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Hail the snail: Hegemonic struggles in the Slow Food movement

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Abstract

This paper explores how new institutional fields are established and extended. We argue that they are created by social movements engaging in hegemonic struggles and which develop social movement strategies, articulate discourses and construct nodal points. We examine how this process played out during the creation and development of the Slow Food movement. We argue that the positioning of Slow Food as a new field was based particularly on using multiple strategies, increasing the stock of floating signifiers, and abstracting the nodal points used. This mobilized new actors and enabled a more extensive collective identity which allowed the movement to progress, extend, and elevate the field of Slow Food. The field of Slow Food was transformed from appealing only to gastronomes to becoming a broader field that encompassed social justice activists and environmentalists. This study then contributes to the existing literature on field formation, the role of social movements in this process, and political dynamics within social movements. We focus on the importance of hegemony in the institutional processes around field formation by drawing out how Slow Food created a field through the forging of hegemonic links among a range of disparate actors.

Keywords

Discourse analysis, hegemony, Laclau, Slow Food, social movements, resistance, media representations.

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Introduction

Since the early 1990s, many commentators have argued that the dominance of malbouffe (bad food) has a variety of negative consequences. For instance, it is ruinous for farmers, results in dangerous and low paid jobs for food processors, has disastrous environmental consequences for communities, results in poor diets with associated health consequences for consumers and, above all, creates disenchantment with the experience of cooking and eating (Bove & Dufour, 2002; Honore, 2004; Ritzer, 1996; Schlosser, 2002). Some groups have sought to challenge bad food through the development of movements such as organic food (Skinner, 2007) and fair trade food (Reinecke, 2010). These food movements have led to new fields of investigation by bringing together a set of 'organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resources and product consumers ... and other organizations that produce similar services and products' (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148). They have crafted 'distinctive 'rules of the game', relational networks and resource distributions that differentiate multiple levels of actors and models for action' (Rao, Morrill & Zald, 2000, p. 251).

For some time, researchers have puzzled over how new fields are created (e.g. DiMaggio, 1991). Some have suggested that they arise from the structures of existing fields. That is, legitimacy is built through local adaptations that are extensively copied by the actors in a field (Baron, Dobbin & Devereaux Jennings, 1986; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983). Fligstein (2001) argued that external environmental shocks that give rise to significant institutional changes are the main driver of field creation. Contradictions among different logics have also been emphasized by various scholars (e.g. Lounsbury, 2007; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Scott, Ruef, Mendel & Coronna, 2000; Seo & Creed, 2002). Others emphasize the importance of strategic action on the part of the various groups seeking to establish new fields (Beckert, 1999; Maguire, Hardy & Lawrence, 2004; Perkmann & Spicer, 2007). An important form of this strategic action is the social movement (Davis, McAdam, Scott & Zald, 2005; Rao, Monin & Durand, 2003; Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008). The social movement comprises 'collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities' (Tarrow, 1994, pp. 3-4). Existing studies emphasize how movements create new fields by mobilizing resources (e.g. McCarthy & Zald 1987), taking advantage of political opportunities (e.g. Tilly, 1978) and framing issues in advantageous ways (e.g. Creed, Scully & Austin, 2002). However, they largely ignore how social movements pursue their agendas by engaging in hegemonic struggle (Levy & Scully, 2007). In order to provide an account of how social movements engage in these struggles, we turn to Ernesto Laclau's social theory of hegemony (Laclau, 1990, 1995, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe 1985).

Drawing on a study of the Slow Food movement, we ask how this group established and subsequently extended the field of *Slow Food*. Because previous studies highlight that changing the collective representations of an issue in the mass media is an

important way in which new institutional fields are created (Lawrence & Phillips 2004; Rao, 2004), we focus, in particular, on mass media representations of the Slow Food movement. We argue that this movement, or at least dominant coalitions within the movement, created this new field by employing a broad range of protest strategies that combine autonomy and engagement. This mobilized apparently unrelated constituents including gourmets, farmers and environmentalists. In addition, the movement increased the stock of floating signifiers it used to describe its activities and evoked increasingly abstract 'nodal points' which gave some coherence to its diverse activities. This helped to foster a sense of identification among the increasingly different constituents. By mobilizing diverse constituents and fostering a broad collective identity, the Slow Food movement was able to craft hegemonic links between previously relatively separate groups. These links extended the field of Slow Food from a niche area that appealed largely to an audience of gourmets, into a broader field with a similarly much broader audience. By these means, the Slow Food movement has created a dynamic field that includes a range of organizations including farms, research institutions, restaurants, activists, food producers and policy-making bodies.

Our investigation of this empirical setting makes three broad theoretical contributions. First, we build on existing accounts of the formation of new fields (e.g. DiMaggio 1991; Fligstein, 2001; Maguire et al., 2004; Weber, Heinze & DeSoucey, 2008). We examine the formation and transformation of the Slow Food movement. By doing so we identify how a social movement can create and widen a field by advancing practices, extending the reach of the field, and elevating the issues it claims to address. By identifying these mechanisms, we demonstrate that if social movements want to craft broader fields that sustain a wide range of actors, they need to create hegemonic links between their specific activities and the more general concerns of other actors.

Second, we extend the handful of existing accounts of the role of social movements in field formation (e.g. Rao, 2009; Weber et al., 2008) by moving beyond the existing focus on resource mobilization, opportunity structures and framing to considering the role of hegemony in the creation of a new field. We highlight how social movements build and extend fields by mobilizing new linkages between actors and formulating a novel language and collective identity, which hold diverse actors together. This allows social movements to extend their claims beyond a narrow focus and involve a broader constituency. It is a reminder that social movements can establish niche fields that will attract a narrow range of devotees (as Slow Food did in its early days), but to increase the appeal, the movement needs to create hegemonic linkages with other social movements.

The third theoretical contribution is that we extend existing accounts of the political processes involved in the formation and transformation of a social movement. In particular, we consider the role of hegemony in social movements and institutional processes more generally (e.g. Spicer & Böhm, 2007). Existing work on how new

fields become established tends to focus either on processes of mobilization (e.g. Levy & Scully, 2007) or on the production of new identities that bind diverse groups together (e.g. Otto & Böhm, 2006). We show that social movements seeking to craft hegemony in a field bring together both of these processes, in a self-reinforcing way. They mobilize by building alliances with a range of diverse actors, often with quite different sets of interests. At the same time, they build a collective identity for these groups by broadening the range of floating signifiers they appeal to and by creating increasingly ambiguous nodal points able to appeal to a range of different constituents. These two processes broaden our awareness of how social movements are able not only to create and extend networks but also to foster identification among diverse actors.

We begin by reviewing established theories of social movements, focusing on theories of hegemony in social movements. We describe our methodology and how representation of the Slow Food movement in UK media discourse shifted from being a small group championing *gastronomy* in 1986 to 2000, to being a broad-based movement promoting *eco-gastronomy* after 2000. We draw out three processes that underpinned this shift: multiplying strategies, increasing the discursive stock of floating signifiers, and abstracting nodal points. We argue that these three processes create hegemonic links between hitherto unrelated actors, which fosters the progression, extension and elevation of the field. We also discuss the implications of these processes for the concept of hegemony and what hegemony can contribute to studies of social movements and the creation of new fields. We conclude by outlining some lines for future research opened up by this study.

Social Movements and Institutional Change

Researchers have recognized the importance of social movements in contesting and actively changing institutions (Davis et al., 2005; Rao et al., 2000; Schneiberg & Lounsbury 2008). We now know that social movements create new institutions such as organizational forms (Rao, 1998), governance arrangements (Davis & Thompson, 1994), commonly accepted practices (Lounsbury, 2001), technologies (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006), industry wide logics (Lounsbury, 2007; Rao et al., 2003), and market niches (Weber et al., 2008). To understand how social movements create these changes, researchers have examined some of the core processes. These include the mobilization of scarce resources such as expertise, funding and technologies (McCarthy & Zald, 1987), the exploitation of political opportunity structures (Kriesi, 1995; Meyer, 2004; Tilly, 1978), and framing which entails mobilizing ‘action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate activities and campaigns’ (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 614; Lounsbury, 2001; Lounsbury, Ventresca & Hirsch, 2003).

