

ble spread into nature. Second, the topic of animal welfare appeared as a new issue, in which consumers emphasized the need for more 'ethical' production methods. And, third, there was the discussion on nutrient run-off to the Baltic Sea. Possibly due to the strengthening of both market and green justifications, the compromise between the two did not seem to appear in *MT* almost at all.

The fame justifications assessed how well organic products are known, mostly with attempts to show that the products and the label were widely recognized and established among consumers. In addition, they also referred to the popularity of organic products. Domestic justifications argued for local production and for food circles, which were stated to be the guarantee for quality food.

Again, the justifications based on the green worth were specifically judged in relation to domestic production. The regional markets of the EU as well as other international trade shifted the previous discussions about the authenticity of organic products to a new context. *MT* reported how the customs agencies found out that 10% of imported organic products had (too many) traces of chemicals in them (*MT*, 12 September 1995). *HS* (24 June 1998) reported that all domestic organic products inspected by food safety officials during 1992–1997 were 'really organic', meaning that they did not contain any pesticide residue, whereas one tenth of imports were found to have too much residue. Organic activists and environmentalists attempted to challenge this, claiming that domestic cannot be simply equated with clean or natural. Therefore, even though EU support was considered to be boosting organic farming, the national community and the forms of good connected to it prevailed as the main frame of reference for assessing organic agriculture.

Institutionalization and Divergence (2008–2012)

In this period, local food emerged as a central new topic reconfiguring many of the themes that were previously discussed in reference to organic food. The majority of these articles treat local food together with organic food, in most cases joining them together with the idiom of 'organic and local food'. The first articles to set these two explicitly against each other or to discuss their differences appeared in 2010 (*MT*, 29 January 2010; *HS*, 23 June 2010).

Organic agriculture also gained official recognition during this period. In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland set up a committee to develop a 'country brand' for Finland. In its final report the committee declared that one of the 'key tasks' for enhancing this country brand was to make half of the overall agricultural production organic by 2030. The committee characterized Finland as a country with clean, pure nature, an image that they associated with organic production. This can be seen as one instance of the institutionalized status of organic production, as it was established equal in size to conventional production in the committee's vision. This then brought in fame justifications, concerned with the public image of the country. These justifications were still, however, partly connected to market worth. Fame justifications were also based on surveys that emphasized that organic products were popular.

Green justifications appeared as frequently in *HS* as they did in the previous periods, but now they also gained space in *MT*. However, advocates of organic agriculture still relied mostly on market or market–green justifications. This rise of green

justifications is not explained by the rise in organic actors presenting their claims, but in a more general increase in their use. In *HS*, there were also numerous different green compromises, exemplifying the general rise in discussions related to the environment. The green-market compromises continued to argue that organic agriculture is beneficial in both ecological and economic terms.

Most of the market justifications for organic agriculture referred to its economic viability. There was a consensus that demand was constantly exceeding supply, in Finland and abroad, therefore creating a positive outlook for organic farmers. Again, producers who had converted to organic agriculture were quoted saying that production became viable after shifting to organic. Market worth critiques dealt with the higher prices of organic food. Organic food was said to be only for a small elite who can afford it and who use it as a way to distinguish themselves (see Rosin and Campbell, 2009, p. 41). While organic agriculture was previously marginalized as an alternative form of food for hippies, the marginal group was now transformed into an elite, either way undermining its public and general status. Both forms of critique defined organics as a particular cause and attempted to delegitimize it with this reduction of generality. However, the two examples present a shift in market worth: in the 1980s the environmentalist cause was defined as 'hippie idealism', which was not economically feasible, whereas the latter case was grounded on civic worth and equal access.

Industrial justifications again emphasized clear definitions and standards, according to which organic agriculture should be defined. A few of them also criticized organic agriculture by relying on natural scientific studies and stated that there were no significant differences between organic and conventional products or production methods.

In domestic justifications, the similarity between organic and local food was emphasized, stating that consumers were interested in them because they want to know about the origins of the food. Domestic worth then offers a guarantee against the uncertainties of (globalized) food markets, much in the same way as organic food was qualified before. Here consumers were mobilized through interests in fresh, seasonal ingredients, which were opposed to the highly processed, industrial food, also combining it with other orders of worth: 'Consumers increasingly value wholeness, traceability, ethics and ecology in food. Organic and local food fulfil these requirements' (Retailer, *MT*, 10 June 2011).

