

Orchestrating Concepts: kitchen dynamics and regime change in *Good Housekeeping* and *Ideal Home*, 1922-2002

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Abstract

It has long been recognized that users and consumers actively appropriate new products and technologies and assimilate them into existing regimes and frames of reference. Much less has been written about how these frames evolve or about how processes of integration and appropriation are sustained and transformed. In this article we analyze 'the kitchen' not as a place but as an 'orchestrating concept'. We subject representations of the kitchen, as depicted in *Good Housekeeping* and *Ideal Home* (two of the foremost home magazines in Britain) from 1922 to 2002, to two types of analysis. We begin by showing how materials, images, and forms of competence 'hang together' at different points in time and how kitchen regimes are formed. We then explore ways of characterizing transitions between one kitchen regime and another. The result is an account not simply of the elements of which kitchens are made but of the changing relations between these constitutive ingredients. The article is at heart about the processes and dynamics of regime change. Although we focus on the kitchen throughout, we do so because we believe better understanding of how meta-level orchestrating concepts like 'the kitchen' develop is important for conceptualizing the dynamics of ordinary consumption and everyday practice.