

Ethical Consumption and New Business Models in the Food Industry. Evidence from the Eataly Case

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Received: 26 October 2011 / Accepted: 3 May 2012 / Published online: 8 June 2012
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Abstract Individual and collective ethical stances regarding ethical consumption and related outcomes are usually seen as both a form of concern about extant market offerings and as opportunities to develop new offerings. In this sense, demand and supply are traditionally portrayed as interacting dialectically on the basis of extant business models. In general, this perspective implicitly assumes the juxtaposition of demand side ethical stances and supply side corporate initiatives. The Eataly story describes, however, a different approach to market transformation; in this case a company and a social movement (Slow Food) have negotiated and collaborated prior to initiating a new business model. This collaboration process and its outcomes are described, focusing specifically on ordinary Eataly customers' and Slow Food members' reactions. Given that Eataly can be regarded as a case of mainstreaming, ordinary customers seem satisfied with the new offering and the Slow Food support for the initiative; the more purist members of the Slow Food movement had critical concerns, however, as happened in similar conditions, according to literature, with regard to Fair Trade. The Slow Food endorsement of the new venture has also been observed from the attitude–behaviour gap perspective, as it contributed to addressing the factors affecting the gap

between attitudes and actual behaviours. Extensive qualitative data were collected and analysed over a 3-year period. The main study implications refer to the ways in which companies and social movements could interact to co-design new business models, as well as outlining consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards such new offerings.

Keywords Attitude–behaviour gap · Case study · Ethical consumption · Participative business model · Slow Food · Social movements

Introduction

In this paper, we deal with ethical consumption: the behaviour of ethically minded consumers who feel accountable for the environment and towards society (Freestone and McGoldrick 2008; Harrison et al. 2005; Newholm and Shaw 2007). We are interested in the growing body of research on ethical consumption from the consumer empowerment perspective (Denegri-Knott et al. 2006; Shaw et al. 2006) and the related outcomes (Clouder and Harrison 2005). The more consumers are aware of their consumption choices' impact, the higher the probability that they could drive the market towards environmental and social compatibility. This phenomenon is of particular interest to the food consumption field in which ethical considerations apply to product, brand, and even channel choices (Huybrechts and Reed 2010; Kniazeva and Venkatesh 2007; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007).

On the demand side, ethical stances shift consumers away from specific market offerings, often through resistant behaviours at both the individual and the collective level. Ethical consumption can mirror more reflexive and

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moderate behaviours, as in the case of voluntary simplicity (Ballantine and Creery 2010; Shaw and Moraes 2009), but also more purposeful behaviours, as in the case of boycotting and buycotting (Hye-Jin and Nelson 2009; Nelson et al. 2007). In addition, ethical consumers shift their demand towards alternative and/or new market offerings that are more responsive to their ethical requirements. Both resistant behaviours and demand shifting are expressions of the demand side ethical stances.

On the supply side, companies are increasingly orienting their strategies to respond to the ethical expectation demand. In doing so, they are developing sustainability strategies (Martin and Schouten 2009), implementing Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (Maon et al. 2009), adopting ethical codes of conduct and presenting corporate sustainability reports (Adams and Zutshi 2005), launching new ethically conscious products and services (Crane 2001) and organising corporate responsibility communication (Frostenson et al. 2011). The approach that they adopt is mainly instrumental and reactive to consumers' ethical stances (Crane 2005; Devinney et al. 2010; Fridell 2009). The Eataly case study described in this paper offers a new perspective on how to integrate demand and supply stances through a form of collaboration aimed at overcoming the traditional juxtaposition of supply and demand and the reactive perspective that suppliers usually adopt.

Traditionally, ethical consumption research focuses on two levels: individual attitudes and behaviour, and collective action. It is very important to understand that such action offers opportunities for consumer empowerment and actual market transformation (Newholm and Shaw 2007). From this perspective, ethical consumption's social dimension has been observed (Shaw et al. 2006), as it gave birth to collectives and social movements (Hiatt et al. 2009; Holzer 2006; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Moraes et al. 2010). It is through social and collective action that ethical stances can effectively lead to actual outcomes in terms of market transformation (Gendron et al. 2009). Social movements' role has mainly been observed in the field of Fair Trade research (Jaffee 2010): these movements operate as pro-social agencies (Rao et al. 2000) that influence the market process's regulation and its cognitive/cultural dimension (Lang and Gabriel 2005). From this perspective, they operate on the demand side and interact with public agencies (the regulatory side) and private companies (the supply side) (Nicholls 2010). In this sense, social movements are usually considered opponents of those private companies which try to profit from ethical stances (Moore 2006). Very few empirical studies have analysed the collaborative process of developing new initiatives in the field of ethical business (Alexander and Nicholls 2006; Nicholls 2010) and its related outcomes. There are as yet no

examples in the literature in which the collaboration between social movements and corporate power occurs before and in support of the start-up of new business ventures.

When considering the effects of the interaction between ethically minded consumers and corporate power, one relevant outcome refers to the factors determining the attitude–behaviour gap (Bray et al. 2011; Carrington et al. 2010). As Carrington et al. (2010) underline, most research on the attitude–behaviour gap has paid scant attention to the situational context in which ethical consumption occurs. Nevertheless, the relevance of this topic is recognised; ethically minded consumers, while translating their ethical attitudes into buying behaviours, interact with both the physical environment (e.g. the outlet features) and the social environment (e.g. the interaction with other (ethically minded) customers or with the staff). Consequently, ethical consumption stances pose relevant challenges at the retail level, as the Eataly case study shows.

The aim of this paper is to explore how social movements may interact proactively with corporate power and collaboration effects. In particular, we want to investigate what happens when the interaction occurs prior to the start-up of a new initiative in order to co-design the business model according to ethical stances. Social acceptance and criticism, as well as intermediate forms of consumer reactions, will be investigated as possible outcomes of such an interaction. Moreover, we will examine whether the ex-ante collaboration between the company and the social movement and its role as endorser of the new venture will affect some of the constraints causing the attitude–behaviour gap.

In order to achieve our research objectives, we decided to investigate an Italian retailer, Eataly, operating in Italy, Japan, and the United States. Eataly entered the Italian food market in 2007 as a result of a close collaboration with a social movement, Slow Food, a worldwide organisation with more than 100,000 members devoted to protecting and supporting an ethical and quality food culture (Sassatelli and Davolio 2010; Tencati and Zslonai 2012). Slow Food played a key role by actively supporting the Eataly management in the creation and development of a new, ethically concerned business model from the business's inception.

