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Weijo, Henri; Martin, Diane; Arnould, Eric

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# Consumer Movements and Collective Creativity: The Case of Restaurant Day

HENRI A. WEIJO

DIANE M. MARTIN

ERIC J. ARNOULD

**ABSTRACT** – Consumer movements are resolute and persistent efforts by organized consumer collectives to reimagine elements of consumer culture. Such movements often use creative public performances to promote their causes and to make movement participation more ludic and fun. Yet collective creativity within consumer movements has rarely been an explicit focus of research. Using ethnographic methods and assemblage theory, this study elaborates how collective creativity organizes a consumer movement and facilitates its quest for market change. Findings show how the Restaurant Day movement initially emerged as a resistant response to market tensions relating to constraining food culture regulation in a Nordic market context. Findings then illuminate the movement's appropriation of collective creativity as its chief mode of organization and participation. Collective creativity builds on iterative and co-constituting deterritorializing and territorializing processes of consumer production that fuel transformative and explorative creativity, respectively, within the market context. The study provides new insights to consumer movement mobilization, organization, member recruitment, and market legitimacy. The study also provides novel theoretical insights to the study of consumer creativity.

*Key Words:* consumer movements, collective creativity, market change, assemblage theory.

Collective consumer action can change markets, especially when it is motivated and purposeful. Building on a foundation of new social movement (NSM) research (e.g., McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2005; Jasper 2011; Goodwin and Jasper 2015), consumer researchers conceptualize consumer movements as resolute and persistent efforts by organized groups of consumers to reimagine elements of consumer culture (Kozinets and Handelman 2004). Recent works show diverse motivations behind movement mobilization and equally varied changes to consumption and market practices resulting from collective action (e.g., Izberk-Bilkin 2010; King and

Pearce 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Kjeldgaard et al. 2017).

Social movements, including consumer movements, promote their causes via public and often creative performances, such as protests, rallies, boycotts, parodies, and alternative lifestyle expressions (e.g., Soule 1997; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Tilly 2005; Carducci 2006; Jasper 2008; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Previous works find creativity benefits movements by increasing public interest, building movement energy, and making movement participation more ludic (Jasper 2008; 2010; Shepard 2012). Yet creativity is rarely the explicit focus

within NSM research (Jasper 2010; Shepard 2012), or even consumer research in general (Burroughs and Mick 2004; Dahl and Moreau 2007; Kozinets, Hemetsberger, and Schau 2008). Recent NSM studies find contemporary digital technologies democratizing movements' modes of mobilization and organization (e.g., Earl and Kimport 2011; Castells 2015), but do not discuss implications for collective creativity. Research elsewhere has found digital connectivity proliferating and democratizing creative opportunities across consumer culture, even promoting ambitious, autonomously organized collaborative projects of *collective creativity* (e.g., Benkler 2006; Füller, Hutter, and Faillant 2011; Hutter et al. 2011; Kozinets, Patterson, and Ashman 2016). We explore the promising, yet under-charted consumer movement terrain by foregrounding collective creativity with the following research question: *How do consumer movements mobilized through collective creativity change marketplaces?*

We build theory via an ethnographic study of a food carnival called Restaurant Day (henceforth also RD). Restaurant Day began in the spring of 2011 with the sudden appearance of unsanctioned pop-up restaurants in Helsinki's streets and public spaces in protest of restrictive Finnish food regulation and its stifling effects on foodways. RD's initial mobilization followed a typical consumer movement trajectory where consumers who felt similarly aggrieved banded together to seek change (e.g., McAdam et al. 2001; Kozinets and Handelman 2004). Yet soon after initial mobilization, collective creativity produced supportive social and digital networks. RD became a regular event and enticed people from many lifestyles to become restaurateurs and patrons. The number of restaurants grew drastically, as did their variety and ambition. Fueled by intensive media coverage and public debate, the event quickly spread to other Finnish cities, and soon after, other countries. RD energized the dormant cultural debate around Finnish food consumption. A record of 2,724 restaurants popped up in Helsinki in May 2014. In total, RD has produced 27,000 restaurants by 100,000 restaurateurs, catering to over three million people in 75 countries event (figures after May 2017 event, [www.restaurantday.org/](http://www.restaurantday.org/)).

The paper is organized as follows. First, we review prior research on consumer movements, NSM creativity,

and collective creativity. Next, we present our assemblage-theoretical framework for analyzing creativity. We then explain the political and historical contingencies between top-down Nordic governance structures and Finnish food legislation to give context to RD's emergence. We then outline our methodological procedures. Our findings demarcate co-constituting deterritorialization and territorialization processes that give structure to collective creativity. We detail the movement's emergence and how these organizing elements of collective creativity were formulated. We conclude the paper by discussing our theoretical contributions and identifying pathways for future research.

## CONSUMER MOVEMENTS AND COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY

New social movements (NSM) are conscious, resolute, and persistent efforts by organized groups of ordinary citizens that strive for societal change outside conventional institutions and means (e.g., McAdams et al. 2001; Tilly 2005). Their rise has been linked to a socio-historical transition to a post-industrial society where rising living standards have promoted a shift from traditional class-based political struggles to contemporary issues-based struggles—hence the “new” prefix—regarding identity, social justice, quality of life, and consumption (Jasper 2008; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). Consumer movements are a subcategory of NSMs that strive “to transform various elements of the social order surrounding consumption and marketing” (Kozinets and Handelman 2004, 691). Prior research sees consumer movements mostly as a counterforce to unethical market practices (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Izberk-Bilkin 2010). Some research identifies movements with pro-market ends (Sandikci and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Kjeldgaard et al. 2017). In a comprehensive review, King and Pearce (2010) show consumer movements change markets by a) defying and bringing media attention to ethically suspect market practices; b) encouraging innovation by supporting emerging entrepreneurs; c) legitimizing or creating new market categories and offerings; d) mobilizing resources to build new consumption identities; and e) shifting political

conversations and forcing governments to enact legislative changes.

The literature focuses resolutely on human agents. It argues NSMs emerge through a process wherein actors who feel similarly aggrieved band together and mobilize various resources in building a strategic vision for change (McAdams et al. 2001; Goodwin and Jasper 2015). Consistent with its humanistic focus, extant theory identifies two priorities for successful mobilization. First, the movement must articulate collective grievances and a vision for change that resonates with a broader public (Tilly and Tarrow 2015; Goodwin and Jasper 2015). Second, the movement must translate its vision into a collective identity that allows aspiring members to identify with the cause and make movement affiliation a part of their individual identities (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994; Kozinets and Handelman 2004). Researchers argue that a collective identity is necessary for a movement to develop its “tactical repertoire” (Tilly 2005), that is, means of organizing public performances to dramatize the collective identity and draw further attention to the cause (McAdams et al. 2001; Jasper 2008). Classic NSM tactics include occupying symbolically significant sites through rallies and demonstrations, as well as engaging in communicative action like boycotting and lobbying (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Jasper 2008; Earl and Kimport 2011; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). Consistent with its humanistic focus, NSM studies frame mobilization and the quest for social change as belief-based or self-interested (McAdams et al. 2001; Tilly 2005). The literature also emphasizes charismatic movement leaders’ role in attracting new members to the cause (Johnston et al. 1994; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Interested parties—such as institutions, marketers, and the media—also influence collective identities, especially by resisting movement tactics or framing movements as illegitimate (Jasper and McGarry 2015). Institutions deter movement recruitment by inducing fears of stigma (Johnston et al. 1994; Jasper 2011) or legal repression (Tilly 2005). Strategically speaking, movements must weigh selection of resistant, collective identity-inducing tactics against movement legitimacy consequences (McAdams et al. 2001; Jasper 2008; Jasper and McGarry 2015).

Recent work argue that belief-based identification and leader charisma provide a limited view of how movements recruit contributors (Jasper 2008; Jasper and McGarry 2015). In particular, ethnographic NSM studies have identified that movement participation can be ludic and creative. Despite the serious grievances driving mobilization, movement events often incorporate playful pranks, stunts (Shepard 2012) and the carnivalesque (Ehrenreich 2007, 259). Creativity also animates movements’ material production. Symbols, badges, T-shirts, slogans, signs, street art, and parodies of hegemonic expressions translate and materialize affective commitments (e.g., Holt 2002; Carducci 2006; Visconti et al 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). Creativity strengthens collective identity, helps communicate the transformative vision, induces play and communion, expands movements’ tactical repertoires, and increases transformative energy (e.g., Soule 1997; Ehrenreich 2007; Jasper 2008; 2010; Shepard 2012). In addition to benefiting a movement, affect-driven movement participation can prove personally transformative to its members (e.g., Jasper 2008; 2010; Shepard 2012).

Despite the inclusion of creativity in NSM practices, it is rarely a primary analytic focus (Jasper 2008; Shepard 2012). Research describes leaders or dedicated insiders as the principal planners and producers of creative output (Jasper 2008; 2011). The organization and social dynamics of collective creativity itself as well as its development trajectories remain unknown (Jasper 2010; Shepard 2012). In short, the literature on consumer movements lacks a systematic inquiry into creativity, and more specifically, *collective creativity*. Hence, the focus of our research on collective creativity’s impact on a consumer movement and its market context.

Collective creativity has been theorized in contexts like open innovation, networked production, and participatory cultures (e.g., von Hippel 2005; Benkler 2006; Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2012). Kozinets et al. (2008) identified four distinguishing features of collective creativity. First, individual creative efforts are explicitly geared towards advancing a shared collective project. Second, collaborative efforts foster creative problems at a scale and level of detail that exceeds the ability of

individuals working on their own. Third, collectives often organize creative projects into subtasks based on member preferences, improving on productive outcomes. Fourth, collective creativity's inherent sociality increases intrinsic enjoyment and sustains motivation. The literature claims the centrality of digital technologies to collective creativity (e.g., von Hippel 2005; Benkler 2006; Füller et al. 2011; Hutter et al. 2011; Kozinets et al. 2008; 2016; Jenkins et al. 2012). They foster communality among geographically dispersed producers. Digital technologies reduce the need of formal organizing in managing creative output. They increase the collective's sense of control. Digital technologies enable members with diverse backgrounds to identify openings for individual contributions with like-minded collaborators. Finally, they facilitate sorting creative output through activities like rating, tagging, and commenting. Overall, digitalization promotes consumer collectivity with more fluid organization forms where productivity—creative or not—is central to consumer interaction (Arvidsson and Caliendo 2016; Kozinets et al. 2016). Recent NSM research similarly reveals digital connectivity facilitating movement organization, democratizing participation structures, and expanding tactical repertoires (e.g., Earl and Kimport 2011; Parigi and Gong 2014; Castells 2015). Yet these works do not discuss implications to movement creativity. More specifically to our research aims, they do not explicate how a consumer movement mobilizing through collective creativity can potentially find success in changing a market context.

In sum, previous research claims consumer movements are resolute efforts to reimagine elements of consumer culture. Creativity is included in their tactical repertoires, yet rarely is it a primary focus of research. Furthermore, while digital technologies empower consumer movements and facilitate the emergence of collective creativity, theorization in this intersecting area has been scarce. Thus, this study shifts focus to illuminate how collective creativity organizes and expresses collective identity, precipitates a movement, and induces market change. In service of these research interests, we employ an assemblage theoretical analytical framework.

