

Resolving Contradictions through Institutional Work: Exploring Value Cocreation in a Service Ecosystem

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Abstract

This study builds on service-dominant logic and institutional work literature to explore institutional change in a community of practice identified as a service ecosystem. A service ecosystems lens is adopted to investigate how actors address institutional contradictions through institutional work at multiple levels of observation. Based on a single case study of a community of practice of micro, small and medium enterprises focused on promoting an organic, green, and healthy lifestyle, the analysis reveals nested institutional work taking place internally to resolve member conflict within the service ecosystem. External institutional work is simultaneously performed by the collective to accomplish its common mission outside the service ecosystem. The study also reveals how social media platform features enable and constrain collaboration within a service ecosystem.

Keywords: community of practice, service ecosystem, value cocreation, institutional work, institutional contradiction

1. Introduction

A community of practice is a specific type of collective comprising actors who share a common concern or passion regarding a particular practice and may voluntarily gather to share and learn how to do them better through continual interaction (Wenger, 1999). Adopting service-dominant logic as a theoretical lens, a community of practice can also be perceived as a service ecosystem, defined as “a relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource-integrating actors connected by shared institutional arrangements and mutual value creation through service exchange” (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 10-11).

Despite their shared intentions, actors within a service ecosystem operate in and draw resources from multiple connected yet often conflicting institutional arrangements (Friedland & Alford, 1999; Koskela-

Huotari & Vargo, 2016). Hence, service ecosystems are prone to institutional contradictions: “ruptures and inconsistencies within and among institutionalized systems of meaning, forms of organization, and logics of action” (Seo & Creed, 2002, p. 240). While institutional contradictions can hamper collaborative value creation within and beyond the service ecosystem, they can also reshape and inspire actors to transform institutional arrangements (Seo & Creed, 2002), making institutional contradictions the nexus of institutional change (Sitaloppi & Wieland, 2018).

Within the paradox of embedded agency, actors can bring about institutional change through institutional work (Battilana et al., 2009), “the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215). Institutional work becomes increasingly complex when it involves multiple actors. In the case of communities of practice, individual goals have to be aligned with collective intentions (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2021; Taillard et al., 2016), and as collectives grow in membership, coordination activity will need to account for potentially more diverse views exacerbated by geographic dispersion and time differences. Furthermore, institutional work may involve balancing change within the collective as well as beyond (Gawer & Phillips, 2013).

Most studies focus on either instituting change within a collective (e.g., fashionable management practices) (Perkmann & Spicer, 2008) or outside the collective (e.g., inter-organizational negotiations to establish agreements on global labor standards) (Helfen & Sydow, 2013). However, this study follows the work of Gawer and Phillips (2013), who showcased how an organization (i.e., Intel) was involved in external work to bring about field-level change while also changing internally to adapt to said field-level shift.

However, rather than focus on a single organization, in this study, we explore the case of Organic Community of Indonesia (KOI), a community of practice comprising micro, small and medium

enterprises (MSMEs) focusing on organic, green, and healthy (OGH) market offerings. Specifically, we focus on how the community responds to internal tension and conflict driven by its rapid growth in membership while collectively striving to advocate for practices and policies that promote healthier and more environmentally sustainable living in the broader society.

Identifying this community of practice as a service ecosystem, we adopt a framework of institutional change in service ecosystems (Sitaloppi & Wieland, 2018). Based on service-dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016), this perspective supports a systemic (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2011), multi-level observational approach (Akaka et al., 2023) relevant to this context, to answer the following research questions:

- What types of institutional work are performed to support the value cocreation goals of this service ecosystem?
- What contradictions triggered the identified institutional work?
- What is the role of social media platforms in structuring collaboration within the growing service ecosystem?

In the following sections, we present our theoretical foundations before explaining our case study method and sharing findings relative to the identified research questions. We conclude with a discussion of contributions and future research.