Together with the emphasis on these qualities, local and organic food challenged the distribution channels by opposing the centralization of food distribution and cutting out the intermediaries. This opposition was justified mainly with reference to market worth, stating that in local food arrangements 'everyone benefits... when the intermediaries are left out, the producer gets a better price and the consumer pays less' (Food circle organizer, *HS*, 30 November 2008). Cheaper prices were mentioned mostly in *HS*, which is understandable due to *MT*'s producer orientation. The editorial in *MT* concluded that: 'The most sustainable and safe solution is that food is produced as nearby as possible and that the price for it makes possible to produce it there also in the future' (*MT*, 5 October 2012).

However, the localness of local food was a matter of debate and it drove a wedge into the unity of 'organic and local food'. In a letter to the editor (*MT*, 29 January 2010) a CEO declared that, unlike organic food, local food was understandable to the consumer and its positive elements are self-evident for everyone: "there is no need to bang the positive elements [of local food] into the consumer's head", as he

thought was the case with organic food. Local food brings people ‘within the sphere of clean domestic food’ – giving a clear example of how domestic and clean were again thought to be the same. Another CEO of a restaurant chain stated that not that many clients preferred organic food, continuing that their restaurants started from the principle that the ingredients should be found somewhere near, that is ‘from Finland’ (*HS*, 21 October 2010). Their restaurants would promote organics but only in the case that the taste was also good, therefore bringing into the picture some inspirational justifications. Handling the uncertainty about the origins of the food operated through the national collective: ‘We prefer to say that we provide handmade Finnish food, from which the producer also gets a fair price’ (Chef, *HS*, 10 October 2011).

Among other things, these statements also show how ‘organic’ could still be criticized as being vague and not properly defined, even though organic agriculture had been officially certified for years. In a guest editorial in *MT* (6 August 2012) an advocate of organic agriculture criticized this national focus and emphasized that organic agriculture has always been an international movement.

During this period, green justifications appeared also in *MT* quite often. Even though there was still a clear focus on market worth, green justifications could gain space in its pages as a legitimate rationale. This last period also shows a clear change in the tone in *MT*. While organic agriculture was treated very sceptically in *MT* during the first period, organic agriculture received much more positive accounts in these later periods examined.

Conclusions and Discussion: Constructing Organic Agriculture as a Public Issue

Organic agriculture and food have been shown to be debated and contentious issues in the media, and these debates concerned their public relevance and justifiability. The analysis focused on how actors attempted to make connections between particular claims and the general principles of justification. While the perspective demonstrated various ways in which organic agriculture was seen as justifiable, it also highlighted tensions between different forms of justification as well as critiques of organic agriculture.

In the time periods examined here, the justification for organic agriculture remained contentious. Therefore, there was much more variation when compared to Lockie’s (2006) findings on ‘good’ organics and ‘bad’ industrial food. In numerous situations, organic was assessed against domestic, not conventional, which conditioned its possibilities. This can be taken to have wider relevance for the study of organic agriculture movements, as it suggests that the organic–conventional dichotomy can be too general in some situations in understanding the opposition or support these movements receive. In general, it emphasizes that the meaning and justifiability of organic agriculture was constructed relationally (Campbell and Liepins, 2001; Kjeldsen and Ingemann, 2009) and through different dichotomies (cf. Vanderplanken et al., 2016).

Industrial justifications focused on institutionalizing organic agriculture through the production of knowledge and providing accurate definitions. The focus on technical knowledge in public disputes, as well as a low level of civic justifications in Finnish public discussions, support previous studies on public justification (e.g.

Luhtakallio, 2012). The decline in industrial justifications shows that while certification is important to the practical coordination of organic agriculture, it does not show that clearly in media discussions (cf. Seppälä and Helenius, 2004). Justifications in media texts aim at convincing and mobilizing others or to settle disputes, in which industrial worth has not been as prominent as one could assume. Therefore, as was mentioned in the beginning of the analysis, the decline in industrial justifications should not be taken as suggesting an overall decline in industrial coordination (cf. Reynolds, 2004; Bernzen and Braun, 2014). Even though certification and standards can be used to justify organic agriculture in disputes, this was not resorted to.

