emotive: Meat tastes good; meat is satisfying
	Transformation to new meatways	Factual: Both current production scale and increased production are unsustainable; new meatways are feasible
		Normative: Co-responsibility towards Earth, and towards providing humans enough protein
		Emotive: Affection towards nature and non-human animals; fear of consequences to all life of the business-as-usual approach

Notes: The phrases used in the right-hand side column are merely for illustrative purposes, and are not from the data analysed in Chapter 5; in this particular case, the frames reflect ideologies as well, a topic for the next section.

Importantly, I argue that these three framing devices can be seen to connect to the three domains of emotions, values, and knowledge that both cognitive frames and general understandings connect to. This is significant, as it contributes to these framing devices being effective in translating discourses, narratives, social interactions, behaviours and events to something people can relate to.[122,123]

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[121] I have framed "there are lots of people on Earth" intentionally colloquially. The same can be said more formally: Currently, there are 7.5 billion people, and this is expected to rise to 9-10 billion by 2050.

To note, at a more general level, what are often described as *framing tools*, such as metaphors, images, arguments, examples, or personification, are instances of how the three framing devices are frequently *expressed in context*. In other words, a framing device can be expressed with a tool such as an image, or a metaphor. C*onceptual metaphors* are a common and powerful framing tool which tend to rouse emotions, and with which perceptions are easily influenced, actions justified, and ideologies transmitted. Change can be generated by changing the metaphors used in discourses (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, but see also e.g. Foss, 2009). Chapter 4 will discuss conceptual metaphors some more, as they are related to the data analysis in Chapter 5.

3.5.3 Ideologies

Many of the frames that are built from framing devices reflect ideologies which in turn affect the manner and emphasis with which the three framing devices are applied, delimiting or defining an issue (Strydom, 2000). It seems clear that ideologies can colour answers to questions such as, how something is defined or perceived (factual), what is important, or how to behave (normative) and how something is experienced (emotive). Ideologies can also influence how the three framing devices are expressed, or emphasized in any particular frame. Moreover, as discussed above, ideologies can create an overlap between different framing devices, such as the factual and the normative.

Van Dijk (1995:243) defines ideologies as "basic systems of fundamental social cognitions [...] organizing the [...] social representations shared by members of groups". Social representations refer to shared notions, such as values, beliefs, ideas, knowledges, meanings, norms, practices, and so on. Van Dijk argues further that ideologies indirectly control frames that are used to interpret discourse. As regards the relationship between values and ideologies, ideologies are evaluative, in other words, they provide the basis for what is considered good or bad, right or wrong. Therefore, values are basic building blocks of ideologies, or rather, a certain value hierarchy forms the basis of an ideology.

When ideologies are dominant, they seem "neutral", and contain assumptions that stay largely unchallenged (Wodak, 2014). Wodak defines *hegemony* as a situ-

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[122] However, how people respond to the framing devices is a different matter. For example, the emotions seemingly connected to a particular framing device may be quite different from the emotions experienced through a discourse, or through a practice (before, during or after).

[123] One definition for *wisdom* contains the same three parts, knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics (see Hanlon et al., 2012).

ation where "people in a society think alike about certain matters, or even forget that there are alternatives to the status quo" (idem:306). *Dominant ideologies*, therefore, tend to not be visible: "the most common is the most obscure" (Lehtonen, 2000:7), or as van Dijk (2006) puts it, when an ideology becomes part of the "common ground" accepted by all, it is no longer a recognizable ideology. Dominant social paradigms contain one or often more somewhat related dominant ideologies (see Box 3.3). Dominant ideologies usually have *counter ideologies* which may paradoxically be more visible than the dominant ideologies, due to their state of being against the invisible dominant ideologies. When counter ideologies, however, become more prominent, they can make the dominant ideologies more visible as well.