2. Theoretical Foundations

As noted, this work builds on S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2017) and institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2009; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) to discuss institutional change in service ecosystems (Sitaloppi & Wieland, 2018). Therefore, we provide a brief overview of service ecosystems, emphasizing the need to zoom in and out to observe and analyze the phenomenon of interest. We then explain how the institutional literature, mainly institutional work, aligns with the service ecosystems perspective. Lastly, given that the community of practice we are studying has rapidly developed through social media and web-based messaging apps, we discuss different types of internet-based collectives and their particularities.

2.1. Service Ecosystem Levels

Service-dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016) is a lens for understanding socioeconomic activity built on a process-based and systemic understanding of collaborative value creation. The view is reflected in a simple narrative of collaborative value

creation, in which actors integrate resources to cocreate value for themselves and others through service-for-service exchange coordinated by endogenously generated institutions and institutional arrangements within nested and overlapping service ecosystems.

The service ecosystem perspective underlines that value is cocreated in the context of multiple interactions and through the relationships of numerous actors accessing and exchanging various resources for their benefit and the benefit of others (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2011).

Resource integration in service ecosystems can be depicted as a flat or single-level complex web of actors and their interactions, representing a many-to-many perspective. Hence, analyzing multiple levels in service ecosystems is an analytical process in which ontologically flat web interactions are observed at different degrees or levels of aggregation (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). A multi-level approach is necessary because understanding a phenomenon at one level requires observation of the same phenomenon of interest from a higher or lower level (Akaka et al., 2023; Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Micro-level interactions are embedded within higher (macro-, meso-) levels of aggregation. However, the researcher often arbitrarily determines which actors belong to a particular level. Identifying such boundaries, i.e., specifying the actors, groups, or entities within a system, will impact which actions are considered endogenous vs. exogenous to a system (Layton, 2007).

Resources in a service ecosystem are integrated in the context of other potential resources. Consequently, resources are not inherently valuable since the benefit of a specific resource depends on the availability of other resources offered by different actors. Actors require the appropriate knowledge or sense-making framework to extract the potential benefit of such resources (Koskela-Huotari & Vargo, 2016), therefore underlining the need to understand the role of institutions and institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

2.2. Institutional Change in Service Ecosystems

Institutions are “humanly devised coordinating mechanisms (e.g., rules, norms, symbols, etc.) that enable and constrain value-cocreating actions within and across service ecosystems” (Vargo et al., 2023). Institutions are generally situated within institutional arrangements (i.e., broader assemblages of interdependent institutions), providing a common framework to facilitate large-scale, many-to-many value cocreation (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

Institutions are the more enduring elements of social life that structure and organize social action (Scott, 2008). Institutions can connect different areas of

social life, including the symbolic and the material, agency and structure, as well as the distinct levels of structure (micro, meso, macro) of social systems and organizations (Giddens, 1984; Mohr & White, 2008).

Actors can change institutional arrangements through institutional work, which involves the deliberate effort of actors to create, maintain, and disrupt institutions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

Developing work at the intersection of institutions and service-dominant logic, Siltaloppi and Wieland (2018) conceptualize service ecosystems as interinstitutional systems and identify contradictions among multiple institutional arrangements as the site of institutional change.

Seo and Creed (2002) identify various drivers of institutional contradictions, including misaligned interests, inefficiency, non-adaptability, and interinstitutional incompatibilities. These factors may prompt various practices that generate institutional change. Tensions resulting from conflicting needs and interests among members need to be reconciled, and a shared understanding is necessary for collaborative value creation in a service ecosystem (Siltaloppi & Wieland, 2018). Addressing institutional contradictions involves intentional action by reflexive, goal-oriented, and capable actors navigating their agency within a given and overlapping institutional arrangement (Battilana et al., 2009). In other words, reconciliation can take place through institutional work.

Different types of institutional work are associated with maintaining, disrupting, and creating institutions (Lawrence et al., 2013; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). With regards to creating institutions, Perkmann and Spicer (2008) identify three main areas of action, namely political, cultural, and technical work. Political work attempts to generate new configurations of actors as well as establish and reconfigure rules and property rights, while cultural work is about establishing and reframing belief systems and values by linking practices with more widely anchored discourses. Lastly, technical work is associated with designing frameworks that suggest, recommend, or prescribe specific courses of action. More generally, three areas of strategic work bring about institutional change: symbolic meaning construction, resource mobilization, and the reconfiguration of actor relations to advocate institutional change (Battilana et al., 2009; Siltaloppi & Wieland, 2018).

