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Not Just Small Potatoes: Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Moralizing of Markets

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Abstract. While there is a growing literature on moral markets that aim to create social value through market exchange, much of it has focused on how producer activism is able to legitimate new, institutionally complex, organizational and economic forms that are inscribed with competing market and social/community logics. Much less attention has been directed towards understanding how moral markets are scaled by the entry of large, established organizations. While the scaling of moral markets entails the risk of conservative goal transformation, we still know relatively little about how moral values become embedded in markets, providing an ongoing catalyst for social value creation. Based on a five-year ethnographic study, we show how cultural entrepreneurship associated with the creation of a cross-sector partnership, legitimated local food procurement by large, established organizations, enabling the scaling of the overall market. We argue that a key aspect of their success had to do with bridging the institutional void segregating local and industrial food logics. Based on our study, we highlight how this institutional void bridging was facilitated by cultural entrepreneurship that initially focused on communications that decoupled the values and practices associated with the local food logic, and subsequently, reinfused locavore values by valorizing stories and activities that recoupled those values to food procurement practices after the institutional void was diminished. We discuss the implications of our study for research on moral markets and cultural entrepreneurship.

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Keywords: moral markets • social movements • institutional void • cultural entrepreneurship • institutional theory/logics • sustainability/corporate

Introduction

Over the past couple of decades, a robust literature has emerged on how social movements facilitate the creation of new, morally oriented markets and organizations (e.g., Weber et al. 2008, Sine and Lee 2009, Vasi and King 2012, McInerney 2014, Schneiberg and Lounsbury 2017). This nascent literature on *moral markets* seeks to understand how, and to what extent, movement efforts are able to infuse economic activity with values other than wealth creation (e.g., Fourcade and Healy 2007, Stehr 2008, Schiller-Merkens and Balsiger 2019). Such moral value infusion is a particularly difficult challenge given that the construction of markets entails embracing a logic that values efficiency and wealth, which, in turn, tend to foster conservative goal transformation (Zald 1966) and cooptation (Selznick 1949).

However, research on moral markets suggests that, despite the allure and systemic power associated with market logics (Schildt et al. 2020), movement values can sometimes live on in some form, even if hidden from casual observers, as substantive inspiration to harness economic activity for social good. For instance, McInerney (2014) studied how social justice activists, called "Circuit Riders," pioneered a new market segment aimed at providing information technology services to grassroots and nonprofit organizations in support of social justice efforts. As the Circuit Riders market segment gained traction, it scaled by attracting the entry of large corporations such as IBM, Adobe, and Microsoft. In the process, however, the initial activist emphasis on social justice began to be eschewed in favor of a focus on efficiency and profits, resulting in the demise of many of the initial Circuit Rider initiatives. Meanwhile, a new social enterprise, NPower, stepped in. With funding from Microsoft, NPower carried the ideals of the Circuit Rider movement forward, albeit in a much more muted (i.e., market-oriented) form. In sum, McInerney's (2014) study of the Circuit Riders, highlighted how the entry of large corporations enabled the social mission and values of the initial 1990s

Circuit Rider movement to live on today in a variety of forms—such as in their programmatic outreach to First Nations communities in Canada (see, e.g., www.tsag.net/crtp.html).

Nonetheless, much of the prior research on movement-inspired markets has focused on the initial creation and legitimation of new markets, whether it be in the fields of information technology (McInerney 2014), solid waste (Lounsbury et al. 2003), beef (Weber et al. 2008), or agriculture (Lee et al. 2017). In these cases, the emphasis tends to zoom in on how the initial activists, often producers themselves, mobilize resources to instantiate their value-driven efforts in a newly created market. Much less systematic attention has been paid to the *downstream* effects of social movements on markets, which often involve efforts to somehow scale the formerly created market. This is of particular theoretical interest, because whereas the creation of a new moral market often involves insurgent efforts by a group of producer-activists who share a set of values, the scaling of existing moral markets typically involves the entry and participation of established organizations that are outsiders to the movement and that focus, nearly exclusively, on economic goals (Georgallis and Lee 2019).

This creates a particular vexing problem for those interested in scaling a moral market, because not only are the economic benefits associated with entry into a moral market often unclear or ambiguous (e.g., Hehenberger et al. 2019), but large, established organizations often perceive the social or environmental dimensions of a moral market as at odds with the market logic that they tend to take for granted. As with much of the literature at the interface of social movements and organizations, such problems are stoked by the institutional complexity that results from this clash of logics (Greenwood et al. 2011, Thornton et al. 2012, Schneiberg and Lounsbury 2017).

To shed light on how moral markets are scaled by the participation of established outsider organizations, we conducted a five-year (2014–2019) longitudinal field ethnography involving efforts by large, established organizations (e.g., hospitals, universities, conference centers) to enter a relatively undeveloped "locavore" market by procuring more of their food from local suppliers. Whereas most research on moral markets focuses on supply-side producers, here we focus on the cultivation of demand-side buyers to enable the building of a more robust locavore market. Prior to the beginning of our study, the food buyers had tried, on their own, to participate in the local food market. However, the highly institutionalized nature of the industrialized food system, in which the food buyers were embedded, made progress in this direction nearly impossible. This is because the industrialized food system, organized around the beliefs and practices of a transnational market logic, often directly conflicted with the beliefs and practices associated with the local food market that was informed by a community logic (see, e.g., Marquis and Lounsbury 2007).

We conceptualize the chasm between these two conflicting logics as an institutional void (Mair et al. 2012). Whereas some have conceptualized institutional voids as "empty spaces" where markets are inhibited due to the lack of certain legal rules and their enforcement (e.g., Khanna and Palepu 1997), Mair et al. (2012) usefully conceptualize institutional voids as the spaces that occur at the interface of multiple, conflicting institutional logics, where the "rules of the game" are perceived as ambiguous (Greenwood et al. 2011). Mair et al. (2012) pioneered the logic-centered use of the institutional void concept to show how a social innovation in Bangladesh, initially constrained by conflict among competing logics, was finally able to gain traction by facilitating interactions that diminished the perceived contradictions among logics. Even though prior literature on institutional voids has primarily concentrated on contexts in developing countries, we believe that this conceptualization is generalizable.

In our study setting, for instance, one of the biggest challenges was to cultivate a way to bridge the large divide that existed between industrialized (i.e., market) and local food (i.e., community) logics in a way that enabled large, established organizations to become active participants in, and scale, the local food market. Whereas activism behind the international locavore movement radically aims at the displacement of the industrialized food system (e.g., monocrops and concentrated animal feed operations), the expansion of local food markets in specific locations often requires a more pragmatic approach. In our context, it is not practical for large organizations to sole-source local food. Rather, the issue for these buyers is how to increase their capacity to buy local food as a complement to more industrialized food.

Foreshadowing our findings, we argue that cultural entrepreneurship (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001, 2019)—the skilled use and manipulation of cultural elements—was crucial to successful institutional void bridging. Generalizing DiMaggio's (1982, 1986) invocation of cultural entrepreneurship in the context of "highbrow" forms such as art museums, Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) theorized how entrepreneurs in varied contexts tell stories to enhance the legitimacy of a particular venture or initiative. Whereas this literature has expanded greatly over the past couple of decades (e.g., Gehman and Soublière 2017, Lounsbury and Glynn 2019), less attention has been paid to how cultural entrepreneurs enhance the legitimation of

new markets by altering logics and the relationships among conflicting logics.

In our case, this involved the tailoring of beliefs and practices associated with the local food logic to enable it to be more compatible with the industrialized foods logic. To understand how the institutional void between industrialized and local food logics was bridged, we follow the activities of a community-based cross-sector collaboration, the Local Foods Procurement Laboratory (the Laboratory),[1] which encouraged and supported food buyer entry into the local food market. The Laboratory was founded and directed by a particularly astute cultural entrepreneur, Jackie Haven, who had deep experiences with both logics, along with leadership training in the art of facilitating community-building to enable locavore markets to scale.

Given our limited knowledge of how moral markets are scaled, we aimed to ethnographically zoom into the processes by which cultural entrepreneurship enabled large organizations to enter, and thus contribute to the scaling of, the local food market in a particular geographic region. In doing so, we inductively develop a novel process model that details how the Laboratory, through its director Jackie, was able to facilitate the procurement of local food by large established organizations. As we set out to explore the participation of incumbent organizations in the local food market, we were presented with a puzzling development. Instead of supporting the food buyers in integrating the social and environmental values underpinning the societal-level logic of the local food market, the activist leader of the Laboratory (Jackie) seemingly brushed movement values aside, encouraging the cultivation of stories and other forms of communication that explicitly decoupled values from the practices of the local food logic. This decoupling was a key component of how the societal-level local food logic was translated into this particular geographic community context, most poignantly evidenced by the more technocratic definition of "local foods" that Laboratory members crafted and broadcast.

As we show, this decoupling was pursued *strategically* as an initial approach to gain buy-in from large, established organizations, facilitating efforts to construct an institutional infrastructure with which to scale the local food market (e.g., Greenwood et al. 2011, Hinings, Logue and Zietsma 2017, Logue and Grimes 2019). This institutional infrastructure mainly involved the development of new practices and procedures that enhanced connections and flows between large organizational buyers and local food suppliers. This included the cultivation of a more robust supply chain that followed appropriate certification procedures, as well as garnering support from key stakeholders in the community, including the government. We argue that this had the effect of diminishing the institutional void that segregated the logics of local and industrial foods, enabling Laboratory members to begin to tell stories that recoupled locavore values to the practices of local food procurement. In turn, large organizational food buyers were able to more fully embrace and express the broad values of the local food logic in their sayings and doings (Schatzki 2002). Going beyond conventional narratives of conservative goal transformation (Zald 1966), we unpack the novel theoretical processes that enabled this value infusion via recoupling.