## AN ASSEMBLAGE THEORETICAL VIEW OF CREATIVITY

Assemblage theories originate from Deleuze's philosophical work (e.g., Deleuze and Guattari 1987; DeLanda 2006). An assemblage is a composite of heterogeneous bodies that themselves are also assemblages, analogous to how we can reconceive human bodies as bacterial ecosystems (Canniford and Bajde 2016). Assemblages cohere from heterogeneous entities, such as physical objects, events, signs, ideas, and utterances. As a material construct, every assemblage belongs to a certain context; it is a territorial entity (DeLanda 2006). Assemblage theory is post-structuralist, which means that it does not traffic in the depth ontology of levels of analysis and hierarchies. Assemblages may constitute levels, but levels are an artifact of the assemblage itself (Canniford and Bajde 2016; DeLanda 2006).

Assemblage components have *capacities to interact*, that is, to affect the other components within the assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). These capacities are not inherent: “capacities are not given—they may go unexercised if no entity suitable for interaction is around” (DeLanda 2006, 10). For example, weather capacities conjuring flat waves or dangerous storms may thwart the surfer's skillful maneuvering via the surfboard's material capacities (Canniford and Shankar 2013). Such fluctuating interactivity makes assemblages inherently unstable, but not *equally* unstable. *Territorialization* processes stabilize assemblages by making them internally more homogeneous (in terms of population, constituting material components, expressions, or practices), solidifying their identities and clarifying assemblages' boundaries (DeLanda 2006). Conversely, *detrterritorialization* processes denote the opposite: assemblage boundaries become murky, internal heterogeneity increases, and identities become less clear. In consumer research, Martin and colleagues' (2006) re-inquiry of the Harley Davidson community exposed detrterritorialization. A community that was once ideologically cohesive, marginal, Caucasian, and male (Schouten and McAlexander 1995) became heterogeneous in terms of gender, ethnicity, practices, and social status—

changes that effaced the boundaries around the original outlaw community.

Creativity is defined as the production of novel and useful ideas to solve a problem (Amabile 1996; Csikszentmihalyi 2014; Jeanes 2006), or in consumption contexts, producing consumption outcomes that are qualitatively novel (Burroughs and Mick 2004; Dahl and Moreau 2007). In the assemblage view, creativity always begins with deterritorialization and the liberation of thought and action from convention. Creativity stems from a contextually produced, emotional impulse. As Deleuze (1995) writes: “A creator who isn’t grabbed around the throat by a set of impossibilities is no creator. A creator is someone who creates their own impossibilities, and thereby creates possibilities... without a set of impossibilities, you won’t have the line of flight, the exit that is creation” (133). In plainer terms, assemblage in their current configuration can become over-territorialized, which human agents experience as a sense of constraint and frustrating impossibility. This view is consistent with research that links creative impulses to frustration over persistent practice failures (e.g., Amabile 1996; Csikszentmihalyi 2014; Glăveanu 2014; Giuffre 2009; Illouz 2009). Creators then try to escape constraint—the problem requiring a creative solution. They challenge current assemblage configurations through deterritorializing processes enlisting objects, events, signs, ideas, and utterances to produce new spaces of thought and action. This is Deleuze’s notion of a “line of flight.”

Creativity is rarely a one-off act, and infusing a creation into a social context often requires iteration and reproduction. Here, Boden (1994) demarcates between *transformative* and *exploratory creativity*. Transformative creativity deterritorializes the established order. Exploratory creativity territorializes transformative creation by reproducing and spreading it. In other words, any new component can deterritorialize any assemblage it enters (at least initially), it must itself become territorialized in the assemblage in order to enact lasting changes. For example, Braque and Picasso’s introduction of cubism constituted a creative transformation of the art world. The exploratory creativity of artists like Vorobief, Laurencin, Léger, and Gris later refined and popularized cubism’s expressive conventions (Apollinaire 2004).

Immersion often leads to playful experimentation, integration of ideas, and serendipitous discoveries of new exploratory expressions (Dahl and Moreau 2007; Seregina and Weijo 2017). For a novel component to establish itself within an assemblage it must a) entice human actors to mobilize resources to codify it and order practices around it; b) survive contestation by affected parties; and c) lead to new subjectivities, identity positions, and projects that promote habituation (e.g., Lévy 1998; DeLanda 2006; Giuffre 2009). In consumer research, Martin and Schouten’s (2014) study of Minimoto showed how consumers’ collective, iterative, and playful exploration of emergent ideas and creative directions ultimately resulted in the emergence of a new market.

To sum up, an assemblage view of creativity posits that the over-territorialization of an assemblage’s material and/or symbolic relations produces a sense of constraint on action. Sense of constraint turns into emotional capacities to reshape assemblage relations. We suggest that the distinction between transformative and explorative creativity may map to the NSM context. A movement’s initial mobilization entails transformative thinking in articulating the *raison d’être*, which is then creatively explored through repeat public performances that produce a collective identity (e.g., Jasper 2008; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). Amironesei and Bialecki (2017) write that NSMs are exemplars of assemblage processes, as their success in enacting change hinges on the reconfiguration of relations between ideas, spaces, organizations, institutions, the media, and market actors. Set in the RD context, our hypothesis is somewhat different in that we place collective creativity as antecedent to and organizing of a movement. Thus, our research question: *How do consumer movements mobilized through collective creativity change marketplaces?*

## METHOD

Employing ethnographic inquiry allowed us to immerse ourselves in the RD context and build an understanding through experience (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). The first author began collecting data at the inaugural event in May 2011. The second author joined the project in 2012, and the third author joined in late

2013. We attended 14 RD events in Helsinki between 2011 and 2014. During two events, larger research teams of graduate students accompanied us. The first author is Finnish, which facilitated fieldwork and aided in contextual understanding. The American co-authors provided “fresh eyes” to the Finnish socio-cultural context.

We engaged in participant observation as event patrons and recruited other patrons and RD restaurateurs for ethnographic interviews. To deepen our understanding of the scope of the event and various motivations for participation, we sought out informants from a wide variety of backgrounds (age, gender, ethnicity, level of ambition, location, and offerings). Altogether we interacted with hundreds of patrons, casual observers, restaurant creators and all RD founding members. Pseudonyms were supplied for all informants except the RD founders, who choose to act as identifiable public representatives of the event. We recorded our observations through field notes, photographs, and videography. Most interviews were conducted in Finnish and translated.

Evolution of the research project towards collective creativity indicated a need to interview additional informants including police officers, city and ministry officials, professional restaurateurs, journalists, local politicians and activists. We continuously revised interview guides as explanatory themes emerged from the data. Informants identified noteworthy restaurants, allowing us to get a sense of both typical offerings as well as popular outliers. We probed issues relating to RD’s legitimacy, evolution, and respondent perceptions to develop a sense on how the movement was able to coordinate and inspire collective creative action.

Netnography allowed us to observe different stakeholders’ reactions in the blogosphere (Kozinets 2010) where food bloggers quickly embraced RD, providing interesting vantage points. We analyzed two popular food blogs with dedicated coverage of RD as well as RD’s official social media presence. News clips from a variety of sources: online news, radio, and television, were transcribed for analysis. All data sources are summarized in Table 1.

<< == INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE == >>

Our analysis followed a hermeneutic approach by iterating our interpretation process to develop a sense of the whole and dimensions of data variability (Arnold and Fischer 1994). We constantly reviewed the literature, developed emerging analytical categories and eventually adopted assemblage theory for final analysis. Our growing understanding of RD as a creative movement demanded deeper analysis of themes through efforts such as seeking boundary conditions, gathering more data, and developing alternative perspectives (Miles and Huberman 1994). We engaged in back-and-forth readings of the data and comparing readings between authors to ensure analytical rigor. Transitioning between units of analysis, we uncovered patterns within and between informants and data subsets (Spiggle 1994). From secondary literature, the next section elaborates certain contextual contingencies between the Nordic model of governance and Finnish food culture that we argue from our primary research contributed to RD’s mobilization as a consumer movement.

## **CONTEXT: NORDIC MARKET GOVERNANCE AND FINNISH FOOD CULTURE**

### **The Nordic Model and Consumer Culture**

The Nordic model of governance foregrounds core principles of strong worker rights, income redistribution, social safety nets, and the state as a buffer against unfettered free market dynamics, while embracing markets and entrepreneurship as engines for economic growth (Giddens 1998; Østergaard et al. 2014). Extensively regulated markets guided by government bodies exhibiting low levels of corruption also characterize the model (Byrkjeflot 2001). Nordic state apparatuses lean heavily on a cultural heritage of consensus politics and political pragmatism found in Lutheran Protestantism, rural pietism, high societal trust, an ethos of egalitarianism and conformity, and a trenchant dedication to the Enlightenment project and modernist principles of progress (Byrkjeflot 2001; Giddens 1998; Østergaard et al. 2014).

These themes combine with a heritage of pietist communalism that reverberates strongly in Nordic consumer culture. The pietist project of ‘enlightening the peasants’ results in an embrace of ‘commonness’ where social classes from top to bottom identify with and portray themselves as being ‘the middle’ (Byrkjeflot 2001). Evidence of this institutional heritage manifests in diverse forms. Negative sanctioning of over conspicuous consumption induces conformity in dress, home décor, and leisure choices (Linnet 2011; Østergaard et al. 2014). Save for Denmark, all Nordic countries have state monopolies on strong alcohol sales (Peltonen 2013; Kjeldgaard et al. 2017). High minimum wages constrain McDonaldization of food and retail consumption while also limiting small-time operators. North Americans would find Nordic weekend shop closing hours quaint. Nonetheless, Nordic consumer culture is increasingly glocal: strongly defined by global—especially North American—influences while still retaining Nordic-specific consumption practices (Kjeldgaard and Östberg 2007). However, as Giddens (1998) writes, globalization challenges the Nordic model’s sustainability, and the collective solidarity on which it is built. Food culture is one such contested arena.

## **Finnish Food Culture**

Food anchors rituals and customs across different socio-cultural groups, especially in family life (Warde 1997; Wilk 1999). Food cultures persistently maintain local patterns even against an onslaught of global influences (Askegaard and Madsen 1998; Kjeldgaard and Östberg 2007). Yet global and local food culture need not be at odds: a growing appreciation for food can benefit both simultaneously (Askegaard and Madsen 1998). Finland is no exception. The harsh agricultural and 19<sup>th</sup> century political environment made traditions of family security, frugality, waste reduction, and an emphasis on nutrition over taste central to Finnish food culture (Heikkinen and Maula 1996). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Finland achieved independence after a brutal civil war and was the last Nordic country to develop a consumer economy. Rapid industrialization between the 1950s and 1970s raised living standards and transformed food supply from constrained to abundant (Prättälä and Roos 1999). At

the same time, retail consolidation leads to homogeneous market offerings. Finland’s few big cities embraced international cuisines, dining out, and wine connoisseurship only in the 1980s (Peltonen 2013; Prättälä and Roos 1999). Increasing wealth allowed many Finns to travel abroad and experience new taste cultures. When Finland joined the European Union in 1995, food supplies diversified.