These three core processes in social movements have provided institutional theorists with convincing explanations of how social movements establish new fields. However, they do not allow us to understand completely the strategic dimensions of social

movements that seek to create institutional change (Levy & Scully, 2007). This involves decisions about the 'patterns of organizational action concerned with the formation and transformation of institutions, fields, and the rules and standards that control those structures' (Lawrence, 1999, p. 168). A crucial aspect of these decisions is which arenas movements seek to engage with, and which alliances they might seek to build, and how (Jasper, 2004). Asking such questions helps us to go beyond a focus on the existence of different frames and capture how these frames get articulated and the struggles of power and politics behind these frames (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). In order to understand such political dimensions, some have turned to theories of hegemony (Hensmans, 2003; Levy, 2008; Levy & Scully, 2007; Spicer & Böhm, 2007). These theories remind us that social movements are a coalition of different actors. Theories of hegemony describe how a dominant group seeks strategically to forge relations with other groups in such a way that their particular interests are represented as the interests of the whole (Levy & Egan, 2003; Mumby, 1997). The result is that 'the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 181). According to theories of hegemony, dominant coalitions in a social movement engage in hegemonic struggle to link the incompatible demands of different social groups such that they form a coherent movement that is beneficial to a particular group (Böhm, 2006). The concept of hegemony offers a way to understand how social movements organize linkages between competing groups to change a social field. What is less clear in the current literature is how this hegemonic struggle takes place and, in particular, how hegemonic links are crafted between what sometimes are very different sets of concerns.

Theorizing Hegemony

The concept of hegemony has been used to explain a whole range of organizational phenomena including learning (Contu & Willmott, 2003), strategic management (Levy & Egan, 2003), global production networks (Levy, 2008), international business (Böhm, Spicer & Fleming, 2008), training programmes (Brown & Coupland, 2005), management education (Elliott, 2003), organizational culture (Ogbor, 2001), organizational identity (Coupland & Brown, 2005), entrepreneurship (Jones & Spicer, 2005), organization theory (Böhm, 2006), industrial relations (Haworth & Hughes, 2003), organizational change (Spicer & Sewell, 2010) and institutional entrepreneurship (Levy & Scully, 2007). Most of these studies draw on the thinking of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci (1971), to conceptualize hegemony. To Gramsci, hegemony was the process of ideological leadership which focused on constructing consent through the supportive 'fortresses and earthworks' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 238) of civil society. This last is constituted of institutions, including schools, churches and, increasingly, media. Establishing hegemony, then, involved an incumbent elite imposing a dominant ideology (Ogbor, 2001; cf. Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1980). However, incumbent elites often face stiff resistance from challenger movements that seek to unsettle and question the dominant ideologies (Hensmans, 2003). Thus, hegemony does not entail just domination, but is an ongoing dialectical struggle

(Mumby, 1997), and an irreducible antagonistic struggle among different actors (Contu, 2002).

One way that actors engage in this antagonistic struggle is through mobilization, achieved through strategic action (Levy & Scully, 2007). This entails a range of aspects including the ability to craft sharp critical analyses of the field, develop organizational capacity and the abilities to deploy resources strategically. These abilities are underpinned by future-oriented choices by dominant groups about the actors that the movement seeks to engage with (as allies or enemies), the territory in which the struggle might take place (the workplace or civil society), and the form of the struggle (openly declared politics or more invisible infra-politics). There are four broad generic strategies that would seem applicable to social movements (Spicer & Böhm, 2007). They are: organized workplace resistance (political struggle in the workplace), organizational misbehaviour (infra-political struggle in the workplace), civic movement organization (political struggle in civil society), and civic movements (infra-political struggle in civil society). Social movements will often employ more than one strategy simultaneously (Spicer & Böhm, 2007, pp. 1681-84).

In addition to mobilization, movements seek engagement in antagonistic struggle through the building of identities (Melucci, 1996). This involves trying to create a sense of attachment by crafting collective identification among diverse actors through the movement's demands or claims. This typically involves a process of bricolage whereby different identities are 'cobbled' together by dominant groups in order to create a new composite identity (Duymedjian & Rüling, 2010). These differing identities are given a semblance of order by forging 'chains of equivalence' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). According to Ernesto Laclau's social theory of hegemony (Laclau 1990, 1995, 1996, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, 2001), social movements create chains of equivalence by articulating discourses. By discourse, he is not referring just to bodies of text (cf. Grant, Hardy, Oswick & Putnam, 2004), but to 'any complex of elements in which relations play the constitutive role. This means that elements do not pre-exist the relational complex but are constituted through it' (Laclau, 2005, p. 68). This definition conceives discourse as the underlying rules, logic or form that define the relationships among a series of 'elements' (Willmott, 2005), and creates a sense of identity between the separate elements. Thus, a social movement may use discourse to create a sense of identity and attachment between groups that had not seen themselves as linked. For instance, populist movements were able strategically to use discourse to create a sense of attachment and common identity among very different groups in the countries of Latin America (Laclau, 2005). Similarly, activists involved in Indymedia used a range of common discourses such as 'openness' to forge a common identity which brought together a range of previously disparate groups (Sullivan, Spicer & Böhm, forthcoming). Thus, a central aspect of social movements involves groups propagating discourses that participants can use in political action (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). These discourses provide movements with new and engaging ways of describing their activities, as well as their collective identification with these activities.

A crucial site for social movements to propagate discourse is mass-media, as will be discussed below.

Following Ernesto Laclau, there are two crucial elements to the discourses propagated by social movements. The first is floating signifiers. These are words that have 'overflowed with meaning' and can be 'articulated differently in different discourses' (Torfing, 1999, p. 301). They are signifiers because they are loaded with meaning, and are floating because they can be attached to any number of possible patterns of signification. They are words with no single pre-existing meaning that take on specific meanings depending on how they are linked with other words. Social movements typically exploit a range of floating signifiers in the attempt to create a richer language to articulate their political struggle, and to appeal to and draw in potential allies. Often these signifiers play out in the media. For instance, environmental movements employ a range of signifiers, appealing to vastly different constituents, in order to mobilize broader support (Stavrakakis, 1997). In order to link together what can become a proliferation of floating signifiers, social movements seek to establish nodal points. These are 'empty signifier(s) ... capable of fixing the content of a range of floating signifiers by articulating them within a chain of equivalence' (Torfing, 1999, p. 303). Nodal points are grand terms that bring together a series of more minor terms or themes, to provide some degree of temporary stability (Böhm, 2006). By articulating these nodal points, social movements create chains of equivalence that link the distinct interests of different groups, to one relatively ambiguous central term (Otto & Böhm, 2006). For instance, environmental movements use the relatively ambiguous term 'green' to link a wide range of floating signifiers from the environmental lexicon (Stavrakakis, 1997). This enables social movements to '*integrate* the heterogeneous demands of potentially antagonistic actors' (Hensmans, 2003, p. 363, emphasis in original). Moreover, it enables the formation of a collective identity (such as 'environmentalist') from hitherto fragmented groups.

To summarize, a social movement is created through dominant groups bringing together a disparate range of other groups. They do this through hegemonic struggle, which involves strategic choices about how the movement is positioned within a field, with whom it wants to engage and how it is organized. Dominant groups in movements also engage in identity building by articulating floating signifiers that provide a way of talking about and understanding these activities, and linking these different forms of action around a small number of fairly ambiguous nodal points. Building on this research, we are interested in how new fields are established and extended through the crafting of hegemony. In particular, we are interested in the roles played by mobilization and identity building in this process. In order to explore these issues, we investigate the formation and transformation of the Slow Food movement and how it established and extended a new field.

