Heating Up, Cooling Down: The Moralisation of Markets through Devices and Their Unintended Consequences

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Abstract

Social movements play a critical role in politicising food systems, often contesting and moralising markets to advance their social change agenda. To induce moralisation processes, social movements frequently deploy market devices. Examining the case of the creation and development of the Swiss fair trade flower market over time (1990–2005), we investigate how several market devices are being used in moralising a market, including the intended and unintended consequences of this process. Our findings reveal how the sequencing of devices—the gradual build-up of various devices upon one another—enabled the market-pioneering movement to first 'heat up' moral concerns and raise awareness, and later 'cool down' these concerns by specifying accountabilities and obligations to scale the market. However, the sequencing of devices resulted in a moralised market concentrated on a powerful device—a certification standard for plantations—which in turn triggered tensions within the fair trade movement. The market pioneers became marginalised, and the initial fair trade idea—supporting smallholders—became fundamentally renegotiated at international level. These findings advance our understanding of the mainstreaming process of fair trade, explain how fair trade has come to encompass its first non-food product (i.e., flowers) and planation production, and contribute to research on movement-induced markets by highlighting the unintended consequences and intra-movement conflicts of building moralised markets through devising.

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Introduction

Food systems are facing significant pressures to transform towards sustainable production and consumption patterns, with social movements playing a key role in challenging unsustainable practices and socially unjust conditions (Leach et al. 2020; Weber et al. 2020). By mobilising around societal issues, social movements address inequalities and seek to bring about justice and solidarity among producers and consumers (Motta 2021). While movements may target public authorities and politicians, a common strategy for advancing their demands and societal change agenda involves not only contesting established markets (King and Pearce 2010; Bartley and Child 2011) but also creating novel ones. Existing research has amply demonstrated how social movements are pioneering new 'moralised' markets (Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Rao 2009), such as markets for fair trade, organic food, and grass-fed meat (Gilding and Glezos 2021; Niederle et al. 2020; Raynolds 2000; Weber et al. 2008). Moralised markets differ from conventional markets in that consumers and producers adhere to higher moral standards, including environmental, ethical or health considerations instead of purely economic incentives (Balsiger 2021).

Moralised markets require morality to be made 'explicit' (Suckert 2018), and extant research has emphasised the crucial role of market devices in this process. Market devices such as labels, shopping brochures, certification schemes, and standards help distinguish 'moral' products from conventional ones (Dubuisson-Quellier 2013; Geiger et al. 2014) and can serve social movements as 'principal weapons' in their fight against inequalities in large food systems. Callon et al. (2007) introduced the notion of market device as 'a simple way of referring to the material and discursive assemblages that intervene in the construction of markets' (p. 2). Research on market devices has emphasised the material dimension of markets, explaining how supposedly mundane things (e.g., shopping carts, advertisements, prices, and lists) enable the exchange of goods and services (Callon et al. 2007). Market devices thus often take on an important coordination function in markets, supporting producers' and consumers' production, evaluation, and exchange practices (Dubuisson-Quellier 2013; McFall 2009; Karpik 2010). In the context of moralised markets, market devices are typically deployed with the aim to make 'the market "better" or more just' (Geiger and Gross 2018, 3).

Extensive research has focused on the effect and impact of specific market devices on target markets at a given point in time (e.g., Niederle et al. 2020; Bartley and Child 2011; Dubuisson-Quellier 2013; for a notable exception, Gilding and Glezos 2021). Only minimal work has considered the *process of devising*, that is, the development and interplay of various market devices over time in the creation and development of moralised markets. Such a process perspective on market devices is important for at least two reasons. First, the formation of moralised markets may take time and likely involves the deployment and interplay of various devices. Second, the process of devising performed by social movements for bringing about novel, moralised markets may not only have intended effects but may also be characterised by unintended consequences (Geiger and Gross 2018; McFall 2009; Velthuis 2020). We therefore ask: *How do social movements make use of market devices over time to bring about moralised markets? What are the unintended consequences of social movements' devising in the creation of moralised markets?*

