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Tackling Conventional Agriculture: The Institutionalization of Community Supported Agriculture's (CSA) Principles

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Abstract:

The conventional agriculture system can cause ecological, social, and economic challenges. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is an alternative food system that embodies principles like community building, risk sharing, and ecological sustainability. These principles help to address many social, economic, and ecological inequalities and challenges. In reality however these principles are not always practiced. This article explores the institutionalization of the CSA principles within the field through a literature review and the application of Lawrence and Suddaby's taxonomy of institutional work. It investigates the actions that create, maintain, and disrupt the principles as institutions. Findings show apprenticeship programs as an effective means to spread the CSA philosophy. They also highlight a reluctance by CSA organizers to ensure adherence to rules, while showing that CSA organizers are the most important actor when considering institutionalization. As well, the results reveal some actions that are influenced by conventional thinking or that are aimed at making the CSA experience more convenient led to the disruption of the principles. This reveals the need for research into the intent of actor's when disrupting the principles given the principles importance in addressing problems created by industrial agricultural.

Keywords: Community Supported Agriculture, CSA, Institutionalization, Institutional Work, Community Building, Risk Sharing, Ecological Sustainability

Introduction

A growing distrust of the conventional agricultural system is apparent in the growing public awareness of such issues as deforestation due to palm oil production, emissions from raising livestock, or big business organic certification. The global food system emerged in the 1950s, and since the 1980s conglomerates, mono-cropping, and the manipulation of produce and livestock management to extract the highest output dominated agriculture in North America (Lyson 2007). This commodification resulted in not only a loss of independence and profits for farmers, but also a loss of biodiversity while seeing an increase in energy and resource intensive practices (Lyson 2007). Alternatives are needed to counteract and prevent further exploitation, and they currently exist. Community supported agriculture (CSA) is an alternative agriculture system that tackles many of the economic, ecological, and social challenges that are created by conventional agriculture (Cone and Myhre 2000; Galt 2013) . Its core principles of community building, risk sharing, and ecological sustainability help contribute to the foundation that produces a more sustainable food system (Schnell 2007) . The combination of these principles are what sets CSA apart from other alternative food initiatives such as farmers markets, co-operatives, or community gardens. However, studies have shown that in reality these principles are not always practiced (Brehm and Eisenhauer 2008; DeLind 1999; Pole and Gray 2013). This discrepancy should not be taken lightly. Studies have shown that community building and environmental awareness leads to member retention (Cone and Myhre 2000; Goland 2002), which has been proven to lead to a deeper appreciation of the CSA philosophy (Sumner et al. 2010). Furthermore, as the core principles address many problems created by the agri-food business it is important that they remain. One way to ensure their permanence is through their institutionalization within the field. As institutions the principles would be “enduring rules, practices, and structures that set conditions on action” (Lawrence and Shadnam 2008, p.2289). Therefore, it is important to understand the actions that allow for institutionalization to occur. Just as important, it is necessary to understand which actions work against the institutionalization of CSAs principles. To do so, this paper will investigate the institutionalization of community building, risk sharing, and ecological sustainability within the field of CSA by using Lawrence and Suddaby’s (2006) concept of institutional work to identify the actions that create, maintain, and disrupt the principles. This research is not meant to be a comprehensive investigation of these actions, but rather as a way to gain a better understanding of some of the forces that affect CSA. This alternative food system is not going to replace conventional agricultural (Janssen 2010). However, it aims to build a sustainable food production system through its holistic approach of human needs, both socially and economically, and the environment (Flora and Bregendahl 2012). It contributes to a sounder ecological picture of agriculture, and therefore it is important to understand which behaviors and actions perpetuate its benefits and which harm them.

The theoretical framework: Creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions

Institutional theorists Lawrence and Shadnam (2008) define institutions as “enduring rules, practices, and structures that set conditions on action” (p.2289). They see institutions as ingrained in “specific social contexts”, and reasons as to why we behave the way we do in those contexts (Lawrence and Shadnam 2008, p.2289). The institutionalization of a practice, structure, or rule means it has been embedded into society or a specific field. It represents adoption and to a certain extent acceptance of the practice by the actors within that field. Lawrence and Shadnam (2008) see the understanding of the institutions that govern our society or the fields we operate within as understanding the “social world” (p.2289). In a society where alternative agriculture systems are needed (Blay-Palmer et al. 2016), understanding the actions that embed such a system provides insight into how it is done. This information could be used to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the system, and provide actors with information on what actions should be reproduced, and which actions are counterproductive. As well, as alternative agriculture systems are needed such research could provide information to actors looking to embed the system elsewhere. The perspectives adopted in the concept of institutional work, specifically a focus on the actor’s actions, is what Lawrence et al. (2009) believe will make it easier to adopt for practical uses.

Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) concept of institutional work from a practice approach will be used to explore the actions being done within the field of CSA that embed the principles of community building, risk sharing, and ecological sustainability. The strength of this concept is that it not only allows for the identification of the actions that create institutions, but also identifies the actions that hinder it. It does so by providing a taxonomy of actions that either create, maintain, or disrupt institutions. The authors see institutions as "the product of specific actions" deliberately or indeliberately done by individual or collective actors "to reproduce, alter and destroy them" (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006 pp. 215-216). The authors identified nine actions that create new institutions, six actions that maintain them, and three actions that disrupt them based on reviews of institutional research. They do not intend for the list to be comprehensive (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006).