Methods

Discourse analysis provides a useful addition to existing approaches to studying

institutions (e.g. Hirsch, 1986; Maguire & Hardy, 2006; Motion & Leitch, 2009; Phillips & Malhotra, 2008). The field of discourse analysis is diverse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Grant et al., 2004; Van Dijk, 1997; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001), but in the context of the theoretical concerns developed above, we focus on Laclauian discourse analysis. This approach involves the investigation of political projects and social practices at play in ‘the reproduction and transformation of hegemonic orders and practices’ (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 6). A Laclauian inspired discourse analysis seeks to understand how discourses provide a temporary fix for various social antagonisms and, thereby, construct several different aspects of social reality (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Howarth, 2000). Its central aim is to expose ‘hegemonic discourses as something contingent’ which makes Laclauian discourse analysis ‘suitable for a critique of the inevitability of established regimes of management’ (Otto & Böhm, 2006, p. 308). Such an account of discourse involves tracing the discourses actors use to assign meaning to events. We do this in the context of the Slow Food movement.

Site Selection

We take the case of the Slow Food movement to investigate the dynamics associated with hegemony in a social movement attempting to establish a new field. We were attracted to this movement on the basis that detailed case studies of other food movements, such as Nouvelle Cuisine (Rao et al., 2003; Rao, Monin & Durand, 2005) and molecular gastronomy (Svejenova, Mazza & Palenalles, 2007), have resulted in important contributions to the cultural and political dynamics of field formation. Our examination of this new field indicated that it would provide a rich case for exploring many of our theoretical concerns because it involved lively discourse among very different actors ranging from farmers to elitist food critics. This made it an ‘exemplary case’ (Yin, 2009), appropriate for an exploration of our theoretical concerns.

Slow Food was born in 1989 in Italy as ‘part of a much broader backlash against the high-speed, high-turnover culture of the global food industry’ (Honore, 2004, p. 57). Its mission is to ‘defend biodiversity in our food supply, spread taste education and connect producers of excellent foods with co-producers through events and initiatives’ (www.slowfood.com). Its activities are conducted with a highly localized and decentralized organization with some 100,000 members across more than 150 countries in 2010. The basis of Slow Food is the local convivium, which is a branch organization that organizes events ranging from tastings to protests. There are as of 2010 approximately 1300 of these convivia worldwide, with around 55 in the UK. Some countries have established national branches that provide co-ordination and knowledge to local convivia. In some cases these have become non-profit companies that manage their countries’ commercial Slow Food activities. The UKs Slow Food headquarters are in London, constituted by a governing board of eight people and a management team headed by the Chief Executive Officer. The international headquarters and International Executive Committee of Slow Food are in Bra in Italy. The Slow Food movement runs a range of activities including the Slow Food

Foundation for Biodiversity, Terra Madre (an annual meeting of food producers), and the University of Gastronomic Sciences. Appendix A shows a short historical overview of Slow Food.

Data Collection and Analysis

We began by developing general background knowledge of the movement. We collected many of the movement's foundational texts, manifestos, speeches, histories, and campaigning literature from web sites and examined secondary literature on the movement (e.g. Honore, 2004; Parkins & Craig, 2004). This familiarized us with the movement and its aims, objectives, and methods. It allowed us to construct a narrative of the development of the Slow Food movement. We visited the Slow Food UK headquarters where we were able to verify our account, make amendments and fill in gaps.

We next focused on tracing changes in the discourses associated with the Slow Food movement, focusing on its representation in the UK media. We chose media texts as our central data source because media constitute a principal site for the crafting of hegemony in modern societies (for a review see: Carragee, 1993). Many studies of hegemony focus on how dominant elites capture control of the media to create an alignment between their interests and society as a whole. However, Carroll & Hackett (2006), for example, consider how challenger movements use media as a tool to intervene in struggles over hegemony. Media is used by dominant groups in a social movement to convey the message of movements to external audiences, but also to consolidate these messages for movement participants (Downing, 2001). Media can also play an important role in constructing and solidifying an organization's identities (Kjaergaard, Morsing & Ravasi, 2011). Social movements often choose to avoid mainstream media channels and concentrate on their particular activist media (Atton, 2003). Mainstream media are sometimes seen as being ideologically biased in the reporting of their messages. However, a significant number of social movements, including the Slow Food movement, continue to see mainstream media as important means for conveying their messages to a broader audience. Although the Slow Food movement has a range of media (such as newsletters and websites), it consistently exploits mainstream media as an important activist tool. The founding of the Slow Food movement was a media event, which was organized by its founder, the former journalist Petrini.

Due to the importance of mainstream media for the movement, we decided to focus on representations in the broadsheet UK newspapers: all editions (Saturday, Sunday and other supplements) of *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian/Observer*. We focused on newspapers because much of the research on industry-wide discourses uses newspapers as the main data source (e.g. Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Hirsch, 1986; Selsky, Spicer & Teicher, 2003; Vaara & Tenari 2002) and newspapers often represent many of the discourses in other media such as radio and television. We focused on the "quality" broadsheets (rather than populist tabloids)

because they cover the political spectrum, from conservative to progressive, of Slow Food's supporters, they are targeted at middle class readers, the main target of the Slow Food movement, plus a search disclosed there was very little discussion of the Slow Food movement in the tabloid newspapers. Finally, by examining discourse in quality broadsheet newspapers we were able to capture the discourses articulated by dominant coalitions within the movement. This allowed us to capture the 'official voice' of the movement.

We searched the selected newspapers for the period 1997 to 2007, using Factiva and the term *Slow Food*. Factiva is an online database of 14,000 mainly journalistic sources, such as magazines, newspapers, journals and reports, and provides good access to daily newspapers. The time period reflects the period when Slow Food's activities began to extend beyond Italy: prior to 1997 there were very few articles on Slow Food in UK newspapers, and the first convivium in the UK was established in 1997. After eliminating irrelevant articles, we were left with a sample of 142 (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about Here

The first step in analysing these articles was to order and read them chronologically, and identify and count the floating signifiers that emerged, based on recurrent themes in the newspaper text (see Table 2 and 3). First, we read all the articles. Next, we individually analysed a random sample of 15 articles which we then discussed together to make a first selection of codes. Next, the articles were single-coded and, if required, coding categories were adjusted. Again, the authors discussed the coding results to achieve a consensus. Finally, we worked on identifying nodal points in the texts. We did this by examining the floating signifiers for each year, and looked for consistent meta-themes in the texts. Again, agreement about nodal points was based on discussion among the authors. Finally, we set up a meeting at the Slow Food UK headquarters at which we saw our account of Slow Food's developmental process largely confirmed. We were then able to develop an account of shifts within the UK Slow Food movement discourse (see Tables 4 and 5).

Insert Table 2, 3, 4 and 5 about Here

Findings

As discussed in the theoretical sections, our analysis is structured around three pillars: 1) the strategies adopted by Slow Food; 2) the floating signifiers articulated by the movement; and 3) the nodal points employed. Our analysis identified a shift in its strategies, floating signifiers and nodal points around 2000. We chart the changes that occurred as Slow Food shifted from being a small group championing *gastronomy* pre-2000, to a broad-based movement promoting *eco-gastronomy* after 2000.

1997–2000: A Gastronomic Movement

Strategy

In 1986 the Italian journalist Carlo Petrini, enraged at the opening of a McDonald's at the Spanish Steps in Rome, formed the action group, Arcigola, out of which, three years later, emerged the Slow Food movement. Petrini was fearful of the further Americanization of Italian (culinary) culture, and the resulting standardization and poor quality food, and death of the rich, traditional and varied Italian cuisine. The goal of the early Slow Food movement was gastronomic. The Slow Food Manifesto states that:

‘A firm defense of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of *Fast Life* ... May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency ... Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of *Fast Food*'. (www.slowfood.com)

The quality of food and the sensual pleasure and enjoyment to be derived from eating (and drinking) was at the core of the movement in its early period. This stigmatized Slow Food as being rather elitist, of being a club of snobbish gourmets. In the early years, Slow Food remained embedded in its Italian roots, although Germany (1992) and Switzerland (1993) started their own national Slow Food chapters. Slow Food was, and is, structured around decentralized convivia. These local groups are firmly embedded in regions where they organize a variety of activities. The UK's first convivium was established in 1997.