Research connecting institutional work with market shaping efforts identifies seven types of institutional work potentially relevant for changing institutional arrangements in markets: undermining existing market leaders, framing meaning through new ideology and values, governing and guiding activities through new rules and structures, creating and diffusing knowledge

within the market system, building legitimacy to win the support of market actors, empowering and negotiating with the network, and reinforcing the network to maintain and grow the new market system (Fehrer et al., 2020). Considering markets is relevant because markets can also be depicted as service ecosystems. Market change activities involve more than just the producer-consumer dyad to include other stakeholders, both formal and informal actors (Baker et al., 2019).

Market change reflects a cocreative, iterative, and recursive process despite not all actors working in an orchestrated fashion. Baker and Nenonen (2020) propose a process of 'collective market work' that considers collaborative institutional work to shape markets. Following the collaboration of small New Zealand wineries to gain acceptance of screwcap tops on premium wine, they find that collaborators engage in different phases of market work that increasingly enable and strengthen collaborators to face increasing numbers of more prominent market actors.

Not all service ecosystems are similarly sensitive to or ready for institutional change. New, emerging, or rapidly growing service ecosystems have higher probabilities for conflict and contradictions, hence more triggers for institutional change. In contrast, long-established, firmly entrenched service ecosystems that share rules, norms, and beliefs are less prone or more resistant to attempts at institutional change.

2.3. Internet-based Collectives

Collaboration stems from the logic that achieving a desired goal or output is inefficient or impossible to accomplish individually. The internet and social media networks have expanded the opportunities for actors to work together to achieve a common goal by bridging time differences and overcoming geographic distances.

Dolata and Schrape (2016) identify two general types of internet-based social collectives: non-organized collectives (e.g., masses, swarms, crowds) and collective actors (e.g., movements and communities). Non-organized collectives are situationally structured. Rather than act as a single entity, non-organized collectives display spontaneous and more volatile forms of collective behavior that do not necessarily stem from deliberate, rational, or reflective decision-making processes. Over time, non-organized collectives may transform to become collective actors through institutionalization processes that stabilize group identity and enable the reproduction of group structures.

Meanwhile, collective actors are internet-based collectives that can initiate intentional and strategic action through consensus, negotiation, or voting. Members of such collectives are bound by shared rules, objectives, and identity; they contribute resources to the

collective and help to determine collective decisions (Dolata & Schrape, 2016).

Collective actors are also distinct from public or commercial organizations whose members have a formal working relationship guided by a legal framework (e.g., employment contracts) (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). Instead, collective actors, like online communities, share a more informal form of organization (i.e., “organized informality”).

3. Data Collection and Methodology

This study is conducted in what was originally a producer/artisan community, particularly a community of practice of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that focus on producing, distributing, and marketing organic, green, and healthy (OGH) products. Starting from in-person gatherings of five SME owners and about 15-20 other individuals, the creation of a community website, adoption of social networking and messaging apps and support of word-of-mouth as well as mainstream media has led the community to boast the membership of 80 MSMEs and more than 700 individuals by 2018.

We identify this community of practice as a partial internet-based collective because while the community facilitates the occasional in-person events, a majority of its interactions, especially among members residing outside large cities and in different islands, are primarily virtual and reliant on interactions through social media and mobile phone messaging apps. Nonetheless, the community can be identified as a collective actor that shares an identity, rules, and objectives. They comprise a group of reflective actors capable of collective decision-making.

We also identify this community of practice as a service ecosystem comprising self-contained, self-adjusting voluntary actors (individuals, MSMEs) eager to participate in essentially service-for-service exchange, guided by the shared mission of promoting the OGH lifestyle. In their attempt to learn and grow, members primarily focus on resource integration of operand (knowledge and skills, network, and access to market) and operand (raw materials, OGH products) resources between members within the collective.