In the next section, we theoretically situate our study in the literature on moral markets and cultural entrepreneurship. We then provide a broad overview of the locavore movement and introduce our specific local food market setting that includes the Laboratory. After discussing our research design and methods, we provide an analytical narrative that situates our findings theoretically and offers a process model of moral market scaling that focuses on the bridging of logics that are segregated by an institutional void. We close with a discussion of the implications of our research for the study of moral markets and cultural entrepreneurship, as well as for practice.

Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Construction of Institutionally Complex Moral Markets

The literature on moral markets focuses attention on the sources, processes, and outcomes of value conflict in market exchange systems, aiming to shed light on how the underlying moral orders of markets are created, sustained, and changed (Fourcade and Healy 2007, McInerney 2014, Schiller-Merkens and Balsiger 2019). This literature dovetails with a variety of scholarly efforts to uncover how market logics are twined to various logics related to community and societal welfare in the context of social entrepreneurship and hybrid organizing (e.g., Mair and Marti 2006, Battilana and Lee 2014, Mair et al. 2015, Zhao and Lounsbury 2016, Smith and Besharov 2019, Besharov and Mitzinneck 2020). Since the goals associated with market logics (e.g., efficiency and profit) are often perceived to conflict with logics that valorize social good, community welfare, and sustainability, the twining of such logics generates problems associated with institutional complexity that require ongoing attention (Greenwood et al. 2011).

The moralization of markets and organizations often entails social movement activism that ushers nonmarket logics into market settings or provides the inspiration for the creation of new markets (Schneiberg and Lounsbury 2017, Schiller-Merkens and Balsiger 2019).

A good deal of the existing literature on moral markets has focused attention on the initial activism associated with societal-level social movements and the collective actions of producers that seek to legitimize new forms of economic activity around var-iegated social values (Lounsbury et al. 2003, Weber et al. 2008, Sine and Lee 2009, Balsiger 2016, McInerney 2014). Much less attention has been directed to the *downstream* processes of how moral markets get scaled, which often involves the entry of large, established organizations that are outsiders to the initial movement (Georgallis and Lee 2019). Whereas we have evidence that the scaling of markets, through such entry, threatens to diminish the saliency of movement values that gave rise to the moral market (e.g., Lounsbury et al. 2003, Lee et al. 2017), we know very little about the processes that enable large, established outsider organizations to enter in the first place. We also know very little about the processes involved in moral market scaling and the dilution of movement values.

This raises many important theoretical issues for our understanding of moral markets. To begin, actors involved in a nascent moral market have to decide whether they wish to maintain the purity of their moral ideas by erecting barriers to entry, or risk diminishing the saliency of moral values in a market by inviting entry of new kinds of producers and consumers. This decision hinges on the extent of impact that moral market activists seek, because without scaling the moral market solution, they risk marginality, irrelevance, and even demise as the initial energy of the movement dissipates (Seelos and Mair 2016). If scaling occurs, however, new entrants that do not share in the same values as the pioneers of a moral market could dilute the collective identity of moral market producers and threaten the morality of the market (Wry et al. 2011, Lee et al. 2017). Given the dilemmas embedded in these decisions, how then might moral market activists engage in efforts to scale without completely selling out (Zald 1966)?

Conceptually, we draw on the cultural entrepreneurship literature to shed light on how the relationships between conflicting logics were managed in the context of scaling a local food market (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001, 2019). The cultural entrepreneurship literature has focused attention on how skilled cultural operatives are able to legitimate new practices and kinds of organizations by shaping the per-ceptions of key audiences (e.g., Martens et al. 2007, Überbacher 2014, Tracey et al. 2018, McDonald and Eisenhardt 2020, Soublière and Gehman 2020). This can be done through the telling of stories and a variety of other communicative mechanisms that reshape meanings to enhance the resonance of novel practices (Giorgi et al. 2015). For instance, Weber et al. (2008) showed how grass-fed beef producers and activists were able to skillfully manage cultural codes in a way that perceptually segregated grass-fed from industrial beef, to legitimate a new niche market.

Mair et al. (2012) suggest that this kind of cultural entrepreneurship is especially important in the context of market building in and around institutional voids that they define as spaces at the interface of competing institutional logics. A key implication of their argument is that market creation and scaling often involves efforts to mitigate the conflicts that are rooted in different institutional logics, and an institutional void is an opportunity space where change can occur. Theoretically, they point to the need to unpack the cultural processes by which changes within institutional voids unfold.

With regard to scaling a moral market, then, we need to understand how the cultural values and practices embedded in a nascent moral market relate to those of large, established organizations that operate outside of that moral market. In our context, the institutional void relates to the conflict between existing procurement practices and beliefs of large organizations that are tethered to an industrialized food systems logic, and the logic of local food that emphasizes not only the sourcing of food from local suppliers but also the values of sustainability and community engagement that stand in opposition to large-scale transnational production and consumption. Given the impracticality of fully replacing industrialized food with local food in most communities, including the one we study, the theoretical issue here is how the oppositional nature of the logics can be mitigated to enable large outsider organizations to embrace the local food logic alongside the industrialized food logic.

That is, the scaling of the local food market in our context requires attention to how the institutional void between the two logics gets bridged in a way that enables large organizations to increase local procurement while maintaining industrial procurement. We highlight the crucial role of cultural entrepreneurship (Lounsbury and Glynn 2019) in this regard, particularly how local food was initially conceptualized and talked about, and how this shifted over time. It is important to note that the economic development rationale for local procurement was not sufficient given the limited development of the local food market. Furthermore, the cultural values associated with the locavore logic were not selling points in large, established organizations that were dominated by more conservative, managerial values that valorize cost and efficiency. Although our evidence is rooted in a particular case, our aim is to generate generalizable knowledge about, and to seed a broader research agenda on, the moral dynamics of markets.

Study Setting: A Movement, a Moral Market, and a Procurement Laboratory

As a way to address the negative social and environmental impact of the industrialized food system, the locavore movement (also referred to as the local food, sustainable food, or community food movement) has emerged over the past decade (Low et al. 2015). In stark contrast to the industrialized food system, the aim of the local food movement, in which food is grown, processed, distributed, and consumed within relative proximity, is to enhance social equity and democracy while being ecologically sound, culturally sensitive, and economically viable for both farmers and consumers (Hinrichs 2000, Feenstra 2002, Allen 2010). The movement is promoted by a growing number of social movement organizations. Some of the largest include the National Good Food Network, the John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, and the Sustainable Food Trust. Some of largest foundations (e.g., McConnell and Rockefeller) now have divisions focused solely on providing grants for the development of local food systems. A large number of field-configuring events (e.g., conferences) related to local foods have also arisen, including the Sustainable Foods Summit and the Yale Food System Symposium.

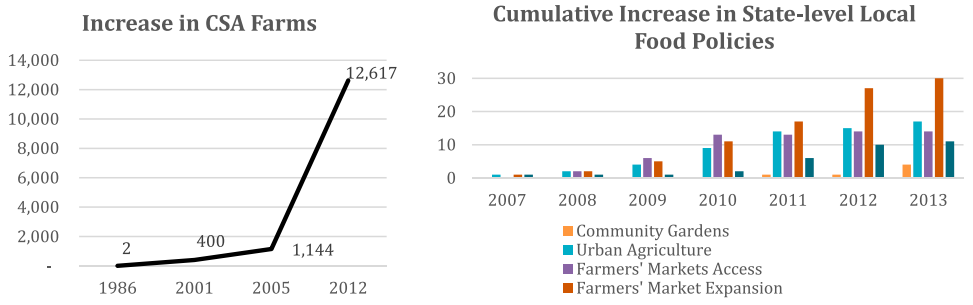
The growth of the locavore movement has given rise to a moral market for local foods, but, practically, the local food market is best understood as a radically decentralized system of markets that takes shape in different ways in different communities. For instance, Michael Pollan (2010), a well-known local food advocate, documents how the movement has enabled people to use their "food dollars" to "vote" for new localized food systems. A primary indicator used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to assess the growth of the local food market is the increase of community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms, in which "members" agree to pay an annual farm membership fee and, in exchange, receive a weekly box of the farm's fresh produce. The number of CSA farms in the United States grew from 1,144 in 2005 to 12,617 in 2012 (Figure 1). Another indicator of growth in the local food market is the increase of state-level laws related to local foods. In 2007, for example, only one state-level policy on farmers' market expansion had been enacted, but, by 2013, the number had risen to 30.

The local food movement and accompanying moral market have gained significant traction among consumers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community organizations and, to an extent, among some food retailers (e.g., restaurants) as well as local and regional governments. However, the local food moral market is argued to have little, if any, transformative impact unless it scaled to be able to accommodate the institutional procurement of food by universities, hospitals, conference centers, and so on (Izumi et al. 2010, Mount 2010, Cleveland et al. 2014), a sector that spends over $72 billion annually in North America alone (Compass Group 2014). Despite pressures from stakeholders (e.g., customers, students) to incorporate more sustainable approaches to food procurement, many established organizations encoun-ter great challenges in responding to such pressures due to established, industrialized food procurement practices (Rosin et al. 2012, Clapp and Scrinis 2017).

The Local Food Procurement Laboratory

Amid the larger setting of the locavore movement and early development of the local food market, we were provided timely access to an innovative community-level effort (The Laboratory) in which food buyers from large, established organizations coalesced to collectively brainstorm how to bring local food procurement ideals and practices into their own organizations and, more generally, into the geographic setting they cohabited. The Laboratory's stated goal was to "make a positive community impact by putting more local foods on more local plates." The food buyers associated with the Laboratory represented a large public healthcare system, a private hospital system, four universities, and two large conference centers. Prior to joining the Laboratory, the buyers had tried on their own to participate in the local food market but with little to no success because of the

Figure 1. (Color online) Indicators of the Emergence and Growth of the Local Food Social Movement



Source. Low et al. (2015).

degree to which the wider local food market practices conflicted with established structures and practices. This conflict was especially acute in our regional setting (Western Canada) due to the dominance of conservative politics, making the effort to foment progressive change in food procurement particularly challenging.