Legislation and state institutions strongly territorialize assemblages by codifying and disciplining human action (DeLanda 2006). In accordance with the Nordic model, Finland has long employed proactive health management programs with strict food codes and national dietary standards (Kjaernes 2003). Food policy reforms led to significant health gains across all social classes between the 1970s and 1990s (Prättälä 2003). The Finnish temperance movement contributed to the most restrictive alcohol policies in the EU, and a state monopoly on strong alcohol sales (Peltonen 2013). This statist governance of food de-emphasizes the social and cultural aspects of food through an overt emphasis on optimal nutrition (Kjaernes 2003). Legislation also limits small, especially ethnic, restaurateurs’ market entries (ibid.). Tensions between statist governance and food market diversity rise when global influences challenge consumers’ preconceptions (Askegaard and Madsen 1998; Kjeldgaard and Östberg 2007).

Finnish consumers with a growing culinary curiosity thus face a highly territorialized and constrained market assemblage: strong state regulations limit and homogenize market offerings, while consensus politics slow down legislative changes and promote civil obedience. Complaints over a nanny state approach to food in Finland persist despite steps towards deregulation. These tensions intertwine directly with Restaurant Day’s emergence. We now transition to findings from our primary research and begin by accounting for the movement’s initial mobilization.



## MOVEMENT MOBILIZATION AND THE SPARK OF COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY

### Over-Territorialized Market Assemblage Constrains Consumption

NSM theory predicts movement mobilization stemming from a shared moral outrage among similarly aggrieved consumers (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly 2005). Among RD's founders, we found multiple expressions of frustration stemming from experiences of stifling statist control of food and urban culture. RD founder Timo expressed his discouragement with the rigid status quo: "It's easy for the bureaucrats to say: 'I'm just following the code and legislation' and 'it's up to the politicians to change it'... The politicians in turn say: 'Hey, this is a common cause and it's hard to change this and we need to compromise yada yada.' In a way, this is the worst feature of bureaucratic democracy. Everything is so hard to change but nobody seems to be responsible for anything."

Timo decries the constraining statist assemblage that creates blind spots for market opportunities. We suggested above that this constraint is an assemblage consequence of Nordic consensus politics and territorialized state institutions with distributed power structures (Byrkjeflot 2001). Arto, a journalist covering RD for Finland's biggest daily newspaper, emphasizes the pressure and frustration stemming from the disconnect between contemporary lifestyles and bureaucratic control: "The cultural atmosphere in Finland has become incredibly liberalized or more European in the last 15 years. But among the bureaucrats you have these monsters of the past who think that you should ban as many things as possible.... Bureaucrats believe that if a child sees a grownup drinking a glass of champagne, next thing you know he will be lying in the gutter or wrestling with the police.... There's been a lot of pent-up, like in a pressure cooker, this pent-up need to do something and I think for many the atmosphere has felt repressive especially relating to this rule-abiding mentality."

Arto evokes "monsters," themes of oppressive religiously based norms, and habituated practices of statist intervention in family life. He cites growing "pressure cooker" tensions from urban consumers' hedonic desires

conflicting with a "rule-abiding mentality," again typical of Nordic statist regulation (Østergaard et al. 2014). Pekka, an urban activist with ties to RD founders, also identified the rationalized, order-centered polity, reproductive of homogeneity as the source of frustration: "The bureaucrats, they'd rather see more Fransmanns or Rossos or Chico's' [Finnish family restaurant chains], because they'll apply for licenses properly and don't cause trouble." For RD founding member Antti, the constraining assemblage became personal when he tried to open a regular restaurant. Health inspectors demanded that the restaurant space include four sinks in the kitchen and three patron bathrooms. This prompted Antti to scrap his plans altogether. Olli, Timo, and Kirsti cite this story as an oft-retold example that initially disheartened and later galvanized RD founders. Timo describes the frustration relating to Antti's story: "It just feels so asinine; this can't be the regulator's intent, can it? That episode really stayed with Antti for a long time." These narratives of oppressive, faceless bureaucrats echo Touraine's (1977) framing of the conflicting desires between tepid technocrats and consumers.

Our data suggest cosmopolitan experiences made the over-territorialization of the market assemblage apparent and shaped perceptions of lack in Finland (Askegaard and Madsen 1998; Kjeldgaard et al. 2017). Timo recounts his frequent travels to cities like Berlin and Copenhagen as leaving him ruminating on Helsinki's shortcomings: "I mean, we [founders] all had experiences from abroad... We thought that the things happening there could never happen in Finland." Another founder, Jyrki, recalled often wondering, "why nothing ever happens in Helsinki." These stories illustrate the productive comingling of personal histories and the cultural context in producing moral outrage that can spark movement mobilization (Jasper 2008). Frustrations that Finland could "never" enjoy a cultural atmosphere similar to other European countries also speak to the sense of constraint preceding creative impulses (Deleuze 1995).

Frustration from the restricted market assemblage eventually made the creative problem evident for RD's founding activists. Next, we recount the first RD's emergence as an initial, transformative act of creativity (Boden 1994) that sought to reshape the assemblage and

its over-territorialized relations.

## **Initial Articulation of Transformative Project**

The founding members' grievances eventually coalesced around a sense of potential for collective action where collective creativity would become central. Olli recalled the origins of their transformative endeavor:

In one online discussion Antti kind of threw it out there that wouldn't it be cool to have something like this.... Then he reached out to me and since I had been organizing stuff like this before, he wanted my opinion. I immediately set up a private Facebook group and invited people I knew would be potentially interested. We gathered a group of a few dozen people to help bouncing around ideas. It took a life of its own and different ideas emerged from civil disobedience to God knows what. But from the start, we emphasized a positive approach.... rather than aggressively trying to oppose something... I just saw a lot of potential there.... I'm supporting a society where people take initiative and become self-organized, which then starts to work around the institutional restrictions that hinder these innovative, new ways of doing.... Then we set up a page and named it Restaurant Day. We went out and spread the word. We articulated the idea. In articulating the idea, Antti and Timo had a big role there... All this was in a matter of a few days.

Getting a movement off the ground often entails ad hoc mobilization of various resources, such as complimentary ideas, skills, and materials (McAdams et al. 2001). Antti's frustration turned into speculative reimagining of assemblages and their capacities, which prompted seeking validation from Olli and recruiting his capacities for organization. Olli's Facebook initiative attracted more participants, fostering collective buy-in, and helping further develop Antti's initial impulse. We also see an emerging and evolving emotional end for movement participation through inclusive collective creativity: Antti's vague "cool something" became, through collaborative iteration, a "positive" and "self-organized initiative" that Olli saw "a lot of potential in." Olli

underscores the group's target was "institutional restrictions," yet their "positive" approach rather than "aggressively opposing something" also resonates with Nordic traditions of consensus politics and appreciation of social order (Byrkjeflot 2001). Olli describes a "gripping" sense of potential and desirous imagining of possibilities in response to felt constraint and repression (Deleuze 1995). Timo further recounted:

The idea was, what if you had this happening, where people didn't have to worry about all that bureaucracy and codes and rules that comes with opening a restaurant... The three of us [Olli, Antti, and Timo] then got together and worked it out, like how could this really happen in practice. Before it was just this big 'what if?' But after that it turned into this idea of a day when anybody could open up a restaurant... like a food carnival when anybody could open a restaurant or café or bar. So, we kind of gave the idea the prerequisites for operation.... Restaurant Day is a festival just because it is in a way a day of the false king. It is changing things upside down for a day and gives a positive example of how things could be at their best.

Timo's account illustrates how the vague yet exciting idea became more spatio-temporally structured and a viable expression with specific emotional ends. Timo explicitly evokes carnivalesque ideals of temporarily inverted order (Bakhtin 1984), rooted in a shared cultural template, the "day of the false king." The emphasis on positivity combined with the explicit targeting of public spaces aligns with Castells's (2015) two notions of a movement "transitioning from outrage to hope" and creating "spaces of autonomy" through symbolically meaningful occupation of physical space. RD thus emerged from a recognizable NSM impulse: challenging the status quo by expressing "what could be" (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly 2005). RD's mobilization took many turns in translating initial intent into a collective identity and strategic vision with sufficient, as Timo put it, "prerequisites for operation."

The first RD in May 2011 featured roughly 40 restaurants offering, for example, sandwiches and gin and tonics served from mobile restaurants carts, wine with companion cheese tastings, and sizzling meat from barbeque stations. Olli and Timo recalled that occupying public spaces, such as parks and waterfront areas, underscored their contentious message as it behaviorally destabilizes the taken for granted understandings of appropriate purposes of such spaces (Castells 2015), but also ensured pedestrian access and visibility. After the successful first event, the founders' decided to pursue an encore. RD's call for inventive and celebratory urban takeover was codified into an official credo: "Restaurant Day is a worldwide food festival when anyone can set up a restaurant, café or a bar for a day. It can happen anywhere: at your home, at the office, on a street corner, in your garden or inner courtyard, at a park, or on the beach—only your imagination is the limit" (<http://www.restaurantday.org/en/info/about/>).

## COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY AT RESTAURANT DAY

Our assemblage-theoretical framework posits that novel components entering and thus deterritorializing an assemblage need themselves be territorialized to stabilize creative changes. Territorialization also leads to new deterritorialization possibilities. Following the seminal event, the movement transitioned from initial transformative creativity to exploratory creativity (Boden 1994) through repeat performativity, deepening the movement's organizational commitment to collective creativity. Figure 1 summarizes the iterative processes of deterritorialization (D) and territorialization (T) that unfold before, during, and after each event.

<=== INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ===>

### Evolving Participation Processes and Collective Identity

The establishment and codification of key participation processes and organizational principles clarified the path to enroll interested consumers. The

resulting flurry of new participants resulted in a new, more heterogeneous collective identity for RD.

*Recruitment Logic and Participation Rhythms.* Social movements must maintain their momentum and attract new supporters to remain viable beyond their initial mobilization (McAdam et al. 2001). The first RD event's success encouraged the founders to hold additional events. After much discussion, and mindful of RD's contingency, they settled on a quarterly schedule. Olli explained: "Since it's being held four times a year, three months is in the end a short time to wait for the next one. You take part in one as a consumer and then decide, 'next time I'm putting up my own'.... If you had to wait a year, you'd forget about it.... [The event] would have died. People got a taster in the spring of 2011 and in August, which was the second time, people were just so amped up for it and planned a lot of stuff; it just blew up."

Olli recounts urgency among the founders to maintain the momentum from the memorable yet fragile first RD event to push the deterritorializing energy onwards. As Olli notes, quarterly frequency ensured momentum through a rhythmic progression: first immersing participants in the event's emotive appeal as patrons, which activates emotional capacities to become restaurateurs. Territorializing the event's participatory rhythm provided predictability for aspiring restaurateurs. The three-month hiatus maintained excitement while enabling developing productive capacities through investment in cooking equipment or new cooking skills. This emic model resonates with Wenger's (1998) theoretical ideas about ideal event rhythms for communal learning. Too frequent events induce fatigue while too sporadic events kill learning momentum.

#### *Connecting Production to Collective Project.*

Enrolling the geographically scattered restaurants into RD's greater whole and helping restaurateurs signal their participation was one of the RD team's main problems. RD founders initially manually recorded restaurants and shared crude maps via social media. When participating restaurants jumped from "forty to almost two hundred" (Timo) for the second RD, hand tallying proved burdensome and mistakes threatened leaving remote

restaurants out of the network. The team turned to digital tools to mitigate these counter-territorializing capacities (Canniford and Shankar 2013). Volunteers helped revamp RD's official website ([www.restaurantday.org](http://www.restaurantday.org)) with a registration and map system for aspiring participants. This removed the bottleneck of direct contact with organizers, giving new members more organizational autonomy (Earl and Kimport 2011). Ale recalled his signup process: "[it was] this simplest possible form... Fill in a couple of fields and that's it." Volunteers eventually built a free mobile phone app that became essential for event navigation. Further democratizing participation, Olli commissioned a printable RD logo as a free resource. The logo codified collective identity and helped legitimate dispersed restaurants as parts of the movement.