This study utilizes a case study design to examine institutional work within and beyond the service ecosystem. We adopted an exploratory single qualitative case study approach because the phenomenon under investigation is complex and context-dependent (Yin, 2003). This approach is particularly suitable when the aim is to understand the “why” and “how” of a phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Various data types were collected to provide a strong foundation for theory development and data

triangulation (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 2003). Data were collected from multiple sources: personal interviews, published articles, press releases, and social media posts. Various data sources facilitated triangulation to enhance internal validity and reliability (Yin, 2003).

Table 1. Data sources and their utilization in analysis

Data Sources	Utilization
Personal interviews	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artisan/MSME ('producer') community: President, VP and Head of community cooperative, Head of Bali Chapter, Coffee producer, Owner of an organic rice brand User ('consumer') community: Moderator/Administrator of WhatsApp group and three active members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narratives on internal and external tension and conflicts provide accounts of institutional contradictions Narratives of community activities reveal various forms of institutional work to disrupt, maintain, and create institutions
Published articles, press releases, social media/website posts	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of community activity helps to establish a timeline of key events Media reporting reinforces accounts made in personal interviews
Participant observation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person: attend community's annual events (bazaar/expo), where MSMEs set up stalls to present market offerings in local malls Online: observer of two user WhatsApp groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance in event Observation of online discussion chats reveals real-time collaboration as well as conflict and resolution

The second author completed all data collection. They conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with five leaders in the artisan/MSME ('producer') community and four user ('consumer') community members. Interviews lasted about 45-90 minutes each, and the conversations were transcribed verbatim.

The second author also attended several community annual events (expo, bazaar) between 2016-2018, which enabled the researcher to observe the enthusiasm among members and the general public. By visiting these commercial events, the researcher is also able to get a first-

hand account of growth in community membership and their competencies as reflected in the number of participating bazaar and expo tenants as well as the variety of products offered to the market and quality of marketing performed (e.g., packaging, labeling, display, promotional material).

The researcher was also a participant observer in two of the community's seven WhatsApp groups (WAG) since October 2018. This participation enabled the researcher to monitor online engagement among members, including witnessing disagreements, knowledge sharing, collaborative and opportunistic behaviors, and reconciliation or policing efforts done by the moderator.

To analyze the data, the team reviewed the interview transcripts and published material regarding the community. We then created a timeline of the community's development since its founding in 2005-2018, noting critical historical events. Thematic analysis of text data through coding was conducted to identify various types of institutional work and contradictions (Saldaña, 2013).

4. Findings

We structure our findings by identifying various forms of institutional work the collective performed and underlining the institutional contradiction that prompted the proposed solution. Due to limited space, we present only a subset of our findings for illustrative purposes.

4.1. Micro-level observation, within community institutional change

The section below presents a micro-level analysis of the institutional work implemented within the KOI service ecosystem to stabilize the fast-growing community.

As a growing community, KOI members must share a clear and common identity. KOI's website underlines the community mindset: "'organic' is not a product, it is a behavior (lifestyle)." The community president also notes, "I always remind my colleagues about our vision and values ...organic, green, and healthy ...everything we do should stand on those values. It's a community movement, not an individual movement. We cannot move forward if we are not persistent enough in sustaining that principle."

This principle exemplifies the institutional work of *constructing identities*, which involves "defining the relationship between an actor and the field in which the actor operates" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 221), which strongly overlaps with cultural work (Perkmann & Spicer, 2008) and symbolic meaning construction (Battilana et al., 2009; Siltaloppi & Wieland, 2018).

The community also participates in various *defining* efforts: "the construction of rule systems that confer status or identity, define boundaries of membership or create status hierarchies within a field" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 221).

Defining practices are prompted by various types of conflict in which actors begin to question why certain members get their way more than others (i.e., why a member can manufacture a product using a particular ingredient, using a specific process, or why an artisan is selected to participate in a bazaar (e.g., trade show). Members become envious of each other and accuse community leadership of unfair play, leading to dissatisfaction and distrust towards the community. They suspect members with closer ties to the leadership team will receive privileges (e.g., the right to use certain raw materials in production) that others will not.