In the mid 1990s, Slow Food became a legal entity with official headquarters in Bra, Italy, where the Slow Food International Office was opened. Its magazine, *Slow*, was published in Italian, English and German and landmark events and initiatives such as the Salone del Gusto (Hall of Taste) and The Ark of Taste were launched. The Salone del Gusto is a biannual event where Slow Food producers exhibit their produce; the events attract some 150,000 visitors. The Ark of Taste is an attempt to 'rediscover and catalogue forgotten flavours, documenting excellent gastronomic products that are in danger of disappearing' (Slow Food 2007). In 2000 the Presidia was introduced as an extension of the Ark to support knowledge sharing, financial aid, improved marketing/distribution systems and exchanges with the various authorities that support Slow Food related causes.

The data suggest that during this period Slow Food relied largely on civic movement organization strategies. It positioned itself in civil society through activities such as public protests, media interviews and relationships with consumers. Some activities were held in small workplaces such as farms or restaurants. It also used infra-political tactics that smacked of direct activism. These included tasting sessions, local markets, school gardens, excursions and publication of food and wine guides. There was some engagement with official bodies, but this was mostly at the local level. There were

some rudimentary attempts to create organizational structures such as a world headquarters.

Floating Signifiers

Slow Food advanced its struggle by transforming quite simple activities, such as eating a bowl of pasta or holding a farmers market, into politically meaningful acts. They did this by attaching new floating signifiers to these activities. Our analysis of the newspaper articles on the Slow Food movement reveals that the terms *taste*, *slowness*, *traditional*, *local products*, and *artisan traditions* were repeatedly attached to Slow Food movement activities.

Slow Food claimed that *taste* was disappearing as a result of contemporary production methods. To quote Slow Food-supporter and Nobel Prize-winner, Dario Fo: ‘eating without tasting what you put in your mouth is like having sex with a woman rather than making love to her’ (TT, 27/10/2000). Mass-produced, homogenized and industrialized fast-food was labelled ‘bland stuff’, ‘boring’, and ‘tasteless’. The emphasis of Slow Food on pleasure and conviviality, frequently coupled together, are probably best labelled under the signifier *slowness*. This label epitomizes the qualities of leisurely consideration, enjoyment and conviviality (STE, 13/10/2002). The movement called for ‘suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment [to] preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency’ (ST, 01/11/1998). The central message is that ‘Slowing down and eating will always lift you and make you feel better’ (ST, 10/07/2005). *Traditional and local* products made through *artisan* processes were treasured and propagated as superior in quality and taste. Slow Food aimed to ‘rediscover the flavours and savours of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of fast food’ (I, 02/10/2004). Moreover, these traditional products were depicted as having cultural value because ‘the ingredients, production, preparation and consumption of food reflect individual cultures and personal pleasure’ (I, 02/07/2001). Slow Food believed in ‘supporting small communities and their right to exist and live a fair and just life [so] that they will also preserve language, dialect, music and traditions’ (I, 12/11/2006). This involved teaching ‘people to consume their [artisan] products. This way we can support local economies, keeping a close relationship between the product, its conservation, and the development of a district’ (DT, 18/11/2000).

In sum, the pre-2000 newspaper data show Slow Food used various floating signifiers such as taste, artisan production, slowness (pleasure and conviviality), and traditional/local. This discourse drew together previously unassociated activities such as food tastings, farmers markets and street protests. It provided a language focused largely on issues related to quality and conditions for growing the food.

Nodal Points

The portrayal of Slow Food in our data suggests that mobilizing signifiers such as taste, slowness, local and traditional foods, and artisan production, allowed the Slow

Food movement to infuse its activities with meaning. The nodal point of *gastronomy* gave some order to this meaning.

The Slow Food manifesto,¹ which was published in 2001, makes the claim that the movement strives for ‘the protection of artisan and regional foods, gastronomic heritage and culture and promotes the appreciation of lovingly produced and prepared food’ (I, 24/03/2001). This emphasizes the focus on traditional and artisanal local food that tastes good and provides pleasure and enjoyment and conviviality. Gastronomic enjoyment and pleasure are seen as the central, albeit ill-defined, concept holding together and crafting equivalences between the floating signifiers. Slow Food gave some sensibility to gastronomy by counterpoising it against ‘bad’ alternatives. The demand for good, traditional and local food was contrasted against the bad alternative that destroyed centuries-old gastronomic traditions, and was devoid of taste, heart and soul. The Slow Food movement is defined by a ‘dedication to "quiet material pleasure", its interest in *località* and *terroir*, its disdain of GM foods (not to mention GM cars), its love of charm and craft and singularity, its finesse and sensitivity, the Slow Food movement represents the opposite to McDonald’s and Coca Cola, now bruised and diminished by consumer revulsion’ (I, 27/05/2005).

According to our analysis of newspapers, prior to 2000 the range of discourses used within and by the movement was quite limited. As already mentioned, they mostly centred on the notions of taste, conviviality and artisan production, and fitted together around the central nodal point of gastronomy.

2000–2007: An Eco-gastronomical Movement

Strategy

Around 2000 the Slow Food movement expanded its reach, focus and activities. *The Independent* (28/10/2000) in 2000 represented Slow Food as ‘an umbrella group whose original mandate to protect disappearing delicacies has become a far wider drive to promote quality food production’. At this time, the term *eco-gastronomy*, coined by Petrini, became more prominent. It encompassed Slow Food’s attempt to bridge between gourmets and environmentalists in a combined quest for good, clean and fair traded food. This period saw the further globalization of the movement. The Awards for Biodiversity resulted in 2003 in the Foundation for Biodiversity, and in 2004 the movement opened its University for Gastronomic Science. In 2004, Terra Madre, a meeting of global food communities was held, at which thousands of food producers gathered to discuss the possibilities of food produced according to Slow Food’s ideals. Political involvement with national governments and international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations (UN), the World Social Forum and the European Union increased. National Slow Food associations with dedicated executive committees were established in the USA (2000),

¹ Since many post-2000 articles refer to Slow Food in a historical context and therefore often refer to the pre-2000 period, we included appropriate articles published after 2000 to analyse the pre-2000 period.

France (2003), Japan (2004) and the UK (2005). By the end of our research period in 2007 Slow Food had more than 80,000 members and over 850 convivia, spread across 100 countries.

During this period, Slow Food continued to be involved in informal political activities such as farmers markets and convivia. But as the organization grew political campaigns became increasingly popular. Slow Food became more prominent in the official political sphere. For example, in 2001, Slow Food launched a petition against an EU regulation banning the use of non-pasteurized milk, the basis of many traditional cheeses. The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, which was set up in affiliation with the Region of Tuscany authorities, and the University of Gastronomic Sciences, are other examples of the more formalized and politicized nature of Slow Food. New events, such as Slow Cheese and Slow Fish, were launched, and direct contact and collaboration with political elites became increasingly the norm. For instance, in 2003, Slow Food and the Brazilian government joined forces to fight poverty, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity and traditional production methods. In 2004 it first cooperated with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. In 2005, Slow Food collaborated with Brazil's Ministry of Agricultural Development to hold a seminar at the World Social Forum. It was a member of a commission at the World Social Forum that drafted and presented to the WTO the *Manifesto on the Future of Food*. Support from (local) authorities was sought for events such as Salone del Gusto. School projects, such as allotments and taste education, were often collaborative efforts. Slow Food became increasingly professional and formalized.

Although Slow Food became a legal entity and an officially recognized international NGO already in 1996, the consequences of this emerged more clearly after 2000. More than 100 people are employed at its headquarters in Bra and Slow Food has adopted a governing body structure, including an International Executive Committee, President's Committee, International Council, and Committees of the national associations. There are associated, independent institutions such as Slow Food Editore (a publishing house), Slow Food Promozione (the press office), the University of Gastronomic Sciences and the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity.

The media representations analysed show that in the post 2000 period the Slow Food movement's strategies became much broader. This coincided with an expansion in its activities which encompassed the whole food supply chain. Slow Food engaged in large-scale events, such as Terra Madre and Presidia, and engaged directly with political elites (such as the UN) and founded a range of formal organizations such as the University of Gastronomic Sciences and the Foundation for Biodiversity. However, it preserved many of its infra-political activities such as tastings. The overall result was that Slow Food's reach and range of actions expanded hugely.