Meat-eating related practices and ideologies

The dominant ideology as regards eating animals is carnism (Joy, 2010),[124] and what can be called counter ideologies in this regard are meatways such as veganism, vegetarianism, or flexitarianism. Although not every person needs to be engaged with an ideology through his or her eating practices, many practices do contain elements of ideologies, such as certain value priorities, and "consuming animal meat is related to [carnism ideology], just as a plant-based diet is related to beliefs regarding veganism or vegetarianism" (Monteiro et al., 2017:59). It is clear that veganism and vegetarianism as counter ideologies tend to be more visible than carnism. Flexitarianism may contain some ideological elements even when this meatway is not named (i.e. with people eating meat only occasionally but not identifying themselves or their behaviour through this practice), but it is likely to become somewhat more ideological once called "flexitarianism". However, the naming can have its benefits, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

On the other hand, naming carnism draws attention to the relationship of eating meat to not eating meat, and to how meat eating is supported discursively (Welch, personal communication, 5 September 2017). Being a dominant ideology, carnism is part of the dominant social paradigm. The new meats, such as cultivated meat, are argued by some (e.g. Miller, 2012) to support the dominant social paradigm, in this case, the importance of meat, and implicitly the idea of continued exploitation of animals.[125]

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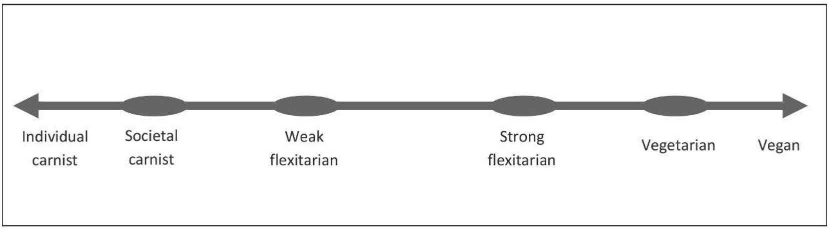
[124] Joy has identified *neocarnism* (Joy, 2011) as a more recent phenomenon which has followed the increasing questioning of the dominance of eating animals. Neocarnism consists of reactions such as eating "humane" meat, and an increased emphasis on justifying meat eating.

[125] On the other hand, the new meatways can offer a softer, more flexible counter point to conventional animal-based meat eating than vegetarianism and veganism have been able to do.

Monteiro et al. (2017) attempt to quantitatively measure carnism as an ideology,[126] using a two-way structure between *carnistic defence* and *carnistic dominance*. Carnistic defence is about defending the practice of eating animals, while not wanting to harm animals as such. Typically, this involves cognitive dissonance, strategic ignorance and various coping mechanisms, especially seeing meat as Necessary, Normal and Nice. Carnistic dominance is about supporting the killing of animals for meat, seeing meat eating as Natural, and typically this can involve being indifferent (*not* strategically ignorant) to the fate of animals, and possibly to other negative sides of the practice of eating animals. Monteiro and colleagues link carnistic domination in their study to other social domination behaviour (as do Dhont & Hodson, 2014), while strongly emphasizing that not all meat eaters would subscribe to such ideology: "carnism and meat eating are not synonymous, and it is important to distinguish between the behaviour (killing and eating animals) and the ideology associated with it (carnism)" (idem: 53).

In Section 3.3.1, I discussed the idea of seeing different ways to eat or not eat animals on a continuum (from Jallinoja et al., 2016). Figure 3.8 illustrates this continuum, from the point of view of meat-eating related practices at an individual level, but also from the ideological point of view.[127]

Figure 3.8: The continuum and journey of different meatways



Source: Figure by author. The idea of such a continuum is, however, present in literature (see Jallinoja et al., 2016).
Note: The positions of the vertical lines offer a rough estimation of the closeness of the meatways.

In Figure 3.8, I distinguish between an *individual* and a *societal carnist*, whereby an individual carnist would express carnistic dominance (Monteiro et al., 2017) and a societal carnist would express carnistic defence. Societal carnists prefer to eat meat on a regular (often daily) basis, out of a habit, a social convention, or because meat is Nice. At the same time, these people are often somewhat uneasy about their diet, and therefore employ coping strategies. A societal carnist has normalised regular meat eating, usually as a small child. Societies tend to be supportive of carnism, both as a practice and as an ideology, but as Monteiro and colleagues suggest, not all meat eaters would support carnism as an ideology. Individual carnists, however, would likely do so. Regardless of differences between individuals, the fact that the ideology is supported by most societies, makes eating animals easier, and not eating them harder.