Defining is implemented internally through *standardization*. To address issues of fairness and ensure transparency, KOI issues a 'forbidden list' outlining the ingredients that KOI members should not include in their products. The 'forbidden list' is a specific institution that guides all community members in developing products for their business. KOI further incentivizes its members to improve product quality by offering different certifications. For example, the "White Flower Label" indicates that a product meets KOI's superior criteria for quality. A Board of Consultancy and Advisory (BOCA) was formed to set up and monitor the curation and certification process for members. They offer advice to members and ensure all ingredients meet the required standard. Yet, complaints continue to occur since some consider the certification process too easy, while others believe it is too stringent.

Part of this conflict stems from various members having different knowledge levels regarding, among others, organic, green, and healthy living, production and quality requirements, and marketing. Differing degrees of green and marketing literacy among members make it easy for some to claim unfair treatment rather than admit failure to meet specific standards. KOI, therefore, also performs *education* work internally by inviting external speakers, such as practitioners, doctors, researchers, or scientists, to share their knowledge in public forums. Their expert and outsider (non-member) status increases the believability of the information shared and helps legitimize certain practices and decisions adopted within the community.

Educational forums are held in-person and online, often using WhatsApp to share updates on the latest science and trends so that members have the needed information, particularly in formulating product ingredients to attain a required quality standards.

4.2. Meso-level observations, beyond community institutional change

We begin the meso-level analysis by identifying institutional work implemented by KOI to disrupt the status quo of institutions outside the community's service ecosystem (i.e., its external environment). As a collective, KOI members are united in their mission to promote the importance of a healthy and eco-conscious lifestyle in the broader community. However, the challenge in this effort is the general public's lack of awareness and knowledge about the downsides of GMO products, potentially harmful ingredients in household items and beauty products.

The community thus performs the institutional work of *educating* non-members on skills and knowledge to support the creation of new institutions and engaging in mobilizing resources by supplying individuals with the products and services needed to learn about and live a healthy and green lifestyle.

Education and advocacy are implemented by working as a resource for media and working with malls to host bazaars with speakers willing to speak about a green, healthy, organic lifestyle. Education is the first step in creating awareness about the lifestyle and related products to build awareness and interest. The community also supports non-profit organizations whose beneficiaries may benefit from a healthier, greener lifestyle. For example, the community sponsored the food consumed by pediatric cancer patients receiving treatment, as well as took part in knowledge sharing with those experiencing autoimmune disease and parents with autistic children.

KOI also engages in *advocacy work* by mobilizing political and regulatory support. To support organic farming, the Indonesian government discussed the potential launch of "Indonesia Go Organic"—a program with the vision of establishing the country as a leading organic food producer by 2010. However, the idea dissipated over time, and KOI's effort to support this endeavor did not come to fruition. KOI founder expressed regret that "the event we had prepared regarding this matter also failed to take place." (Komunita, 2016).

Furthermore, industry standards enforced by government bodies conflict with and do not meet the community standards that all products should be free from the "4P + 1G" elements: artificial flavors (*perasa*), preservatives (*pengawet*), artificial coloring (*pewarna*), artificial sweetener (*pemanis buatan*) and GMOs (*genetically modified organism*).

By insisting members follow production standards distinct from that of the government-enforced Home Industry Food (PIRT) certificate and the distribution license of the National Agency of Drug and Food

Control, the community is performing institutional work to disrupt institutions by *defining* what they consider organic, green, and healthy and *undermining predominant assumptions and beliefs* of what is safe and healthy

Additionally, boundary work is performed mainly through *boundary expansion*. Reflecting a deliberate effort at creating institutions, Harmony with Nature Community (KSA), a consumer community, is created and brought into the KOI ecosystem. In a media interview (Fimela, 2018), KOI founder notes, "our consumers even create new communities. They also actively participate in activities organized by KOI, starting from giving talk shows, appearances, and so on." This community was formed "because we understand that not everyone has a business, but almost everyone wants to live a healthy life... As KOI developed, we began thinking about embracing consumers because producers also have to establish good relationships with consumers, and when both are there, they can evaluate and correct each other."