Laboratory meetings between the food buyers were initiated by Jackie, an astute cultural entrepreneur, who had been hired by a regional agricultural association to help develop the local food market. Jackie arranged an initial meeting with the food buyers, leveraging her professional and personal relationships and her reputation in the community as a former restaurateur and local food activist. Her intent for the first meeting was to gauge the buyers' level of interest in working together to scale the local food market. With unanimous agreement to continue meeting, ongoing meetings were supported by a food systems innovation grant. To support the food buyers in scaling the local food market, the Laboratory involved other food system stakeholders including distributors, farmers, government agencies, and nonprofits.

Data, Methods, and Analytical Strategy

Given our aim of understanding how a particular local food market was scaled, we conducted a field ethnography that relies on the triangulation of a diverse range of archival and ethnographic data to shed light on field development processes (Lounsbury and Kaghan 2001, Zilber 2015). The Laboratory meetings represented a series of field-configuring events (Lampel and Meyer 2008). The primary source of data for this study was participant observation, which began two years after the Laboratory began. Participant observation was augmented with 31 interviews and extensive documentation and archival data that extended back to the beginning of the Laboratory in 2014 (Online Appendix 1). In some cases, the multiple data sources provided important comparisons and contrasts, for example, in assessing the reality of what the food buyers said they did, or believed they did, compared with what they actually did. In line with the literature on cultural entrepreneurship (Lounsbury and Glynn 2019), we highlight the importance of the varied communications of our informants, including the stories they told.

Participant Observation

The first author spent 35 months (828 hours) in the field observing the activities and interactions of the Laboratory. In addition to being on-site at the Laboratory's host organization two days per week for the first year and attending all group meetings, observations also included near daily interactions with Laboratory members through emails, phone calls, as well as document reviews and editing as part of a research internship to facilitate Laboratory meetings. Because the Laboratory was based on a shared-leadership model, the facilitator role was administrative in nature (coordinating meetings, sending agendas, time and note keeping during meetings, as well as sending meeting notes). In addition to Laboratory observations, the first author attended four national conferences on local food systems and participated in several local food tours. Extensive field notes and photos were taken while at the host organization, while visiting member organizations to conduct interviews, and also during Laboratory meetings and local food tours. Abbreviated notes, taken during meetings and tours and fleshed out shortly afterward, were memos of what happened, what people said, details of the environment and thoughts, observations, and questions (Myers 2013).

Interviews

In addition to participant observation, 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Interviews lasted 45–90 minutes and began with the broad question of "How did you become involved in the Procurement Lab?" (Myers 2013). Interviews focused on the institutional food buyers but also included others who offered important perspectives for the study. Interviewing local food suppliers (e.g., farmers and producers), for instance, helped triangulate and provide context for the interview data from buyers. For example, one of the interviewees was a farmer who used to sell produce to the food service sector but had transitioned to selling only directly to consumers through farmers markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA). This interview provided important insights into the dynamics of selling to institutions compared with selling directly to consumers.

Archival Data

Archival data were important to the study, not only in providing triangulation for the participant observation and interviews, but also in providing contextual and historical information related to the Laboratory and to the larger locavore movement. Archival data for the Laboratory included all meeting minutes covering the five years between the group's inception in 2014 and the end of the study period in 2019, along with grant applications and reports. The Laboratory commissioned two reports—a report on the economic impact of increased local food purchasing and a baseline report of local food availability and purchases. Nonprofit and government reports were also part of the archival data for this study, as well as information and reports from a large number of local food social movement organizations (SMOs).

Data Analysis

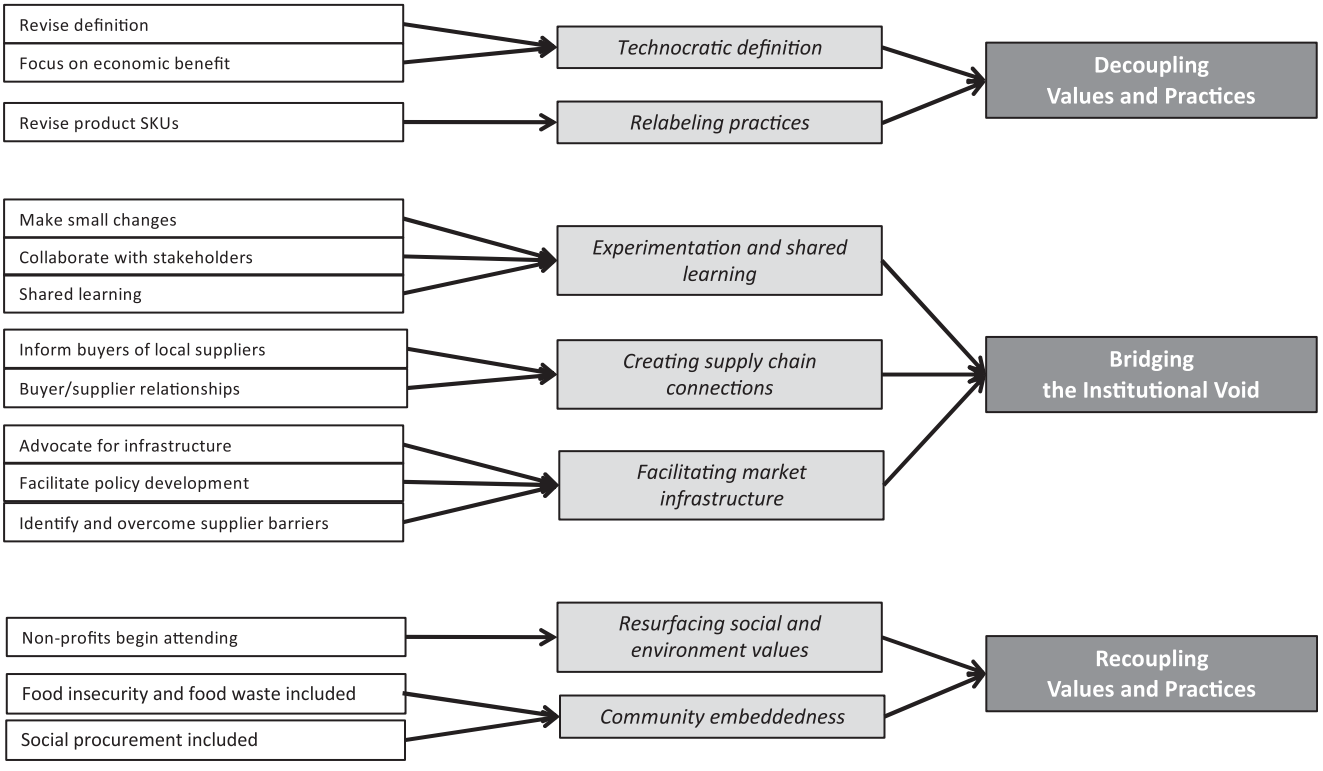
Data analysis for field ethnographies is similar to data analysis for organizational ethnographies (Zilber 2015). The initial phase of data gathering included theoretical sampling (Myers 2013) through interviews that began with broad questions: "How did you come to be involved in the Procurement Lab?" and "Tell me about your experience with trying to buy more local foods." As often occurs, theoretical sampling, in iteration with analysis and engagement with existing literature, often suggests the need for a more focused period of data collection (Dey 2004). After analyzing our initial interviews, we refined interview questions to evoke richer descriptions related to the buyers' personal and professional perceptions of, and relationships with, the locavore movement, along with their specific efforts to participate in the local food market.

The first phase of analysis involved the open coding of raw data in which phrases or sentences were summarized with a succinct code (Online Appendix 2) linked, often verbatim, with field notes, interviewees' words, or text from archival data (Van Maanen 1979). For example, the code "focus on economic benefit" resulted from "It's the broadest definition [of local foods] that I've ever used but it meets economic development, economic diversity and the agricultural goals of the group" (Interview, Food Buyer) and "Mention of social and environmental aspects are absent from meetings and documents" (Field Notes).

In the second phase of data analysis, axial coding, we moved from informant-centric to researcher-centric concepts, developing descriptive categories that flowed from natural groupings of first-order codes (Glaser 1978, Gioia et al. 2012). For instance, the first-order code "focus on economic benefit" was naturally grouped with the first-order code "revise definition" into the second-order code "filtering movement values" because both first-order codes represented ways that the broader values of the local food movement (i.e., social and environmental values) had been filtered out by the Laboratory.

During the third phase of analysis, theoretical coding, we looked for broader themes that might describe the phenomena that was emerging from both the raw data and the descriptive categories about how the food buyers, through participation in the Laboratory, were articulating a localized settlement of the broader local food moral market (Gioia et al. 2012). Looking at the descriptive categories, and considering the raw data, we asked, "What are the food buyers doing in more thematic terms?" The third stage of coding (Figure 2) emerged from the process of considering this question during multiple reviews of the second-order codes. The result was the emergence of a theoretical framework. For this phase, we focused

Figure 2. Processes Involved in Scaling the Local Food Market



on answering the question "What insights does this case give us into the sources, processes and outcomes of moral struggles to understand how the underlying moral orders of markets are created, sustained and changed?" We reanalyzed our data once again, focusing on temporal bracketing (Langley 1999). Our attention was drawn to the importance of Jackie, the Laboratory's initiator, in theorizing and constructing the Laboratory.