Lawrence and Suddaby built their concept of institutional work from two schools of thought, institutional studies and a practice approach from social theory. Coming, from an organizational studies background the author's concept diverges from new institutional theory in how they center actors as having the ability to effect change instead of being at the mercy of institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Works by DiMaggio (1988) on institutional entrepreneurship influenced the important role of the actors while Olivier (1991, 1992) led the authors to develop the notion that institutions are not permanent and therefore need to be maintained and can be disrupted (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) diverged from DiMaggio's perspective however by seeing all actors, those with power and those in "supportive" roles, as being able to influence institutions (p. 219). Lawrence and Suddaby borrow from the practice approach within social theory to further characterize the actor. While being careful not to see the actors as overly powerful the authors do not place the actor at the mercy of existing institutions that dictate their actions (Lawrence et al. 2009).

Combining institutional and practice theory shows that the action regardless of its goals is defined by a set of rules within the field it operates (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) still see innovation as very possible, however they recognize that "the practices which might lead to institutional innovations are themselves institutionally embedded and so rely on sets of resources and skills that are specific to the field or fields in which they occur" (p.220). Applying this to CSA shows the challenges an alternative system faces as it works with actors coming from a system that enforces opposing beliefs and values. This is an interesting point to consider as it questions the ability of a practice, structure, etc. to change when it is occurring within a strict environment that has a structure of rules that governs it. It is the importance Lawrence and Suddaby give to the actor that helps address this issue. The authors do not assume the actions are successful, and therefore they do not always produce the expected results (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). This creates an environment where the actors "[interact] with existing social and technological structures in unintended and unexpected ways" (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p. 219). This environment is where the innovation can occur. This does not mean that actions have to fail in order to allow for innovation, but instead we assume it is the interaction of different structures that allows for unexpected results.

In clarifying and further developing the concept of institutional work Lawrence et al. (2009) discuss the issue of intent. CSA actors often have best intentions and wish to support the CSA movement as a way to fight the agri-food business yet some actions contradict these values and work against the institutionalization of some of the principles. Multiple perspectives to intent are provided by the theorists. The first one assumes the position that action must be performed with the intent to create, maintain, or disrupt institutions in order for it to be considered institutional work (Lawrence et al. 2009). To reject this stance we will consider Lawrence et al. (2009) realization that institutional work can have unexpected outcomes producing new institutions or influencing existing ones. As the outcome was unexpected it could not have been planned making intent irrelevant when considering actions and their ability to create, maintain, and disrupt institutions. The approach to intent that will be adopted here sees institutional work as "includ[ing] all human action that has institutional effects"(Lawrence et al. 2009, p.13).

Methodology

The data was collected by completing a literature review on CSA as it provided many rich examples of case studies that involved one on one and group interviews, surveys, participant observation, personal experience, etc. that explained the practices and characteristics of different CSAs. The articles were selected by completing a search on Google Scholar with the keyword “Community supported agriculture” in December 2015. A reference list of 420 results was compiled . Only peer-reviewed academic journal articles were selected. The literature review comprised of 67 articles.

The articles were read using Atlas.ti software that allowed for the data to be coded based-off Lawrence and Suddaby’s 18 forms of institutional work (Table 1). The codes for each principle and each form of work were further broken down based off which actor was completing the work. The data was then compiled into reports, and analyzed for examples of institutional work.

The majority of research on CSA is from the United States. This is reflected in this literature review. Sixteen articles are included that present research from Australia, Canada, China, Croatia, England, Ghana, Iran, Ireland, Scotland, and Slovakia. The articles were published between 1994 to 2015, however they cover case studies and research from 1986 to include examples from the start of the CSA movement. The topics vary from social inclusion, the issues of community and labour, to challenges of modernity and embeddedness, and many others.

Table 1 Lawrence and Suddaby’s (2006) Taxonomy of Institutional Work (pp. 220 - 238)

Type	Form	Definition
Create	Advocacy	The mobilization of political and regulatory support through direct and deliberate techniques of social suasion
	Defining	The construction of rule systems that confer status or identity, define boundaries of membership or create status hierarchies within a field
	Vesting	The creation of rule structures that confer property rights
	Constructing Identities	Defining the relationship between an actor and the field in which that actor operates
	Changing Normative Associations	Re-making the connections between sets of practices and the moral and cultural foundations for those practices
	Constructing Normative Networks	Constructing of interorganizational connections through which practices become normatively sanctioned and which form the relevant peer group with respect to compliance, M&E
	Mimicry	Associating new practices with existing sets of taken-for-granted practices, technologies and rules in order to ease adoption
	Theorizing	The development and specification of abstract categories and the elaboration of chains of cause and effect
	Educating	The educating of actors in skills and knowledge necessary to support the new institution
Maintain	Enabling Work	The creation of rules that facilitate, supplement and support institutions, such as the creation of authorizing agents or diverting resources
	Policing	Ensuring compliance through enforcement, auditing and monitoring
	Deterring	Establishing coercive barriers to institutional change
	Valourizing and Demonizing	Providing for public consumption positive and negative examples that illustrates the normative foundations of an institution
	Mythologizing	Preserving the normative underpinnings of an institution by creating and sustaining myths regarding its history
	Embedding and Routinizing	Actively infusing the normative foundations of an institution into the participants' day to day routines and organizational practices
Disrupt	Disconnecting sanctions	Working through state apparatus to disconnect rewards and sanctions from some set of practices, technologies or rules
	Disassociating moral foundations	Disassociating the practice, rule or technology from its moral foundation as appropriate within a specific cultural context

	Undermining assumptions and beliefs	Decreasing the perceived risks of innovation and differentiation by undermining core assumptions and beliefs

Findings

By investigating CSA through the concept of institutional work it identifies the actions that institutionalize CSA principles, the actions that maintain these principles, and the actions that disrupt them. Table 2 outlines the examples discussed in this paper. These actions can take a variety of forms. The work can be "highly visible and dramatic" to daily, repetitive action that is "nearly invisible and often mundane" (Lawrence et al. 2009, p.1). The latter is more frequently done in the case of CSA.