*Contestation from Established Market Actors.* Social movements, especially transformative ones, face pushback from interested parties, such as public authorities, businesses, and the media, with potentially negative consequences to collective identity (Goodwin and Jasper 2015). From its inception, RD generated public discussion and media attention. Established actors preferring the market assemblage's original configuration saw RD as a deterritorializing threat to the established order and tried to forestall legitimation. Finland's state-run TV channel report on first RD emphasized its "radical," "rebellious," and "anti-authoritarian" aspects. Finnish business daily *Kauppalehti* described RD as a "web rebellion" with "pirate restaurants." Founder Jyrki recalls that "all kinds of government agencies" were pressured to intervene. Elsa, a representative at the governmental food agency Evira, described frequent emails from regular restaurateurs, calling Evira "too limp-wristed... They wanted us to put a stop to the whole thing, or at least properly enforce bureaucracy." Regular restaurants' outrage over RD surprised the founders, as Kirsti recalled: "Regular restaurants and pop-up restaurants are so incomparable. We never thought they would see us as competitors." Bureaucrats also issued public warnings of food poisoning dangers at RD. A member of Finnish parliament publicly condemned the event as "useless" and promoting tax dodging and decadence (*Helsingin Sanomat* daily, 4.10.2012). The unregulated sale of alcohol was a key

concern. Stefan, an employee at the social and health ministry's office (Valvira), recalled reactionary action following the first event: "We officials saw already at the first Restaurant Day that alcohol was being sold. It was evident in the restaurant descriptions... We were in regular contact with the police and made two joint statements... In our view, selling food like this does not excuse alcohol sales. It's circumventing the law." Jyrki recalled seeing frequent "police raids checking if people were selling alcohol" at the second event.

Contestation led to reconfigurations. Through deliberation, RD's founding team agreed not to endorse alcohol sales. Arto regretted seeing RD give up "on the rebellious spirit they had," suggesting diminished emotional capacities and a return to normal ways of thinking (Deleuze 1995). However, by removing a facile basis for negative framing, founders reasserted RD's positive framing. This facilitated the agricultural ministry's dramatic endorsement of the event live on Finland's state-run television: "Our head director decreed that he doesn't see this as civil disobedience, but rather as completely legitimate citizen activism. We even have the proper code for it in the new food legislation." (Elsa). "The proper code" refers to the revamped Finnish food code from 2006 that allows for temporary small risk operators, such as pop-up restaurants. After the directorial decree, only pop-up bars remained conclusively and unambiguously illegitimate. The founding team was surprised to learn about the revamped food code, but professed indifference: "We didn't know about it. But in the end, we thought: 'Does it really matter?' Sanctioned or not, we decided to push forward" (Timo).

The movement also faced philosophical conflict from within. The founding team created calamity with an RD "commerciality manifesto" stating: "We will not publish restaurants whose names or descriptions have political or religious statements, commercial trademarks, or other marketing fluff" (RD Facebook page, April 2012). The anti-marketing language reasserted deterritorializing intentions. The manifesto called for culling profiteering and cautioned not turning the event into a "free advertising platform." While some applauded the manifesto, other libertarian-minded reactions decried it as a betrayal of the anarchic spirit of the original event. The founders' actions

exemplify typical movement dilemmas of seeking a balance between mainstream legitimacy and ideological purity (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Jasper 2008). Arto's remark of "losing rebellious spirit" and libertarian cries of betrayal surface fears that the movement is losing its deterritorializing energy before it could affect change. Next, we show how RD reinvented itself as a populist celebration that embraced expressive heterogeneity.

*Transitioning from Niche Resistance to Populist Celebration.* As Olli recalls, participants in the first RD were mostly friends and friends of friends of the founding team. They identified with the "cool" event that resonated with their lifestyle preferences: "these urban types, like 25 to 35 years old." Yet heterogeneous participation quickly became a hallmark, facilitating recruitment and promoting inclusivity. As Pekka recounts: "It has become much more varied, which I don't think is bad at all... I think it's become more of this citizen enlightenment thing.... It's more like bourgeoisie activism. So rather than spray paint something on a wall or yell until your face is red or laying around on the Music Hall's lawn [known protest place in Helsinki] and making a mess, [RD] has this tempered charm of the bourgeoisie to achieve these same things."

Pekka suggests RD became "bourgeoisie activism" and "citizen enlightenment" with a low participation bar compared to more contentious political initiatives, a populist celebration with "tempered charm." Though this suggests a tempering of RD's rebellious spirit, it shows an alignment with the nation's consensual, pro-market ideology evoked in the manuscript's context section (Byrkjeflot 2001; Østergaard et al. 2014). Pekka's assessment of radical activism reminds us that this, too, usually takes stereotypical form, of which RD provided an exciting reinterpretation. Olli agreed that while the event started as "a protest, or an expression of frustration," it since changed, with a notable increase in participation heterogeneity: "we noticed that all the people joining and participating, they had so many different motives and that kind of became the secret ingredient." Jyrki likened the event to a "folk fest... something that us organizers can't control anymore." Indulging creativity comes with the risk of the movement spinning out of the original activists' control (Jasper 2010). Jyrki and Olli openly embrace this

and credit lack of control and growing heterogeneity as "the secret ingredient" that allows for a multitude of emotional participatory ends. Arto concurs: "I think [RD] became about this new communality that social media enables... It's like this social glue that you're huffing together... You provide a positive example through action rather than point fingers... But food was always central there, this carnival, doing together, and being hedonistic."

RD participants with multiple motivations afforded this "social glue" of communion. RD thus evolved from anarchic political rebellion into a consumer celebration of creativity through heterogeneous offerings that nonetheless yielded a cohesive collective identity around celebration of food and creative expression. Next, we analyze the multiplicity of consumer expressions and how it continued RD's deterritorialization of the Finnish food scene.

## **Exploratory Creativity and Expression Heterogeneity**

*Here Come the Explorers.* This section outlines how consumers act as explorative creators (Boden 1994) who fill the blank canvas RD laid out for them. Many RD participants activate personal interests as central emotional capacities in producing expressions, similar to the imaginative labor identified by Chronis and colleagues (2012). At RD, "people get to express themselves" (Väinö, RD restaurateur) and "show something of yourself unconditionally and open-mindedly" (Nea, RD restaurateur). A passion for cooking is a common motivation; one participant proclaimed RD "a dream come true for us foodies" that enabled participants to express repressed cooking capacities. Ale and his friend saw RD as an opportunity to profess their fondness for French cuisine: "We both went to the French school [elementary and secondary school in Helsinki], so the French theme has followed us for ages now. We've both lived in France, too.... For us it wasn't like 'let's have a restaurant at Restaurant Day' but rather 'should we serve onion soup at [RD]'... We're going for good music, good vibes, and just having fun. And maybe our reputation too, we can't just serve any kind of crap to our friends."

Ale and friend's project is detached from RD's explicitly ideological transformational goal, yet fits comfortably with the event's celebratory ethos. RD had activated emotional capacities of fun and status-seeking, as well as skill-based capacities and ambition. The restaurant invoked French culture with a boom box playing French *chansons*, tiny French flags, and inconspicuously served red wine. Some participants used RD to promote an idealized image of their cultural heritage through cuisine. By insisting Helsinki is other than a Finnish city, these projects deterritorialize. They pair global nomadism with RD's theme of enriching Finnish food culture (Bardhi, Eckhart, and Arnould 2012). For example, Manny, a native of Indonesia and three-time participant, recounts his decision to cook Palembang, his home country's signature dish: "The main reason why we are participating is because there are no Indonesian restaurants in Finland... We are also doing this because we want to share where we grew up. Because we are a big country with a lot of diverse resources... This dish is from south Sumatra called Palembang. It's quite famous... We change the food every time, because we have 17,000 islands [in Indonesia], all with different foods."

Manny entices patrons with variety, producing something new from Indonesia at each event, simultaneously resisting normalizing and routinizing capacities. Troy, from Louisiana, similarly wanted to enchant Helsinki by bringing a "Mardi Gras atmosphere for a day." His Cajun-themed restaurant surreptitiously served Hurricane cocktails and was decorated with Mardi Gras beads, an alligator head, voodoo trinkets, and New Orleans Saints football team memorabilia. Some foreigners also sought to correct ethnocentric misconceptions. One pair of Greek restaurateurs told us they wanted to show Finns that Greek cuisine is "much more than just feta salad." Native Finns also celebrated Finnish culinary traditions in their restaurants. A pair of self-proclaimed "grannies" sold savory Karelian pirogkis. A group of girl scouts raised funds for an upcoming camp by serving pea soup and pancakes. A hunting club served elk burgers while educating diners on ethical hunting practices. These nomadic participants remind us of the contemporary link between globalization, cuisine, and assertions of national identity (Wilk 1999). In a local

frame, their efforts turn into public gifts (Visconti et al. 2010) that contribute a temporary and celebratory enrichment of the Finnish food market, consistent with the movement's transformative goal. Figure 2 provides examples of restaurant expressions.

<< == INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE == >>

Matching personal production with the overall collective project is iterative and playful; it is autotelic. Material practices foster ongoing innovation from serendipitous discoveries of novel configurations (Seregina and Weijo 2017). Immersion into restaurant creation was central to RD's participation appeal. As Markku recounted:

One of us had just cooked this type of a meal for us. So, when the next [RD] rolled around, we kind of already had the idea for the food, we thought it would fit really well with [RD].... The original idea for the menu was there.... Then at some point, like a totally off-hand remark like "we could also have that, too." That small thing ended up becoming central, like around which the whole menu came around, pulled pork.... And when we chose this [waterfront] location, the archipelago bread became a natural addition, and I've baked it before, too. Then we thought what else like traditionally Finnish you could serve with it, so we added a cabbage and radish salad.

From the impulse of meal sharing, the process took them through various turns in producing the restaurant. Markku and his crew constantly recalibrated their cooking capacities and interests with serendipitously manifesting insights and elements at various stages of the process. They reconfigured and synergized capacities by making certain elements—pulled pork, archipelago bread (a pre-refrigeration era staple for Finnish fisherfolk), the location, and vegetables common in vernacular cuisine—more central to the offering, while removing others. They also repurposed convenient domestic materials, such as a dining table and lawn chairs. Markku's narrative illustrates blurring between production and consumption (Ritzer and Jurgerson 2010): producing consumable goods for others

serves as consummation. The joy of immersive crafting is palpable in Markku's presentation of his grease burns, "like a real chef would have." Markku's narrative also features all three essential emotional outcomes of fulfilling creative consumption experiences: satisfaction from project completion, a sense of autonomy, and individual task enjoyment (Dahl and Moreau 2007).