Floating Signifiers

After 2000 there was also a shift in how the movement's activities were represented. They continued to be represented in terms of taste, slowness, artisan production and local and traditional foods, but a new range of signifiers emerged in the Slow Food discourse: *sustainability, biodiversity and social justice*.

The floating signifiers of *biodiversity* and *sustainability* represented the ecological dimension, or what Slow Food referred to as 'clean' food. Petrini argued that 'there is no pleasure without justice and the cleansing of the environment' (I, 17/06/2006). This ecological angle was coupled with Slow Food's ideals for the value of local, traditional and artisanal products. Many species have become extinct and the environment has been harmed as a result often of the food industry's objectives: '[T]he Slow Food movement believes the solution is to re-localise agriculture and support local communities in order to enable the growth of sustainable development' (I, 11/11/2006).

The discourse of *social justice* refers to fair compensation and humane treatment of food producers. Slow Food commissioner Mojoli stated that: 'To defend these small-scale artisans, we have to ensure they are paid a fair price. This is part of the Slow Food message: if you are going to defend quality, you have to spend money. A cheese made in a cottage in the mountains can't cost the same as one made in a factory. We have to teach people to consume less and consume better' (DT, 18/11/2000). Social justice refers to fighting against the exploitation of, often small and local, food producers. By deciding what to consume, individuals (or co-producers as Slow Food terms them) can influence the fate of the farmer at the other end of the supply chain.

To summarize, after 2000, the Slow Food movement began to introduce several new discourses. These included biodiversity, sustainability and social justice and effectively extended the Slow Food movement's representation of its activities. It meant that the focus was no longer only on food quality, but included environmental and fair-trade issues.

Nodal Point

The new signifiers were linked around the nodal point of *eco-gastronomy*. Before 2000 quality was equated with gastronomy, taste and pleasure. After 2000, quality had an ethical and ecological dimension, present also in the concept of eco-gastronomy, which was the term coined by Slow Food. Slow Food began to promote the holistic approach of eco-gastronomy, which is good, clean and fair:

"For far too long," he [Carlo Petrini] says, "the history of food, on the one hand, and gastronomy on the other, have been thought of as two different things.... It's this division that is all wrong. ... Agriculture, food processing, economy (because trade is economy), political economy, nutrition, the pleasure of eating - all this is gastronomy. And our task here is to reclaim this concept of gastronomy in all its multidisciplinary richness.'" (I, 11/10/2004).

In our representations, the linking between the nodal point eco-gastronomy and the floating signifiers of slowness, artisanal production, local/traditional food, taste, sustainability, social justice and biodiversity becomes clear. It meant that food should not only taste good, but its production should be ‘sustainable, diversified and humane to workers as well as animals’ (IS, 15/06/2003). Slow Food combined a focus on gastronomy with ecological and social justice discourses. This coincided with a more general concern among society about these issues: ‘Slow Food now taps into a broader movement whose leitmotifs are anti-globalisation, anti-standardisation and the assertion of local and regional identity, not to mention saving trees from the bulldozers and worries about BSE and genetically modified foods’ (TT, 27/10/2000).

The enemy continued to be ‘McDonaldization’, standardization and growing globalization, which reduced biodiversity, harmed the environment, was unsustainable and led to global social injustice. Central to this was the Good, Clean and Fair food strategy, which continues to be the basis of Slow Food’s endeavours. This drew together a range of actors with very different interests and demands, but according to the founder of the East London convivium: ‘What I particularly like about the Slow Food Movement is that, though its mission is clear, it’s got a natural diversity. ... you can tap into whichever most interests you’ (TT, 22/12/2005). Based on a central nodal point, Slow Food was able to appeal to many different individuals with a shared identity of ‘working ... against the economic logic of modern life but in this “modern” world’ (Petrini 2001: 109, emphasis in original, quoted in Parkins and Craig 2006: 129).

Thus, the dominant nodal point in Slow Food’s discourse changed after 2000 and a range of new discourses, such as environmentalism and social justice, became part of Slow Food’s lexicon. These discourses did not fit so neatly with the nodal point of gastronomy, and the notion of ‘eco-gastronomy’ became the new nodal point able to accommodate all these signifiers.

Discussion

The Slow Food movement has been remarkably successful at constructing a new field populated by ‘slow’ producers, distributors, critics, consumers and others. As a welcome addition to the established theories of framing (Benford & Snow, 2000), resource mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1987) and political opportunity structures (Tilly, 1978) we have focused on the crafting of hegemony (see also: Levy & Scully, 2007; Spicer & Böhm, 2007), making it possible to gain more insight into the processes of struggle faced and strategies employed by a social movement. In what follows we argue that Slow Food crafted hegemony by multiplying the strategies of resistance, increasing the stock of floating signifiers, and abstracting the nodal point it used. This mobilized new actors and built a more extensive collective identity through which the movement was able to progress, extend, and elevate the field of Slow Food.

Multiplying Strategies

The existing research shows that successful social movements often employ a range of strategies (Levy & Scully, 2007; Scully & Creed, 2005; Spicer & Böhm, 2007). But how these strategies are brought together is not clear. In the case of Slow Food it initially used civic movement organization strategies, but later employed both infra-political and political approaches. This involved a process that we call ‘movement broadening’. Existing accounts of social movement strategy suggest that as movements grow, they are forced to abandon informal infra-political activities to pursue more formalized political activities (for a review see Clemens & Cook, 1999). By maintaining the importance of local convivia, Slow Food was able to nurture direct activities such as tastings and food markets, which in turn allowed them to continue a ‘strategy of autonomy’ (Böhm, Dinerstein & Spicer, 2010) and allowed Slow Food members to govern and direct at local level and to effect grassroots change. Alongside the convivia pursuit of autonomy, other aspects of the movement were involved in a ‘strategy of engagement’ (Levy & Scully, 2007, p. 984; Meyerson & Scully, 1995), based on direct political strategies. This enabled the movement to engage with powerful political entities with significant resources, including the UN, and to construct an organizational basis to sustain the movement. These more formal elements of the Slow Food movement pursued a reformist agenda that sought to work closely with the political elites (Den Hond & De Bakker, 2007). This typifies the dilemma faced by many institutional entrepreneurs of needing to mobilize members within a field, while also reaching into other fields to obtain resources, legitimacy and new ideas (e.g. Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006).

By broadening its activities, the Slow Food movement was able simultaneously to pursue the strategies of autonomy and engagement, and to broaden its appeal to direct activists and larger organizations. This created tensions based on the need to support two different processes - of organizing, engaging and acting at the convivia level and through more formal processes.

Increasing Stock of Floating Signifiers

To deal with such tensions, we know that social movements often foster and employ a common language (Laclau, 2005; Weber et al., 2008), but we do not know much about how they do this. Slow Food initially employed the language of quality which expanded to include the languages of the environment and social justice. This involved creating links with broader popular discourses, which increased the stock of floating signifiers. Slow Food did not simply move from one language to another, which many studies of social movement and institution building suggest happens (Rao et al., 2000). Rather, it added another range of floating signifiers to its existing stock. The new discourses were emerging in society more generally and were associated with environmentalism, social justice and fair trade.

By broadening the stock of signifiers used, Slow Food did not alienate the current Slow Food movement members by abandoning the language that they were familiar with. It continued to be rooted in the language of gastronomy. This is in line with other studies that show that the linguistic repertoires of successful movements are linked to deeply rooted traditions (e.g. Rao et al., 2003). Also, by broadening its stock of signifiers, Slow Food was able to appeal to other groups interested in the environment and fair trade. For instance, it was able to present itself as an ‘environmental’ organization that spoke the same language as other environmental groups. This allowed its influence to extend from the narrow field of gastronomy to the broader area of environmentalism. This is in line with other studies that claim that the use of discourses with wide social appeal enable social movements to broaden their appeal to a wider range of potential participant groups (Lounsbury et al., 2003).