A literature review offers many examples of institutional work being performed providing a challenge in selecting which to discuss. The actions that are considered 'hot topics' within CSA literature, are new areas yet explored within the literature, or that have widespread implications for the institutionalization of all the principles within the field were chosen for discussion. For example, the institutionalization of community through the practice of recruitment is discussed as it contributes to the homogeneous nature of CSA which is a frequent criticism of CSA.

Before covering the institutional work, we introduce the findings with a presentation of the CSA evolution over time, their characteristics and the importance of education.

Table 2: Institutional Work within CSA that Creates, Maintains, or Disrupts the Principles

Type	Form	CSA Principle & Action (ES: Ecological Sustainability; RS: Risk Sharing; CB: Community Building; All: The three principles)	Actors
Create	Defining	RS: Contracts signed by each member outlining member and farmer responsibilities	CSA organizer(s)
		RS: Manifesto stating what members can do if another member does not share the risk	Farmers & Members
	Constructing Identities	RS: Calling all participants farmers and active-farmers ES: Actors define their role as preserving the environment	CSA organizer(s)
	Educating	ES: Offering preserving and cooking workshops for members	CSA organizer(s)
		ES: Conferences and workshops on sustainable farming practices for farmers	NGOs & Farmer groups
		All: Apprenticeship & training programs that teach the principles to future CSA farmers	CSA organizer(s)
Maintain	Enabling Work	RS: Participants lose their share if they do not attend the mandatory pledge meeting CB: Reducing membership numbers to maintain environment that allows for everyone to know each other CB: Work requirements and working shares facilitate the environment of community	CSA organizer(s)
	Embedding and Routinizing	CB: Recruitment strategies, eg. word of mouth, and advertising in alternative food meeting places and stores, attracts similar people	CSA organizer(s) & members

<table>
<tr><td>Create (originally considered as disrupt)</td><td rowspan="2">Disassociating Moral Foundations</td><td>CB: Farmers making deals without contracts
ES: Purposely bundling different shapes/sizes of produce to disrupt institution of standardization</td><td>CSA organizer(s)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Disrupt</td><td>CB: Replacing core group and volunteers with hired labour and NGO management</td><td>CSA organizer(s)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Undermining Assumptions and Beliefs</td><td>CB: Charging fee to opt-out of work requirements
RS: Setting share prices based off perceptions of what members will pay</td><td>CSA organizer(s)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mimicry</td><td>CB: Replicating online shopping to eliminate inconveniences disconnects grower and eater
RS: Replicating conventional banking and shopping practices eliminates upfront capital or guaranteed wage for farmer</td><td>CSA organizer(s)</td></tr>
</table>

CSA evolution

Growing from similar concepts that began in Japan, Switzerland and Germany in the 1960s (Starr 2010), CSA started in the US. CSA "is an alternative food marketing and distribution model in which consumers pay a membership fee in advance of the season in return for a weekly share of a farm's harvest" (Harmon 2014, p. 1). This alternative strategy often embodies social, ecological, and economic implications. These can take the form of building social connections, environmental respect and conservation, and a more equitable sharing of financial risks. These principles stem from scientist and philosopher Rudolph Steiner and economist Ernst Friedrich Schumacher whose beliefs were the inspiration for the first CSA farms in the US (Press and Arnould 2011). As big agri-food business began dominating the agriculture sector in the US in the 1980s, Indian Line Farm was the first CSA to open in 1984, which influenced the Temple-Wilton Community Farm that opened two years later. Steiner's element of biodynamics and Schumacher's focus on local created within these CSAs a respect for the community, farmer, and land (Press and Arnould 2011). Both located in eastern USA, they are both still in operation today over 30 years later with the same philosophies (Temple-Wilton n.d. a; Indian Line Farm n.d.).

The two most relevant groups of actors within CSA are the farmers or core groups that organize the CSA and the members. Farmers, when compared to their conventional counterparts, tend to be younger, more educated, women, and are less likely to have previous farming or agriculture experience (Schnell 2007; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007; Brown and Miller 2008; Sumner et al. 2010). Members are frequently identified as being homogenous and affluent. They tend to be white, middle class, married, and highly educated (Brehm and Eisenhauer 2008; DeLind and Ferguson 1999; Landis et al. 2010; Lang 2005; Lang 2010). Women are also significant actors as members. They tend to initiate membership within their household, comprise the majority of membership, and drive the movement in terms of participation in activities, physical labour, and administration (DeLind and Ferguson 1999; Mcllvaine-Newsad et al. 2004; Cone and Myhre 2000).

Of the three core principles, ecological sustainability is consistently a motivator for members (Farr-Wharton et al. 2012; Galt 2013; Hall et al. 2013; Press and Arnould 2011; Sarjanović 2014; Schnell 2013), and farmers (Cone and Myhre 2000; Cooley and Lass 1998; Mcllvaine-Newsad et al. 2004). As well, paying in advance of receiving the produce is another consistent practice of CSA. There are many reported benefits of this characteristic, such as securing a market for the produce (Sarjanović 2014) and allowing new farmers to begin farming with enough upfront capital (Cox et al. 2008).