Participation varies in inventiveness and effort. Mia put up her restaurant to support the protest against the state's "heavy-handed control over people's lives." Her restaurant was consistent with the founders' transformational goal, yet it was also modest. She was selling seasonal Finnish desserts from an undecorated table in front of her apartment building. Perhaps ironically, we found that participation driven by intrinsic enjoyment and personal expressiveness led to more ambitious and inventive production than that which sought to merely champion the original transformative goal. Our findings thus affirm previous theorization that consumer-driven events thrive when participants find ways to achieve personal distinction (Schau, Muniz, and Arnould, 2009). As we show next, much exploratory RD creativity reimagines past RD expressions and relies on relational production, indicative of an evolving creative project.

#### *Relational Production and Past Expression*

*Modifications.* Manny, Troy, and the Greek restaurateurs exemplify how RD restaurateurs survey Helsinki for various absences. Budding restaurateurs also pursue opportunistic synergies between participatory capacities. As Ale recalled: "We chose a spot in Plague Park, there's like seven to eight other restaurants there near our spot, and three of them are serving dessert.... It's a central location, a lot of people on the move.... Koff's Park would have been a bit secluded, that was the other one [we considered]."

Ale notes the synergizing opportunity afforded by the presence of restaurants serving desserts that complimented their "main course" offering in the popular park. Reflection prior to and between events is thus central to the overall creative project's evolution. Founder Timo recalls that many stopped serving pulled pork after it became "something of a craze" during early RD events. Yet pulled pork's cliché status inspired Carita to reimagine

the dish:

Because [my boyfriend] is from the north, we've got plenty of reindeer in the freezer and started thinking what you could make of it. We came up with the idea for pulled reindeer and thought that it would be a great fit because [pulled pork] been done before [at RD]... I got some advice from my friend who works as a master chef at a Finnish meat company.... But even he had never done pulled reindeer, so this is really exotic.... We've been testing and getting the texture right, figuring out how to make the burger work. A hot dog bun wasn't right. A burger bun didn't work if you cut it too thin at the bottom.... I benchmarked prices to this other place that had served burgers last year [at RD].... Since he [another restaurateur] was charging eight euros for a regular burger, I felt like I can charge the same eight euros for an exotic burger like our pulled reindeer burger.

Carita fuses the convenient material affordance of frozen reindeer with an established RD expression in producing an innovative offering, exemplifying the relational production of novelty. Creating the dish invited persistent experimentation, enhancing personal capacities with professional help (Epp and Velagaleti 2014). Carita echoes Markku's story of iterative problem solving in fitting materials (meat + bread = the final dish) and expressions (recipe + price) with one-another. Benchmarking competitor prices and adjusting accordingly, Carita demonstrated her inventive productive capacities. Carita's story illustrates how deterritorialization processes often benefit from the territorialization of previous expressions (DeLanda 2006); they promote learning and increase productive confidence through social proof. Illustrating relational reflexivity but also guerrilla deterritorialization, Ale and Troy each served alcohol on the sly after the official norm-conforming alcohol policy change.

In addition to exotic origins and regional expressions (reindeer, piroggi), Helsinki neighborhood myths stir the imagination and motivate novel expressions. Patrik set up his restaurant in the previously working class but increasingly hip neighborhood of Kallio:

Kallio-ness has a long tradition. That's why we've switched to serving vegetarian food. We wanted to promote sustainability.... On the other side of the bridge [euphemism indicating different mentalities between Kallio and bourgeoisie downtown] you've always had this construction yard sociality of a working class district... I'm here with all my hair messed up, hung over, and nobody will look at you any different. It's a tolerant city district and a peaceful one too, better than its reputation.

Patrik evokes Kallio's past as inspiration for his restaurant, repurposing its working class heritage. At the same time, Kallio's emergent status as a favored district for creative classes grounds Patrik's rationale for serving hip, vegetarian fare. Similarly, Maria set up shop in the island district of Lauttasaari, just off Helsinki's city center, which features a tiny, forested summer colony, and is experiencing a demographic turnover. She described her motivation: "We moved to Lauttasaari a year ago... We're trying to liven up the place a bit, and if nobody shows up, then that's just Lauttasaari's loss!... We've joked that if nobody shows up, we'll move away for good. [laughs] We used to live in Töölö, and before that in Kallio. So, this place felt like private, maybe? This is kind of a suburb sometimes, even though it's so close [to the city]."

Maria's restaurant tries to conjure the flair of more bustling boroughs such Kallio and Töölö in sleepy Lauttasaari. Maria named her restaurant Café Regatta, appropriated from a popular waterfront café in her former home in Helsinki's Töölö district, but also resonant with Lauttasaari's multiple marinas and rich maritime history. The inclusion of local history in restaurant planning and execution is a form of public reciprocity (Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012) and a way to re-enchant mundane public space (Visconti et al. 2010). Neighborhood building constraints also provide material affordances for creativity (see Figure 3). One sandwich restaurant conducted all transactions with a basket lowered from the apartment's third floor window to patrons gathered on the street below. Many repurpose their apartment buildings' indoor courtyards and furniture for their restaurants. Iconic neighborhood locations, such as statues or parks, are

frequent locations where restaurateurs often pay thematic homage. The event's original quarterly schedule brought a seasonal flair to the event, which was reflected in the cuisine choices; warm soups and stews were plentiful in the winter and fresh or cold dishes animated spring and summer events. All our many examples show that RD activates capacities of personal importance to foster "new" concepts—new to Helsinki anyway.

<< == INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE == >>

## Let's Get a Crowd Going

Staging public collective identity performances brings visibility to a movement and allows those sympathetic to the cause to show support, as with people attending marches or rallies (e.g., Kates and Belk 2001; Tilly 2005). Many show up at RD in explicit support of the movement's original transformational goals. Yet unlike typical NSM events, participants at RD do not rally at a fixed point, or at a set time (Jasper 2008). RD's crowd mobilization is organic and emergent, as Olli describes: "You go to the event to support a friend; they pull you in there. And you're aware of the event, there's something else going on there as well, like you're going with the flow.... If it were just one person shouting somewhere on Facebook, you wouldn't really care. But when you know about all those restaurants, they pull you in."

As Olli tells it, restaurateurs invite friends or family members to dine. Through emotional ties, each patron becoming an expressive node in the assemblage. Proximity to other restaurants entices patronage; a wandering crowd is born. Wandering around RD displays an emotionality reminiscent of *flaneuring*—strolling the city and seeking serendipitous consumption (Benjamin 2006). RD provides "anticipation of not knowing what one might get" (Osmo), and pleasure in "just strolling around the city and being surprised" (Eetu). Wandering around RD can take an entire day. Mikaela "won't eat anywhere else the whole day, just [RD] restaurants." Sharing portions allows for prolonged exploration: "You don't have to just choose three good places. Let's make it six or more and share the food" (Mirka).



While patron roaming typifies flaneuring, RD's overall atmosphere is antithetical to the flaneur's blasé attitude towards fellow citizens (Benjamin 2006). Instead, RD fosters a communal affect starkly atypical of Finnish culture. A comment on RD's Facebook page likened the atmosphere to Southern Europe: "People were on the streets and in the parks... nice and easy-going chatting and instant interaction regardless of not knowing anyone personally!" Exotic restaurants provide opportunities for reliving cosmopolitan travel and countering mundane Finnish food culture. Manny recounts a memorable patron interaction: "There is a lot of Finnish people who have traveled to Indonesia nowadays, especially Bali... We actually had like 15 customers, Finnish customers, that ordered food in Indonesian." These examples align with RD's transformative goal of infusing Finnish food consumption with cosmopolitan flair. Through all day eating, organic occupation of space, impromptu sharing, and unexpected juxtapositions of cuisines, ephemeral crowds deterritorialize the dining experience and city space, producing novelty, freedom, and surprise into a commonly produced, if contingent, territory.

### Activating the Appreciators

Crowd members territorialize RD production via acts of appreciation that promote repeat performances and raise productive ambitions (Kozinets et al. 2008; Visconti et al. 2010). Crowds also connect production into taste-based networks.

*Sorting, Curating, and Critiquing.* When wandering around and sampling RD's delights, diners share meal pictures on digital platforms like Facebook and Instagram, urging patronage of featured restaurants. Tags, comments, or GPS coordinates often accompany these posts and pictures, facilitating the navigation of similarly inclined diners. Such organic social media activities supplant the need for formal sorting processes for creative output (Benkler and Nissenbaum 2006; Kozinets et al. 2008). They also improve restaurant capacities. We witnessed social media fame elevating restaurants to "the talk of the town" status that led to patron rushes.

Social media influence restaurant production and

promote continuity. Otto's crew originally created a Facebook page for their restaurant to advertise to "friends and friends of friends," but the restaurant's surging online popularity meant "ninety percent [of patrons] found us through Facebook" at later events. Restaurateurs reuse identifying components from previous RD restaurants, such as names, aesthetics, locations, and social media profiles. Some keep their social media followers engaged between events, like Ale and his friend who created anticipation by "posting pictures of our test batches" on Facebook.

More engaged crowd members become gatekeepers in collective creativity and elevate charismatic restaurants while calling out transgressions, reducing the need for formal gatekeeping of collective production (Benkler and Nissenbaum 2006). For example, RD's surge has attracted food and lifestyle bloggers. Bloggers guide future creative impulses by highlighting restaurants deemed in line with RD's celebratory ethos and they call out transgressions. Our analysis of two popular Finnish food blogs found nuanced restaurant evaluations:

What really caught my eye in a bad way were some of the too (?) professional looking food kiosks, particularly some ethnic restaurants.... You saw retail donuts and Berliners being served straight from retail bags, with a significant markup. I really do hope that most Restaurant Day diners appreciate more the food and pastries that have been made by the pop-up restaurateurs themselves. (The Untrendy Food Blog, May 2013)

First through Esplanad – blah blah blah. Then Plague Park, still blah. But we did make a stop at Delicious Thai Springrolls' hut, because a three-euro curry portion sounded so out of place. A magnificent portion of Mussaman curry with rice, though a little light on salt, was THREE EUROS, while their neighbors were selling sausage and pea soups [traditional Finnish foods] for five euros a pop. Great price quality, this is what [RD] is supposed to be.... But just to throw this out there for future restaurateurs: how about half the portion for half the price? (Hanna's Soup Blog, February 2014)

The first food blogger calls out profiteering and unimaginative restaurants selling wholesale Berliners as uninventive, lazy, and transgressing on the event's DIY, anti-profiteering ethos. The other blogger expresses disdain for the mainstreamed Plague Park and Esplanad RD areas, promoting instead innovative value propositions in out-of-the-way locales. Food bloggers post pictures of what they deem authentic expressions of different food cultures and event ideals. Evaluative curating promotes certain taste expressions over others (Schau et al. 2009; Arsel and Bean 2013). This territorializes them as favorable benchmarks for aspiring restaurateurs. While this can lead to uninspired mimicry, it also inspires novelty through reconfiguration. Carita's reinvention of the cliché pulled pork as pulled reindeer exemplifies this renewal.

Knowledge sharing helps aspiring restaurateurs recognize dormant capacities in existing materials and facilitates participation. Following the second RD event, Kirsti became the event's PR officer, recruiting volunteers and promoting RD on social media. The team's curatorial efforts included highlighting restaurants that exemplify "the spirit of Restaurant Day" (Kirsti). They amplify crowd messages by re-sharing blog posts, pictures, and comments on RD's popular social media profiles, sharing best practice DIY solutions, all the while lowering the bar for participation. For example, one such post on RD's Facebook page encouraged the use of checklists, creating separate offerings for friends and strangers, and turning domestic materials into attractive affordances. These territorializing processes invited aspiring restaurateurs to perceive openings for their own production, and seek new points of divergence.