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[126] Their study aims to empirically study what Joy (2010) concluded theoretically.

[127] This continuum is in fact a conceptual metaphor, and metaphors can carry their own ideologies. So may this one.

Carnistic values per se, are argued to be comprised of values such as: tradition, conformity and security (with social focus), and power, achievement and hedonism (with personal focus) (Suveri, 2016; see also Figure 3.5). These carnistic values are more likely to be prioritized by individual carnists than by societal carnists. Notably, sustainability-facilitating values, as defined in this book, are not present among these carnistic values.

The following will include some final points for this chapter on critical discourse analysis, particularly as regards research on social practices, a less common combination.[128]

3.5.4 Critical discourse analysis

Van Dijk (2015:467) understands *critical discourse analysis* as focusing "primarily on social problems and political issues rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside their social and political contexts". He sees such analysis of social problems as usually multidisciplinary. Further, van Dijk understands critical discourse analysis necessarily bridging the gap conventionally perceived between the micro and macro levels of society, also in terms of discourses.[129] As especially stronger social practice theories do not perceive such a gap, to begin with (see Section 3.1.1), critical discourse analysis can be seen fitting ontologically with social practice theories.

Van Dijk (2015:479) laments that no proper theory of critical discourse analysis exists yet: "despite a large number of empirical studies […], the details of the multidisciplinary theory of critical discourse analysis that should relate discourse and action to cognition and society are still on the agenda". My conceptual and analytical configurations fit to this area, in relating discourse and action (social practices) to cognition (cognitive frames), and the related notions of values, emotions, and knowledge.

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[128] However, Fairclough (2001a) sees critical discourse analysis as a method in social sciences.

[129] "Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro-level of analysis" (van Dijk, 2015:468).

Wodak (2014:304) argues that the "critical" in critical discourse analysis has three dimensions. Firstly, critical discourse analysis may attempt to make "explicit the implicit relationship between discourse, power, and ideology, challenging surface meanings, and not taking anything for granted". Secondly, being critical in critical discourse analysis includes being self-reflective and self-critical, criticizing the "critical". Thirdly, critical discourse analysis often aims to contribute to social change.

As Chapter 4 will explain further, I carry out my analysis in Chapter 5 mainly at three levels, starting from more basic content analysis, and, via the middle level that focuses on frames, ending with some sociological analysis. Frame analysis is a frequently used method in critical discourse analysis, in particular, because of its ability to bring out otherwise possibly hidden meanings, values and ideologies (Paltridge, 2006). I would argue that a focus on frames in analysing discourses on and within social practices highlights the extent to which ideologies can be coupled with social practices.

The first notion behind the critical discourse analysis in this book is that discourses are integral to social practices (Fairclough, 2001a), and discourses determine practices to a large extent, especially due to their influence on cognitive frames and general understandings. Critical discourse analysis focuses largely on the relationship between discourses and power relations in society and attempts to contribute to solving societal problems. The focus may be on power *in* discourse (struggle over interpretations of meaning) or power *over* discourse ("access to the stage"). While not forgetting those, I focus also on the third kind of power discussed by Wodak (2014), the power *of* discourse itself (influence of macro-structures of meaning or of frames) over societies and social practices. Fairclough (2015) refers to the power *behind* discourse which includes ideologies as power behind the discourse and is therefore related to the power *of* discourse. My data analysis (in Chapter 5) explores frames in a real-life discourse context, while my conceptual analysis (in this chapter) explores the power of frames as an element of social practices, among other things. I consider the uncovering and reassessment of this kind of power critical for a transformation towards more sustainable social practices.

The next and last section of this chapter will still discuss power and agency in different forms.