CSA characteristics

Although some CSAs today still embody all of CSAs principles, many resemble a vegetable box scheme where members pay in advance and receive their vegetables each week without a focus on community or participation (Press and Arnould 2011; Wodraska 2008). This could be due to the growth of the social movement. Lang (2010) points out that as a social movement develops it can lose some of its more radical positions in an effort to maintain support and participation (Zald and Garner 1987 cited). Considering the CSA movement, the alternative food strategy is now practiced all over the US, Canada, and appearing in many countries around the world like Croatia (Sarjanović 2014), Australia (Lea et al. 2006), China (Shi et al. 2011), and researchers have evaluated applicability for it in countries like Ghana (Darimani et al. 2012) and Iran (Shabanali Fami et al. 2011). The expansion of CSA has resulted in a diversity of how its principles are practiced. Feagan and Henderson (2009) categorized three types of CSA that reflect this diversity: collaborative, functional, and instrumental.

A collaborative CSA involves "a partnership" between the farmer and member that fosters a sense of community and shares more than just financial risks but also management and responsibility of the farm (Feagan and Henderson 2009, p. 208). The Indian Line Farm and Temple-Wilton Community Farm are examples of this category of CSAs. Many studies have shown that neither saving money nor making a profit are priorities for members or farmers (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; Delind and Ferguson 1999; Durrenberger 2002; Galt 2013; Jarosz 2011; Landis et al. 2010). This signifies a potential collaborative CSA as profit maximization and receiving goods for the lowest cost are not goals of the members. Another characteristic is the prioritization of social benefits over economic ones. The Ann Arbor CSA in Michigan, US reduced membership numbers by nearly half and ultimately revenue in order to maintain an environment where everyone could know each other (Donahue 1994).

An instrumental CSA on the other hand mirrors conventional economic practices where participation does not extend past the typical exchange of money for goods and community building only occurs to the point of completing the exchange (Feagan and Henderson 2009). Instrumental CSAs are very common as many members indicate they join CSAs in order to access chemical-free, quality grown produce (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995; DeLind 1999; Hinrichs and Kremer 2002; Kolodinsky and Pelch 1997; Pole and Gray 2013; Sarjanović 2014). Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008) found in their study of two CSAs in eastern US that a sense of community building was not a incentive for members to join nor was it seen as a benefit of participation.

In the middle of these two types are functional CSAs where the farmer and member typically have a relationship based on "solidarity or camaraderie" in the pursuit of similar objectives, however the relationship is "limited to special circumstances" (Feagan and Henderson 2009, p.208). Functional CSAs are also very common as many members see their participation as a way to practice their ecological beliefs and resist conventional agriculture (Cox et al. 2008; DeLind and Ferguson 1999; Schnell 2013; Sumner et al. 2010). Cone and Myhre (2000) term this as a "community of interest" being built instead of a "community built on mutual relationships of rights and obligations, on reciprocity" (p.13). An example of a functional CSA is of Seeking Common Ground where members were required to pick up their shares in order to create an opportunity for interaction, but the share price was based on a perception of how much the members were willing to pay instead of the true cost of production (Wodraska 2008).

Despite CSAs ability to produce social, economic, and ecological benefits it does involve some negative aspects. As the members are generally a homogenous group the movement is criticized as lacking accessibility (Forbes and Harmon 2007; Hinrichs and Kremer 2002). Efforts are made by farm organizers and NGOs to tackle this issue by offering shares to low-income families as a means to foster a sense of community (Hinrichs and Kremer 2002), or accepting government food stamps, organizing outreach programs, and offering payment plans and working shares (Forbes and Harmon 2007).

Another downfall of this alternative food system is the pressure on farmers. Farmers report psychological pressures in being able to produce enough (DeLind 1999; Galt 2013) and poor compensation (Hinrichs and Kremer 2002).

Creating, maintaining and disrupting community building as an institution within CSA

Despite the disregard of the community aspect within CSA by some members and farmers (DeLind 1999; Janssen 2010; Pole and Gray 2013) there is still work done that maintains it as an institution.

Enabling work, which is the creation of rules to maintain an institution, is used to prioritize community and create an environment for it to occur. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) see maintenance work as typically the result of a "change in the organization or its environment" (p.234). After experiencing growth in membership, the CSA of Ann Arbor purposely reduced numbers by nearly half, and consequently revenue, in order to maintain a sense of community (Donahue 1994). This rule directly maintains community as an institution as it facilitates the opportunity for community to be practiced.

Another rule that institutionalizes community is that of requiring members to provide assistance on the farm. One way that this is done is through work requirements which is when members provide a certain number of hours over the course of the season. Another way is through a working shares, which is when members rent a piece of land from the farm or are expected to contribute a certain amount of hours each week to the CSA in return for a reduced shared price. The practice of these rules is common within CSA (Cone and Myhre 2000; Cox et al. 2008; DeLind 1999; Forbes and Harmon 2007; Hayden and Buck 2012; Shi et al. 2011; Wodraska 2008). Growing In Place Community Farm in Michigan, US implemented both working shares and work requirements that required members to contribute a certain number of hours to the CSA (DeLind and Ferguson 1999). Some members did not like the work requirements, and one even saw the organizers as trying to "[force] an artificial community" (DeLind 1999 p.7). Others, specifically women, saw "the CSA as a place from which to build community" (DeLind and Ferguson 1999, p. 8). In this case, it was what Cone and Myhre (2000) termed a "community of interest" (p.13). Likewise, working share members at Little Donkey CSA in Beijing, China reported the ability to build new connections and create a sense of community at the farm that was not possible in their neighbourhood communities (Shi et al. 2011). These examples show how rules in the form of work requirements and working shares has the ability to maintain a sense of community, whether it is the objective or not.