Owing to the topic's complexity and innovativeness, we opted for a multiple method approach by collecting heterogeneous qualitative data from various informants (customers, social movement members and managers, corporate executives, and the entrepreneur).

The paper is structured as follows: in “**Theoretical framework**” section we review the literature to highlight the main issues related to ethical consumption as an individual and social phenomenon as well as associated

company actions. Thereafter we present the methodology adopted for the analysis of the Eataly case study and the main findings. A discussion of the findings, implications and suggestions for further research conclude the paper.

Theoretical Framework

Over the last 30 years, ethical consumption has become a central issue for both practitioners and academics (Carrigan et al. 2004, 2010, 2011). It embraces a wide range of phenomena, from the buying of Fair Trade products to more general attention to the environment, labour conditions and animal welfare, when deciding what and how to purchase and consume. Since the first green consumerism in the 1970s, ethical consumers have shown increasing levels of awareness of environmental and social issues. Researchers have highlighted the heterogeneity and complexity of ethical consumers and ethical concerns (Özçaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006; Shaw and Newholm 2002) along with the solutions that suppliers have adopted to address ethical demand (Crane 2005). Moreover, ethical consumption has emerged, both in studies and in practice, as particularly critical with regard to food choices (Vermeir and Verbeke 2006), since ethical purchasing not only has repercussions at the product level, but also as far as outlets are concerned (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007).

Three focal issues, which will be discussed in the following sections, deserve particular consideration regarding ethical consumption and its impact on market mechanisms.

First, despite a growing debate on the implications of ethical consumption for companies' strategy (re)formulation, demand and supply have been mainly analysed as separate domains. In this regard, research addressing the effects of interaction on the two domains is still underdeveloped.

A second key issue relates to the interpretation of ethical consumption as a behavioural category that not only involves a wide range of individual behaviour patterns, but also of collective behaviour. Nevertheless, the dialectical process between collective behaviours and corporate strategies deserves more consideration in the theoretical debate.

The final issue relates to the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap. Some of them are connected to consumers' values and characteristics, others are related to product features, and, ultimately, the physical and social context in which these products are bought is assuming a more significant role in the theoretical debate (Carrington et al. 2010).

Demand Versus Supply

Interlinked research streams have underscored the importance of ethical consumerism and devoted efforts to deepen

the heterogeneous ways in which consumers try to realise their ethical stances. Over time, a proliferation of consumption expressions (Newholm and Shaw 2007) have emerged in the academic debate, among others, shopping misbehaviour (Vitell 2003), consumer resistance (Izberk-Bilgin 2010; Kozinets and Handelman 2004), voluntary simplicity, (Ballantine and Creery 2010; Cherrier 2009; Huneke 2005; McDonald et al. 2006; Shaw and Moraes 2009), slow living, (Parkins and Craig 2006) as well as anti-consumption (Kozinets et al. 2010; Lee and Fernandez 2009) and boycott or buycott behaviours (Hye-Jin and Nelson 2009; Neilson 2010). Recently, consumer social responsibility (C_NSR) has emerged as an alternative framework for specifically addressing social consumption (Devinney et al. 2010).

From a different perspective, other scholars have addressed ethical consumption as a starting point to investigate suppliers' strategic reactions. In past years, the opportunities to develop a competitive advantage in this market segment have attracted companies that attempted to meet the multifaceted, ethical consumer's needs through ethically responsible and sustainable products, brands and services. Marketers and researchers basically agree on two alternative macro approaches aimed at satisfying ethical consumption requests (Crane 2005): ethical niche orientation and mainstream ethical orientation. A narrow specialisation in an ethical niche allows firms to pursue a unique positioning strategy based on products and services with specific ethical features; this also modifies the conventional way of interpreting the market radically and, in a sense, deploys the company strategy more ideologically. In mainstream ethical orientation, the basic belief is that quality, convenience and price are the primary concerns, while ethical criteria are secondary concerns in consumption choices (Crane 2005); mainstream distribution and communication channels are employed to reach a wider portion of the ethical demand market (Bezençon and Blili 2009; Low and Davenport 2006). For instance, in most affluent countries, Fair Trade products (De Pelsmacker et al. 2005; Huybrechts and Reed 2010; Kim et al. 2010; Lyon 2006; Nicholls 2010) and organic food categories (Honkanen et al. 2006; Lockie et al. 2004; Perrini et al. 2010; Thøgersen 2010) are relatively small, growing market niches that have progressively exited specialised distribution to enter mainstream outlets (Bezençon and Blili 2009; Hira and Ferrie 2006; Low and Davenport 2006, 2009; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007).

In previous literature, suppliers' response to ethically minded consumers is mainly presented as a reaction to the demand for ethical stances and rarely as a dialectical process of interaction aimed at co-designing new supply solutions (Fridell 2009; Martin and Schouten 2009). Our major concern regarding the extant literature is the lack of

consideration of collaboration and integration opportunities between demand and supply.

In particular we want to investigate how demand and supply can effectively interact, overcoming the traditional reactive perspective of the supply side. Moreover, this paper aims at exploring how consumers' individual and collective stances can effectively contribute to the development of more ethically oriented corporate strategies.

From Individuals to Social Movements

Although the empowerment of ethical consumers is spreading and the quest for an ethical restructuring of markets is increasing (Gendron et al. 2009), individual attitudes and behaviours have a limited impact on the marketplace (Low and Davenport 2005), even though consumption choices are considered 'votes' that transcend national boundaries (Shaw et al. 2006). As highlighted in the literature, individuals' choices tend only to impact moderately on institutions and organisations (Clouder and Harrison 2005; Dickinson and Carsky 2005; Holzer 2006).

The individual perspective has thus been complemented by research on the social dimension of ethical consumption (Newholm and Shaw 2007). This dimension is viewed as a collective undertaking (Barnett et al. 2005) in which social integration plays a crucial role in the continuous process of the (re)negotiation of consumers' subjective view on ethics (Cherrier 2005). Social movements and their organisations have recently interpreted and collectivised several of these ethical stances in order to translate individual behaviours into collective action (Holzer 2006; Lavine 2010; Moraes et al. 2010). Micheletti (2003) refers to this approach as 'individualised collective action'.