Nevertheless, this strategy can pose problems. It risks being confusing because of the number of discourses in circulation. It risks the specific and enduring message of the movement becoming obscured. It risks loss of identity of the movement, one of the key components in the process of mobilization (Melucci, 1996).

Abstracting Nodal Points

The literature shows that to maintain a coherent identity, movements need broad appeal and all-embracing nodal points (Böhm, 2006; Hensmans, 2003; Otto & Böhm, 2006). But little is known about how movements link a range of often radically different demands around a particular nodal point. Slow Food initially evoked the gastronomic qualities of food, but later focused on the environmental and social consequences of food production. It maintained its vehement opposition to ‘fast food’, which enabled the inclusion of diverse groups, including restaurant critics and anti-corporate activists, within the broad, deliberately ambiguous fold of ‘eco-gastronomy’.

Slow Food included these additional actors by abstracting the appropriate nodal point, one that was all-embracing and ambiguous. Its ambiguity allowed the movement to construct a broad, and less elitist-seeming identity. In particular, it buried its identity as being a movement for leftist, middle class gastronomes and became accessible to a broader group interested in food, the environment and social justice. Its broad appeal for quality food succeeded precisely because it could be linked to various different practices. Slow Food evoked a ‘strategically ambiguous’ discourse that allowed it to fit easily into particular localities (Markham, 1996). Slow Food’s claims became even more alluring to potential users of these discourses (Driver, 2009; Jones & Spicer, 2005). Research shows that institutional entrepreneurs also rely on ambiguous discourses. For instance, essential to establishing cross-border regions was the appeal for ‘a united Europe’, a very broad and ambiguous description (Perkmann & Spicer, 2007).

As the ambiguity of the nodal point increased, the range of floating signifiers that could attach to it increased. This introduced a danger that the value associated with the

uniqueness of the nodal point might decrease (Litrico, 2008). Another danger associated with ambiguous nodal points is they can be hijacked. Think, for example of a takeaway business producing high quality, organic food, attempting to gain the endorsement of Slow Food. Some large food retailers might try to label their own promotions Slow Food. Both examples would result in suspicion about Slow Food. To prevent infringements, the Slow Food movement has developed a series of strict rules about when its name can be used and its insignia (a snail) applied. These certification and branding issues are reminiscent of the ongoing tension between wide-spread involvement in the movement and control of symbolism of its discourse.

Crafting Hegemony

After examining the processes that, according to our data sources, turned Slow Food into a movement with a broad appeal we next consider the role of hegemony in the field formation process more generally.

In the literature review we discussed research that suggests that hegemony is created either through processes of mobilization (e.g. Levy & Scully, 2007), or through the development and articulation of collective identities achieved through the articulation of discourses (e.g. Willmott, 2005). In our study of the Slow Food movement, we found the processes of mobilization and identity building appeared to be two sides of the same coin, operating *simultaneously* and *mutually implicated*. Mobilization processes were, for instance, visible through the multiplication of strategies, which extended the number of actors involved. Broadening the range of actors meant that the movement was including radically different sets of different demands and interests, which in turn complicated the forging of a sense of attachment. Our data then suggests that Slow Food sought to build a sense of identification with a broad range of diverse groups by increasing the stock of floating signifiers and abstracting the nodal points in order to achieve a language that diverse groups would find appealing. In sum, the functional alliances and attachments developed into ideological attachment to the movement and clashes or tensions between constituents could be reduced by the ambiguous common nodal point.

Conversely, identity-building also relied on mobilization strategies. By articulating a range of empty signifiers and creating fairly ambiguous nodal points, the Slow Food movement created an ideological framework to frame a broader movement. However, this discursive framework needed to be given life through everyday activities, not inspired only by ideology, but based on more practical activities such as building and nurturing alliances and organizational capacity. This focus on practical activities gave the ideology practical substance as well as provided the broader discourse of Slow Food with meaningful content. So far from using either mobilization or identity building exclusively, Slow Food appeared to exploit both processes. This has been recognized by others (e.g. Spicer & Böhm, 2007) but they remained less explicit about how this happens.

These mutually reinforcing processes of mobilization and identity building brought together a range of actors into something that resembles what Gramsci (1971) called a ‘historical bloc’ around the concept of Slow Food. However, in Gramscian terms these blocks usually refer to wide political movements (e.g. communism) that rely on both ideological and coercive means to establish a power of unification. Since this scale does not apply to a movement such as Slow Food, it is possible more appropriate here to refer to "historical links" rather than "historical blocks".² These “historical links” helped to forge linkages and alliances among the different actors by inviting different groups, such as farmers and environmentalists, to participate at conferences. It also created an ideological framework that bound the actors together (Levy & Scully 2007, p. 978), with the result that previously separate groups developed links and acknowledged that they had common interests. These links were dynamic: although none of the groups involved relinquished their identities or interests, they did realize that they were being served by the Slow Food movement. Slow Food was articulating a series of very different interests and struggles within a multifaceted movement. Tables 6 and 7 show the intended as well as unintended crossovers between Slow Food and a range of different actors.

Insert Table 6 and 7 about Here

By creating historical links comprised of a range of different actors bound loosely together by a shared identity, the Slow Food movement established its new field. By crafting the hegemonic links around ‘slowness’, the Slow Food movement accomplished *progression* in the field and created novel relationships among actors who had previously not interacted. It created a range of new practices, routines and modes of organizing, such as the convivium and Terra Madre, which had not previously existed. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the movement created a novel collective identity that could be used to label and promote activities associated with ‘Slow Food’. This provided many of the components required by a new field such as groups of actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), rules of the game, resources and networks (Rao et al., 2000), and shared meaning (Lawrence & Phillips, 2004). The forging of a hegemonic agreement effectively produced a kind of settlement (albeit broad) between potentially opposed players, around the nature of the field (Rao & Kenney, 2008).

The attempts to create hegemony effectively *extended* the field by including a range of new actors, developing a range of floating signifiers (e.g. sustainability and social justice) that would appeal to these ‘new recruits’ and constructing the broader nodal point of eco-gastronomy to create a collective identity with which constituents could identify. This allowed the movement to claim a huge range of activities that would have been irrelevant had it been strictly a gourmet movement. It shifted from being a niche movement towards a much broader movement that influenced its environment

² We are indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

beyond its immediate task at hand (see also Barley, 2010). The discourse of ‘Slow’ has by now extended even further into other aspects of life including city planning, leisure, publishing, education, finance and travel. The institutional entrepreneurship literature has previously recognized this extension aspect as well. For instance, Greckhamer (2010) studied the “stretch” (expansion) of strategic management discourse to economic development. However, the details of exactly how this was achieved remained underdeveloped.

The Slow Food movement was effectively *elevated* from being a somewhat elitist movement to addressing important and more far reaching issues. Its language expanded to include more reference to social justice, for example, which supported its claims that its activities addressed broader societal goals. It established more and tighter connections to higher level and commonly shared schemes of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). This vested the field of Slow Food with moral worth. It changed from ‘just’ being aimed at satisfaction and enjoyment, to the more worthy causes of environmental problems, building authentic connections among people, and social justice. This increased moral worth is probably the basis for the economic worth of the field today: based on its claims to be doing morally good things we are prepared to devote more resources to it. For instance, many people are willing to pay a significant premium for a ‘slow’ cheese. Recent work on fair trade shows that the moral claim of ‘fairness’ becomes transformed into patterns of economic worth (Reinecke, 2010).

Future Research

The present study opens up several possibilities for future research. First, we primarily focused on the political processes of how social movements establish and develop themselves. Underpinning this process is a broader issue of how they create broader legitimacy for themselves. In the present study we noted that many of the appeals which the movement made were primarily to moral conceptions such as fairness and greenness. This seems to highlight the importance of social movements building moral legitimacy (e.g. Palazzo & Scherer, 2006; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). Future research could expand this observation by looking in more detail at how new fields are established and legitimized on a set of moral claims about what is “good” and the work that for instance social movements undertake in this.