However, just because the rules exist does not ensure compliance. Growing In Place deliberately did not monitor nor enforce the mandatory hours for work requirements or work shares as the organizers felt it was meant to be each member's responsibility (DeLind and Ferguson 1999). This is an example of a deliberate action taken not to perform policing work. Policing is used to maintain an institution by "ensuring compliance through enforcement, auditing and monitoring" (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p.230). While some members exceeded their responsibility others did not complete their hours (DeLind 1999; DeLind and Ferguson 1999).

This unwillingness to complete policing work is similar to a group of CSA farmers in Iowa, US that purposely did not utilize contracts in their trade deals (Janssen 2010). One of the farmers felt the collaborative approach fostered a "community of farmers" (Janssen 2010, p. 10). While this practice creates community it reflects the institutional work of disassociating moral foundations, which is done by "disassociating the practice, rule or technology from its moral foundation as appropriate within a specific cultural context" (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p.235). The farmers did not see contracts as appropriate within their context, so by not following conventional practices they created a community built on trust.

The importance of actions taken to maintain community within CSA are highlighted in the case of Chesapeake CSA in Maryland, US, a member led CSA. When the management of the CSA was taken over by an NGO, the new organizers disassociated the practice of members working on and leading the farm from its moral roots by replacing volunteers with wage laborers and implementing top-down decision making (Lang 2010). One member explains the effects of the disassociation, "[We] lost the real community management and involvement. We used to be completely run by shareholders and we would get up to 100 people at a farm festival. Now community involvement is minimal" (Lang 2010, p.20). This action disrupted the community, and led to many members leaving the CSA (Lang 2010). It does not seem this practice was intentionally done, however it shows the irrelevance of intent in the effect of actions on institutions.

Another example of the institution of community being disrupted is by the farmers and farm organizers in an attempt to make the practice of CSA more convenient. Studies show members dissatisfaction with work requirements (Durrenberger 2002; Farnsworth et al. 1996). As a result, some CSAs allow members to pay a fee to be exempted from their work requirements (Cox et al. 2008; Polimeni et al. 2006b). As was seen, working on the farm provides the opportunity for interaction between participants and by removing the risk of not complying with the rules set by a work requirement it disrupts the institution of community through undermining core assumptions and beliefs (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006).

The CSA Star Hollow Farm in Pennsylvania, US that serves urban members in Washington, D.C. gives evidence of disrupting the institution of community by changing its structure to adapt to consumer conveniences. “After paying an initial registration fee that is credited to a debit account, CSA customers can log into the farm's Web site midweek and order local vegetables and free-range eggs. …. Unlike typical CSAs, customers can customize the content and frequency of deliveries” (Cappellano 2011, p.206). This is an example of a CSA mimicking online shopping in order to ease adoption. It has removed the link between grower and eater which is a characteristic of CSA. This action does not provide many opportunities for interaction to occur.

The last form of action that helps explain the kind of community commonly created within CSA are the recruitment strategies. A CSA in Ohio, US recruited members from a health food store (Goland 2002). Sweet Pea CSA, in Midwest, US utilized personal networks and distributed information at places related to alternative food systems to recruit members (Sharp et al. 2002). Likewise, the majority of members joined through word of mouth at one of the largest CSAs, Roxbury Farm in New York, US (Polimeni et al. 2006a). These kinds of action represent the institutional work of embedding and routinizing as they reproduce the norms of the community through the organizational practice of recruitment. Although this leads to a community being created as it results in people being brought together it creates a certain kind of community. Recruiting members through personal networks is likely to attract more of the same people. Recruiting members at health food stores could result in a more affluent crowd as these stores are frequently expensive. These actions lead to the creation of the homogenous nature that CSA is frequently criticized for.

Creating, maintaining and disrupting risk sharing as an institution within CSA

Risk sharing is a defining characteristic of CSA. It deviates from the standard practice within conventional market transactions and other alternative food systems like co-operatives and farmers markets where money is typically exchanged when the product is taken. Despite the diversity of ways to practice CSA, paying for a share of the harvest in advance is consistently done, except in the case of payment plans to improve accessibility and in one example that will be discussed later in this section. Risk sharing is seen by a member at a CSA in Minnesota, US as “I am willing to take a stand by putting my money out there at the beginning of the season to say, "I'm with you, farmer. " And whatever weather gives us, whatever crops look like this year, I'm with you. . . It's a step beyond the co-op. ” (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995, p. 31). This section will explore how this sense of risk sharing is institutionalized within CSA.

Prairieland CSA in Illinois, CSA used contracts in its first year of operation to define rules of membership. This definitional work required each member to sign a written agreement that defined the farm’s organizers’ and members’ responsibilities. It stated:

> “As partners, they will share the risks of planting, growing, and harvesting enough fresh produce to provide an adequate amount and variety of vegetables during the Production Period for each share subscribed by the Consumer. It is possible that some crops will wholly or partially fail. Hopefully, other crops will do better than expected, making up for the failures. In the event that everything goes according to plan, and the experiment is successful, the Consumer and Producer agree to share the credit for this achievement” (Farnsworth et al. 1996, p.92).