In particular, new social movements, such as Slow Food, emphasise the process of building a collective identity and sharing values and lifestyles rather than, or in addition to, developing ideologies (Tencati and Zsionai 2012). They take societal, environmental and economic concerns into consideration when purchasing and consuming (Lang and Gabriel 2005). The Fair Trade movement has actively fostered this process (Özçağlar-Toulouse et al. 2009). Consequently, several research studies investigating ethical consumption practices focus on the Fair Trade movement (e.g. Connolly and Shaw 2006; Low and Davenport 2006; Low and Davenport 2009; Nicholls 2010).

Literature manifests even more that the ethical issues championed by social/consumer movements are not only aimed at influencing society as a whole, but also market mechanisms (Davies and Ryals 2010). In this process, these issues act as mediators of the engagement and active participation of ethically minded consumers (Barnett et al. 2005).

When the relationship between social movements and firms are investigated, several tactics emerge from the

demand side. According to de Bakker and den Hond (2007), these tactics can be grouped into four categories: shareholder activism, political consumerism, social alliances, and the creation of alternative business systems. In particular, the last two categories deserve consideration for a better understanding of the mechanism through which social movements and companies interact, in order to shape corporate social change activities (den Hond and de Bakker 2007) and transform the markets.

Such new forms of interaction are promising in terms of consumer empowerment and market transformation, but they have to be analysed carefully and critically to identify possible drawbacks (Low and Davenport 2005). In particular, the increasing tension between the more radical members of a social movement and the movement itself when it starts to collaborate with corporate power is highlighted in the literature (Gendron et al. 2009). In this regard, new questions emerge about the movement members' different reactions towards its economic institutionalisation; this is seen as an outcome (perhaps unwanted) of this interaction.

The dialectical process between social movements and companies and its dynamics deserves further consideration, especially when the outcome of the process is a new ethically minded business venture. In this sense, we aim at understanding, also in a collective rather than only individual perspective, how ethical consumers may collaborate with corporate power. Furthermore, we will focus on the positive and negative outcomes of this collaboration.

The Attitude–Behaviour Gap

Despite several studies emphasising consumers' positive ethical intentions, the ethical product market has not developed as expected (Bray et al. 2011). One of the main reasons for this is the vagueness of the 'ethical' product concept (Devinney et al. 2010) as issues such as product safety, environmental impacts, employee welfare, discrimination, fair pricing and trade, etc. have all been progressively integrated into it (Bezençon and Blili 2010; Crane 2001). In order to deal with this problem, the Slow Food movement, for example, has empirically defined it in terms of 'good, clean and fair' food, thus contributing to a simple but effective idea of 'ethical' products.

Moreover, although consumer interest in this product category seems to be growing, companies have come to realise that ethical consumers often do not walk their talk (Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrington et al. 2010; Nicholls and Lee 2006). Several scholars have studied this discrepancy between a declared ethical attitude and actual behaviour, eventually labelling the 'attitude–behaviour gap' or 'ethical purchasing gap' (e.g. Auger and Devinney 2007; Belk et al. 2005; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Nicholls and Lee 2006).

In recent years, the literature has addressed three major sets of factors affecting the attitude–behaviour gap: the first is more related to individual consumer values and their background; the second is connected to ethical product features; the last set refers to the context in which ethical products are bought.

Some scholars have addressed factors, such as personal values, personal experiences, ethical obligation, self-identity and moral norms; these affect consumer attitudes and eventually either support or hinder their actual translation into intentions when consumers are faced with ethical products (Bray et al. 2011; Özçağlar-Toulouse et al. 2006; Shaw and Shiu 2002; Vermeir and Verbeke 2008). Actual achievements of ethical attitudes are often contradictory (Cherrier 2005) since—as has been argued—social desirability biases declared intentions (Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrigan and Attalla 2001), which are not a reliable proxy for purchasing behaviour (Carrington et al. 2010).

Moreover, previous research has identified the role of other factors related more closely to the ethical product itself which affect the attitude–behaviour gap: the higher prices of ethical products, the potential loss of quality, the additional effort required to select these kinds of products (Bray et al. 2011; Boulstridge and Carrigan 2000; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; De Pelsmacker et al. 2005).

We argue that two other factors, pointed out in literature, are particularly relevant: the lack of information (Bray et al. 2011) about ethical features and the limited product availability (actual or perceived) in traditional outlets (Nicholls and Lee 2006; Vermeir and Verbeke 2008). These are two aspects that call our attention to the critical role that retailers (such as Eataly) can play and which need further conceptual and empirical exploration. Retailers ‘are in the position to act as brokers of trust’ (Castaldo et al. 2009, p.6) and can guarantee consumers that the products’ origin and features are ethical.

A recent paper by Carrington et al. (2010) underlines the importance of the situational context, which is identified as an important mediator of ethical intentions; it ‘represents the momentary contingent factors within the shopping environment that may act to block or facilitate the translation of ethical purchase intentions into ethical buying behaviour’ (Carrington et al. 2010, p. 147). In particular, the situational context comprises, on the one hand, the physical surroundings, such as the marketing environment and the product accessibility, both of which (as already mentioned) directly refer to the important role played by outlets where ethical products can be bought. On the other hand, another key factor emerges: the social surroundings, which comprise other people, their roles and the interpersonal interactions that occur between ethically minded consumers.

We argue that a further step in interpreting the importance of social surroundings as factors mediating the

attitude–behaviour gap could be to look not only at the interaction between individuals, but also between individuals and social movements.

In this regard, our research aim is to investigate if and how the collaboration between social movements and companies can act as a facilitating condition for dealing with these factors, specifically those related to the physical and social contexts in which buying behaviour is expected to occur.

Methods and Data

Research Setting

Eataly is an innovative company that entered the Italian food market in 2007. It was created by Oscar Farinetti, who had previously run a large company in electronics retailing. The name Eataly was derived from the combination of the verb ‘to eat’ and the name of its country of origin ‘Italy’. It is a new retail format that offers a new food distribution paradigm inspired by concepts such as sustainability, sharing and responsibility. The company offers an original combination of goods and services (mainly raw food, restaurants, and training) for food preparation and consumption.

The first Eataly shop, which opened in Turin in 2007, is the flagship store and embodies the new venture’s core principles. Another seven shops were opened in the domestic market (Pinerolo, Milan and Bologna) and abroad (Tokyo and New York). The sales reached about 50 million EUR in 2010. Scheduled store openings should result in Eataly having 25 branches around the world by 2015.