Empirically, we focus on the fair trade movement, a paramount example of the moralisation of markets that has garnered significant attention within agri-food studies (e.g., Goodman 2004; cf. Raynolds and Benett 2015) and beyond (Reinecke, Manning, and Von Hagen 2012). Drawing on rich archival data and interviews, we study the moralisation and growth of the fair trade flower market in Switzerland over a time span of 15 years (1990–2005). Unpacking the process of moralising this fair trade market, our analysis shows that several market devices were critical in helping the pioneering social movement to evoke moral concerns and qualities, and to enrol conventional economic actors into the moralised market. The devices employed were built upon one another, yet changed radically over time — a process we refer to as *sequencing of devices*. They changed from devices that helped to 'heat up' and raise awareness of moral concerns in the consumption arena, to devices to 'cool down' these concerns, focusing on specifying accountabilities and obligations in

the production arena. The sequencing of 'heating' and 'cooling' devices (Callon 1998) eventually resulted in a moralised market governed by a single, powerful device that enabled market expansion, namely a certification standard.

Our findings however also reveal how the sequencing of devices and the establishment of a powerful governing device that enabled marketisation entailed a range of unintentional effects, creating tensions within the fair trade movement. First, it pushed the movement pioneers who had initiated the process of moral market building to the margins of the market, while a powerful standard-setter assumed the dominant position. Second, the devising of the flower market resulted in the integration of plantations into the wider fair trade system, which until then had exclusively focused on supporting smallholders, excluding larger plantations. In other words, the devising and moralisation of the flower market generated unintended repercussions on the fair trade movement and the adjacent food sector by introducing a standard for plantation production applicable for food products, such as bananas and other fruits. This step connects to the idea of 'politics of scalability' (Pfotenhauer et al. 2022), that is, helping and supporting as many producers as possible.

Our findings contribute to research on movement-induced markets by highlighting the unintended consequences and the movement dynamics of building moralised markets through devising. Specifically, our study illuminates important intra-movement tensions that can occur through market devising. First, we show how the sequencing of devices can backfire as market devices evolve beyond the control of the social movement that once established them, marginalising the market pioneers. Second, our results reveal unintended spillover effects across sectors—a rarely studied phenomenon. In our case, the devising of the flower market resulted in the highly controversial integration of plantations into the fair trade system (Raynolds 2017; Besky 2008)—a finding that resonates with the literature on the mainstreaming and marketisation of fair trade (e.g., Goodman 2004, Raynolds 2009, Tallontire and Nelson 2013). We identify the highly empirical source of the expansion of fair trade to large-scale plantations, and highlight that mainstreaming cannot be explained solely by the pressure of corporate market actors but also by the movement's use and sequencing of devices. Our results moreover show how devising underpins shifting politics that value market expansion, and contrast with the perspective that the mainstreaming of fair trade based on certification standards has occurred at the expense of politicisation (Edward and Tallontire 2009; Nelson and Tallontire 2019). Instead, devising emphasises these shifting politics as endogenous within the fair trade movement, akin to the observed changes in cultural politics toward the aestheticisation and celebritisation of fair trade (Goodman 2010, Goodman et al. 2012, p. 203-221).

Our article proceeds as follows. We first present our theoretical orientation on the role of market devices in the movement-driven moralisation of markets. After then presenting our case and methodological approach, we turn to our empirical results and conclude by discussing our findings.

Market devices in the movement-driven moralisation of markets

Existing research in this field has demonstrated how market devices are deployed to improve markets (Geiger and Gross 2018). Moralisation is one possibility of such 'improvement', leading to the formation of 'moralised' or 'concerned' markets that 'take into account the various concerns that are associated with the unfolding of economic transactions' (Geiger and Gross 2018, p. 2). The role of market devices has been widely studied in this context (cf. Velthuis 2020), and the literature exemplifies how social movements employ market devices to moralise existing markets or foster the emergence of new ones. Two functions stand out.

First, building on the seminal work on boundary objects that enable and stabilise coherence across social worlds (Star and Griesemer 1989), research has demonstrated how market devices facilitate domain-spanning interaction among actors of distinct social domains. Bridging domains is pivotal for moralised markets as they must overcome the divergence between morality and economy (Suckert 2018). Market devices help to create

new relationships fundamental to any moralised or concerned market (Geiger et al. 2014). They play a role in both 'hot' situations, where controversy arises, and 'cool' situations, where agreements are being settled and rendered feasible (Callon 1998). Devices can thus help to 'cool down' moral concerns (Steiner and Trespeuch 2019) and integrate them with economic mandates. Complementarily, devices can facilitate participation because of their materiality, as they are effortlessly handed over to multiple actors (Marres 2016). While we do not intend to reduce market devices to their materiality, it is important to note that they diffuse easily and help to bridge moral and economic concerns. Among others, these are important reasons why market devices can assist movements to mobilise other actors—business corporations in particular—to support their efforts, which matters for the scalability of moralised markets (Lee, Hiatt and Lounsbury 2017).