Trustworthiness throughout the data analysis process was supported by taking an insider-outsider approach in which the first author was in the field and the second author remained outside (e.g., Gioia and Chittipeddi 1991, Gioia et al. 2012). For additional confirmation of accuracy in the data analysis process, the results of the coding phases were presented to, and confirmed by, two scholars who were part of the Laboratory. Through the process of reanalyzing the data through a temporal lens, the phases of decoupling, institutional void bridging, and recoupling were identified (Figure 2).

Findings

Whereas our study reports on how a particular local food market was scaled, our aim is to generate insight about the processes by which moral markets are scaled more generally. Although a local food market existed at a rudimentary level in our setting, industrialized food procurement was dominant—especially for large, established organizations. Whereas some procurement specialists within large organizations that we encountered expressed an interest in buying local food, and even sympathy with locavore values, there were steep challenges associated with their ability to actually procure local food. This mainly had to do with the fact that the local food logic, which was substantively infused with locavore values, is antithetical to the industrial food logic (see Table 1).

Whereas the local food logic embraces environmental and social values rooted in sustainability and the valorization of local farmers, the industrial food logic embraces economic value above all else. But this divergence in cultural values is associated with a variety of differences in core practices that, in combination, create a major institutional void that makes it difficult for large organizations to embrace local food, even in limited ways. Industrial food pricing is almost always lower than local food pricing, especially in the context of relatively undeveloped local food markets, where local farmers require higher prices to survive. Local farmers also tend to rely more on informal, relational systems of exchange, whereas industrial food systems often have state-of-the-art computerized systems that efficiently process and track orders. Local farmers also tend to have more delimited growing seasons that make food supply choppy, whereas industrial food systems ensure year-round supply of products. Finally, industrial food often relies on third-party certification to validate food safety, whereas local farmers often cannot afford such certification, instead relying on word of mouth and their personal relationships with buyers.

As the cultural entrepreneurship literature suggests, these differences in logics were reflected in the identity stories told by our informants (Lounsbury and Glynn 2019). For instance, a food buyer for a hospital system told the story of purchasing meat from a local farm for a banquet and being shocked when a truck pulled up to the administrative building with the carcass of a recently butchered elk that had been divided in several large coolers. During this point of the story, the buyer lowered his head and, shaking it slowly, said that was the moment that he realized the challenges of buying local foods (Field Notes):

> We are a hospital. We have high food safety standards to comply with. We can't have a carcass show up in coolers, delivered in the back of a regular truck. . . . Twelve years ago was an attempt to buy local but from the farmers market. The gap was too large. The carcass was the exclamation point on the thought that this just isn't going to work despite good intentions. (Interview, Food Buyer)

Whereas local growers and producers need to set prices at levels that allow for business survival, they compete with the economies of scale that corporate farms are able to achieve through vertical integration and inexpensive labor:

> We sold to grocery stores and it was so rough. Wouldn't get paid for six weeks and wouldn't know the price we'd get until we got paid. They found one worm in a truckload of cabbage and they dumped (the whole truckload) in our lawn. It's painful. You are competing with Mexico. (Interview, Farmer)

Table 1. Food Market Logics

Logic elements	Local food logic	Industrial food logic
Values basis	Environment and social/community	Emphasis on economic values
Pricing	Set to enable local farmer survival	Based on competitive market
Systems of exchange	Informal	Large-scale processing and distribution
Production	Limited growing season/choppy supply	Year-round supply and sourcing
Validation	Personal relationships	Third party

Processing, delivery, and distribution presented another set of tensions. Small- and medium-sized farms often focus on growing and often cannot afford their own processing and delivery. Using a distributor is often not an option because it results in a loss of already thin margins. Large organizational buyers are also accustomed to purchasing processed (e.g., chopped onions) or value-added (e.g., pasta sauce) food items and are unable to handle a large number of incoming small deliveries each day.

Another challenge is the multiyear contracts that institutions are bound to with large, multinational food distributors, which provide the convenience of placing a single order that arrives in a single delivery. Food distributors also provide food safety reassurance. When buying local foods, on the other hand, institutions have to find each individual supplier, ensure they meet food safety standards, set them up in the institution's vendor system, and arrange for delivery:

> All the [local food] literature was about the local chef that picks up ingredients at the farmers market on Saturday and makes meals with it all week. We make thousands of meals a day and can't do that. So, there was a real disconnect at the beginning, even in the first meetings that we had. People coming to the meetings were farmers and [institutional food buyers] and there was a big gap in the middle, which is the systems and processes that would allow us to even consider using the products from safety and delivery standpoints. So, there were barriers. Back then I felt guilty like we were doing the wrong thing because even if we tried, we could not get [local growers] in the door. (Interview, Food Buyer)

> There are certain barriers. They are so used to ordering from [a large distributor] and there are things that I can't do that [the distributor] does, like have broccoli available every week of the year. (Interview, Farmer)

The dramatic institutional void that inhibited the growth of the local food market in our setting required collective action to address, and this came in the form of the Laboratory that initially sought to bring together food buyers, from a variety of large, established organizations in the community, to brainstorm how they could enhance their procurement of local food, thus helping to scale the local food market. From the first meeting minutes and marketing materials, it is evident that Laboratory members initially recognized the broad cultural values of the locavore movement but were unsure as to what this actually meant in practice for their respective organizations. This is signaled in early meeting minutes that listed what members wanted to accomplish through the Laboratory:

- Healthy competition between institutions can accelerate progress on sustainability initiatives.
- Value of local is not just bottom line.
- "Local" has many definitions.

Broad locavore values were also reflected in early marketing communications:

Specifically, We Are Committed To

- Diversity—increasing the variety of (regional) products on menus
- Impact—creating economic opportunity within (regional) rural and urban communities
- Communication—sharing the story of (regional) food producers and processors
- Measurement—developing ways to measure and track local food purchasing
- Transparency and Traceability—making sure you know where your foods come from
- Food Safety—ensuring our food is grown, prepared, and served with appropriate food safety standards
- Collaboration—working with partners to increase our collective impact
- Sustainability—ensuring our food system is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially just

Despite an initial embrace of the local food logic in these early statements, it quickly became clear that bridging the institutional void between local and industrial food logics would not occur quickly or easily. In what follows, we discuss the process that we observed about how the Laboratory and its members, particularly the food buyers at large, established organizations, went about enhancing their participation in, and scaling of, the local food market. Our analysis revealed three stages. First, instead of adopting the local food logic as theorized by the wider societal locavore movement, Jackie, the Laboratory founder, sought to *strategically decouple* the values and practices of the local food logic, evidenced in the stories they told about local food. This was a pragmatic move that aimed to enhance cooperation and collective action among Laboratory members by focusing on their shared need to address the economic value proposition of local food and to develop a technical rationale to convince others in their organizations to buy local.

We argue that this initial decoupling of values and practices, emphasized in the stories told by Laboratory members, enabled the institutional void between local and industrial food logics to begin to be bridged by reducing the perceived conflict between these logics. Reducing the perceived conflict involved retheorizing the local food logic, which enabled

bridging of the institutional void that enhanced the value proposition for local food procurement by large organizations from a more technical/economic standpoint. Retheorizing the local food logic also served to shift the Laboratory from a competitive to a more collaborative and information-sharing orientation. Finally, once local food procurement by large organizations began to gain traction, the Laboratory and its members began to *recouple* locavore values to food procurement practices. Although the process in our setting is ongoing, we believe that the dynamics we have uncovered provide important theoretical insight about how moral markets scale. After discussing these three stages, we reflect on their implications for theory.

Decoupling Values from Practices. Although the individuals responsible for food procurement at large organizations expressed an interest in buying local, their stories suggested that it was difficult for them to garner organizational support for these efforts, because buying local was more expensive and perceived as unreliable:

> The invisible hand of the market is speaking. And it's speaking price, availability, and consistency are the drivers. And even if we get organizations like [the Laboratory] trying to move away from that, it still ultimately comes back to cost per plate. Like, how much does this thing cost? And they want us to be competitive with the import products. (Interview, Food Buyer)

> It was the typical response. It's local, it's too hard to buy. It's local. Nobody wants to pay the price. (Interview, Distributor)

> Fluctuation in pricing [of local foods] is another issue. Big industry suppliers can weather the storm in some cases. There is that element of contracted pricing or contracted availability. We don't have that with smaller producers. They can't say, we know we promised you this price but we can't operate at a loss. (Interview, University Food Service Director)

Trying to convince technocratic managers with value rational arguments (Weber 1958), emphasizing the moral concerns of the locavore movement (e.g., sustainability, community) was a nonstarter, often generating eye rolling. In fact, to the extent that a moral argument was used as the main justification for buying local, it was perceived negatively—as an ineffectual argument given the economic and technical deficiencies of the local food market.

Much of the literature on moral market creation emphasizes how activists work to legitimize movement values as a core aspect of a new market (e.g., Weber et al. 2008, Sine and Lee 2009, Vasi and King 2012, McInerney 2014). However, our research uncovered a dramatically different approach in the context of moral market scaling. Jackie, the Laboratory founder, sought to strategically decouple locavore values as a way to initially engage buyers from large, established organizations in the community. Her approach was rooted in her own personal experiences of procuring local food for her own restaurant, as well as the activist training she received from international social movement organizations and other experts in civic activism and community development. Jackie noted that

> the formation of the Lab was influenced by a few things: my experience with the BALLE leadership, my knowledge and understanding of community organizing principles that are promoted by the Industrial Areas Foundation, [the Lab's cofacilitator's] experience with Art of Hosting; the work of Meg Wheatley on emergence was also a key focus, and Deborah Frieze was a core part of shaping the BALLE experience. . . . We also had the opportunity to work with several experts in the nonprofit sector, including Heather Macleod Grant. . . . My work was also influenced by David Korten and his work on "A New Economy." Authors that have substantially shaped my thinking are Michael Shuman and Stacy Mitchell (Interview, Lab Founder).