Slow Food and its president, Carlo Petrini, played a primary role in this new business venture, influencing many of the business formula’s founding ideas. Slow Food is a worldwide organisation founded in 1989 in Italy to counteract fast food and a fast life, as well as the disappearance of local food traditions by promoting ‘good, clean, and fair’ food (Petrini 2005; Petrini and Padovani 2006; Tencati and Zsionai 2012). Slow Food’s main objectives are to spread taste education, to connect producers and consumers of excellent and ‘ethical’ foods through events and initiatives, and to build new communities of ‘ethical’ food supporters. The Slow Food movement is distinguished by its promotion of the ‘eco-gastronomy’ concept, which highlights the ethical, and ultimately political, meaning of food, as well as emphasising pleasure in consumption (Pietrykowski 2004). Today, Slow Food has over 100,000 members in 153 countries and operates through local regional branches.

Methods

In order to pursue our research objectives—thus describing the process and outcomes of the collaboration between

Eataly and Slow Food and examining its potential for dealing with the attitude–behaviour gap in ethical consumption—we employed a multiple method approach with a variety of qualitative data sources. This approach allowed us to address broad research questions, develop more robust findings, and avoid single-method biases (Davis et al. 2011). We adopted the complementarity design that, according to Davis et al. (2011), enables researchers to examine different, but complementary, aspects of the phenomenon under study. The weights of the adopted methods are equal and integrated into a one-phase design. The data were collected in parallel and the various sets of results were interpreted concurrently in order to draw valid conclusions regarding the research problem.

The project started at the end of 2008, when we began to collect preliminary and exploratory data on the development of the business formula and the Eataly customer reactions. At that time, the most intriguing elements were firstly the original collaborative dimension of the relationship between the company and the social movement and their direct interaction during the development of the new venture; secondly, the presence of enthusiastic and supportive consumers and, conversely, critical and sceptical ones as a challenging aspect of this phenomenon. Although the latter comprised a smaller group than the former, this contradiction convinced us to deepen the process of exploring the development of the Eataly-Slow Food collaboration and to carefully (and critically) analyse consumer attitudes.

We explored the relationship between Eataly, its customers and the Slow Food movement in depth between 2010 and 2011. We investigated the alignment between the values underlying the movement, the Eataly business idea, and its customers' actual perceptions, whether they were Slow Food members or not. The data were collected from different sources (Table 1): in-store observations at the Turin and Milan stores; semi-structured in-store interviews with customers; in-depth interviews with customers at

home; in depth interviews with both Slow Food and Eataly managers and employees; blogs and forums; and secondary data on Slow Food and Eataly (books, websites and internal data).

All the informants were notified about the aims of the research and consented to anonymous inclusion in the study (pseudonyms are used in this paper).

In-Store Observations

The three researchers visited the two Eataly stores in Turin and Milan independently in January and February 2010. Their observations were individually recorded in notes and photographs; this allowed the store's features to be identified in terms of its layout, atmosphere, and internal communication.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Fifty personal, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the Turin and Milan branches between February and May 2010, using purposeful random sampling (Patton 1990). Regular and occasional customers, Slow Food members and non-members were selected.

In-Depth Interviews (Corporate)

During the same period, we conducted personal interviews with Eataly's owner, two managers (in charge of external communication and sales) and two sales clerks (from the grocery department and customer service). We interviewed a Slow Food executive who works at the Eataly headquarters as the supervisor of the supply chain: his position was created to ensure that the Eataly formula is in line with the Slow Food principles. We also interviewed a Slow Food member who participated in the Slow Food task force that supported the supplier selection process during Eataly's launch.

Table 1 The data set

| | Interaction and co-design | Support and criticism | Consumer attitudes and behaviours (gap) |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Exploratory analysis (observation, informal interviews, pictures, videos, secondary data, 2008–2009) | | X | X |
| In store observations (Turin and Milan stores, 2010) | X | X | |
| Semi-structured in store interviews (50 consumers, Turin and Milan, 2010) | | X | X |
| In-depth interviews (7 executives Slow Food and Eataly, 2010) | X | | |
| In-depth home interviews (10 Eataly customers, some of them are Slow Food members, 2010) | | X | X |
| Blogs/Forums (over 350 discussions, 60 eligible, 2010–2011) | | X | |
| Secondary data (books, websites, internal documents, 2008–2011) | X | X | |

In-Depth Interviews (Customers)

Ten one-on-one home interviews were conducted with customers, who had already been interviewed in the stores between February and May 2010 (Table 2).

Blogs/Forums

Forums, blogs and Facebook pages were consulted to obtain data on customer attitudes towards Eataly. Between December 2008 and May 2010, more than 350 discussions and also comments on public blogs and forums were analysed (40 pages of transcription). Each discussion was considered independently and analysed in its entirety. About 60 were considered relevant to our investigation (e.g. authenticity, sustainability and ethical stances) and analysed further.

Secondary Sources

Data were gathered from the four books published: respectively, by the Slow Food movement founder, Carlo Petrini (Petrini 2005; Petrini and Padovani 2006) and Eataly's owner, Oscar Farinetti (Farinetti 2009; Sartorio 2008), as well as from corporate websites and internal company documents.

Each interview, blog, or forum post was transcribed (giving a total of 143 pages) and analysed separately by each of the three researchers. The data were further coded and analysed in tabular displays, using the main constructs from the literature (Spiggle 1994). The adoption of a multiple method approach, the multiple data sources and

the triangulation between the three researchers strongly support the research findings' validity.

Findings

In December 2008, we started to collect preliminary evidence of the Eataly business model and the consumer attitudes and behaviours. From the very beginning of our observations, we realised that the close collaboration between the social movement and the company, established prior to the Eataly launch and aimed at co-designing the business formula, was one of the distinctive features of the new venture. It emerged that the vast majority of Eataly visitors (not all of them went there just to purchase products) considered it an attractive shopping opportunity due to the intrinsic qualities of the food and the company's ethical commitment. Many of them explicitly mentioned the Slow Food support as a major reason for purchasing there. Simultaneously, however, certain discrepancies appeared between Eataly's offering and a restricted group of Slow Food members who evaluated the overall Eataly format more critically. Only a few of them felt that the Eataly formula was truly representative of the Slow Food philosophy. This contradiction resembles the argument by Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), who maintain that critical stances, such as those mentioned above, represent the dissent of the community's more radical and committed members, who feel that corporate power exploits their values.

By further interviewing consumers and corporate members, we improved our research design to better understand the characteristics and the outcomes of the alliance between Eataly and Slow Food. The results highlighted (a) some intricacies and trade-offs in the interaction and co-design process, (b) supportive as well as critical stances from Eataly customers and Slow Food members, and (c) some aspects of the business model context that support the reconsidering of the attitude-behaviour gap.