3.6 Power and agency

Much, but not all, of what I will discuss in this section has already been covered before in this chapter. Power and agency are, nevertheless, critical to purposive changes in social practices, or society at large, and therefore, I recap the relevant issues here.

To start with, however, I will briefly discuss the differences between power and agency. Sahakian and Wilhite (2014:28) reference Ortner (1989) for a definition of *agency* as “the capability or power to be the source and originator of acts”. I see agency as focused on an *actor*, usually human, and additionally, agency is usually directed towards change (usually positive for the actor). Agency is therefore mostly centred on human-induced intentional change. On the other hand, *power* can be about a human or non-human actor maintaining the status quo, about curbing change, and about furthering change, therefore, it can be agentive or non-agentive (dominative) power. Power is, therefore, a more general and neutral term.[130] In line with Sahakian and Wilhite (2014), I believe that *agentive power* is therefore similar to agency, but it can also be applied to non-human, including man-made and more abstract entities, such as materials, discourses, etc., furthering change in some form. Agency is the human form of agentive power and implies intention. In any particular context, agentive power (of a non-human entity) and agency (of a human actor) can work in opposite directions as well.

In the next sections, I will discuss different forms of power and agency relevant to changing social practices.

3.6.1 Non-agentive (dominative) power

As regards power and social practices more generally, a criticism social practice theories have sometimes received is not focusing on power enough (e.g. Hargreaves, 2011; Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016). Watson (2017) offers defence by saying that although, for example, Shove et al. (2012)[131] do not focus on power, power is ubiquitous in practices — and therefore not necessarily discussed. He goes on to say that especially the interconnectedness of different practices across different sites, large or small, is important in terms of power. Indeed several authors focus on this power of networks of practices which can be seen as the “structure” in a flat practice theory ontology.[132] Weenink and Spaargaren (2016:77) call this network an “enormous vibrant web of interconnected practices” that intermesh, overlap and connect. This seems a useful way to solve the conflict between flat and non-flat ontologies, i.e. seeing structure as the power of networks of practices.

Several authors connect the dominative power of interconnected practices to the challenges of transforming practices (e.g. Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016), especially from the point of view of potentially motivated and empowered individuals involved in such practices (Halkier, 2010; Verain et al., 2015). To Halkier (2010) in particular, *challenged consumption*, seen as practices, should be understood so that both the optimistic position where individuals can change things and the pessimistic position where they cannot, may be wrong. People *can* (and *want to*) change things, but the "messy" everyday contexts make it difficult.

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[130] Power can be negative or positive, so to speak, so that commonly desired change would be seen as related to positive power of a human or non-human entity, and vice versa.

[131] The third author of Shove et al. (2012) is Watson himself.

[132] Warde (2014:295) argues that a “strong theory of practices will insist that structural characteristics are nothing other than the effects of the intermingling of many practices”.

Further, the restrictive power of practices lies not only in the interconnected network aspect but also within the elements of particular practices. For example, we can only achieve what we can imagine possible (general understandings), we can only use or employ what is available (materialities, infrastructures), and we can only do what we are able to (competencies). This, in a way, connects to the iceberg metaphor for individual practices in Figure 3.2, whereby one reason practices are hard to change lies in the invisible main part of practices, consisting of all the elements.

To look at a specific interconnected mesh of practices, meat production — comprised of bundles of large-scale practices — and meat "consumption" — comprised of bundles of smaller-scale practices — usually connect at the consumption junction (shop, restaurant, etc.). Each side holds its own restrictive powers. As discussed in Chapter 2, the power relations between production and consumption in the meat system are often presented in societal discourses as consumption (demand) holding power over production, although many argue that it is the production (marketing, the spread of industrial animal agriculture and supermarkets etc., the related lobbying and other aspects of industry power)[133] holding power over consumption. With the new meatways, it could be that there is a somewhat more equal power relationship between production and consumption. With the new meats and the opportunities that they offer, producers would be pressed to respond to a need towards more sustainable production and products, and away from the current meat system. Similarly, with strong flexitarianism, the idea of continued growth of production or profits could be challenged. This would then relate to collective human agency, discussed further below.