Whereas contemporary approaches to civic activism work toward systemic change, including the development of new economic forms that balance economic, social, and environmental values, there is a kind of pragmatism that infuses their change models. For example, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE; https://bealocalist.org/about) is involved in helping to revitalize thousands of communities, focusing on facilitating the growth of green building, efficient and renewable energy, local and sustainable agriculture, community capital, independent retail, and local zero-waste manufacturing. To do so, their approach has been to build cross-sector relationships by explicitly facilitating "conversation, connection, and collaboration" among diverse community stakeholders, including large, established organizations (see https://community-wealth.org/about/vision-mission.html). Similarly, the Art of Hosting takes

> an approach to leadership that scales up from the personal to the systemic using personal practice, dialogue, facilitation and the co-creation of innovation to address complex challenges.[1]

They focus on building personal relationships, as opposed to just enabling professional connections, among participants. Foundational elements of this facilitation style include the physical arrangement of meetings and the way they start and end. Participants sit in a close circle, sometimes on the floor without shoes. Pieces of paper and colored markers and crayons are in the middle of the circle encouraging creativity and spontaneity. Meetings began by

"opening the circle" in which the facilitator asks a personal question that each participant answers out loud. Meetings end similarly by "closing the circle."

Jackie viewed this process orientation to be especially crucial at the early stages of the Laboratory, because initial members, who included a variety of food buyers from different large, established organizations, exhibited a profoundly competitive orientation toward each other. For instance, several interviewees, when reflecting back on the first Laboratory meeting in 2014, shared how one of the buyers exclaimed "I'll come to these meetings, but I will not tell anyone how much I pay for carrots!" This manifestation of competitive rivalry, relayed by several interviewees, indicated that information regarding pricing and vendors should be a closely guarded secret. In implementing the ideas and processes espoused by organizations such as BALLE and the Art of Hosting, Jackie sought to build trust and partnership among members, and diminish their competitive orientation. Reflecting on the early moments of the Laboratory, a grant report noted that

> facilitation that supports group development has been essential to the group progress. [The Art of Hosting] facilitation process has been utilized and despite resistance, or clear discomfort, has been effective in moving the core of the participants to think like a "group" rather than a collection of individuals. We are still working on developing trust and going a bit deeper, but that will come with time. In general, the "business" people in the room are a little uncomfortable with the facilitation style, but it has been an effective tool.

When asked why the food buyers would be willing to participate in meetings, Jackie stated:

> It's because the buyers know that they cannot do this alone. It's bigger than what the buyers can do on their own. They know that the only way to do this is to work together with others. (Field Notes)

Building on the trust-facilitation processes underlying the BALLE and Art of Hosting methods, Jackie sought to emphasize cultural communications that decoupled locavore values from local food market practices for two main reasons. First, she believed that to get large organizations to buy local, arguments rooted in technocratic rationality and emphasizing economic value would be more powerful. Second, given the competitive orientation of buyers, Jackie believed that a fruitful starting point for building trust among buyers was to focus on perceived self-interest rather than social or environmental values. At an early meeting, Jackie asked the members to write down what they wanted out of the Laboratory. She made it clear that they were note there to "do good" (Field Notes); rather, they were there to get their own interests met. Jackie's approach resulted in decoupling, enabled by two key cultural efforts: crafting a *technocratic definition* and *relabeling practices*.

Technocratic Definition. This pragmatic, interest-based approach informed much of the early activities of the Laboratory, punctuated when the initial set of members cultivated their own definition of "local foods" that was more relaxed than the definitions used by other North American cities with more developed local food markets. At the first Laboratory meeting, participants were asked what barriers existed to be able to purchase more local foods. Several of the answers pointed to the need for a common definition of "local" (examples from meeting minutes: "Need definition of local foods"; "There are many definitions of local"; "Local? Grown and raised?"). In several of the interviews and meeting minutes, comments were made about how, early on, the lack of an agreed-upon definition of "local foods" impeded the Laboratory's progress. A grant report listed an early milestone of the Laboratory:

> Agreement on the definition of "Local" created parameters for identifying potential vendors or products as well as creating an opportunity for collective measurement. This shared definition was a result of a desire to positively impact agriculture, support provincial job creation and build community wealth creation through the food system. (Grant Report)

This grant report excerpt also reflects a sole focus on the economic aspects of the local food market. Ultimately, this became reflected in the technocratic definition of "local foods" that Laboratory members endorsed. The Laboratory's definition required that two of the following three criteria be met: regionally owned, regionally grown, and regionally processed. Although pragmatically useful by expanding what local buyers could claim was "local," this definition arguably created considerable ambiguity about the distinctiveness of local food vis-à-vis industrial food. For instance, the definition allowed for highly processed foods that were made with imported ingredients to count as a local food, so long as it was processed in a regionally located facility with at least 50% regional ownership. One informant commented,

> Today, the Lab toured a "local" producer that processed canola oil. The processor is a massive international producer. I took photos showing that the majority of product in the warehouse was labeled in Chinese for export there. I also took photos of the food labels for items like margarine and nondairy whipped cream, which contained a long list of chemicals. No one would think of these as "local foods." (Field Notes)

When asked about how this definition of "local foods" came to be agreed upon, pragmatism was given as the

driving reason for coming to the economically focused definition of "local foods":

> Because of the market being driven by agriculture and because of the scale of the partners, we could not have a 100-mile definition. (Interview, Food Buyer)
> The sustainability is not part of the primary focus of the university. Their focus is on making sure people are fed without seeing costs go through the roof. (Interview, Food Buyer)

> It's the broadest definition that I've ever used but it meets the economic development, economic diversity and the agricultural goals of the group. We needed a definition to allow for a local coffee roaster and still encompass a potato grower and value add producer. It's criteria versus definition. (Interview, Procurement Lab Coordinator)

When asked about the process of coming to this technocratic definition, Jackie and several laboratory members said that it happened very easily. Once the definition was proposed, everyone readily agreed. Two of the food buyers said that, although the definition was not what they would have preferred, they did not feel comfortable expressing disagreement:

> A Lab member from the sustainable food working group at the university's sustainability office commented informally that the Lab does not consider any aspects of local foods except the economic aspects. I asked her if she had ever brought this up at the meetings and she said that she did a little early on but didn't want to seem oppositional. (Field Notes)

Relabeling Practices. The Laboratory's definition of local foods was significant in that it created a basis for other pragmatic compromises, including the cultural relabeling of existing practices. Based on the Laboratory's definition, for example, the buyers added an identifier for each food item that they had been purchasing all along and that met the Laboratory's definition for "local foods":

> We added a new code to all of the products that we were buying that met the definition of "local" that the group agreed upon. (Interview, Food Buyer)

> During the meeting, one of the large distributors explained how they revised their product tracking system to add new codes for items that were local based on the Lab's definition. This made the amount of their "local purchases" increase quickly. They did not actually buy more local; they just changed their product codes to now track what they had already been purchasing. (Field Notes)

Through relabeling pre-existing practices, it appeared that buyers had increased the amount of local foods purchased, when in reality, no substantive changes to food procurement had occurred. When asked why the Laboratory had focused on the economic aspects of local foods, while the social and environmental aspects were omitted in the Laboratory's definition of "local foods" and associated practices, Jackie responded:

> The strategy I used for the Lab comes from the leadership and community development programs that I've been a part of. I realized that I needed to engage the food buyers by appealing to their needs and interests. In the first meeting, I explained to the buyers that the purpose of the Lab was to support them in being able to buy more local foods, rather than "doing good." I explained to the buyers that it was important for them to participate in the Lab out of self-interest. In fact, I asked each of the buyers to write down what they wanted to get out of the Lab. I engaged the buyers this way because they represented the most important aspect of the food system, which is demand. Starting with demand is a "pull" approach. Starting with the supply side is a "push" approach, which leaves a remaining struggle to engage the demand side. I learned from the leadership and community development programs I was a part of that a pull approach was a better strategy. So, I knew I had to first gain support for scaling local foods in the region by emphasizing the economic benefits. Once support for scaling local foods was gained through convening demand, the other social and environmental aspects of local foods would eventually follow.

This comment reinforcesJackie's cultural approach to the decoupling of local food logic values from practices, while also signaling an aspiration to foster more substantive changes to practice beyond relabeling. Thus, Jackie viewed this cultural reframing as crucial to enabling the institutional void-bridging processes that we discuss next. It is important to note that Jackie's comments also suggest that decoupling values from practices is a temporary cultural strategy that might enable recoupling at a later time.

Bridging the Institutional Void. Whereas institutional voids highlight barriers that exist at the interface of conflicting logics, they also provide opportunities for collective action to forge new organizational forms and practices at the interstices of logics. For instance, in the context of market building in Bangladesh, Mair et al. (2012) highlight how the development organization, BRAC, helped redefine market architecture by creating a new space for interaction, engaged in outreach to a variety of potential new stakeholders, built new infrastructure, legitimated new market actors, and recombined norms and traditions. We see similar dynamics in our setting, although the substance of the processes we identify differ in key ways. Importantly, the bridging of the institutional void, within our setting, bracketed the value conflict between local and industrial food logics, focusing on how practices associated with procurement and the

local food market could be altered to facilitate the integration of local and industrial food procurement at large, established organizations. We highlight three main ways in which changes in practice helped bridge the institutional void: *experimentation and shared learning*, *creating supply chain connections*, and *facilitating market infrastructure*. Of course, all of these processes relied on Jackie's ability as a cultural entrepreneur to initially eschew locavore values in all communications, enabling local food procurement to become a legitimate endeavor for large, established organizations.