Second, market devices support moralisation through valuation processes. They evoke multiple values (not only economic value) and critically shape the valuation of products and services (Beckert and Aspers 2011). That is, rather than 'cooling down' moral concerns, market devices can also 'heat up' by raising awareness about societal issues and introducing new moral values. In an empirical study of shopping booklets that value products according to specific environmental criteria, Dubuisson-Quellier (2013) explains how social movements use this market device to introduce eco-friendly criteria to markets, such as local sourcing, reduced packaging, and environmental impact. Hence, market devices are an effective tool for social movements seeking to infuse markets with moral concerns and values. Moreover, market devices can validate moral meaning to such an extent that they become accepted by other market participants. However, with increased 'cooling down', in other words, abstraction and formalisation, devices can become so accepted in their role of validating moral values and concerns that their purpose is no longer questioned (Stinchcombe 2001). This can be observed, for example, in the case of mundane-looking food safety certificates, which are rarely critically scrutinised and instead are taken for granted as a proof of safe production and processing.

It would, however, be naïve to assume that market devices support social movements in moralising markets solely in intended, unidirectional ways. Like any other artifact, market devices are not neutral (Scott 2003); 'once in place, such market devices take on a life of their own' (Fligstein and Calder 2015, 6). This means that market devices and their unintended effects may vary, depending on the contextual setting (e.g., Erturk et al. 2013; Geiger and Gross 2018; Velthuis 2020). For example, Hawkins (2011) explains that food packaging, a highly accepted market device as it improves shelf life and enables brand strategies, leads to massive accumulation of waste that endangers our ecosystems. The unintended consequences do not have to be only ecological, they can also be social and organisational in nature. Erturk et al. (2013) detail how financial devices enable elites to privatise economic gains for themselves, while the losses are distributed. Similarly, the bitcoin was introduced as a market device to challenge the existing political-economic order, yet it has evolved into a good enabling opportunities for a range of investors (Lawrence and Mudge 2019).

Interestingly, however, the literature on market devices favours the study of the consumption side (for a notable exception, see Fürst 2018). This is exemplified by the expression 'devising of consumption' (McFall 2014) and can also be observed in the work of Cochoy (2007), who disentangles the ways in which rather boring market devices (e.g., trolleys, cards, labels, signs flags) animate everyday consumer behaviour in supermarkets. Karpik (2010) introduces the concept of judgment devices as a specific market device explicitly oriented toward consumers. Judgment devices, such as restaurant rankings, literary reviews, and wine ratings, are used by consumers to determine the (uncertain) value of incommensurable goods (e.g., wine, art, books). For the morality-oriented devising of markets, social movements tend to prioritise accountability devices (Neyland et al. 2019). These devices validate moral meaning by ensuring that the moral values propagated in the consumption arena are upheld on the production side. In food systems, accountability devices often include certification standards (Gilding and Glezos 2021; Fouilleux and Loconto 2017; Lee et al. 2017), while alternative devices, such as participatory guarantee systems, are under development (e.g., Niederle et al. 2020).

While much research has focused on specific devices in isolation, to better understand their effect and impact on a target market, we know a lot less about the interplay of various devices over time, including their unintended effects. In this empirical study, we investigate *devising*, the process whereby various market devices are developed and interact as they change a market. We study devising in the context of movement-driven markets, and also focus on the unintended consequences of devising in the process of market moralisation for market-pioneering social movements.

Methodology

Research design and setting

We employed a qualitative research design and conducted an in-depth, longitudinal case study to explore the role and consequences of a social movement's devising processes intended to moralise the market. We examined the moralisation of the flower market in Switzerland (1990–2005), a local setting in which fair flowers were locally invented before developing into an international market. Fair trade involves different products with different histories and pathways, recognised for 'operating both "in and against" the market' (Goodman 2004, 893), while being one of those movements that addresses inequalities related to a lack of solidarity and justice in food systems (Motta 2021). Even though fair trade has been extensively explored (cf. Raynolds and Benett 2015), the process whereby flowers were integrated into the fair trade system remains—to our knowledge—unexplored. The existing literature on fair trade flowers is limited to impact studies and does not address the historical origins of flowers within the fair trade system (e.g., Raynolds 2022).