Eataly and Slow Food: Interaction and Co-design between Demand and Supply Sides

The Eataly experience allows us to describe the process by which companies and movements can interact dialectically during the initiation of a new business venture. Inspired by the changes affecting ethically conscious customers, as expressed by the Slow Food movement, Oscar Farinetti eventually decided to convert his experience in the retail business into a new concept. Food quality and ethical stances, as interpreted by Slow Food (Pietrykowski 2004; Tencati and Zslonai 2012), fascinated him; food must taste good, but it should also be ecologically and socially sustainable.

Table 2 In-depth interviews with customers: the informants

| Name | Profile | Gender | Age |
|-----------|--|--------|-----|
| Anna | Occasional Eataly customer | Female | 59 |
| Giulia | Loyal Eataly customer. Slow Food member | Female | 58 |
| Claudia | Occasional Eataly customer | Female | 45 |
| Luisa | Occasional Eataly customer. Member of Cascina Roccafranca's Purchasing Group | Female | 40 |
| Carla | Occasional Eataly customer | Female | 38 |
| Maddalena | Occasional Eataly customer. Slow Food member | Female | 32 |
| Antonio | Loyal Eataly customer | Male | 48 |
| Roberto | Loyal Eataly customer. Slow Food member | Male | 40 |
| Marco | Loyal Eataly customer. Slow Food member | Male | 35 |
| Filippo | Loyal Eataly customer | Male | 34 |

“Petrini taught me to enter into a different relationship with food. He was the first to make me understand that behind food there’s a patrimony of culture and values. I simply tried to put these ideas into practice with the Eataly business model” (Farinetti, interview).

As previously observed, Slow Food and its president, Carlo Petrini, played a primary role in this new business venture, influencing many of the business formula’s founding ideas. Before the official opening of the first Eataly shop, a joint task force of Eataly managers and Slow Food delegates undertook more than two years’ research to identify and develop collaborations with food and beverage producers who shared the same quality concept and values. Slow Food actually helped Farinetti find his first 18 key suppliers.

“People, who share our passion, have profound respect for their products’ traditions and want to protect their quality. Like us, they think that directly telling consumers about themselves and how they make their products is a good way of offering them the key to quality and knowledge” (Sebastiano Sardo, Slow Food Executive).

All of them are small-scale producers who control their product supply chain by assuring Eataly of the quality of the products and the manufacturing process of some relevant food items: water, wine, oil, vinegar, flour, pasta, canned tomatoes, rice, cured meat, cheese, preserved fish and fresh meat. Using the same strict criteria developed to select the first suppliers, since 2005 another 200 partners have been selected from small producers. They have broadened the assortment of goods and services to the current almost 13,000 items.

Besides providing food, Eataly promotes a fusion of traditions, culture and values embedded in a respectful and ethically oriented relationship with food.

“We want to show that it’s possible to achieve important results by merging entrepreneurship, ethics and a social perspective in our business” (Farinetti, interview).

These values are rooted in cultures and knowledge that can be, and are, taught and learnt. In this sense, Eataly aims to act as a cultural intermediary (Durrer and Miles 2009; Venkatesh and Meamber 2006). According to Slow Food’s fundamental beliefs, food habits should be corrected and taught, and customers should be empowered to interpret and share the movement’s philosophy. In this regard, one of the new venture’s key features is the integration of buying and learning activities. Eataly is not only a store where ethically minded consumers can find the products

they need, but also a place where they can gain information about ethical stances related to food, can attend workshops to learn to distinguish authentic and tasty products and can exchange knowledge about selecting and cooking food. These activities are developed in close collaboration with the Slow Food members, who actively participate in various initiatives with the aim of spreading the ethical movement to mainstream consumers. Expressing its social role as an ethical movement (Barnett et al. 2005), Slow Food participated actively in defining and implementing the Eataly business idea.

“I was part of a team of four members of the movement who was delegated by the Slow Food chairman board. We worked directly at the Eataly headquarters, where we could share our opinions with the management. We spent two years identifying, selecting, and choosing producers and products that were suitable for the new venture. We went to the producers’ plants many times to verify the product quality and that Slow Food values, such as sustainability and the principles, ‘Good, Clean and Fair’, are respected in the production process” (Sebastiano Sardo, Slow Food Executive).

The Slow Food delegates participated pre-emptively and proactively by selecting providers whom the movement had certified as ethically minded, by planning the assortment, by choosing products and services that complied with the new venture’s aim, and by defining the contents and tone of the communication both inside and outside the store. These actions allowed the two parts (the social movement, considered as a key stakeholder, and the firm managers) to really intertwine (Maon et al. 2009), thus overcoming the barriers that mutual diffidence raises.

The close collaboration also continued after the Turin store opening. A Slow Food executive was a permanent part of the Eataly management for two more years, monitoring and selecting partners and products, and training the internal staff; he currently works as a consultant at the Eataly headquarters once a week to guarantee that the Slow Food principles are respected. One of his important tasks is producing the monthly report on the assortment, pricing, promotion and communication practices that both the Eataly and Slow Food top management target.

Slow Food endorsement and consulting were fundamental in establishing a model that aims at balancing mass market retail practices with values that customers increasingly appreciated, particularly those committed to the Slow Food movement. However, Eataly’s founder did not initially aim to create a ‘food boutique’ for elite groups of consumers. The objective was to release ‘ethical’ food from its market niche and market it in a mainstream fashion (Crane 2005) in order to attract customers who are

not necessarily connoisseurs and who may appreciate fair pricing.

“Slow Food decided to participate in this new challenge because we understood the risk of becoming an elitist movement for a snobbish food culture. Nevertheless, this strategy was strongly criticised by radical Slow Food members. That’s why we paid so much attention to the Eataly offering; on the one hand, to its harmony with the idea of the democratisation of quality food and, on the other hand, to the logic of authentic and sustainable food to attract traditional Slow Food members and the mainstream market” (Sebastiano Sardo, Slow Food Executive).

Both partners considered the pre-emptive interaction between the social movement and the company before the launch of the new venture, as a potentially effective way of reducing the drawbacks of mainstreaming, while maintaining the focus on the ethical stances of the demand they wanted to address. As will become evident in the next section, Eataly customers generally seem to approve of the new retail formula, although some of them perceive the contradictions inherent in transforming an ethical stance into a market offering.