The Temple-Wilton Community Farm in New Hampshire, US institutionalizes risk sharing through the creative work of constructing identities calling all participants ‘farmers’ in order to share the responsibility and thus the risks amongst all participants (Wodraska 2008). Whereas the majority of CSAs differentiate roles with titles such as farmer, member, consumer, producer, customer, etc., the Temple-Wilton CSA does not divide participants. Constructing identities “[defines] the relationship between an actor and the field in which that actor operates” (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006, p.221). Therefore, by assigning the title of farmers to all participants it imparts the responsibilities of the title and thus reconfigures the actor’s belief systems. One challenge to constructing identities that Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) point out is that it can lead to decreased participation for the actors who feel uncomfortable with the new role. With the responsibility implied by the title ‘farmer’ there is a strong possibility of this occurring in this case. The Temple-Wilton farm tackles this by differentiating between farmers and active-farmers. Active farmers are defined as those who “enact their right” to organize and complete farm work on a consistent basis whereas farmers give that right to others (Temple-Wilton n.d. b). Constructing identities can be seen as quite powerful work considering Lawrence and Suddaby’s strong view of the actor.

The identity imposed on the participants is strengthened by the farm’s manifesto, which states all farmers/active-farmers were to “share the cost of the annual budget”, which was done by hosting a pledge meeting (Temple-Wilton n.d. b). The pledge meeting involved each participant declaring how much money she/he were able to contribute until the farm’s budget was met (Wodraska 2008). The pledge meeting has been declared as the one mandatory meeting of the year, and if a member does not attend or send a representative then she/he loses the share (Woodraska 2008). Therefore, by penalizing the member by taking away their share this is a form of enabling work that ensures adherence to the institution of risk sharing.

Nevertheless, the farm organizers deliberately do not implement any other rules, penalties, or incentives in order to ensure the risks of farming are shared. The manifesto states:

> “If a member does not do the farm work that they promised to do; if a member does not pay the share of the farm cost they declared they would pay; if a member harvests more produce for their household than is socially responsible …. ; in other words, if any active farmer or farm member fails to fulfill their stated obligations the others have no claim against them. All they can do is step in and help to support the endeavor.” (Temple-Wilton n.d. b).

By intentionally not enforcing participants to complete work hours or pay their share this definitional work has spread the risk amongst everyone.

Actions are taken within CSA that undermine the institution of risk sharing within the field. An example of this is how share prices are generally set. The pledge meeting conducted at Temple-Wilton is quite a unique example of how share prices are determined. Below are examples that represent a common general process of how share prices are set.

> Quincy CSA, Quincy, Illinois, US: “The figure we came up with, $275 for twenty weeks of vegetables, was about what the market would bear, we concluded. Certainly the $7,000 or so that the project yielded to the farmer wasn’t anything near a living wage either before or after expenses were considered, but that wasn’t exactly the point. The point was innovation in connecting people to food” (Wodraska 2008, p.44-45).
>
> Seeking Common Ground CSA, New York, US: “After I projected purely theoretical harvest numbers - so and so many pounds of such and such vegetables - for the coming season, we decided on a $350 share price, based on fifty shareholders.” (Wodraska 2008, p.47)
>
> Farmers in nine Midwestern states, US: “Considered operational costs when setting their share prices but did not include payment for their labor” (Tegtmeier and Duffy 2005 cited by Brown and Miller 2008, p.1299).
>
> Harvest Share CSA, Iowa: A veteran CSA farmer of nearly 20 years feels: “The 2008 share price is a 20 percent increase over the previous year and is still lower than what [the farmer] feels is necessary to fully cover her costs” (Janssen 2010, p.10).

This strategy of pricing shares based off a perception of what members will pay instead of the true costs of production has disrupted the principle of risk sharing as it decreases the perceived risk of innovation. The innovation is a new food system, and when the farmers do not cover their costs they undermine a core principle of the innovation. It is interesting to note that the veteran farmer of Harvest Share argues that CSAs should "maintain a high enough share price so as not to undercut other farmers" (Janssen 2010, p.10). This disconnect between belief and practice could indicate strong institutions existing outside the alternative system that prevent her from implementing her beliefs.

The last example of actions taken to disrupt risk sharing that will be discussed is the example previously discussed of Star Hollow Farm in Pennsylvania, USA that disrupted the principle of community by mimicking online shopping. Instead of the members paying upfront for a share they deposit money into their online accounts like a "debit account" when they wish (Star Hollow Farm n.d.). Mimicking conventional banking and shopping practices removes the financial commitment the member usually makes to the farmer. This practice does not provide the farmer with up-front capital to work with or take a salary from. In trying to be convenient and satisfy members the principle of risk sharing has been disrupted.

Creating, maintaining and disrupting ecological sustainability as an institution within CSA

Prioritizing ecological sustainability is fairly consistent throughout the varying types of CSA, ie. instrumental, functional, and collaborative. Members are motivated to join to eat food produced sustainably, and farmers consistently strive to be stewards of the land by following biodynamic, permaculture, or organic methods. This dedication to the land can be highly personal for some and a commitment to future generations. A farmer in Missouri, US feels "[i]f we poison the land and water, then eventually we poison ourselves. …. In fact, I do not even use a lot of products accepted by organic standards. I use cover crops and mulch, I pull a lot of weeds, and I smash a lot of bugs. One of the reasons I refuse to spray my crops is that in 2005 I became a father" (Press and Arnould 2011, p.181). This section will explore the actions that have contributed to this dedication to ecological sustainability.

The personal stance the farmer in Missouri, US adopted has come to be a part of how some farmers and members define themselves. They see themselves as advocates for sustainability and the environment.