Experimentation and Shared Learning. Laboratory members agreed that in order to scale the local food market, they needed to figure out ways in which they could begin to procure local foods. In 2015, they began creatively experimenting with local food procurement by agreeing to dedicate a particular amount of total food purchases toward local foods. For one food buyer, the ingredients for weekly buffets were sourced locally. Because buffet items did not need to be consistent from week to week, the food buyer was able to purchase available produce from a nearby farmer. For instance, one farmer noted that

> [food buyers] understand but they don't know how to make it work and it takes extra effort. So, I built a relationship with [the food buyer] where . . . I just text him on Tuesday and tell him what I have, and he picks three or four items. The volume and price work. And they have a large budget, so he's just shifted a small percentage of his budget towards us. I think he spent $8,000 over the season and it's easy and convenient. He used our veggies in his buffet. (Interview, Farmer)

Some buyers also began to identify specific food items that could be locally sourced. One university food buyer, for instance, locally sourced tea for the on-campus convenience store. Another university buyer replaced a national brand of ice cream with a local gelato, resulting in a large sales increase. Food buyers also began to work together with local greenhouse growers to purchase "ugly vegetables." The industry term for ugly vegetables is "seconds"—imperfect vegetables that are typically thrown into compost heaps. After identifying specific uses for ugly vegetables (i.e., soup ingredients or salad bar items), food buyers began collectively purchasing them at much lower prices, while providing farmers with revenue from what had previously been waste.

Experimentation also unfolded via new collaborations between buyers and suppliers. For example, a hospital system food buyer wanted to buy locally produced banana bread for numerous retail food-service locations. However, because the baker used household-sized bread pans, the hospital food service employees would have had to slice and plate the bread, which presented a barrier to the food buyer. The food buyer worked with the baker to design bread pans that were much longer than traditional bread pans but still fit in the baker's ovens. The baker also agreed to invest in equipment to provide pre-packaged single-serving slices in exchange for a volume commitment from the food buyer. As a result, the baker was able to sell to other food buyers who were introduced through the Laboratory.

Whereas these kinds of experimental purchases required a great deal of extra energy and effort to build procurement relationships that could work in a way that could be justified via technical rationality, they enabled learning about how local food procurement could be done effectively and enabled local food to gain a foothold in large, established organizations. Whereas the buyers associated with the Laboratory undertook their own experiments, they also shared their tactics and learnings with colleagues from other organizations at the Laboratory, enabling learning to occur across organizations. Recognizing the importance of this shared learning, it was made a formal part of meeting structures beginning in 2016 (Meeting Notes). Of course, the foundation for this collaborative sharing was enabled by the efforts Jackie undertook initially by eschewing locavore values as a way to build trust rooted in the sharing of practical information related to economic value.

Creating Supply Chain Connections. The Laboratory also facilitated the bridging of the institutional void between local and industrial food logics by enhancing supply-chain connections. For instance, organizing local food tours, beginning in 2016, helped to familiarize buyers with community farms and processing facilities. During these tours, the buyers were able to directly see the processing facilities as well as hear the pride that the farmers and producers took in their animals and products:

> Today on one of the Lab's local foods tours, the tour bus stopped at a small rural sausage producer. Inside, the vendors—a husband and wife team—relayed how they had left Germany to start a new life in the "land of opportunity," but had experienced disappointment, in their new country, of not being able to find authentic German sausages. They explained how they turned their disappointment into a business opportunity, despite not having had any experience in farming or making sausages, much less any experience in the food industry. The vendors explained to the Laboratory members how every aspect of their sausage business was grounded in their German values. They used only high-quality ingredients. They developed strong relationships with other farmers in the area, eventually

> sourcing the majority of their ingredients from nearby farms, where they could be assured of good animal husbandry practices. The Laboratory members were walked through the vendor's food safety processes and could see the gleaming stainless-steel surfaces and well-organized spaces. (Field Notes)

The Laboratory also developed and made available a large list of local food vendors, and time was allocated during each Laboratory meeting for food buyers to share practice changes, including new relationships with local vendors. Additionally, different vendors were invited to each Laboratory meeting to introduce their products. During these "Meet the Maker" events, which became a formal part of the meeting structure beginning in 2016, Jackie encouraged vendors to tell their personal stories behind their food businesses:

> At today's Lab meeting, an owner and her daughter presented in traditional African clothing and their packaging reflected African colors and symbols. The vendor told Procurement Lab members how poor they were when they came to this country and how the only way she could make enough money to feed her family was to use a traditional recipe to make samosas that she sold to neighbors. Eventually, she began selling her samosas at a farmer's market. Thanks to a government program to support small food enterprises, she explained, she was able to grow her business by purchasing industrial equipment and renting a small manufacturing space. (Field Notes)

As this example demonstrates, some of the personal stories told by vendors connected the food buyers with the vendors in a personal as well as professional way.

Facilitating Market Infrastructure. Laboratory members also helped to scale the local food market by enhancing commitment to infrastructure development. As news of the Laboratory spread through conferences, publications and social media, it received increasing attention. The growing attention, coupled with the Laboratory's significant collective food spending, signaled to the government that large organizations were willing to step outside of their conventional food purchasing practices to support the region's local economy. Motivated to diversify the region's economy, government agencies demonstrated, in turn, a willingness to develop policies to support the increased procurement of local foods. These supports included food safety certification support for small suppliers, purchasing policies (i.e., minimal percentage of local food spending), and the development of food hubs to aggregate from several small farms providing food safety assurance, processing, and streamlined distribution to meet the needs of institutions:

> Now what's different is that there is more structure, more awareness, more demand that has, for instance, created interest in the Syscos (large distributors). Like the food hub idea is really different. When we talk local, the food hub is the solution. (Interview, Food Buyer)

This quote explains how the Laboratory motivated large distributors to carry more local foods. It also explains how the Laboratory enabled needed infrastructure like a food hub, in which local farms could aggregate and distribute their produce, making it able for large institutions to purchase. Action items from the Laboratory's 2016 strategic plan demonstrate its role in advocating for local food infrastructure:

> Make government aware of the purchasing power (e.g., economic impact report) and that the largest barrier to increased institutional procurement of local food is the supply. (Strategic Action Map)

> Awareness among decision makers of economic potential and barriers of (the region's) local food economy to facilitate needed policy change so that appropriate resources are committed to the local food economy. (Strategic Action Map)

> Host dinner with government representatives for the purpose of telling them that the main barriers to us being able to purchase more local food is the lack of infrastructure and the challenges involved in GAP (Good Agricultural Practices; food safety) certification. (Strategic Action Map)

In addition to advocating for infrastructure, the Laboratory also helped local farmers by advising them on how to alter their own practices to better serve them. This included helping point local farmers to funding opportunities that would help them organize their production and distribution in ways that would enable procurement by large, established organizations:

> This guy showed up in a small truck and asked me to try his breaded chicken tenders. It was seriously in a plastic baggie that was in a small cooler. Call me crazy, but I cooked it up and tried it. I wanted to give him a chance. Anyways it was really good so I asked him to get me some more to sample. You won't believe this but the next week, I got a package in the mail and it had dry ice and another bag of chicken tenders. I told the guy that he can't do business like this and I connected him to government resources. Now he is one of the biggest breaded chicken tender suppliers in the country. (Interview, Food Buyer)

This story exemplifies how buyers were willing to expand outside of their traditional roles to help local

producers connect with support and infrastructures with which to scale their businesses. In so doing, such efforts helped to integrate the buyers from large organizations with the wider community of local farmers and variegated stakeholders associated with the local food market. This enabled the building not only of thicker structures of communication and exchange, but also of a richer infrastructure that expanded the range of actors, and locally sourced production and consumption. For example, in 2018, the municipal government created a position focused on local food economic development. These changes had a generative effect on community building, enabling the local food market to gain legitimacy and begin to scale.

Recoupling Values and Practices. Once the bridging of the institutional void began to occur, visibly manifested by the growing procurement of local food by large, established organizations and the overall scaling of the local food market, we began to see efforts in the Laboratory to recouple locavore values and practices, by explicitly embracing those values in their communications. Given that the scaling of the local food market was gaining traction, locavore values were no longer seen as a threat to the ability of large, established organizations to enhance their procurement of local food. Importantly, this recoupling and value infusion was strategically orchestrated by the Laboratory founder, Jackie, after the institutional void that segregated the local and industrial food logics was bridged.

Although Jackie's skill as a cultural entrepreneur was no doubt key, her actions were mainly facilitative. The successful bridging of the institutional void and recoupling of practices and values had as much or even more to do with the cross-sector collaboration that developed through the Laboratory. This cross-sector collaboration, enabled by Jackie's efforts, helped to generate a communal spirit that underpinned the effort to build institutional infrastructure that allowed the local and industrial food logics to coexist, as opposed to pursuing a more radical agenda that sought a displacement of one logic by another. To wit, the cultural entrepreneurship that we identified in recoupling locavore values to food procurement practices did not center on the use of values to justify local food purchase, but as an elaboration of the benefits that will result from the scaling of the local food market. This shift was evident in the stories that were told by Jackie and other Laboratory stakeholders; these stories importantly began *resurfacing social and environmental values* and expressing their *embeddedness in the community*.

Resurfacing Social and Environmental Values. Resurfacing of the social and environmental values associated with the wider locavore social movement began in a visibly concrete way with the inclusion of representatives from local food-oriented nonprofit organizations in the Laboratory in 2018. Invited to join by Jackie, these representatives were more vocal about the importance of social and environmental values. One of these new stakeholders was the Executive Director of the city's community foundation who gave a presentation on social procurement. Social procurement is a social innovation focused on the use of public spending dollars for making a social impact. For instance, requests for proposals issued by organizations that have a social procurement policy or framework include criteria such as hiring and training of disadvantaged workers (e.g., previously incarcerated, immigrants, individuals in additions recovery). When the topic of social procurement was presented, the other Laboratory members were visibly enthusiastic about the idea that their food-buying decisions could make a positive impact on the community (Field Notes). Other nonprofit organizations presented on topics of food waste and food insecurity, making the point that many of the foods that go into the waste stream, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and landfills, may not be sellable but are still edible and could be redirected to help address food insecurity.