The Compromise between Mainstreaming and the Movement Values: The Consumer Reactions

The collaborative partnership between Slow Food and Eataly was aimed at developing a new venture whose values were aligned with the social movement’s values and identity from the start. Their ambition was to go beyond the alternatives of remaining within an ethical niche or entering the mainstream market (Crane 2005). To this end, the social movement mediated the engagement and active participation of individuals (Barnett et al. 2005) by interpreting and collectivising the ethical stances of its members and translating them into actions aimed at transforming the market (Holzer 2006; Moraes et al. 2010).

Our research clarified that many consumers actually consider Eataly a compromise between radical forms of ethical consumption and the actual exploitation of business opportunities. Some accept this compromise.

“I have a lot in common with those whom I meet at Eataly. I feel like I have a lot more in common with them than with people in a supermarket” (Roberto).

The data indicate the communal nature of the discourse: loyal Eataly customers strongly identify with one another. Conversely, they distance themselves from those who shop at traditional supermarkets. This evidence calls for a ‘tribal’ interpretation of the relationship between consumers and Eataly (Cova et al. 2007): as in other, profit-

oriented communities, the link between consumers and the company is mediated by the relationship with other consumers, which fosters the community feeling.

Conversely, some of them feel the responsibility of their consumption choices and they explicitly recognise Eataly’s inability to support their ethically sound consumption practices (Arnould and Price 2000). And they criticise the compromise.

“I don’t like it, as it seems a ‘trendy’ supermarket. I prefer the purchasing group formula: it is easier and less pretentious. The group is more effective because we, as members, are directly involved in the selection of products. We are not always as good as we would wish, even if some of us are responsible for the search for small producers to help and support” (Luisa).

The social dimension is evident in this excerpt: members like Luisa are strongly committed to the ethos of the social movement and do not wish to trade it for a new, more commercial community. In this sense, Slow Food members show heterogeneous levels of commitment (Dalli and Corciolani 2008) and their reactions vary accordingly. The more committed, those who believe in their actual ethical responsibility and who distrust the ‘trendy supermarket’, have not become involved in the new venture and have returned to more traditional, authentic and essential forms of collaboration with local producers (Alexander and Nicholls 2006). This seems to suggest that the social movement presents an articulated structure in which various member profiles are represented, not all of whom are willing to follow the initiative as a unitary body.

“Farinetti is right when he says that it is good to spend more money on good food and avoid many superfluous things, paying more attention to what we buy. But in my opinion, it seems that here at Eataly they are moving towards an elitist market, something trendy” (Claudia).

Critical customers, who only visit Eataly occasionally, point out the ineffectiveness (compared to other institutions), elitism and even the exploitative dimension of Eataly. As in other case studies (Bekin et al. 2005; Dalli and Corciolani 2008), radical members of the community support a purist form of commitment towards the cause and do not accept commercialisation, even if it is directed towards the emancipation of mainstream consumers (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Low and Davenport 2005).

“I come to Eataly once a month because I can find all the products that I have to buy at various locations in the countryside. But I always have this unpleasant feeling of being in a place that is not mine. I am used to being on the farms themselves and I fear that this is

a sort of commercial counterfeit. [...] Even those whom I meet here seem to be a bit different from me. I do not feel at ease with all these lights, billboards, well ordered stacks of stuff that are sometimes purposely messed up. It seems that they are displayed in such a way that tempts you to buy something that you don't really need" (Maddalena).

Moreover, although only occasionally, even demanding Slow Food members visit Eataly and some of them seem sincerely supportive of the positive outcomes of the organisation's goals.

"It seems that at Eataly's core there is a solid and reliable background of deep and well-rooted beliefs. Nevertheless, I am a bit worried about the extension of this model, which exploits the commercial side of the movement: I hope that the existing coherence will never be lost. I hope that this initiative will positively impact production: those who stopped producing ethical and quality products because of poor market opportunities may now find that Eataly has given them an incentive to return to traditional and authentic products" (Giulia).

With ethically minded consumers recognising the distinctive approach of the Eataly formula, even if it is criticised, this raises the question whether it has the capability to respect and maintain the social movement's values and purposes over time without submitting to the temptation to definitively adopt mainstreaming logic. The investment made by Slow Food in terms of personnel and constant endorsement seems oriented towards this direction, providing Eataly customers and Slow Food members with good and reliable arguments in favour of the actual ethical commitment of the formula.

Addressing the Attitude–Behaviour Gap

In keeping with the company goals, Eataly aims at supplying products and services that enable consumers to overcome some of the barriers they usually encounter when trying to purchase according to their ethical philosophy. From the outset, the challenge was to create a place where customers could not only buy food and products, but which would also provide integrative services and opportunities to taste products and learn about ethical matters. The solution was to reduce the perceived distance between consumers and their ethical choice set, one of the key factors of the attitude–behaviour gap (Alexander and Nicholls 2006; Bray et al. 2011; Carrington et al. 2010; Nicholls and Lee 2006) related to consumers' personal background. Eataly customers seem well aware of the trade-off between ethical consumption and traditional

outlets; they seek contexts in which their ethical values, self-identity, and personal experiences (Shaw and Shiu 2002) are reflected. Their quest for food with specific intrinsic properties, which lies at the core of their choices, is clearly expressed by their statements.

"I regard food as a cultural element that refers to identity and tradition and to a specific relationship between the producer and the land. And I try to translate these beliefs into consumption practices that are based, on the one hand, on a kind of imagery that our parents gave us and, on the other hand, on a sort of reaction against the homogenisation of tastes driven by forces like McDonald's: we react, seeking variety, diversity and, finally, identity through food consumption" (Marco).

"Besides quality, the sustainability of products is essential. It is a different form of warranty that is becoming increasingly important, primarily when you have a family" (Filippo).

Another critical aspect related to the attitude–behaviour gap is the need for customers to be supported in the process of evaluation and selection of products and their features. The Eataly formula is considered a suitable context for ethical consumption as it overcomes the constraints associated with traditional outlets, such as a narrow assortment, high prices, and the lack of information supporting consumers' purchasing choice in the store (Bray et al. 2011; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Nicholls and Lee 2006; Vermeir and Verbeke 2008). Owing to the Slow Food endorsement, Eataly can promote a vast selection of products that fulfils the core values of being good and tasty, clean (because the company respects raw materials and guarantees transparent and traditional production processes), fair (because Eataly ensures adequate margins for producers and affordable prices for customers). Moreover, visual merchandising, educational areas, and restaurants emphasise the ethical nature of the consumption experience and foster wholesome food values. Signs and posters all over the shop drive the customers to evaluate product features in accordance with Slow Food principles. According to the management prices are, on average, medium to high when compared to mainstream products, but Eataly is strongly committed to explaining to customers that good food is expensive to produce, preserve and deliver.