3.6.2 Agentive power

Regarding the issue of agency and agentive power and social practice theories (see e.g. Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016), it may be that some of the differences, especially between the stronger and weaker versions of the theories, partly arise from the history of practice theories in the context of sustainable consumption being a reaction against behaviour change policies. In part, due to this history, social practice theorists may sometimes see agency narrowly defined as only being about individual human agency, rather than about collective agency in humans. Welch and Warde (2015) note indeed that collective agency has largely been ignored in social practice theories. Non-human agentive power is, however, often considered relevant to social practices.

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[133] See Fuchs et al. (2016) for a discussion of such dominative power.

Sahakian and Wilhite (2014) discuss agentive power within practices through the concept of distributed agentive power within the pillars of practices.[134] Below I will focus on three separate aspects of such distributed agentive power, namely, linked to discourses and general understandings, to materialities, and to human actors. There are several linkages between these spheres, which makes it impossible to separate them entirely. In short, the agentive power in discourses and general understandings can make people aware, reduce strategic ignorance and provide emotional agency; the agentive power in materialities makes change practically achievable; and the agentive power (agency) in humans, collectively or not, makes the actual purposive change possible.

3.6.3 Discourses and general understandings

As I discussed in Section 3.5.4, power in terms of discourses has many faces, but the one most relevant to the context of this book is the agentive power *of* discourses.

Earlier in this chapter, I argued for the agentive power of discursive consciousness, on the one hand, and of discursively open practices, on the other. Much of this connects to human agency, and in fact, it is the discursive consciousness of human "practitioners" that can create discursively open practices which in turn may be more susceptible to purposive change. Below are some of the links to literature.

Huddard-Kennedy et al. (2015) perceive discursive consciousness of and within social practices as creating agency. Halkier (2010) notes that some of the interventions by governments, companies or NGOs into unsustainable practices can be on purpose to initiate discourses which can then open practices up for revision, in other words, create what I call discursively open practices.

Further, arguably discourses on the new meatways, in a way, push people to reflect on their practices, and with that, make political choices, by consuming politically (e.g. less meat), or not, with the point being that discourses in a way force people to make choices, especially since not making a choice is also a choice.

Weenink and Spaargaren (2016) make a case for changes in emotionally charged general understandings, shared by several practices, helping to overcome the dominative power of the interconnectedness of practices. As argued earlier in this chapter, such general understandings are not only an element of practices but connect practices to discourses.

Lastly, individual words can have agentive power. For example, Chung et al. (2016) examine the difference between terms for certain kind of ground meat whereby those reading about “lean finely textured beef” were less concerned about risks related to ground meat than those reading about “pink slime” (an alternative term sometimes used for this type of meat by the media). Similarly, the new meanings of meat, such as those discussed in Section 3.3.1, may have agentive power to impact general understandings, and therefore also practices.

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[134] As explained earlier, the pillars are the social world, the material world and the human body.

3.6.4 Materialities

Social practice theories (e.g. Shove et al., 2012) refer to Bruno Latour and Actor Network Theory in that material things have agentive power. Although they lack “intelligibility, intentionality and affectivity”, materialities can have performative power to influence the ways practices unfold (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016:66).

As in the example I have given in Section 3.3.1, the first cultivated meat hamburger cooked in London in 2013 can be seen as having had agentive power to change discourses, cognitive frames and general understandings (e.g. in terms of what meat is). Together with other material developments — including the parallel development of the new plant-based meat products, and the attempts to popularise insect eating in the Global North — that took place in parallel and soon after the first cultivated meat hamburger, there have been concrete changes in the related industries. Further, although it is not known yet how many people have changed their meat-eating related practices due to the new plant-based meat products, such as the Impossible Burger, some likely have.[135] Even insect eating as a new option may have changed the practices of some people. Some may have changed their practices due to the new discourses brought on partly by these new developments. So, far, however, the most significant change from this particular material agentive power has been at the level of discourses, arguably in cognitive frames and general understandings.