*Tasteworlds.* Consumption collectives can foster tasteworlds (Kozinets 1999), that is, subgroups with differing taste orientations that nonetheless champion the collective at large. Diners often seek out restaurants that cater to personal interests. Kalle "check[s] out the map for what interests me" to economize participation and match food selection with taste preferences. In addition to social media platforms, the RD mobile app is indispensable for finding restaurants, saving favorites, and plotting walking routes. The combined effect of social media curation and the organic congregation of crowds and restaurants at

different public spaces has led to identifiable and territorialized taste constellations that further enhance the restaurateurs and diners' experiences. The most popular destination, Plague Park, is located in the city center. During the May 2014 RD event the park boasted 87 restaurants and a festive atmosphere accentuated by live music. One diner gushed: "This is probably the coolest place to be in Helsinki today. There are a great number of restaurants and participants." Despite the crowds, the park is festive and restaurateurs organize themselves spatially in a cordial first come, first served manner. This well-known reoccurring event location reduces the need for patrons to plan RD adventures: just show up and dine.

The park also attracts the most ambitious and skilled restaurateurs, signaling shared emotionality among tasteworld restaurateurs. As Osmo notes: "you have more of these top talents participating and whipping all kinds of really skillful dishes." In addition to quality foods, restaurant decorations and "staff attire" are noticeably more elaborate than those found elsewhere (see Figure 3). While Plague Park is popular, the rising bar for quality also deters participation, with one participant calling the park "intimidating and too competitive." Much like the status games at Burning Man (Kozinets 2002), we see threats to collective enjoyment. Popularity also attracts opportunists who undermine the event's ethos; rising profiteering at the park irks RD purists. However, tasteworld fragmentation helps identify preferred restaurant clusters; if Plague Park's massive crowds and selection feel uninspiring, the courtyard at Helsinki's old butchery provides a new hub for exotic dishes. Tasteworlds thus mitigate "taste problems" (Jasper 2008) within movements when expressions over collective identity cause rifts between more cautious or radical factions, for example. From a collective creativity perspective, they also mitigate tensions stemming from members' different productive motivations (Hutter, et al. 2011).

## **Productive Transitions and Market Assemblage Transformations**

This section recounts RD's successes in changing the food market assemblage. Growing popularity and public

support combined with successful deflection of contention imparts longevity. RD has also fostered entrepreneurship and other projects of culinary ambition.

#### *Consumer Capacity Building and Market Role*

*Transitions.* First-time restaurateurs take a conservative approach to their initial foray, advertising primarily to families or friends and limiting servings to between twenty and forty portions. Positive experiences and feedback from creative production increase ambition and encourage future output (Füller et al. 2011). Suvi recounted that they “had such a good group going and we had a lot of good contacts and resources available for us, so we thought we’d make it a little bit bigger.” Team Rauni’s productive capacities improved through understanding “that we need to have five buckets instead of three, and that actually we might need some napkins as well.... We learned through practice.” Through repetition, learning increases productive capacities and builds vitality for the collective (Schau et al. 2009). Participation transforms RD restaurateurs, their cuisine, and the event itself. Otto provides a lengthy account of his RD engagement:

Misha, from our crew, has cooked a lot of beef. I’ve been doing ribs. Marko is big on hamburgers, and so we just started talking and thought: “That’s it!” It gave us the perfect excuse to buy proper smoker grills that you need for cooking meat well. We felt ready for [RD] since all of us had made food like that individually, and when this opportunity to play restaurateur presented itself, it was self-evident what we should do... You make food and somebody tastes it and calls it great. I mean sure you get that at home, but when it’s a stranger complimenting your restaurant, it’s really cool.... We’ve had people visit us at the first, second, and third event, so they’ve come to us every single time.... One special kind of clientele for us is people who are into grilling themselves.... They take grilling seriously... They really seem to know their stuff, sometimes even better than we do. Many had lived or been to the States, eating real ribs... They compared ours to that... The early crowds were clearly male dominant. I mean grilling is a bit of a guy thing. But later we had many women, too. I think we

lost that *grilling* impression. The word “grilling” has this negative, like, just grilling some sausages at the summer cabin. [That impression] was hard to shake off, but we were striving for *better* grilling.

Through experimentation, investment, and feedback, Otto and his Finnish crew mobilized capacities to reimagine classic American BBQ. Otto evokes a different role for the RD crowd than mere appreciative flaneurs. Grilled meat aficionados, mostly men, flocked to the popular restaurant and became co-innovators with their enlightened feedback. Absent RD, these various grilling experts with their knowledge- and skill-based capacities are nothing more than a spatially distinct set of nodes. RD creates interaction between these capacities and, fueled by Otto and crew’s desire to “play restaurateur,” produced an evolving restaurant. Subsequent improvements of productive capacities, such as investing in proper smoker grills, are a network effect of this intensive yet contingent interaction. This process of co-innovation also illustrates a taste regime influence on expression territorialization (Arsel and Bean 2013). By striving for “better grilling,” Otto’s crew matches the restaurant with RD’s artisanal, craft, and celebratory ideals, while simultaneously distancing it from a territorialized, mostly masculine habitus.

RD’s reconfiguration of consumer capacities fosters conventional entrepreneurship. After three RD appearances, Otto and crew decided to make fantasy a reality and spun off their RD “brand” into an entrepreneurial pursuit. Repeat participation, an established following, and enhanced productive capacities shaped full time restaurateurs. They kept their brand name (“B-Smokers”) and its Facebook page, with modifications indicating their transition to a regular restaurant. Long-time coffee enthusiasts Matti and his wife had a similar trajectory. Through improved capacities, Matti credited RD with giving him the confidence to pursue entrepreneurship: “When you practice at home, it’s a couple of cups per hour. But here you might get like twenty or thirty people in an hour... It’s good practice.” By an unofficial count, at least 17 restaurants, cafés, or stores have spun off from RD. RD’s social media profiles celebrates these entrepreneurs as exemplars.

Entrepreneurship and similar projects build movement permanence and give it mainstream legitimacy (Tilly and Tarrow 2015). They also counter perceptions of RD as mere temporary escapism from the prevailing order. RD also soothes anxieties relating to non-actionable entrepreneurial dreams in the Nordic context, as Nea notes: “I would like to at some point set up my own restaurant or bar, but the amount of bureaucracy is unbelievable, so that will never happen. But for one day a year, I can live out my dream.”

*Market Alliances, Co-optation, and Legacies.*

Marketplace allies with mainstream credibility helped legitimate RD and territorialize production. Helsinki’s World Design Capital program brochure in 2012 featured RD, generating international media attention. Travel agencies organized charter buses for Russian RD tourists. Perhaps opportunistically, Helsinki retailers supported RD with special promotions and offered their spaces for RD use. The event’s constant evolution also proved essential in building and maintaining favorable media attention. Paula, a reporter who covered RD for Finland’s leading newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, recounts that the event’s evolution justified her continuous coverage: “For us the challenge is always to think what interests the reader, finding a new angle to the story... It’s a fun event, but you can tell that story only so many times... In the beginning, it was more of a hipster gathering... [Our recent RD coverage] was so nice because you had this family with their restaurant, a 14-year-old girl with mom and dad... This is the type of angle and spirit [of coverage] that what we look for... Rather than always showing [the event’s] official faces, you highlight everyday people.”

Mainstream media often focus on individual movement leaders and their dramatic actions or pronouncements, which may stigmatize the movement and deter recruitment (Johnston et al. 1994; Jasper 2008). RD’s collective creativity draws the spotlight to other participants, yielding capacities that make the movement’s identity more heterogeneous, populist, and difficult for opponents to contest. Belying initial antagonism, RD has also proven valuable for regular restaurateurs. Olli opined that the event had become “an awesome laboratory for restaurant entrepreneurship. It gives existing entrepreneurs

ideas of what people really want, what people want to offer each other, what people want to eat.” RD’s collective creativity unearths taste preferences and codifies them into coherent expressions for marketer co-optation (Arsel and Bean 2013), further territorializing them and related taste regimes within the market assemblage. We also learned that regular restaurateurs have come to appreciate RD’s celebratory ethos around food quality and diversity.

RD reshapes citizen-consumers’ subjectivities by helping them perceive latent capacities in their city and the marketplace. Olli provides a telling account of the event’s legacy in reshaping of the public imagination: “One of the best things about Restaurant Day is that it has expanded both the citizens’ but also the city bureaucrats’ imagination of what is possible in this city. It has kind of increased the playing field like ‘wait a minute, you can do this thing, organize like this, or put up events like this in this city.’”

In addition, political discussions, including parliamentary sessions frequently reference RD, suggesting lasting cultural impact. RD has won support and recognition across the political spectrum in Finland ([www.restauranday.org](http://www.restauranday.org)):

Restaurant Day is something new and surprising. It is culture that citizens create for each other. It changes the public parks, corners of the streets, gazebos and living rooms into unique experiences in which cuisine and Helsinki citizens play the most central roles. (Anni Sinnemäki, Green Party Member of Parliament and Helsinki City Council in her speech awarding Restaurant Day the Cultural Event of the Year prize in 2011)

Restaurant Day is exactly the sort of project that will define our future. Restaurant Day has inspired the city’s population to question how things are run and to experiment and put forward new ideas of how daily life might be improved in the future. (Jussi Pajunen, Former Helsinki Mayor from the conservative Coalition Party)

Restaurant Day has probably affected Finnish restaurant culture more than anything else since the new alcohol legislation of 1969 when beer was

allowed to be sold in supermarkets. (Paavo Arhinmäki, Former Minister of Education and Culture from the Leftist Party, in his speech for the Finland Prize in 2011)

Pekka similarly opined that RD became a reference point in Helsinki's municipal elections where "candidates who wanted to paint themselves as more progressive used [RD] as one of their campaign themes... It has become a symbol for a new dividing line in city politics." These excerpts from across the political spectrum further show that the event's joyous atmosphere, innovativeness, alignment with the country's market and consensus ideologies, and successful mobilization of a broad spectrum of consumers has brought the movement political legitimacy.

## DISCUSSION

Our analysis of collective creativity within the RD consumer movement offers the following theoretical contributions. First, we explicate how collective creativity changes the logic of mobilization, organization, participation, and recruitment for consumer movements. Here we also extend theorization on consumer creativity overall by shedding new light on the relationship between creative freedom and creative structure. Second, we extend theorization on how consumer movements enact changes in their market contexts through legitimacy gains.

### Collective Creativity as a Mode of Consumer Movement Organization and Participation

The triggers behind RD's initial mobilization were similar to those documented among fatshionistas (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013), devout Turkish women (Sandikci and Ger 2010), and Danish beer aficionados (Kjeldgaard et al. 2017), who all experienced over-territorialized marketplace contexts by way of constrained consumer choices. Though all consumer movements, including these, are fundamentally creative in their desire for change (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; King and Pearce 2010), our study shows that mobilizing through *collective* creativity is a distinct organizational mode for

consumer movements. We underline the point that RD's movement founders chose to embrace collective creativity, and consider this a prerequisite for this type of mobilization. Research shows that negative emotions—shock, anger, disgust, and shame—are powerful in movement mobilization (McAdams et al. 2001; Tilly 2005), but can turn into feelings of powerlessness and alienation (Jasper 2008; Castells 2015). Positive emotionality, on the other hand, increases movement longevity (Ehrenreich 2007; Sandlin and Callahan 2009). RD founders deliberately turned initial frustration into a project where positive emotionality was a central element. RD's simple, open, anything-goes call for action, which appears more strategic in retrospect than it was, evoked a response that reminds us more of open innovation than NSM (e.g., von Hippel 2005; Benkler 2006; Kozinets et al. 2008).