Community Embeddedness. The presence of nonprofit organizations that brought social and environmental values to the Laboratory fundamentally altered the nature of the Laboratory by embedding the food buyers in the community. As an example, a meeting between Laboratory members and a city councilor was arranged for the purpose of advocating for a food hub that explicitly embraced a social mission. At the meeting with the city councilor, one of the Laboratory members, a buyer for a large hospital system, produced a model of a food hub that he had envisioned. In addition to aggregating and processing food for larger market channels, his model incorporated food and job training for homeless individuals, as well as channeling edible food waste to address food insecurity. After the meeting, the buyer commented, "But for the grace of God, I too could be homeless, so I want to do what I can do help. I am a part of this community." These kinds of stories about how the scaling of the local food market can yield important social benefits to the community became increasingly prevalent.

Months after nonprofit organizations became part of the Laboratory, a small group of buyers met in 2019 to discuss how to move forward with a pilot for

coordinated procurement. The purpose of the meeting was to agree on a few items to direct from farms instead of through distributors who took a 30% cut of the farmers' revenue. At this meeting, the buyers shared and agreed on product pricing and specifications (e.g., package sizes). The following conversation took place at that meeting:

Buyer 1: Then (through coordinated procurement) we can support different food insecurity issues.

Buyer 2: I tried that conversation with [two large food distributors]. (Whistles.) Out to lunch. I did. I asked how can a large group of organizations like you not manage what the small organizations do? Crickets.

Buyer 3: Have you heard of [a food rescue program[2]]? He's been successful in the piloting stage. Some of it goes to animal producers, some to Meals on Wheels, some to NGOs. He has been working in the region and with [a particular regional grocery chain].

Buyer 2: We should be cognizant of waste and how we can contribute (to reducing it).

Buyer 1: I don't think it is offside of this conversation. I think what we are working on [coordinated procurement] can support it.

Buyer 3: I would love to have a bigger impact.

This conversation is exemplary of how the buyers' perspective of local foods had shifted to encompass social and environmental values and also how the food buyers had more fully shifted from a competitive to a collaborative stance. This shift toward collaboration and information sharing was further evidenced by the multiple retellings of the "carrot story" ("I'll come to these meetings but I will not tell anyone how much I pay for carrots") during interviews. The retelling of this story was accompanied with laughter as interviewees reflected upon how far the Laboratory had come in terms of their relationships with one another (Field Notes).

Another example involves two large distributors who participated in the Laboratory and had much to lose by the food buyers (their clients) joining forces to buy food direct from local producers. When the idea of coordinated procurement (i.e., aggregating purchases and buying direct, which would essentially cut out the distributors) first came up in a Laboratory meeting, a member from one of these large distributors asked to speak with the first author afterward and said that he could not continue coming to the meetings because it was not in his company's best interest. Two years later, during a discussion of hiring a full-time Value Chain Coordinator to build direct market relationships between buyers and producers for coordinated procurement, this same distributor, who had returned to meetings after several months of being absent, said:

> We have to do whatever is in the best interest of the food buyers and the producers. That's what this group is about. (Field Notes)

This quote reflects how the distributor had shifted from a focus on what he perceived was best for his company to what was best for the food buyers and the community.

The recoupling of locavore values to the local food logic became most profoundly evident in how local buyers were talking about local food by the end of our time in the field. The 2019 strategic plan, in stark contrast to the 2016 strategic plan, explicitly included a priority for "Social and Environmental Considerations." Furthermore, when asked, during interviews, what local foods meant to each of the food buyers on a personal level, their enthusiasm was visible; their faces became expressive and their body language became livelier (Field Notes):

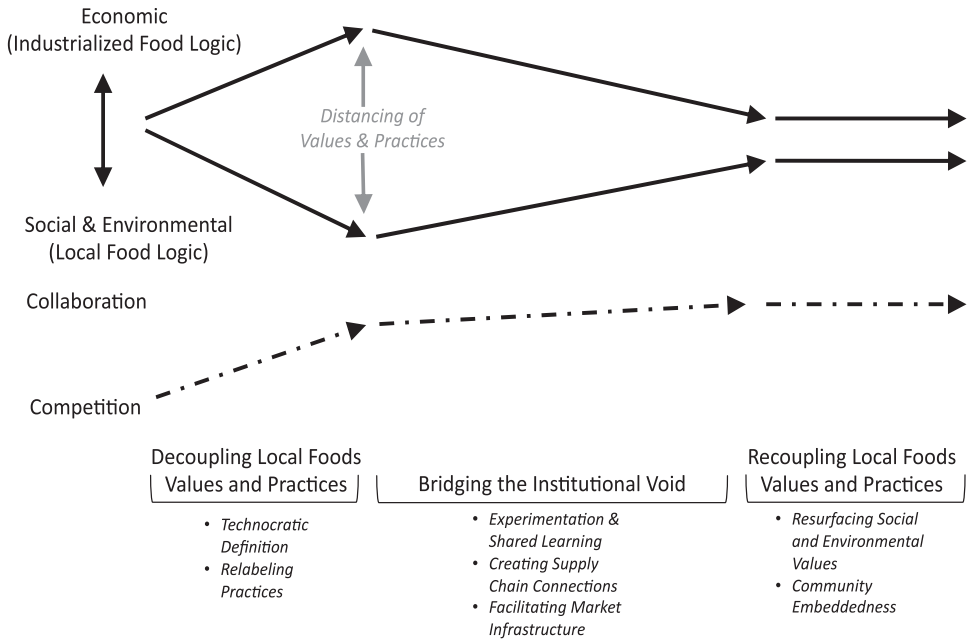
> Local foods are about the impact you can have in the community. What matters is animal husbandry, food safety. Social justice is important as well. Fair Trade coffee, equitably traded, ethically sourced. (Interview, Food Buyer)

> "Local" means knowing who was producing, growing, knowing who it is. I know the owner here [at the café where the interview was conducted] who is opening a roaster down the street. I like knowing that. Maybe it is about the relationship. I feel like I am supporting local. In my own mind there is more of the relationship. Local evokes fresh, healthier, may be more sustainably produced. I will assume better practices, not so industrial. (Interview, Food Buyer)

Discussion

In this paper, we aimed to gain insight into the general processes by which moral markets get scaled. Toward this aim, we zoomed in on the efforts to enhance local food procurement by large organizations in a particular geographic setting. Conceptualizing the barriers to large organizational procurement of local foods as rooted in an institutional void that existed at the interface of competing local and industrial food logics, we presented evidence from a five-year ethnographic field study that highlighted how barriers to local food market scaling were overcome. We showed how, in our case, three key moments related to overcoming these barriers were observed (see Figure 3). First, in order to build a collaborative orientation among competitively oriented food buyers and other actors along the food supply chain, locavore values were decoupled from local food market practices in virtually all Laboratory communications. This was also important because, to be able to procure local food, large established organizations had to provide a more technocratic justification rooted in economic value.

Figure 3. Process of Moral Market Participation and Scaling by Established Organizations



Once the values and practices of the local food logic were decoupled, a more collaborative process ensued among food buyers at large, established organizations, enabling the bridging of the institutional void segregating local and industrial food logics. We identified three component processes related to institutional void bridging—*experimentation and shared learning*, the *creation of new supply-chain connections*, and the *facilitation of market infrastructure*. These practice-centered efforts enabled the construction of richer communal connections linking local farmers, procurement specialists at large organizations, and a wider array of key stakeholders. This facilitated stakeholders to learn from and help each other in ways that collectively enabled the local food market to begin to scale. As part of these changes, the perceived distance between the local and industrial food logics was reduced, and large organizations procured food from both local and industrial buyers.

Once local food procurement began to be more firmly instantiated and legitimated as a component of large organizational food procurement, we observed more explicit efforts that sought to recouple locavore values to local food market practices. This was witnessed in the communications and social composition of the Laboratory. For instance, the Laboratory began to widen its membership to include more activist, nonprofit representatives. The buyers at large organizations also began to substantively embrace locavore movement values and view themselves as more deeply embedded in the community. Although we would not go so far as to claim that the local food market that we studied is a robust exemplar relative to local food markets in places such as Berkeley or Boulder, the scaling we have witnessed is tangible and important.

We believe that our study has important implications for theory. Recent scholarship on social movements and markets has focused on how wider social movements or initial groups of activist producers are able to gain legitimacy for a new kind of market (e.g., Weber et al. 2008, Vasi and King 2012, McInerney 2014, Schneiberg and Lounsbury 2017). This literature has highlighted that the downside of new market legitimation entails risks associated with conservative goal transformation (Zald 1966) and co-optation (Selznick 1949), as goals of efficiency and wealth creation, associated with market logics, become central. Recent discussions of moral markets have highlighted the need to probe deeper into the black box of moral market creation and development to understand the ongoing struggles associated with efforts to infuse economic activity with values other than wealth creation (e.g., Fourcade and Healy 2007, Stehr 2008, McInerney 2014, Schiller-Merkens and Balsiger 2019).