> Farmer at Harvest Share, Iowa, US: "Jean feels that part of her mission as a farmer and a citizen is to educate people about the realities of food production" (Janssen 2010, p.7).
>
> Member at EarthShare, Moray, Scotland: "Of course for a lot of people, and certainly for ourselves, my wife and myself, it isn't the food; … it's really because you can't say that the present generation owns the soil. …. We feel this very deeply indeed; you cannot hand over to your incoming people, your incoming generations, soil that is so desperately polluted and inert it's lost its life." (Cox et al. 2008, p.212).

These actors have constructed their identity around CSA as stewards of the land thus embedding the notion of ecological sustainability within the field. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) see this form of work as the actors empowering themselves. These farmers and members have defined their role as preserving the environment through their practice of CSA thus making the practice of sustainable methods necessary.

Ecological sustainability is also institutionalized within CSA through disruption work. Grocery stores often offer fruits and vegetables that are clean and look similar. The farmer of one of the largest CSAs in Iowa, US purposely bundles produce that is different sizes, shapes, and colours together to show the realities of farming compared to what is seen in conventional agriculture (Janssen 2010). By showing the imperfections of produce it disrupts the practice of standardization within the conventional system by disassociating it as appropriate within CSA. This action challenges the consumer to rethink what should be normal looking produce, and works towards desensitizing them from imperfections. Not all institutional work is successful though (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). In a preseason study of the experiences of members and eating habits at a CSA in Ohio, US some members indicated they understood the produce may be dirty or not look perfect as what is found in grocery stores while others hoped it would clean and similar to grocery store produce (Goland 2002). One member expressed dissatisfaction post-season since the items she received in her basket were "more scarred and less attractive" than the items sold at the farm's roadside stand (Goland 2002, p.19). A similar experience was found at Sugar Trails farm in Kentucky, US where farm staff were asked to dedicate more time to ensuring the produce looked clean after a complaint from a member (Nost 2014). Furthermore, considerable time was dedicated to the aesthetics of the produce at Lazy River farms in Wisconsin, US as an objective of the farmer (Nost 2014). These examples show that despite many members valuing ecological sustainability not all are willing to accept what it means.

The idea of disrupting conventional practices is also done by avoiding organic certification. Although certification could contribute to maintaining the institution of ecological sustainability within the field through ensuring adherence to rules the avoidance of it represents dissociating the practice as appropriate within CSA. Many farmers follow organic methods but do not get the certification (Farnsworth et al. 1996; Moore et al. 2014; Schnell 2007) due to cost or as a stance against it (Schnell 2007). Farmers dissociate the practice of getting certified from being necessary, because they are able to practice organic methods without needing proof from a certification. This lack of action does not institutionalize ecological sustainability, but it is an interesting case as it works towards disrupting mainstream agricultural practices aimed at ensuring ecological standards are followed. As well, once again this signifies a reluctance to policing and ensuring adherence to rules within the field.

CSA and education

Ecological sustainability is also created as an institution within CSA through educating actors by providing the skills needed to support it (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Education is provided for farmers on how to farm sustainably through conferences and workshops (Janssen 2010). Members also receive education. Members have complained of the big quantities, limited varieties, and unfamiliarity of some of the produce and how to produce it (Kolodinsky and Pelch 1997; Goland 2002; Mcllvaine-Newsad et al. 2004; Lang 2005). CSAs have begun offering preservation and cooking workshops or including recipes and information to support the practice of eating sustainably (Donahue 1994; Jarosz 2011; Sumner et al. 2010). This education helps the members to become familiar with local and exotic varieties instead of imported ones. It can decrease food waste through preserving unused food. It also brings members an awareness of eating seasonally, which is not necessary when shopping in big grocery stores. This is shown by one member who says "[the vegetable] was not necessarily what I would have bought, but it does get you closer to what the earth is producing at that point" (Cone and Kakaliouras 1995, p.30).

In fact, education has helped spread all three principles throughout the field. Steiner's and Schumacher's principles of ecological sustainability, supporting a community, and financially sharing the risk of farming were at the heart of the first CSAs, Indian Line Farm and Temple-Wilton Community Farm. Since 1997, Indian Line Farm has offered an apprenticeship program (Press and Arnould 2011). This form of education leads to what Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) refer to as templating, which is when an organization teaches a practice that allows for it to be duplicated. One of the founders of Temple-Wilton Community Farm, Trauger Groh, inspired the creation of a member-initiated CSA in Michigan, US after presenting the concept in 1988 (Donahue 1994). The members of Ann Arbor hired two farmers who had trained at the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association (Donahue 1994). The action of templating is further carried on as the CSA also took on apprentices. One of the first CSAs in mainland China, Little Donkey Farm in Beijing, that has a very holistic view of farming also has an apprenticeship program where some participants have started their own organic farms as well as other agricultural initiatives (Shi et al. 2011). This CSA was also started after one of the founders worked as an intern in the US specifically to learn its methods to start one in China (Shi et al. 2011). There are many other cases of apprentices starting their own CSA. The farmer at Century Farm in Iowa, US "interned at a 160-member CSA in southern Wisconsin, which served as his introduction to CSA" before starting his own (Janssen 2010, p.12). The institutional work of education has spread the principles of CSA leading to their institutionalization. The next section will explore each principle individually to discuss the actions that have influenced their institutionalization within the field of CSA.

Discussion

This section explores some of the links between the forms of work being done and recurring themes. It also discusses who the actors are considering their importance within the concept of institutional work.