Many of these aspects are mirrored in the customers' perceptions.

"Until the opening of Eataly, I was forced to buy the few products that I could find directly from the producers. It was frustrating. Finally I can buy a wide range of products in a single reliable store" (Giulia). "The courses on tasting and selecting quality wine that Eataly organises with the support of its experts,

have allowed me to improve my purchases in the store” (Antonio).

“The information shown in the signs up on the shelves is helpful in guaranteeing food origin and quality. If you are conscious about these things, then it’s worth spending a little more on some products” (Carla).

Furthermore, when the layout of the shops was designed, inspiration was drawn from the Tokyo fish market, the Berlin KaDeWe, Disneyland Paris, and Paris Grand Épicerie as well as from small biological markets. Many of the Eataly areas re-create the atmosphere of traditional markets: there are many stalls where customers can touch, smell and choose food. It is therefore not only the products per se that attract customers to Eataly, but the feeling that they are involved in a process which differentiates the business from ordinary supermarkets. This is part of the situational context and, more specifically, the physical surrounding, which Carrington et al. (2010) pointed out as one of the challenges that suppliers have to face when addressing ethical consumers. Instead of ordinary products and channels, Eataly customers seek authentic offers with intrinsic properties from reliable suppliers (Castaldo et al. 2009).

“I want to know what I am going to eat and I don’t want industrial ‘bogus’ goods. Here [at Eataly] I feel as if I’m purchasing directly from the original producer” (Anna).

“I like to see many local, Italian producers. I often attend Slow Food events, where you can see the names of the producers and then I can find them here at Eataly” (Giulia).

As its founder has declared, Eataly aims at becoming an ‘all around show’ by cleverly balancing information, training, tastes, fragrances, and transmitting emotions to customers who will then recognise that they are part of a community in search of authenticity and products in line with the Slow Food movement’s requirements. The search for food’s intrinsic properties overlaps the social and ideological stances that arise from various and interconnected networks. Eataly customers participate in various communities and related discourses that emerge from different conditions (Thompson and Arsel 2004).

“Sustainability is important to me: I participate in a purchasing group of more than 150 families and we buy products and brands according to the Kilometri Zero philosophy.¹ I often come to Eataly to buy the

same products that I usually buy through the purchasing group” (Luisa).

According to these statements, it seems that the Eataly formula can engender the same kind of expectations that are usually met by participation in various forms of community-supported agriculture and new consumption communities (Moraes et al. 2010). Moreover, it seems that Eataly has accepted and exploited some of the contextual factors that sometimes hinder ethical purchases. In particular, by emphasising the store as a locus where values and ideological stances are shared with other customers, Eataly can ultimately meet and reinterpret another relevant challenge related to the situational context (Carrington et al. 2010): the social surrounding in which consumers feel involved and immersed in a committed ethos. Eataly is mainly able to offer such a setting as an outcome of its collaboration with Slow Food and the latter’s endorsement.

Discussion and Conclusion

The paper’s main contribution lies in the innovative nature of the collaboration, which is the crux of the Eataly case, and its related outcomes. The relationship between the company and the Slow Food social movement started long before the opening of the new venture, which the entrepreneur, together with the Slow Food movement, brought to market.

The search for a solution to the conventional juxtaposition of ethical stances and corporate initiatives has been the motivating principle of the collaborative approach that Slow Food adopted in supporting the new venture’s design. Slow Food decided to adopt a different approach to the mainstream market through its close interaction with the company in order to constructively and effectively influence the transition towards an innovative, ethically minded, retail formula (den Hond and de Bakker 2007; de Bakker and den Hond 2007).

The main aim of the collaboration was to create a new format where consumers could buy quality products, thus supporting the local farmers producing them and also creating a better environment. The social movement’s endorsement has contributed to the development of proper tools for understanding and sharing the values and stories behind these products. By starting the collaboration before the Eataly launch, the alignment of the two partners’ values was facilitated; in this regard, the social movement’s intervention was not aimed at modifying an existing company in terms of identity and strategies (Martin and Schouten 2009), but at contributing to the creation of a new retail format whose design started specifically with the ethical stances of the demand. From this perspective, social

¹ The Kilometri Zero philosophy means preferring goods locally produced and fresh and seasonal produce. This prevents goods travelling far from the points of sale, since their transport and handling cause pollution and environmental damage.

movements like Slow Food can play an important role in the endorsement of initiatives that are compatible with the value system that they and their members support. In a sense, social movements may act like any other public or international institution (Rao et al. 2000) that contributes to setting the rules for ethical consumption and business (Jaffee 2010). But, as in the case of Eataly, they can also move beyond this regulatory role and enter the business environment directly through partnership and organisational commitment.

The collaboration had two main effects. Firstly, supported by Slow Food, the Eataly team has addressed the practical implications of adopting an ethical orientation in developing a new retail formula. Secondly, the Slow Food members have had the opportunity to understand how business logic can be integrated into their ethically minded approach. In this sense, the Eataly business model relates to company consumers' collaborations as recently (although rarely) highlighted in the literature (Alexander and Nicholls 2006; Nicholls 2010). Contrary to most extant evidence (de Bakker and den Hond 2007), supply side and demand side agents can collaborate to develop new business initiatives instead of merely interacting (often ruthlessly) from opposite sides. In particular, our research gives rise to the opportunity to add a further option to the list of tactics proposed by de Bakker and den Hond (2007): the 'transformative social alliance' between Slow Food and Eataly can be considered as a new form of collaboration that enhances the traditional form of (ex-post) alliances; by introducing an explicit and shared aim of market transformation prior to the development, a new venture could be an expected outcome of such a collaboration.

As has emerged from the above evidence, the company and the movement started interacting collaboratively as peers long before the opening of the first shop and this relationship is still strong. Contrary to extant theory and evidence from counter-cultures (Desmond et al. 2000) and social movements (Buechler 2010), Eataly and Slow Food have cooperated and continue to operate pro-socially (Rao et al. 2000) to create and develop a new, domesticated business model. The outcomes of this process present some controversies, as a group of consumers (Slow Food purist members) have expressed their concerns with the formula. This seems to be the trade-off that both the company and the social movement have to consider from their perspectives when evaluating the effects of this mainstreaming initiative (Fridell 2009).