3.6.5 Emotional and collective human agency

To Weenink and Spaargaren (2016), practices produce emotional energy, and this turns into emotional agency in humans. Weenink and Spaargaren, however, see this mostly as *collective emotional agency* which, importantly, has potential to both transform and maintain new practices (an example given by Weenink and Spaargaren is the vegan movement).

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[135] Data on any concrete changes at the level of eating practices is still lacking, however, and therefore, we can only talk about likelihoods and possibilities.

Further, as argued before, acknowledging ambivalence about conflicting values and emotions can, in some situations at least, lead to a sense of agency.[136] Lertzman's concept of *environmental melancholia* (Lertzman, 2015) can, in a way, be seen as the opposite of the emotional agency potentially gained from social practices. In environmental melancholia, not acknowledging emotions regarding, for example, environmental destruction or climate change, leads to disempowerment. Vice versa, a process of acknowledging these emotions can lead to empowerment and a sense of agency.

Apart from collective *emotional* agency, others have argued for the potential of collective agency for change in social practices. As mentioned above, Huddard-Kennedy et al. (2015) point to its potential through discursive consciousness. Moreover, Spaargaren et al. (2012) and van Otterloo (2012) discuss human agency from a transition theory point of view. To them, individual consumers collectively "put alternative views and practices on the map" and other societal actors, such as producers and retailers, can then take notice and incorporate changes in their professional practices. Spaargaren et al. (2012) refer to a *tipping point* after which a social movement is large enough to impact the system as such.[137] Van Otterloo (2012) uses the phrase "frappez, frappez toujours" which refers to keeping at it, repeating your point (individually or collectively) until something desirable happens.[138]

Finally, on collective agency, O'Brien (2018) discusses tackling all the dimensions of systemic transformation, from systems and practices to worldviews, collectively. In this process, individuals shift from being objects (to be changed) to being subjects.

3.6.6 Non-collective (individual) human agency

Last, and to many practice theorists the least, is the thorny issue of individual human agency which requires a few comments. There are two potential forms of individual human agency in connection with social practices; one is acting as a *regular individual* and having power to transform one's own practices, and the other is to act as a *change agent*, transforming practices either from within or from the outside, together with others or alone.

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[136] From the point of view of addressing *collective* strategic ignorance (see van der Weele, 2013), collective agency would need to be harnessed.

[137] According to the social tipping point argument, it may be enough for large-scale societal change to be triggered, if only 10% of people change their values and demand change (Urry, 2011; Xie et al., 2011). Erica Chenoweth has argued for an even lower percentage of 3.5% of active participants in civil resistance bringing about transformative societal change (see https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/02/why-nonviolent-resistance-beats-violent-force-in-effecting-social-political-change/).

[138] The Fridays for Future youth movement could be seen as an example of this.

Social practice theories tend to dismiss individual agency, although, as discussed in the above subsections and earlier in this chapter, individuals can be seen to have a certain amount of agency. In short, as Halkier (2010) argues, individual agency has to be seen in the "messy" context of the everyday performances of practices. Furthermore, in some practices, such as meat-eating related practices, individuals can be seen to have more potential for agency than in some other practices, more restricted by the general interconnectedness of practices. Halkier and Holm (2008) refer to *environmentally challenged food consumption* — such as eating vegetarian or organic food — as its own type of practice, showing political everyday agency, with the qualifying criteria of intentionality and autonomy. Eating in line with the new meatways can be seen equally political.

As regards how the publics feel about individual agency and responsibility, the meat consumption related focus group research by Wellesley et al. (2015) indicates that although in the United Kingdom and the United States, people might not take personal responsibility for causing climate change, for example, through having eaten large amounts of beef, they do (especially in the United States) seem to believe in individual agency. Further, in Brazil and China, personal responsibility for action was acknowledged among the focus group participants, and people seemed to be more open to modifying their behaviour accordingly.