The apprenticeship programs at the original CSAs were an effective means of spreading the principles as they provided a template for new farmers to reproduce. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) warn against assuming institutions are permanent however, and the absence of community is often mentioned within CSA literature (DeLind 1999; Lang 2010; Pole and Gray 2013). Creating a community is sensitive work as it needs to be genuine in order to prevent creating an artificial or insincere community. The examples presented here show actions whose side effects allow for a community to be built. For example, CSA organizers cannot make a rule stating a sense of community must be built. Instead the examples here show CSA organizers implementing rules that create the opportunity for a sense of community to be built, such as setting a maximum number of members or requiring members to complete work on the farm. Nevertheless, allowing members to buy their way out of providing labour has disrupted the institution. It can be assumed that this action is not intentionally done as CSA organizers are concerned with making the experience more convenient for members (Cappellano 2011). Risk sharing is also undermined by trying to make the CSA experience more convenient by allowing members to select the produce they want and buy it online. The finding that some actions by actors from within the field disrupt the principles may be surprising. This shows the importance of unintended consequences, because of their potential negative impacts. As well, this highlights the irrelevance of intent within institutional work as these actors are not intentionally trying to undermine community building or risk sharing, but their actions have that effect.

Furthermore, this disruption is being done by mimicry, which Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) categorized as creative. This change of category also happened in the examples of farmers making deals without contracts and purposely bundling produce that was different shapes and sizes. These actions created community building and ecological sustainability, respectively, but meet the criteria of the disruptive work disassociating moral foundations. These examples show how the forms of work provided by Lawrence and Suddaby can have multi-purposes, and perhaps should not be limited to a specific type, eg. creative, maintenance, or disruptive, of work.

CSA shows examples of a reluctance to ensure adherence to rules, which could mean that such a practice does not align with the beliefs of CSA actors. At first, this could appear to be a weak point of the CSA movement for this form of action would lead to the maintenance of the institution. Growing In Place and Temple-Wilton both implemented work requirements and consciously did not enforce them, but Growing In Place lacked a sense of community while Temple-Wilton seemed to thrive as a community. Temple-Wilton's manifesto explicitly stated no work would be done to monitor or enforce rules, so it is the responsibility of all members to ensure the budget is met and to complete any unfinished work. This has had the effect of spreading all the risk and responsibility amongst all members. This was further done by calling all participants farmers and active-farmers to impart a sense of responsibility, and the participants show many examples of accepting it (Wodraska 2008). Temple-Wilton did have one rule that they ensured adherence to. If members did not attend the pledge meeting, the one meeting that allows for risk sharing to be practiced, they would lose their share. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) characterize this type of work as visible as they cause the actors to be conscious of their actions. Despite completing one form of maintenance work aimed at ensuring adherence to rules, Temple-Wilton generally does not monitor their participant's responsibilities, and it is a CSA with a strong sense of community that successfully practices risk sharing for over 30 years (Temple-Wilton Farm n.d. a). This shows the importance of completing multiple forms of institutional work.

The influence of conventional thinking and practices has implications for CSA. Ecological sustainability is institutionalized at some CSAs by disrupting the practice of standardization within conventional agriculture by bundling produce of different shapes and sizes together. However, some members complain of dirty or scarred produce showing how their perceptions are shaped by conventional practices. Risk sharing is also negatively impacted by conventional thinking. The tendency to want the most goods for the cheapest price prevents some CSA organizers from setting accurate share prices, which can result in the farmer not receiving a proper wage. Furthermore, replicating online shopping practices can also lead to the loss of upfront capital or guaranteed wage for the farmer.

Who is performing the institutional work is an important aspect considering the importance of the actor within the concept (Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). In the examples presented here it is mostly the CSA organizer, ie. the farmer or core group, completing the work. The members play a role of course and there is also evidence of external groups, e.g. NGOs, farmer associations, participating, however it is the organizers who lead the actions and are thus the most important actor when considering institutionalization within CSA.

Conclusion

Community supported agriculture is a unique venture that puts the environment first while promoting a sense of community that shares the responsibilities among both the growers and eaters. These principles are special as they demonstrate an alternative way to grow food. This paper set out to understand the actions that allow for the institutionalization of these principles within CSA as the principles challenge the problems created by the conventional agricultural system. Just as important was to understand the actions that worked against the institutionalization of the principles. This research found that the CSA organizers are the relevant actors when considering the institutionalization of CSA principles. It also found there is a reluctance to ensure adherence to rules within CSA, but this can be seen as a stance for individual responsibility within the collective. As this places the power within the hands of each member it could create a strong group of members who are accountable and committed thus contributing to the institutionalization of the principles. Nevertheless, as ensuring adherence to rules is important it is beneficial to complete multiple forms of work.

Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) taxonomy of institutional work was not intended to be exhaustive, however we conclude that the 18 forms of work were sufficient to investigate the institutionalization of CSA principles within the field. No new forms of work were discovered. However, this research did show some actions that challenged the categorization. Some forms of work that Lawrence and Suddaby originally labelled as creative were disruptive or vice versa.

Some limitations stimulating further research are identified. Firstly, the concept of institutional work showed that some practices aimed at making CSA more convenient undermined the principles. This calls for the evaluation of these practices and the objectives of the CSA. Furthermore, some of the principles are also disrupted by the influence of conventional thinking within the alternative system. Future empirical could look into the disruptive actions and the intent of the actors. Secondly, this research was done by completing a literature review, which only considered academic peer-reviewed journal articles. Future research could also take into consideration CSA websites, newsletters, and conduct direct observation to identify all the actions being done at one CSA.

Despite all the examples of actions presented here that show the institutionalization of CSAs principles institutional work reminds us that the work is never done. CSA actors will need to continue working to ensure the principles remain intact.

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