Our study responds to these calls by investigating the dynamics of values and practices in the context of how moral markets get scaled, a neglected aspect of the literature (Georgallis and Lee 2019). It seems to be taken for granted that the legitimation of a moral market will invite large, established organizations to enter. Our study shows that enticing such organizations to enter a moral market requires a great deal of collective effort and cultural entrepreneurship. In addition, our study suggests the need to attend much

more to the demand side of markets. Too much scholarship, not only on moral markets, but on market categories more generally, in organization theory and strategy overemphasizes the role of producers and supply-side dynamics (Priem 2007, Dalpiaz et al. 2010).

It is important to note that one of the key boundary conditions of our study is our focus on business-to-business production and consumption, as opposed to the shifting behavior of end-consumers. Where prior work suggests that social movements can be effective at mobilizing individual consumers and shaping consumer preferences (e.g., Lounsbury 2001, Weber et al. 2008, Balsiger 2016), it is much more difficult to mobilize change among the diverse organizations along the supply chain in order to supply moral market goods to end-consumers. This is because the organizations along the supply chain are more likely to have sticky routines and practices in place, as well as experience institutional complexity associated with competing market and community logics.

Theoretically, we drew on recent developments associated with the institutional logics perspective (Thornton et al. 2012) and cultural entrepreneurship (Lounsbury and Glynn 2019) to conceptualize the challenges faced by those interested in scaling moral markets. The struggle of infusing cultural values into a market almost always entails the blending of market logics with some sort of communal or socially progressive logic (McInerney 2014). In our case, we highlight how the inherent conflict between such logics, as illustrated by the differences between local and industrial foods, creates an institutional void that inhibits the development of such moral markets. We generalize the Mair et al. (2012) case of overcoming an institutional void to build inclusive markets in Bangladesh by highlighting how their notion of institutional void, focusing on the challenges as well as opportunities for activists at the interface of multiple logics, is usefully applicable in developed country contexts.

In our case, however, instead of hybridizing beliefs and values associated with different logics, we showed how the scaling of a moral market involved a complicated process of value decoupling, institutional void-bridging via practice change and infrastructure building, followed by an effort to recouple values and practices. The end result was not a hybridization of logics, but, in essence, a way to establish a new logic (local food) in a way that could be compatible alongside an existing logic (industrial food) inside large, established organizations (Reay et al. 2009). As we have argued, underpinning the processes that we document was an astute cultural entrepreneur—Jackie, the Laboratory's founder—who not only had deep experiences with both local and industrial food logics, but received training that enhanced her strategic capacity to facilitate the development of a successful cross-sector collaboration.

Jackie not only effectively transposed models of local food market scaling from other settings by facilitating a collaborative process of community-building, she also guided the stories told. Initially, she encouraged the Laboratory members to focus on their interests and to set aside locavore values. She did this intentionally as a way to enable local food procurement to more closely align with technocratic rationales. It was only after large established organizations began to gain traction in the ability to procure local foods that Jackie began to encourage storytelling that was infused with social and environmental values. Whereas moral market research has predominantly shown how value-laden efforts that are typically evident in the creation of new moral markets are subject to some form of conservative goal transformation (Zald 1966), our case shows how such values might take root in a more robust form if they are interjected *after* a market has begun to scale. This raises new questions about the role of values in organizations and markets, and how they become tethered to practices (Gehman et al. 2013, Kraatz 2015).

Whereas we have a well-developed stock of knowledge on how cultural entrepreneurship enhances the legitimation of new ventures, our understanding of how cultural entrepreneurs enable market building remains limited (Wry et al. 2011, Lounsbury and Glynn 2019). In this case, our cultural entrepreneur, Jackie, is best understood as an "embedded agent," who, as a result of her experiences, was able to cultivate the cultural toolkits (Swidler 1986) needed to astutely navigate the institutional complexity faced by the institutional food buyers (Thornton et al. 2012). These cultural toolkits included her leadership training on the use of various community development tools, techniques, and strategies that had been shown to be effective in similar scaling efforts, in food systems as well as in other market settings. Jackie's ability to effectively transpose such activist strategies to enable the scaling of the locavore moral market highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the conditions under which cultural entrepreneurs, as embedded agents, are able to more or less successfully navigate institutional complexity in this way (see also Zilber 2002, Battilana et al. 2009, Almandoz 2014, Luo et al. 2020).

It is important to emphasize that our aim is not to portray Jackie as a hero. Although she is clearly a skilled cultural operative, her role was made possible and constituted by a wider institutional process related to the societal legitimation of local food as well as the emergence of leadership training, mentoring, and advice networks and organizations that aimed to

theorize and diffuse locavore values and local food markets across the globe. Our case is best understood as a translational event, and thus draws attention to the need to understand how such localized efforts are fundamentally constituted by wider institutional processes (Meyer and Jepperson 2000, Ocasio et al. 2016, Lounsbury and Wang 2020, Meyer and Vaara forthcoming). This understanding is consistent with the cultural analysis of social movements that has shown how the construction of certain kinds of collective action tactics and repertoires gets transposed across different fields of contestation (e.g., Clemens 1997). Research on cultural entrepreneurship draws attention to the constitutive nature of entrepreneurial action and points to the need to understand the sources of cultural resources and entrepreneurial practices, not just their consequences (e.g., Rindova et al. 2011, Lounsbury and Glynn 2019, Seidel et al. 2020).

Even though locavore values began to be recoupled to local food market practices at the end of our field research, such recoupling will, of course, be variable across contexts. In fact, it may be that the recoupling of locavore values is only temporary, depending, for example, on shifts in the political and economic environment. In our case, we examined the scaling of a local food market that occurred after the local food market logic had some degree of broader societal legitimation and an institutional infrastructure was in place to provide support and resources to enable someone like Jackie to do what she did. Nonetheless, future research should attend more deeply to such decoupling and recoupling processes associated with the values and practices of logics.

In general, whereas research in organizational analysis has attended a great deal to processes of decoupling, we need much more empirical and theoretical attention to how and the conditions under which recoupling occurs (Bromley and Powell 2012), including the role of cultural entrepreneurs and the kinds of stories and communications that they produce (Lounsbury and Glynn 2019). We believe that such decoupling and recoupling processes are pervasive in the context of the institutional voids that exist at the interface of multiple conflicting logics. As such, this line of work has the potential to greatly enhance our understanding of how institutional logics operate, as well as how actors cope with institutional complexity (Greenwood et al. 2011). We need much more research on the conditions under which logics can be integrated, hybridized, or made compatible in some way that enables the creation of new kinds of markets or organizational forms.

We also believe that our focus on the more downstream effects of societal-level social movements articulates well with recent interest in understanding the indirect effects of social movements. Scholarship in this vein suggests the need to attend to the *relationship* between the direct and the second-order, indirect effects of movements, and conceptualizes the relationship between movement-related activism and market dynamics as an ongoing political process (Fligstein 1996, King 2008, King and Pearce 2010, McDonnell et al. 2015, Briscoe and Gupta 2016). This is important because, even if the initial movement effects on markets and organizations appear only symbolic, such as in the corporate adoption of social management devices studied by McDonnell et al. (2015), such practices, and the staff associated with them, might alter the corporate opportunity structure, inviting future activism that more substantively embeds movement values in the functioning of organizations and markets (Meyerson and Scully 1995, Creed and Scully 2000, Lounsbury 2001). Like the literature on moral markets, this work suggests the need to go beyond sweeping narratives of co-optation to highlight how values get embedded in organizations, potentially providing an ongoing motor or opportunity for progressive change in organizations and markets. This opens up new research avenues to study how activism is situated in and across multiple organizational sites within an ecosystem and the kinds of challenges and challengers that might sustain, resource, and reshape larger transformative social change efforts (DeJordy et al. 2020).

Finally, we emphasize that gaining greater insights into the processes and dynamics through which established organizations enter the local food market is of practical relevance. A recent report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) calls for significant changes to "business as usual," warning that only 12 years remain during which "urgent and unprecedented changes" must occur in order to avoid global warming in reaching irreversible and catastrophic levels, including food insecurity for hundreds of millions of people (IPCC 2017). The industrialization of the world's food system, which focuses on efficiency, centralization, and homogeneity, has led to many of the world's most complex environmental, health, and social issues or "grand challenges" (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002, Hinrichs 2003, Ferraro et al. 2015). For instance, the leading sources of water quality impacts on rivers, lakes, and wetlands in the United States have been identified as related to agricultural practices (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2013). It is estimated that the current industrialized food system accounts for 19%–29% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Vermeulen et al. 2012). Fossil fuel dependence and depletion are attributed in large part to mass agriculture (Johnson et al. 2007). In addition, food security has become a major global concern (Godfray et al. 2010).

Thus, the harms wrought by the industrialized food system make salient the importance of large, established organizations entering and scaling local food markets across the globe. Whereas decoupling and cooptation can certainly dilute the potential impact that mainstream organizations can have in shifting the food system toward more sustainable practices, our study suggests that decoupling can also be part of a strategy for providing traction for large organizations that would like to participate in local food markets but face steep challenges because of the large gap between local and industrialized food logics. Our study highlights that the effective development of collaborative cross-sector partnerships and skillful cultural entrepreneurship may provide a key mechanism to enable such processes, and we encourage more attention to the role of such partnerships (see Gray and Purdy 2018). We hope our study provides some fruitful guidance for progressive change in this direction.

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Endnotes

[1] Pseudonyms are used throughout this study to protect the identities of the individuals and organizations involved.

[2] Description of food rescue program: We work with local grocery stores to take their discarded food and relocate it to local charities and small farms. We provide simple systems with safe liability structures that enable food wholesalers, retailers, and producers to divert 100% of their unsaleable food away from landfills and toward those in their community who can use it best. Our simple, adaptable system allows us to move quickly to implement tailor-made solutions, while directing the goods to their highest and best use; first people, then animals, and finally sustainable food production and energy. We believe that making the right environmental, social, and sustainable choices should not be complicated, full of liability, or expensive for any organization.

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