Second, we engage primarily with secondary representations of the organization since it draws mostly on data from newspapers. While the focus on ‘naturally occurring text’ is entirely consistent with most studies of discourse, it leaves some questions. For instance, the question of the unwritten and unofficial discourses that circulate in social movements such as Slow Food and how movement members use these discourses? Furthermore, what about representation in non-UK newspapers? These questions could be examined through a more detailed study of how hegemony is crafted in the day-to-day processes of mobilizing and building identity.

Third, more research is needed on the growth of the movement. Our objective was to examine the role of hegemony in field formation, but there are some questions about the role of social movements in a field beyond the initial processes of ferment and struggle. For instance, the role of social movements in sustaining or destroying a field. A particularly interesting question is how such fields move from being a broad movement to becoming a mass movement. To answer these questions, researchers might draw on broader historical databases that would allow the social movement to be tracked over a longer time period. Comparative case study methods could be used to uncover the ways hegemony is established, maintained or challenged in growing, stable or declining fields.

Fourth, in this paper we tracked the movement's hegemonic struggle. Hegemony does not replace the other movement processes though, but exists alongside them. Thus we need to understand how hegemony interacts with other movement dynamics such as resource mobilization, opportunity exploitation and framing. Research could track these other movement processes alongside hegemony and consider the interactions between them.

A fifth issue is our focus on an idiosyncratic field of food production. Studies of food fields suggest that cultural struggles are important (e.g. Rao et al., 2003; Svejenova et al., 2007). Whether similar cultural processes emerge in a technical field, such as an open-source software community, or a political field such as a policy community, is unclear and requires further study. Future research might examine more technically or economically oriented fields.

Finally, this paper does not examine in depth how movements practically manage competing demands. We noted tensions between the strategies of autonomy and accommodation, breadth and specificity of the floating signifiers used, and the clarity and ambiguity of nodal points. It would be interesting to explore how social movements manage these tensions which could be achieved through a close up and ongoing study of how movements and field members manage and negotiate these competing demands. In particular, it would be rewarding to explore the contradictions which social movements face in seeking to establish hegemony. This would involve investigating how social movements build hegemonic links that bring together diverse groups around a common identity. It is also important for researchers to be mindful of how new these new identities may be experienced as exclusionary or dominating by some groups. This gives rise to the question of when is it that movement identities becomes too solidified and we it becomes impossible to incorporate alternative groups within them. It also gives rise to the question of how dominant groups in a social movement are able to balance attempts to create a unified identity with space to express alternative identities.

Conclusion

This paper explored how the formation and transformation of social movements has implications for the establishment and extension of new fields. We have argued that the Slow Food movement used multiple strategies to enrol new participants, increased the stock of floating signifiers which provided a broader language, and abstracted the nodal points which created a more general collective identity that appealed to a wider audience. Slow Food created hegemonic links through processes of mobilization and identity building that attracted a range of actors not previously involved in the movement. This progressed the field by creating novel practices and patterns of interaction, extended the field by appealing to broader audiences and incorporating new activities, and elevated the field by linking the movement's activities to higher – especially moral - values. This allowed the Slow Food movement to become a broader movement addressing a wide range of constituents and worthwhile goals.

We started this paper by pointing out three main contributions. As for the first, this paper extends the work on the emergence of fields (e.g. DiMaggio, 1991; Fligstein, 2001; Maguire et al., 2004). We argued that social movements play an important role in establishing new fields. Many existing studies focus on the initial stages of niche movements (e.g. Rao, 2004). In our study, we examined how a niche movement was extended and elevated through the crafting of hegemonic links with other actors. These processes are not limited to the Slow Food movement; many social movements have succeeded in linking the struggles of previously unrelated actors in order to create new fields. For instance, during the 19th and 20th centuries, the Labour Union movement brought together a range of previously unrelated occupations to form a powerful 'historical bloc' with the collective identity of 'workers' (Thompson, 1967). The environmentalist movement gathered various special interest groups around a common identity and set of practices associated with being 'green' (Stavrakakis, 1997). Within the workplace, activists have established linkages between previously unrelated claims from women, people of colour, the disabled, and gays and lesbians, using the broader discourse of 'diversity' (Creed et al., 2002). We see similar processes at work in industries where a range of quite different activities are collected under a common label, for example 'bio-technology', 'nano-technology' and 'clean-technology'. In each of these cases, we find purposeful attempts by social movements to progress the field by creating linkages and patterns of identification between previously separate groups. In all these examples, the movements sought progressively to extend the reach of the issues being addressed (e.g. the green movement applying itself to ever broadening aspects of social life). Finally, the crafting of hegemony allowed these movements to address increasingly important goals (e.g. the diversity movement working for 'equality', 'justice' and 'freedom').

In addition to providing a framework to explain the dynamics of field emergence, this paper provides a novel account of how social movements intervene in this process (e.g. Rao, 2009; Weber et al., 2008). Moving beyond standard accounts of resource

mobilization, the discovery and exploitation of political opportunities, or framing processes we argue that hegemonic struggles are a vital aspect of movements' activities. We also argue that the crucial role of social movements is brokering relationships and creating linkages between different actors with often diverse demands. This enables a united powerful voice and captures the activities and initiatives of the movements they seek to create links with. Crafting hegemony provides a way for these often conflicting actors to find a settlement that becomes the basis of a field (Rao & Kenney, 2008). This process can be seen in a range of cases beyond the Slow Food movement. For instance, studies on the creation of technical standards emphasize how the actors established some minimal settlement between potentially opposed parties to establish standards which were advantageous to all (e.g. Garud, Jain & Kumaraswamy, 2002). Similarly, studies of competing organizations, such as elite restaurants, emphasize how movements can unite chefs around common norms, which then become the basis for subsequent competition (Rao et al., 2003, 2005). These studies demonstrate that social movements do not necessarily abolish competition, but may become the basis for new rules of the game and new competition among different members of the field.

Finally, we have advanced the work on the political processes involved in the formation and transformation of social movements. In particular, we highlight the role of hegemony in the processes of organizing (e.g. Böhm, 2006; Böhm & Spicer, 2007; Levy & Egan, 2003; Scully & Levy, 2007), which tends to show that hegemony is crafted either through mobilization or identity building. Here we show that these processes are mutually dependent and argue that as movements seek to build alliances with new actors they need to construct appropriate language and collective identities in order not to alienate potential allies. At the same time, these movements need to 'populate' these discourses and identities with practices to give them substance in order for their claims not to be hollow. Slow Food is not alone in exploiting mobilization and identity building simultaneously. It emerges in many attempts to craft meaningful and durable hegemonic links. For instance, large multinational corporations try to influence environmental legislation by building networks and founding organizations such as lobby groups, and articulating a broader discourse associated with free-market solutions (Levy & Egan, 2003). Resistance movements mount challenges through mobilization (e.g. building organizational capacity and creating networks) and a collective identity (Sullivan et al., forthcoming). Even in our own field of organization and management journals this phenomenon can be observed. A recent study on the evolution of the scholarly discourses championed by *Organization Studies* (Hinings, 2010) discussed some of difficulties faced in the balancing act '...to become global, which means incorporating non-Europeans, and especially North Americans, while retaining its allegiance to its enduring themes, its particular roots and tradition' (Hinings, 2010, p. 670). It could be argued that the journal tried to extend its reach and voice while at the same time maintain its 'European' identity through a mixture of processes of mobilization (internationalization of editorial boards, the annual Colloquium moving outside Europe) and the articulation of its European academic discourse of diversity, pluralism and inter-disciplinarity. We think such processes of

movement broadening in intellectual fields like Organization Studies may also give rise to many of the same tensions and struggles we have described.