Although overarching developments can be recognized in the development of organic agriculture (e.g. Guthman, 2004), many of these meanings are not completely captured by the perspectives focused on marketization and industrialization of organic agriculture. Especially the debates on the scientific credibility of organic agriculture have not been captured by previous conventions theory studies (e.g. Reynolds, 2004; Sage and Goldberger, 2012; Bernzen and Braun, 2014). Knowing the controversies in which organic agriculture is criticized by drawing on natural scientific knowledge (e.g. Trewavas, 2001), one would have assumed the share of industrial justifications to be higher in the latter periods as well.

One reason for the declining share of industrial justifications identified in this analysis could be that some of these controversies were situated more clearly in the green order of worth. In the case of GMOs – and especially in the opposition towards them – organic standards were indeed emphasized as one of the last certainties that consumers could fall back on. Some of these justifications did emphasize strict certificates, but in general they emphasized environmental protection and set to oppose techno-scientific methods. This shows a certain overlap between the orders of worth and some of the ambiguities related to the green order of worth (see Blok, 2013).

Market justifications promoted organic agriculture by referring to its capabilities to bring extra revenue to agricultural production. Although this does not suggest the practice of organic agriculture to be completely devoid of critical environmentalist ideas, it does imply that public discussions have laid emphasis very much on the economic side. And it shows that market justifications, focused on profitability, were considered to be convincing and legitimate when arguing for (and against) organic agriculture.

Market worth raises questions about the use of conventions theory. The analysis of market justifications demonstrated how they developed from being minor issues of extra revenue to one of the possible key areas of maintaining Finnish agriculture. Through this development, market justifications were firmly grounded in the common good, and were not in any way value-free (cf. Darnhofer et al., 2010, p. 72). From this perspective, Rosin and Campbell's (2009, p. 42) and Ponte's (2009) conceptualizations associating civic and green justifications with a focus on 'a greater whole' is somewhat misleading. Even though economic activity can be taken as a specifically problematic aspect of building commonality because it can be rather easily associated with private gains, the analysis shows how arguments referring to market worth were indeed connected to moral claims about the common good (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006, pp. 43–61). This was clearly the case with industrial justifications as well, as they emphasized accurate definitions and efficiency as ways of coordinating common issues that are beneficial for everyone.

Domestic justifications emphasized locality and personal connections between producers and consumers. In addition, these justifications related to the building of

trust and certainty about food and production conditions. While in some cases locality and local food were understood explicitly as national, the overall national focus was present also in other justifications. Boltanski and Thévenot's framework would make possible to interpret these as compromises with the domestic and other forms of worth. However, justifications emphasizing nationality did not really attempt to construct these kinds of compromises, and did not emphasize the principles of the domestic worth (e.g. traditions, personal relations or hierarchy) that clearly.

Instead, the differences in justifications can be interpreted as differences in scope. Although the diversity of views is of course more complex, I would argue that this nationalist framework has been both effective in countering the claims made by the organic movement and to justify it in economic terms. Whereas organic farmers argued mainly for a distinction between organic and conventional agriculture, their criticism encountered the distinction between domestic and foreign production in which the national community is the relevant context of the common good. In these instances domestic and local production were seen to embody similar qualities as organics, thus hindering the possibilities for establishing a clear difference between the two forms of agriculture and food that would have been considered meaningful enough. This setting was identified in the three periods analysed, presenting different contextualized variations of it, showing therefore both continuity and change. The findings go together with studies that have emphasized that Finns tend to favour domestic products and view them as superior to foreign ones (Kakriainen et al., 2006).

Justifications and the capacities to enrol others are constructed situationally and they differ according to the order of worth on which they depend. This study has emphasized the need to analyse organic agriculture as a contested phenomenon that justifiability needs to be analysed in these relational and contextualized settings. Examining how different forms of justification make it possible to connect claims with principles of common good gives a view into how the worth of organic agriculture is perceived.

Note

1. Domestic worth does not refer to family life or to domestic in opposition to foreign. Instead, it is based on the principle that what is worthy and beneficial for the collective, is to organize things according to traditions, customs and personal relations. Therefore, it should not be confused with domestic production either. Industrial worth is based on the principle that the collective should be organized efficiently, according to accurate measurements and technical knowledge, and should not be confused with industrial production.

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