The role of WhatsApp social media platform (social messaging app) is highlighted: "Initially, we built KSA through monthly online discussions, so friends can share certain [organic, green, healthy] themes in the WhatsApp group, and there is also interaction there [on the platform] for two hours. If you still want to discuss after that, please do, but that's two hours we have allocated for sharing and discussion."

Underlining these different forms of institutional work is the contradiction of differing institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). While both operate under a market logic, KOI also uses the logic of health (well-being) and eco-consciousness. Consequently, KOI will forgo large commercial sponsors whose products use ingredients on the 'forbidden list' or do not meet its certification requirements. Meanwhile, most of society (e.g., mainstream food vendors, marketers, the public) lacks awareness or care for issues and practices considered core values for KOI members.

4.3. The Role of Technology in Facilitating Collaboration

KOI utilizes several online platforms to communicate with members and the public. Since mobile phone use is more dominant than personal computers in Indonesia, phone-based apps are more popular than websites. Unsurprisingly, KOI's website appears to be sparsely updated. A recent study by the Pew Research Center (2024) reveals that WhatsApp and Facebook are prevalent in middle-income countries, including Indonesia, where 75% of adults claim to have ever used WhatsApp, followed by Facebook at 53%. Meanwhile, the usage of TikTok and Instagram by

adults is 35% and 31%, respectively. However, KOI utilizes WhatsApp for its members and Instagram to communicate with the public, likely to attract a younger audience.

KOI utilizes WhatsApp to coordinate (inform members of upcoming events) and host online educational forums. Members can request to join a WhatsApp group (WAG). The group administrator will have the right to add or remove members from the group. Once added to the WAG, members can share messages to all group members or message any group member personally.

Initially, KOI utilized WAGs to facilitate members across the Indonesian archipelago who cannot attend in-person events commonly held in large cities. Consumers, participants, and contributors can experience and cocreate value remotely through this communication platform. WAG seminars are conducted regularly by inviting experts to speak about a specific topic related to the OGH lifestyle. One event emphasizes one topic (e.g., green beauty, cancer food therapy, mom and baby health, mental health). The speaker will share the material first, followed by a question-and-answer session.

The use of WAGs has facilitated education and coordination among members. However, WhatsApp limits the number of WhatsApp group members to approximately 256 (Makeuseof, 2020). As a result, the benefits of free online platforms will hit a limit. Given this limitation, KOI managed about seven WAGs before the pandemic to handle the overflow and growing number of members. Therefore, communication efficiency only occurs up to a certain degree until a new WAG needs to be created, which can lead to new conflicts about equal access to information and members. Eventually, the WAGs facilitated different interest groups within the community.

Due to the group size limit, community members do not necessarily receive the same information and experience with the community. Since activities on the WAG are member-led, the interaction dynamics of each WAG depend on the initiative and network of their respective members. While one group can be highly active and flooded with many questions, interesting online discussions, or invited expert talks, others may be less active. Minimal WAG activity may disadvantage novice members but not necessarily become an issue for members already confident with their knowledge.

Given this setup, KOI's communication efficiency and member experience highly depend on WhatsApp's size limit and other features. For better or worse, KOI will need to continually adapt to changes implemented by WhatsApp, which should prompt KOI to consider the cost-benefit trade-offs of staying with WhatsApp's free

service or creating and funding its own custom communication tool.

5. Discussion

An initial round of data analysis reveals two types of nested institutional work for KOI—one mostly of creating institutions within the service ecosystem and one to disrupt institutions outside the service ecosystem.

Internal institutional work included cultural work by ensuring clear identity construction of what it means to be a KOI member. Internal institutional work also involved technical work, equipping members with the fundamental knowledge needed for members to execute a green and healthy lifestyle for consumer groups and production and marketing know-how for MSMEs, artisans, and producers of OGH products.