The other way individual agency can have an effect is through the concept of change agent, collectively, or individually. As O'Brien argues:

> Directly recognizing and engaging people as agents of change can drastically speed up […] transformation processes because everyone is part of a system, and everyone has a sphere of influence. Activating conscious human agency that is critically reflective of individual and shared assumptions, beliefs and paradigms is a powerful way to shift norms and institutions in ways that support [a transformation].
>
> O'Brien (2018:158)

Individual change agents are discussed in detail by Sahakian and Wilhite (2014) in connection with several real-life cases of collectively changed practices. Moreover, Jallinoja et al. (2016) discuss the power of certain societal actors, such as NGOs, politicians, celebrity chefs and teachers of home economics, in potentially affecting change in meat-eating related practices. Finally, Verain et al. (2015) discuss the topic in terms of individual consumers (however, considering their constraints), for example, in terms of flexitarians creating change in their own particular environments. Further, individual action may lead to political change: "reformation of the self, including our behaviours as consumers, can inspire, inform and sustain political and cultural action".[139]

3.6.7 Ought implies can

A general principle in ethics states that *ought implies can* (Voget-Kleschin et al., 2015). In other words, we cannot claim that something needs to be done on moral grounds, if it is impossible, on cognitive, physical or psychological grounds. A certain amount of agency is required for responsibility to be given. The "ethical core issue regarding sustainable consumption" is the question of whether individuals are responsible for changing their practices as regards sustainability (idem:118). Voget-Kleschin and colleagues do see changing one's lifestyle, to contribute one's fair share, as one of the three core duties for individuals as regards sustainable consumption.[140] Importantly, however, this assumes that changing lifestyle is possible and does not *overburden* individuals.

Further, in addition to the challenges posed by societal power structures (Fuchs et al., 2016) affecting the "can", the cognitive and psychological hurdles for most individuals prevent the issue from being a *felt responsibility* (Luchs & Miller, 2015), as part of co-responsibility for sustainability shared by all societal actors. However, through the different sources of agentive power discussed in this Section 3.6, it may be possible to also tackle the problem of strategic ignorance. The example of conscious flexitarians (Verain et al., 2015) acknowledging co-responsibility, and using their political agency (Halkier & Holm, 2008) indicates that there are possibilities reflecting and applying the *ought implies can* principle.

Although practice theories have tended to argue against individual responsibility, Welch and Warde (2015:94) call for constructing "a plausible set of connections between the habits and routines of everyday life and lay normativity and collective mobilization". The new social norms Andrews (2018) sees as necessary to allow people to express more emotion regarding the overwhelming issues of environmental destruction and threats such as climate change, could be part of this, enabling cognitive and emotional labour to resolve strategic ignorance.

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[139] David George Haskell, 17 February 2019 at https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/feb/17/david-wallace-wells-uninhabitable-earth-review discussing responding to the climate crisis.

[140] The other two duties are: duties to comply (with institutions aiming for more sustainable consumption), and duties to promote (institutions, e.g. with political action, but also by example).

3.7 Conclusion and discussion

This conceptual chapter has covered a lot of ground in an interdisciplinary manner. First, I discussed different approaches to sustainability transformation, while focusing on social practice theories in more detail. Subsequently, I presented my social practice framework as a graph and then proceeded to explain it, especially focusing on the parts that relate to my particular areas of interest here, namely the connections between practices and discourses concerning change towards sustainability. The corresponding elements of general understandings (on the side of practices) and cognitive frames (on the side of discourses) form the main connection. Values, emotions, and knowledge importantly link to both of them. Discursive consciousness of conflicts between values, emotions, and knowledge, in addition to discursive consciousness of practices themselves is a necessary step towards discursively open practices which may subsequently be open to purposive transformation.

As regards values, I emphasized the importance of seeing societal, and especially individually held values relating to specific behaviour, as not static, but as differently ordered value priorities, partly doing away with the value-action gap concept. I explored the many ways that values and emotions connect, not the least in the form of strategic ignorance of value and emotion conflicts, and ignorance of the related knowledge. Further, I stressed the importance of discourses in defining current practices, especially through various dominant ideologies often carried by cognitive frames, and in potentially leading to the unbundling and rebundling of discursively open practices. At the end of the chapter, I recapped the potential for (distributed) agentive power in social practices and the related discourses and discussed the ethics-based *ought implies can* principle for co-responsibility for sustainable societies.