Our analysis foregrounded co-constituting assemblage processes of deterritorializing and territorializing consumer production, which we further linked to notions of transformative and exploratory consumer creativity (Boden 1994). RD's original emergence was indeed transformative; it introduced a new practice that liberated the way Finns, and now others, thought about food culture and public space. This deterritorializing act was promptly territorialized by political labelling of RD as legitimate social expression, which prior theory would predict as reducing its transformative creativity energy (e.g., Hickey-Moody 2010). Popularity and success did indeed sap RD of some of its revolutionary zeal. Yet RD's territorialization processes also opened new deterritorialization avenues. RD was never static; its continuous evolution and reinvention between events (see Figure 1) suggest that RD became a "creative assemblage," or,

a more or less temporary mixture of heterogeneous material, affective and semiotic forces, within which particular capacities for creativity emerge, alongside the creative practices these capacities express. Within this assemblage, creativity and creative practice are less the innate attributes of individual bodies and more a function of particular encounters between human and nonhuman bodies. (Duff and Sumartojo 2017, 419)

As an important theoretical contribution, the back-and-

forth between deterritorialization and territorialization (and transformative and exploratory creativity) at RD reveals a productive comingling of creative freedom and creative structure, a relationship prior creativity research has often had trouble reconciling. Some equate creativity to freedom and liberating thought and action from the constraints of structure (Deleuze 1995; Jeanes 2006). Others argue that structure and limitations can boost creative potential by removing the proverbial “fear of the blank page” of too much creative freedom (Amabile 1996; Csikszentmihalyi 2014). RD dissolves this binary, and shows that freedom and structure can coexist in mutually beneficial fashion. In concise terms, RD is a project of liberating consumption from the structural oppression of statist bureaucracy that relies on its own set of bureaucratic structures to do so.

We emphasize that RD’s structure for creativity was primarily of the enabling kind, with only some clear restrictions on production (negation of profiteering, DIY ethos). RD’s success aligns with prior NSM theorization on digital technologies that emphasize their potential to democratize participation, facilitate opinion sharing, and synergize offline and online interaction (Earl and Kimport 2011; Parigi and Gong 2014; Castells 2015; Tilly and Tarrow 2015). The synergies between democratized participation, digital organizing, and distributed learning and tastemaking were most evident in the movement’s fragmentation into divergent tasteworlds and even into external networks, such as food and lifestyle bloggers. This type of distributed and participatory communication diffuses internal disputes over proper expressions of movement ideals, a problem that plagues many NSMs (Jasper 2008; Castells 2015).

Much of our analysis aligns with Kozinets and colleagues’ (2008) theorization of collective consumer creativity. The exploratory creativity at later RD events develops their point that collective consumer creativity quickly devolves into attempts to reconfigure what others have done rather than the ongoing production of disruptive (i.e. deterritorializing) novelty. Our analysis also illuminates how uncreative production, as exemplified by lazy mimicry of past ideas, could paradoxically spur creativity through relational production, such as Otto’s transformed BBQ or Carita’s pulled reindeer. Similar to Kozinets et al. (2008), we found that engaging in creative production

encourages repeat performances and promotes learning. Here we extend their work by showing that creative engagement encourages material investments and stimulates transitions into more ambitious productive roles that rival those of marketers (see Martin and Schouten 2014). RD’s consumer movement context, in contrast to the digitally bounded co-creation activities of Kozinets et al. (2008), creates further points of difference. In our view, the linear, problem-solving perspective they describe explains exploratory creativity, but not transformative creativity. Furthermore, their portrayal of a virtuous learning feedback loop between producing consumers and appreciating consumer audiences preserves the binary between the creative few and the receptive many. RD dissolves this dichotomy, and invites consumer audiences to become productive agents (see Visconti et al. 2010).

RD’s mode of distributed and heterogeneous participation opportunities has significant implications for how consumer movements recruit new members. Prior literature argues that consumers buy into a movement’s alternative or utopian vision, implying a belief in future empowerment (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Castells 2015; Goodwin and Jasper 2015). Extant research also emphasizes participants’ ideological purity, proper learning of collective practices, and movement leaders’ gatekeeping role in monitoring collective discipline (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Tilly 2005; Jasper 2008). Emphasis on ethos, ideological purity, abstraction, and monitoring of ideological commitment evokes familiar subcultural acculturation processes (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Schau et al. 2009). By contrast, when collective creativity is in the foreground, it implies immediate empowerment rather than a prolonged process of dues paying, social capital building, and internalizing shared beliefs, lingo, and practices. Initiation into RD participation is simple: go to your kitchen and get to work.

Our analysis complements Scaraboto and Fischer’s (2013) interpretation of consumer movements. They see institutional entrepreneurs being the primary source of inspiration for movement participation. They emphasize that consumers need to “identify—and identify with—institutional entrepreneurs who they believe are actually challenging the status quo” (1244). By contrast, each of

RD's numerous restaurateurs provide distributed inspiration to movement participation. Each becomes, as Olli put it, a magnet pulling people into the movement's sphere and inspiring participation. RD's tangible transformation of city space, large crowds, and enthusiastic consumer participation communicate the movement's success, and infuse the movement with hope (Castells 2015). RD's simple and immediate participatory logic also soothes anxieties by giving consumers control in calibrating the extent of movement participation relative to their individual identity projects (Johnston et al. 1994). This benefits movement recruitment, as a serious "activist" identity and related expectations to show "rage against the machine" can entail too great identity investments for potential members (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Sandlin and Callahan 2009). Here we concur with previous studies that investigate creativity within NSMs, who find that creativity infuses movements with energy and ludic qualities (Jasper 2008; 2010; Shepard 2012). Many RD participants are indeed less enthused by the event's vision for market change and more attracted by opportunities for taste-based self-expression and ludic celebration of different cuisines and urban culture. RD provides a platform for these various individual yet collectively compatible projects. This expands the repertoire of resources that movement members can mobilize (McAdams et al. 2001), which strengthens the movement. By enabling its members to do more, RD itself could achieve more. Here our findings also provide new understanding for the dynamics between individual and collective participation. Our findings thus depart from typical movement research, which tends to privilege the collective level at the expense of illuminating how individual participation contributes to collective action (Jasper 2008; Haenfler, Johnson, and Jones 2012).

Collective creativity further benefits member recruitment by rendering the participatory landscape more intelligible, which enables interested consumers to identify preferable participation opportunities (e.g., Benkler 2006; Füller et al. 2011). RD participants reproduced the movement's collective identity by mobilizing diverse personal experiences, desires, skills, and histories (Chronis et al. 2012). Similar to how Sherry's (1990) flea marketers used their personal retail experiences when selling their

wares, most RD participants draw on a host of familiar food service experiences in developing their offerings. Cooking and dining are useful, accessible templates that translate difference into shared expressions. We also note the gratifying and autotelic nature of RD production that drives further creativity via serendipitous discoveries (Dahl and Moreau 2007; Seregina and Weijo 2017). Here, RD's creative production also aligns with the presumption construct: each project is individually gratifying and consummate, yet productively beneficial to the overall project, (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010).

Soule's (1997) findings from the anti-Apartheid Shantytown movement supports our theorization that facile internalization and replication of movement production logics benefits member recruitment. The movement built derelict shacks on American university campuses that provided visceral and immediate communicative expressions of Apartheid's oppressive constraints. The shacks were easy to replicate, which facilitated rapid participant recruitment. Sandikci and Ger's (2010) study of Turkish veiling similarly showed a low barrier for consumers to produce versions of a contested practice variously. In contrast, participation in the fatshionista movement entailed commitment to an ideology, as well as relatively greater investments in equipment, a mobile phone equipped with cameras and online connectivity, and regular communicative activity according to emergent group norms (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013).

Research on consumer creativity focuses primarily on individuals and creativity's psychological processes (e.g., Hirschman 1980; Burroughs and Mick 2004; Dahl and Moreau 2007), which marginalizes the enabling and constraining role of social and material actors that were central to RD's collective creativity. Our assemblage framework was sensitive to these other actors in collective creativity. Unlike the online world, RD production and consumption reacted to affordances like public parks, buildings, and local landmarks, illuminating how consumer agency creatively engages with public space (Visconti et al. 2010). But the Nordic social context is also embedded in these spaces, as public safety in urban Helsinki is rarely a concern. We underline the relationality of these reconfigurations; restaurateurs, dining and appreciative crowds, and place all had active capacities in

inspiring creativity and driving menu and locational choices (Jeanes 2006; Duff and Sumartojo 2017). Overall, RD participants' creative appropriation of dormant domestic and urban affordances answers the call for more research on how "components with low or unexercised capacities might manifest in new or reconstituted assemblages" (Epp et al. 2014, 95). RD's ephemeral collectivity that was nonetheless rich in its relational productivity also contrasts with Kozinets et al.'s (2008), who proposed a necessary link between collective creativity and communality. RD's productive logic aligns more with Kozinets et al.'s (2016) view that digital technologies produce new forms of organized collectivity with "high levels of passionate consumer engagement, boundary breaching, and innovation" (p. 678) that differ from traditional consumption community characterizations (see also Arvidsson and Caliandro 2016).

### **Collective Creativity and Consumer Movement Quests for Legitimacy and Market Change**

A social movement finds success in enacting societal change primarily by building visibility and legitimacy for its cause and collective identity (Tilly 2005; Goodwin and Jasper 2015). Prior works also argue that core movement activists provide the most visible expression of its collective identity (Johnston et al. 1994; Kozinets and Handelman 2004). For consumer movements, gaining legitimacy means that the movement and its chief representatives must accrue symbolic capital related to the consumption field wherein their grievances and struggles are situated (Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Yet sensationalist media coverage and resistance from powerful adversaries often hamper movement efforts to gain legitimacy and control perceptions of collective identity (Johnston et al. 1994; Tilly 2005; Goodwin and Jasper 2015). Our findings suggest that collective creativity can help consumer movements contend with these struggles.

RD's evolution and the establishment's embrace of the event remind us that market legitimacy is indeed not static. To use Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013) typology, RD started as "resistant rebels" whose legitimacy was initially questioned by powerful market actors as the futile and

frivolous rabble rousing of a few discontented hipsters. Through growing participation heterogeneity, the movement evolved and grew into "comfortable collaborators" with the mainstream market. RD's heterogeneous production shifts focus away from the movement's founders—especially in media coverage—and onto the event's various participants. RD's new collective identity has indeed proven hard to delegitimize. What public figure wants to denigrate grannies selling Karelian piroggs or girl scouts selling pea soup to fund an outing?