Internally, institutional change was prompted by efforts to address contradictions in which envy among members and lack of trust towards leadership and the community were driven by limited knowledge and transparency. Action was driven by efforts to solve the problem.

Meanwhile, prompted by the misalignment of institutional logic, external institutional work focused on political work by advocating for an OGH lifestyle and OGH-informed market logic. The community undermined established food processing and safety standards by establishing a separate certificate to reinforce its organic, green, and healthy standards.

Actor reconfiguration was also performed through boundary work, expanding membership criteria to include both buyer ('consumer') and seller ('producer') groups. Consequently, the community has now evolved into a marketplace where artisans, farmers, and MSMEs may source raw materials from KOI members and where fans of OGH lifestyle learn from fellow members, and users purchase curated KOI products for daily use.

The community utilized technology, primarily WhatsApp social media (messaging) platform, to support coordination and education. The WAG afforded efficiencies in communication among members, connecting members across the archipelago, separated by time and space. It ensured that all members received timely and uniform information across the board, leveled communication access to all members, returned trust and transparency, and built engagement. However, the technology benefits are no longer optimal when membership grows beyond the cap for WAGs, i.e., 256 members. After this point, new WAGs have to be created, requiring new moderators, leading to dissimilar experiences among members, thus bringing back the various sources of conflict before utilizing WAGs. Therefore, while WAGs can structure collaborative interactions among community members, helping to

address conflict up to a certain point, they can also potentially become the source of new conflict.

WhatsApp increased its group size limit to 1024 in November 2022. It also launched Communities, enabling users to bring different groups under one umbrella and administrators to make announcements to the broader community and divide them into smaller discussion groups. However, since the scope of our research did not cover this period, additional investigation is needed to revisit if and how KOI has responded to this new feature.

6. Conclusion

This study builds on a service ecosystem approach to zoom in on micro-level institutional work to support collaboration within a service ecosystem and zoom out to observe meso-level institutional work to facilitate interaction between distinct service ecosystems.

This view highlights the nestedness of institutional work, in which actors experience and resolve conflict within as they simultaneously show a united front in their efforts to perform institutional work to achieve their collective goal outside of their service ecosystem. Failure to resolve conflict within may impact the ability of the collective to face other service ecosystems. However, in the case of KOI, despite some internal conflict, the collective continued their goal-pursuit of advocacy beyond the service ecosystem. Hence, members were willing to overlook internal conflict to achieve their public-facing goals. Future research may investigate whether a threshold exists, i.e., at what point or what circumstances will cause internal strife to halt collective action.

Looking closer, KOI appears more focused and successful at its internal institutional work than its external. Much work has been done to serve community members, enforce identity, establish clear operational standards, and create governance mechanisms to support members. Meanwhile, except for partnerships with non-profits and collaboration with media and malls, KOI has not yet made significant progress in mainstreaming the OGH lifestyle or influencing policymakers to support healthier and more sustainable production. Unlike the New Zealand wineries that successfully faced large market actors and gatekeepers (Baker & Nenonen, 2020), KOI has retreated by creating a niche market within its community. By bringing in OGH fans and user groups as community members and facilitating exchanges among members, KOI has focused on expanding its membership in its service ecosystem rather than fundamentally changing its outside environment. In other words, KOI restructured the actors and institutions within its service

ecosystem rather than significantly impacting the institutional arrangements outside it.

More research should investigate whether KOI will succeed in its external institutional work with time and more members or whether other factors are necessary for that endeavor.

Furthermore, the study highlights the community's dependence on social media platforms to support collaborative activity among members; so much so that the app's specific features shape the types of interactions and service experienced by individuals and other community members. What workarounds or other means, if any, are community members adopting to counter the limiting effects of technology?

While the current study has helped reinforce the notion of institutional contradiction as the site of institutional change, the study also raises new questions about the micro-meso dynamics affecting internal and external institutional work and the role of technology as resources and institutional arrangements that enable and constrain collaborative ecosystems.

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