These concerns have emerged because, according to Crane (2005), the Eataly formula can be positioned halfway between an ethical niche and mainstreaming: it is ethical in terms of quality and intrinsic properties, but is mainstream in terms of the store layout, the product range width and the overall company size. While representing an

interesting opportunity for a distinctive positioning of a company/brand, this ambiguity raises some doubts about the company's ability to maintain its coherence with the social movement's ethical values over time.

As highlighted in the previous sections, both product and context factors were considered in the design of the Eataly stores. Moreover, the overt collaboration between the company and Slow Food played a significant role in endorsing and authenticating the market offering. This interaction between the company and the social movement also influences Eataly customers' acceptance. Most of them see Slow Food's role as a certification agency that legitimises many aspects of the Eataly business model: products, services, suppliers, and—overall—the entire selection and distribution process.

Both the company and the social movement have invested in specific operations and communication to assure customers (actual and potential ones, Slow Food members or not) that its values and principles are considered in every aspect of the company's value chain. This means that the new business can rely on a captive market of sorts. This market is strongly rooted in the community of Slow Food members and mainstream consumers with a positive attitude towards the movement. In marketing terms, this asset is a form of brand equity based on ethical and ideological considerations. Consequently, the collaboration between the company and the social movement can be regarded as a means of improving the causal relationship between ethical attitudes and ethical behaviours, given that it may impact on some of the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap (Auger and Devinney 2007; Belk et al. 2005; Bray et al. 2011; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Carrington et al. 2010).

Our findings point out that by leveraging this collaboration, Eataly was able to provide an adequate range of selected products, balanced information on the products' features (Carrigan and Attalla 2001), as well as on the suppliers and their production processes (Honkanen et al. 2006; Vermeir and Verbeke 2006), and a suitable in-store layout (Carrington et al. 2010), thus impacting some of the factors affecting the attitude-behaviour gap. In this sense, we suggest that collaborations between companies and social movements can effectively contribute to improving the social context in which ethical purchases occur (Carrington et al. 2010). Moreover, this process of co-designing the market offering supports ethically minded customers' buying behaviour and, simultaneously, attracts mainstream customers. Many of them feel actively involved in the process (Arnould and Price 2000); they seem to enjoy the same experience as when purchasing directly from the original producers.

Nevertheless, certain of the more radical Slow Food members have criticised the collaboration between Eataly

and Slow Food. Some of them explicitly mention that they do not want to shop at Eataly due to its commercial nature. This kind of criticism is also present in the literature and is related to various aspects of mainstreaming in the Fair Trade and organic business field (Davies and Ryals 2010; Hira and Ferrie 2006; Jaffee 2010; Low and Davenport 2005). Here, a new aspect is that this criticism is directed towards both the company and the social movement. Some radical Slow Food members are very disappointed by its support of the new initiative. Some of them even seem willing to resign and rely on more emergent, local and informal initiatives for their ethical purchasing and consumption needs. The literature (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007) holds that the community has the power to counteract corporate co-optation by moving their consumption practices away from the market. In Eataly's respect, the situation is slightly different, because Slow Food is almost intimately connected to the company, and detachment from it does not seem possible or likely. Further longitudinal analysis is necessary to understand how the relationship between the social movement and its critical members will evolve.

Implications

To date, the Eataly story suggests that there are interesting opportunities for movements and companies to collaborate in the development of new business ventures with an ethical orientation. The aim with regard to customers is to find new ways in which they can actively participate in transforming the market towards a more ethical one. Such an undertaking may be successful, especially regarding ethically minded individuals in social movements, as they have the power to exert an effective impact on mainstream markets.

Consumers' quest for authentic food lies at the core of the examined alliance between a company and a social movement. A strong mutual commitment, based on ethical concerns, is a prerequisite for this type of market transformation. The Eataly case demonstrates that collaboration could (and perhaps should) start in the early project phases. The movement can play a role in these phases by codifying and transferring its body of knowledge about products' ethical features, the production processes and the provider selection to the entrepreneur or managers and their staff. This transfer of knowledge facilitates the alignment between the social movement and the corporate strategy by creating shared stories, a shared language and common practices, which are developed as the collaboration evolves.

Furthermore, the aim to reduce the attitude-behaviour gap implies that the project management has to focus on the coherence of all the different elements in the retailing

mix with the ethical stances of the demand. According to our research, this process can be oriented by community certification and support. Consumer expectations should be met on various levels in order to result in effective behaviours: consumers need to perceive the link between their ethical values and the business formula; their expectations have to be fulfilled in terms of the intrinsic properties of the goods and services; moreover, their involvement can be increased by the creation of an 'ethical' shopping experience.

However, the study also shows that—even under these conditions—certain consumers are critical and detached. This reaction highlights the risk that a movement runs when it collaborates with mainstreaming. Nevertheless, the unavoidable compromises that it has to accept do not necessarily have to undermine its credibility, especially with its members.

Since critical social movement members usually play an important role in their community at the movement's local and global levels and due to their influence on other individuals, their opinions and behaviours should be considered seriously. These members should be involved in the different project phases through direct and factual collaboration (i.e. by signalling new providers or by supporting the new venture staff's training process) and/or through continuous communication about the project's developmental stage and the criteria adopted in its definition.

Limitations and Further Research

Overall, the Eataly case provides an opportunity to reconsider companies and social movements' respective roles in a socio-economic setting where ethical consumption occurs. While a case study is limited and specific by nature, the growing international scope of Eataly suggests that this model can be applied in diverse contexts (Europe, Japan, and the US).

Regarding the methodology adopted for our analysis, we have tried to overcome some of the limitations of case study research by employing various methods and sources for data collection. We furthermore relied strongly on triangulation and critical revision (often in collaboration with key informants) to improve the robustness of the results.

Future research could examine relationships between social movements and corporate power in other settings emerging in the previous literature and in management practice. Such collaborations also occur in standard market transactions, for instance, Fair Trade labels in ordinary supermarkets, in 'domesticated markets', as in the Eataly case, and in collective purchasing from suppliers. In yet other cases, non-market transactions occur (sharing, gift giving or bartering), as in some forms of community-supported agriculture. Even anti-consumption behaviours (boycotting and

voluntary simplicity) could be considered, as they affect the social and cultural dimension of food purchasing and consumption. Further research is needed to gain a better understanding of the opportunities for market transformation according to the ethical stances that could emerge in different industries and geographical settings.

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