Our findings address Scaraboto and Fischer's (2013) call for more research on how and why consumers with high symbolic capital mobilize their capital stocks to influence market changes. At RD, the mobilization of cultural intermediaries followed rather than led, but ultimately assembled a host of intersecting relations between various conventional market actors (Castells 2015; Amironesei and Bialeck 2017). RD virtually compelled certain intermediaries such as food bloggers and even regular restaurateurs to participate in the "cool" and ubiquitous "can't miss" event. Other market actors soon followed; travel agencies, Helsinki Design Week, local retailers, and politicians across the political spectrum all saw supporting RD as worthwhile or benefited economically from the crowds of wandering flaneurs. These intermediaries legitimized RD and induced longevity. Our findings align with Van Bommel and Spicér's (2011) findings from Slow Food, where activists similarly diversified the movement's collective identity through purposeful appropriation of concepts such as "taste," "artisanal," and "tradition." This helped unify disconnected "foodie" subgroups to perceive common interests, and gain legitimacy for increased market impact. Kjeldgaard et al. (2017) also found enthusiastic and evolving collective consumer production inducing gains in movement legitimacy and visibility, which led to market alliances and market changes in a similar Nordic context.

The Slow Food case emphasized movement heterogeneity from a semiotic standpoint (see also Carducci 2006). We emphasize that RD's heterogeneity is material, sensorial, and even visceral. RD's collective creativity brings the movement's ideas "out there" into public space (Castells 2015). By illustrating what is *not* there outside of RD events, RD expands consumers'



imaginary capacities (Epp and Velagaleti 2014), and legitimizes emerging market expressions (Martin and Schouten 2014). We also note how fast-churning material productivity allows RD to evade a demoralizing marketer takeover (Holt 2002). Here, Burning Man (Kozinets 2002) provides an apropos comparison. Though not a prototypical consumer movement, market-transformational aspirations nonetheless underlie the event. Burning Man's exclusive and spatially bounded episodes unleash creativity for reimagining alternative society. At the same time, its temporal irregularity, spatial remoteness, and economic exclusivity hinder transformative potential as ideas fail to territorialize beyond the event site.

Among regular NSMs, the LGBT movement's collective identity performances and efforts to build legitimacy bear many similarities to RD. LGBT activists long ago realized the disadvantages of asserting a monolithic collective identity, as it allows opponents to stereotype a singular, "sinful" lifestyle (Jasper, Tramantano, and McGarry 2015). Instead, LGBT activists promote the production of heterogeneous expressions to resist essentializing "queerness" as anything other than a positive resistance to the norm (Jasper et al. 2015). Heterogeneous production and creativity also permeate the LGBT movement's premiere public performance of its collective identity: The Pride march. Pride's carnivalesque spirit spurs on creativity and has a disarming, welcoming, and inclusive quality that invites "everybody be gay for a day" and offers a viewpoint to what has been kept in the proverbial closet (Kates and Belk 2001).

Despite these similarities between RD and Pride, we caution that our model may not transfer as easily to other NSM contexts. The Pride case already suggests that creativity and heterogeneous collective identities can threaten movement goals. Ludic celebration has attracted rampant commercialism, causing internal strife as some see over-commercialization dulling the fangs of the transgressive movement (Kates and Belk 2001). Other works similarly warn that a ludic or fun protest atmosphere can make it easier for affected players to paint a movement as self-indulgent and non-serious "light activism" (Ehrenreich 2007; Earl and Kimport 2011; Shepard 2012). These risks are likely more salient to regular NSMs than consumer movements. At RD, we also found credence for

Jasper's (2010) speculation that when movement insiders encourage creativity, they to also give up control. Overall, this tradeoff certainly seems worthwhile for RD. However, developments at the end of our fieldwork illustrate difficulties of movement management becomes once the creative genie has been let out of the bottle. Prior to RD's fifth anniversary in 2016, the founders tried to introduce changes. In a statement, they wrote that RD "no longer served its purpose," which we interpret as indicating that territorialization had sapped RD's deterritorializing energy. Their statement also boldly declared, "Every day is Restaurant Day now." RD's online mapping system was retooled into a hub for pop-up restaurants setting up any time, any place. Consumer response was tepid, and the quarterly schedule was reinstated prior to the May 2017 event.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study is necessarily bounded by the context of the Nordic political model of statist market regulation, Finnish food culture and local market regulations, and practices that irrigated the constraints participants experience and ensuing creations. Nevertheless, RD has leaped the bounds of this cultural context. Examination of the diffusion and adoption of RD events in various cities around the world would illuminate its global versus local manifestations (Castells 2015), and especially differences in creative production logics. Novel contexts could also shed further light especially on the dynamics of 1) key mobilization causes, for example globalization processes that expose consumers to novel ideo- or consumptionscapes that increase a sense of constraint; 2) new dynamics of contesting creative consumer movements; 3) new creative expressions and evolutionary directions; and 4) elements leading to movement permanence such as crowd dynamics, material affordances, digital media and tools, or regulatory changes.

## DATA COLLECTION STATEMENT

The first author gathered the majority of ethnographic data by attending altogether 14 Restaurant Day events in Helsinki, Finland between 2011 and 2014. The second

author joined the ethnographic fieldwork on two occasions in 2012 and 2014. The third author conducted individual fieldwork in Helsinki in 2016. The first author directed and occasionally joined marketing masters' students' qualitative interviews of different stakeholders between 2012 and 2013. The first author also collected netnographic data and followed media coverage of the event between 2011 and 2016. The first author was the primary data analyst with the second and third authors providing supporting analysis and serving as auditors. The dataset consisted of field notes, interview transcripts, photographs, downloaded online discussions, videographic materials, and various secondary materials predominantly from online sources.

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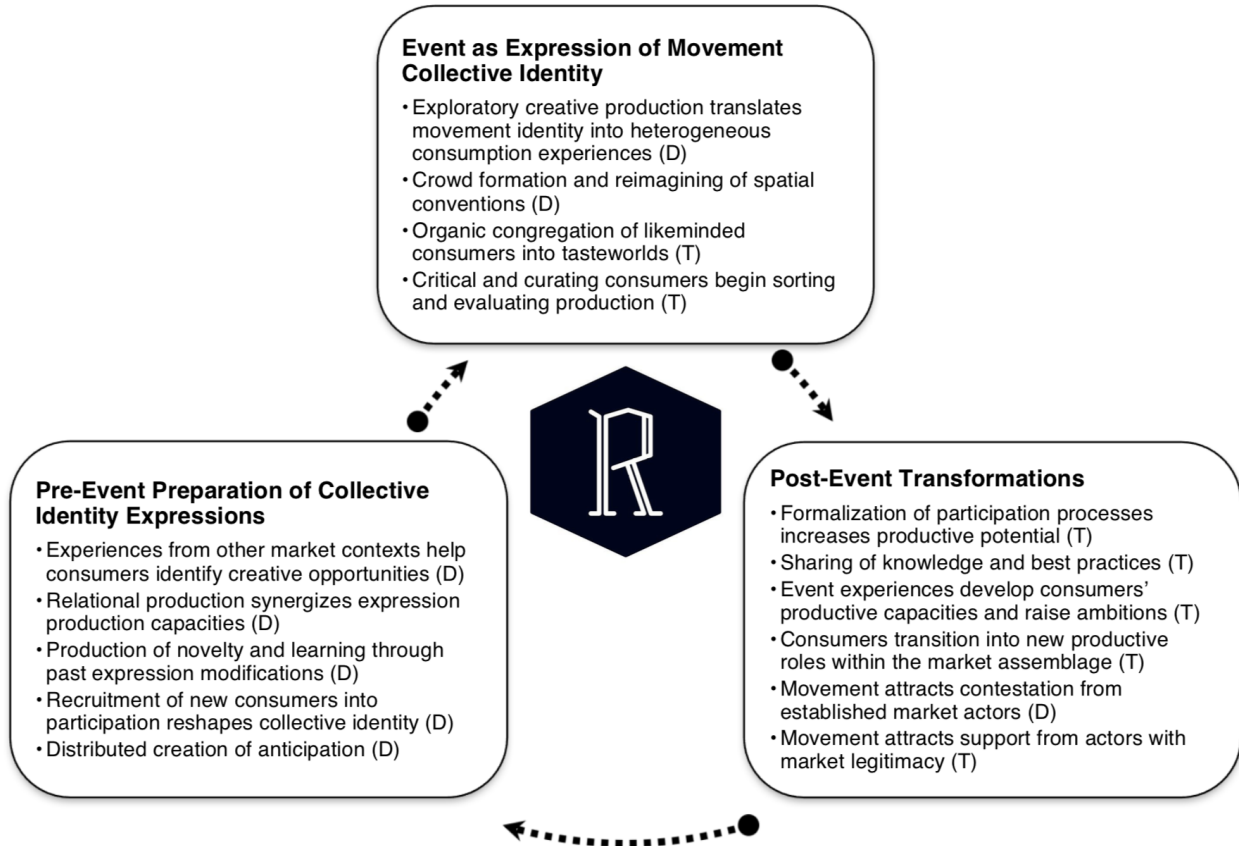
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**TABLE 1:**  
**SUMMARY OF DATA SOURCES**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Dataset</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Ethnographic fieldwork	Fieldwork at Restaurant Day events between May 2011 and May 2014	57 minutes of audio field notes	Recording and elaborating on emergent fieldwork impressions and insights
Photography	Photographs taken during fieldwork	126 photographs	Illustrating variety of event expressions and symbolic elements
Ethnographic interviews (recorded)	Interviews during fieldwork, ranging from 5 to 45 minutes	51 interviews, 118 double-spaced pages	Understanding behavior and motives of event participants
Netnography	Restaurant Day's social media presence and related discussions, food blogs with dedicated coverage of Restaurant Day (The Untrendy Food Blog and Hanna's Soup Blog)	58 entries, altogether 432 double-spaced pages	Understanding participant reactions and discussions outside of events, understanding behavior of creative curators and critics
Videography	Supporting fieldwork at November 2012 and February 2013 events	130 minutes of footage	Understanding material practices, grand tours of restaurants, heterogeneity of event expressions, participant movements, elicitation during interviews, emotions
Media coverage	Finnish and international mainstream media articles, local media articles, radio interviews (transcribed)	78 articles, 204 double-spaced pages	Understanding media framing of creation and greater audience reactions
Long interviews	Restaurant Day founders, cultural activists, politicians, government officials, police officers, and journalists, average length around one hour	14 interviews, 279 double-spaced pages	Understanding behavior and motives of various market actors behind and affected by the creation

**FIGURE 1:**  
**THE PROCESSES OF COLLECTIVE CREATIVITY AT RESTAURANT DAY**

D = Deterritorializing processes  
T = Territorializing processes  
● → = Temporal sequencing of processes





**FIGURE 2:**  
EXAMPLES OF RESTAURANT EXPRESSIONS AT RESTAURANT DAY



NOTE. — *First row:* Restaurateur dressing up for French restaurant (left); mascot for Empanada restaurant (middle); Carita’s pulled reindeer restaurant with menu and authentic Lappish boot (right). *Second row:* Troy’s Louisiana-based restaurant with alligator head (left); “Doggy Style” dog café selling gourmet dog treats (right).

**FIGURE 3:**  
EXAMPLES OF SPATIAL APPROPRIATION AT RESTAURANT DAY



NOTE. — *First row:* Manny's Indonesian restaurant in front of a friend's café (left); use of apartment building courtyard and furniture (right). *Second row:* Conducting transactions through apartment windows (left and right); *Third row:* Russian tea café with vintage dresses at Plague Park (left); guiding patrons with chalk Restaurant Day logo on pavement (right).