News-					
paper	The Times	The Guardian	The Independent	The Daily Telegraph	Total
Year					
1997	1	1	-	N.A.	2
1998	1	1	1	N.A.	3
1999	1	-	-	N.A.	1
2000	5	3	4	1	13
2001	4	4	3	-	11
2002	3	1	4	1	9
2003	1	1	2	1	5
2004	6	8	11	4	29
2005	3	4	5	-	12
2006	6	10	13	4	33
2007	7	8	3	6	24
Total	38	41	46	17	142

Table 1: Count of articles on Slow Food in UK broadsheet newspapers

Table 2: Count (absolute) of floating signifiers associated with the Slow Food movement

		Frequency of Mentioning per year											
		97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	Σ
Nodal Points and Floating Signifiers	Gastronomy												
	Slowness	2	5	3	14	12	14	7	26	18	37	28	166
	Artisanal	2	0	2	10	14	11	8	26	16	32	24	145
	Local/ Traditional	5	3	2	20	16	16	10	36	21	41	29	199
	Taste	3	2	1	14	9	11	9	23	15	30	26	143
	Eco-gastronomy												
	Sustainability	0	0	0	4	7	9	5	22	10	32	25	114
	Social Justice	0	0	0	3	6	7	3	15	7	22	16	79
Biodiversity	0	1	1	6	9	9	4	26	11	35	24	126	
	Σ	12	11	9	71	73	77	46	174	98	229	172	972

Table 3: Count (relative) of floating signifiers associated with the Slow Food movement

		Relative Frequency of Mentioning per year (%)										
		97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Nodal Points and Floating Signifiers	<i>Gastronomy</i>											
	Slowness	17	45	33	20	16	18	15	15	18	16	16
	Artisanal	17	0	22	14	19	14	17	15	16	14	14
	Local/Traditional	42	27	22	28	22	21	22	21	21	18	17
	Taste	25	18	11	20	12	14	20	13	15	13	15
	<i>Eco-gastronomy</i>											
	Sustainability	0	0	0	6	10	12	11	13	10	14	15
	Social Justice	0	0	0	4	8	9	7	9	7	10	9
	Biodiversity	0	9	11	8	12	12	9	15	11	15	14
	Σ (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4: Shifts in discourse in the Slow Food movement: pre-2000

Period: pre-2000				
Nodal Point	Floating Signifier	Description	Example	Source (if applicable) and date
Gastronomy	Taste	use of fresh, and authentic high quality products for meal creation	‘it’s all about the right to consume a meal in beautiful surroundings – the opposite of fast food and the sworn enemy of boring, mediocre supermarket food’	(ST, 23/12/2001)
	Slowness (Pleasure/Conviviality)	enjoying the art of cooking with other people to escape the business culture	‘take time and pleasure over preparing and eating our food, it puts a brake on our increasingly frenetic way of life’	(TT, 06/12/1997)
	Artisanal	preference for non-industrialised and mass-produced food in order to keep the cultures and craft skills alive	‘real Italian coffee was not just a hot drink but part of the Italian way of life. It was becoming increasingly urgent for Europeans to defend their local identity and "spirit of place" against the multinationals’	(TT, 05/04/2001)
	Local/Traditional	appreciation for the authentic, non-standardised and non-homogenised	‘then we had a big idea to rediscover the osterie - the classic, traditional places where you could eat regional food informally and get good value for money’	Giacomo Mojoli (Slow Food VP) (DT 18/11/2000)

Table 5: Shifts in discourse in the Slow Food movement: post-2000

Period: post-2000				
Nodal Point	Floating Signifier	Description	Example	Source (if applicable) and date
Eco-gastronomy	Taste	use of fresh, and authentic high quality products for meal creation	'... when I eat a slice of ham, it becomes a part of Carlo Petrini. That's why I care about food'	Carlo Petrini (TT, 23/09/2006)
	Slowness (Pleasure/Conviviality)	enjoying the art of cooking with other people to escape the business culture	'... pleasure is not a negative discourse. That we think this way is because of ... Puritanism for you British, according to which pleasure is practically a sin'	Carlo Petrini (I, 11/10/2004)
	Artisanal	preference for non-industrialised and mass-produced food in order to keep the cultures and craft skills alive	'these are foods made by artisan producers, just as they were hundreds of years ago, so now are of historical importance and need to be prevented from becoming extinct'	(I, 12/11/2006)
	Local/Traditional	appreciation for the authentic, non-standardised and non-homogenised	'the new generation of fashionable young chefs are following the craze for local produce, fusing authentic local products and urban tastes and proudly adding the name of the producer or origin to the menus'	(G, 28/06/2006)
	Biodiversity	saving traditional products, species and production methods	'a gourmet who does not think of ecology is stupid, but an ecologist who is not a gourmet is boring'	Carlo Petrini (TT, 04/12/2006)
	Sustainability	ensuring long-term viability for all that lives on and of our planet	'...we've moved away from being simply a gastronomic organisation to be much more aware of environmental issues ... We are now an eco-gastronomic movement'	Wendy Fogarty (Slow Food UK) (DT 11/01/2003)
	Social Justice	fair treatment and compensation for all	'If your concerns are with the politics of social change, you may find yourself in harmony with Slow Food's commitment to land stewardship and food that's grown by sound and sustainable methods'	(Madison 2001: ix, cited in Parkins and Craig 2006: 18)

Table 6: Crossovers between Slow Food and other actors

Period: pre-2000			
Domain	Actor	Frequency	Description of strategy
Political/ organiza- tional	--	--	-
Civil society	--	--	-
Business	Restaurants	4	Restaurants taking over the Slow Food philosophy.
Media	Newspaper commentators	4	Media coverage of linking the Slow Food principles with broader societal trend of 'slowing down'

Table 7: Crossovers between Slow Food and other actors

Period: post-2000			
Domain	Actor	Frequency	Description of strategy
Political/ organiza- tional	Political agents	8	Endorsement and sponsoring of Slow food initiatives by governmental agencies (e.g. UN, Ministry of Agriculture in Italy and the Brazilian government)
Civil society	Celebrities	6	Endorsement (passive and/or active) of Slow Food through celebrities such as Prince Charles, politicians David Cameron and David Miliband, and chefs Alice Waters and Jamie Oliver
	NGO's	3	Collaboration with NGO's such as Greenpeace
	Slow Cities	6	Spreading of Slow Food's discourse into spin-offs such as Slow Cities (affiliated with Slow Food)
Business	Tour operators	4	Organised trips by non-Slow Food affiliated tour operators to Italy 'in search of Slow Food'
	Restaurants	12	Restaurants taking over the Slow Food philosophy, including emergence of 'slow' fast food.
Media	Books and magazines	8	Publication of independent books using the Slowness discourse and appearance of Slow Food in non-food magazines such as The Ecologist.
	Newspaper commentators	6	Media coverage of linking the Slow Food principles with broader societal trend of 'slowing down'

Appendix A: Event History

Year	Event
1986	Slow Food's forerunner Arcigola established
1989	Slow Food movement established
1990	Slow Food Editore (Slow Food publishing house) established First Slow Food International Congress
1992	Slow Food Germany established
1993	Slow Food Switzerland established.
1994	National Congress of Slow Food Italy decides to invest in developing Slow Food internationally
1996	Slow Food becomes a legal entity and opens the Slow Food International Office Introduction of the Slow magazine, Salone del Gusto and The Ark of Taste
1997	First UK convivium established Introduction of Cheese
2000	Slow Food USA established Introduction of the Presidia and the Slow Food Award for the Defense of Biodiversity
2001	Slow Food website (www.slowfood.com) launched
2002	Slow Food awarded Sicco Mansholt Prize for contribution towards sustainable agriculture
2003	Slow Food France established Foundation for Biodiversity established Informal meeting Slow Food and 28 European ministers of agriculture
2004	Slow Food Japan established Collaboration Slow Food and The Food and Agriculture Organization (UN) Introduction of The University of Gastronomic Sciences, Slow Fish and Terra Madre Carlo Petrini labeled 'European Hero' of 2004 by Time magazine
2005	Slow Food UK officially established Cooperation Brazil's Ministry of Agricultural Development for World Social Forum
2006	Slow Food National Associations meeting introduced Slow Food UK opens national office
2007	Slow Food becomes part of European coalition against GMO

Appendix B: Abbreviations of Newspapers

Newspaper	Abbreviation
The Times	TT
The Sunday Times	ST
The Guardian	G
The Observer	O
The Independent	I
The Independent on Sunday	IS
The Daily Telegraph	DT
The Sunday Telegraph	STE

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