I consider the sustainability-facilitating values — including co-responsibility, concern for, and unity with nature, social justice and equality — to be relevant especially at the societal level, if and when embedded in discourses and societal master frames, ideologies, and paradigms. Societal value priorities can influence individual value dispositions, and vice versa, and as social practice theories would agree — with some supporting evidence from empirical research — doing can influence thinking, as well as the other way around. In other words, we need not necessarily first prioritize, for example, nature-related values to act in ways that support the wellbeing of nature, but while doing so, our individual value dispositions may also change.

Central concepts in this chapter, strategic ignorance and discursive consciousness, tend to work in opposite directions. Although somewhat uncomfortably, strategic ignorance helps people maintain the status quo, while discursive consciousness may offer opportunities for acknowledging the ambivalence regarding conflicting values and emotions, and thereby reflecting on practices with a more open and critical eye. Even strategic ignorance, however, although problematic, may be better for change than *true* ignorance, as strategic ignorance may already include a sense of responsibility (Onwezen & van der Weele, 2016), even if this responsibility is ignored.

Generally speaking, strategic ignorance may be an appropriate reaction in some issues — for example, we cater to terrorism, if we do *not* ignore it to an extent — but it is problematic in connection with many other societal issues, such as threats from climate change in general, and destruction of nature and its biodiversity through industrial animal agriculture in particular. As stated earlier in this chapter, strategic ignorance can, therefore, be seen directly in opposition to sustainability, as ignoring knowledge, and the related value and emotion conflicts, or ignoring difficult emotions themselves, may all help maintain unsustainability. Problems do not exist when they are ignored, so to speak. Addressing strategic ignorance — also through addressing values and emotions — is therefore vital.

The above links to the importance of societal discourses reflecting the "norms, standards and institutions" which Warde (2014:295) hopes to be a focus for social practice theoretical research in the future. Although Warde believes in the near-constant presence of practical rather than discursive consciousness in the everyday lives of people, discourses do reflect the rare instances of deliberation where changes can be instigated at any level of societies, including questioning the dominant social paradigms or master frames, and the dominant ideologies that often tend to invisibly restrict purposive change. Analysing discourses may partly help address the concern of Welch and Warde (2015) as regards the focus of social practice theoretical research largely staying at the micro-level of practice performances, and therefore it not being able to offer fully persuasive conceptual answers to policymakers on how to make societal change.

Further on policymaking, Shove et al. (2012) see the main benefit of social practice theories in their ability to redefine policy issues. Moreover, they see policymaking successfully changing practices, and behaviour with it when it: addresses all main elements of practices (including worldviews and meanings); involves also non-policy actors; recognizes the unpredictability of the process of practice transformation, and the perpetually moving targets for change; and builds networks and coalitions that facilitate the formation of new practices. Shove and colleagues ponder that one solution to unsustainable practices could be getting rid of bad practice elements, such as meat, or the valuing of convenience, in particular, since policymakers "often have a hand in influencing the range of elements in circulation" (idem:19). While trying to provoke and engender "a transition in dominant paradigms" (ibid.), Shove and colleagues wish for an explicitly practice-oriented approach to public policy.

As social practice theories argue, change is constant. However, humans do have the power to "change the change" (O'Brien, 2012:590), although this requires both agency and responsibility, and addressing the "conscious and unconscious assumptions, beliefs, values, identities, and emotions of individuals and groups that influence perceptions, interpretations, and actions" (idem: 589). Using social practice theories on analysing societal challenges as well as their potential solutions may be valuable — especially when adapted, as in this chapter, to include discourses, and when allowing for some emphasis on distributed agentive power.

Chapter 6 will reflect on this chapter in connection with both my overall conceptual research task and my more specific research question.