We considered the case of fair trade flowers to be suitable for examining the ways in which a social movement deploys market devices for a moralisation process, because visual and textual devices have been substantial in fair trade practices (Goodman et al. 2012). These market devices, needing to disrupt existing norms and practices related to the production and trade of conventional flowers, introduced moral concerns and values. They connected various previously unconnected actors across the economic and moral domains (e.g., non-government organisations, social movement organisations, flower farmers, customers, florists' shops, retail chains, standard-setters), reframed consumer, producer, and sales preferences, and redefined the means whereby flowers are cultivated and traded between producers in the global South and buyers in the North. Nowadays, exchange practices are stable and coordinated through a range of actors (e.g., retailers, flower shops, standard-setter), but at the time, the idea of fair trade flowers marked a radical shift in the fair trade system away from food products cultivated by smallholders, to non-food products from large-scale plantations (Raynolds 2017; Besky 2008). The moralisation of the Swiss flower market was thus highly controversial and disruptive, as it represented a fundamental redirection of the fair trade idea.

Engaging with our case in-depth, we discovered an intriguing aspect in an otherwise typical movement-driven moralisation process. Although a range of market devices were used over time, the moralised flower market ended up being governed by a single device: a certification standard. In other moralised markets, such as markets for organic milk and food or sustainable coffee, multiple devices coexist, compete and collaborate (Suckert 2018; Reinecke et al. 2012; Fouilleux and Loconto 2017). In our case, however, the market devising consolidated around a single market device. This concentration is important to consider not only when seeking to understand how devising helps to moralise a market, but particularly when one is concerned with the consequences for the social movement that employs and backs up these devices.

Finally, our focus on Switzerland is justified for other reasons. Not only were fair flowers 'invented' there, but, according to the historian Steinberg (1996), Switzerland constitutes an ideal research context for case studies. Due to its small size, federalism, multilingualism, and high level of development, it is well suited for examining socio-organisational phenomena. Due to a strong fair trade movement since the 1970s, fair trade products are highly legitimate in Switzerland, enjoying the highest per capita consumption of fair-trade certified products worldwide (110 CHF/year) (Fairtrade Max Havelaar, 2023). This enabled us to place the main emphasis of

our analysis on the effects that devising had on the movement, rather than the legitimacy struggles in market creation (Arnold and Soppe, 2017). The timeframe of our study starts in 1990, when activists began stirring up the flower market. It ends in 2005, when the fair flower project had gained a paramount standing in Swiss retail and had turned into an internationally approved trade activity.

Data collection and analysis

We conducted data collection and analysis in two main phases, involving both the broader development of the Swiss fair trade movement and our specific case of interest. This provided us with a contextual understanding, as the history of fair flowers is interwoven with that of the broader fair trade movement. In the first phase, we reconstructed the history of the Swiss fair trade movement. The Swiss Social Archives in Zürich (SSA) offered us rich archival data about fair trade campaigns, initial alternative trading efforts, and the creation of the fair trade standard-setter Max Havelaar Foundation (MH) (Table 1).

Table 1: Overview of collected archival data, phase 1

Signatures*	Themes	Timespan
Site 1: SSA - Swiss Social Archives in Zürich, Switzerland (visited Jul and Aug 2012 as well as Jul, Aug, Dec 2013)		
Ar 430.27.1; Ar 430.27.2; Ar 430.28.1; Ar 43028.2; Ar 430.28.3; Ar 430.28.4; Ar 430.30.4; Ar 430.30.6; Ar 430.30.7; Ar 430.30.8	Pioneering fair trade campaigns that used jute bags, coffee, pineapples, and bananas as attention seekers	1973-1983
Claro 1101.1; Claro 1102.1; Claro 1103.1; Claro 1125.11; Claro 1010.12; Claro 1010.2; Claro 1011.1; Claro 1030.11; Claro 4511	First permanent trade of fair trade products in an alternative niche	1977-1995
Ar 435.10.1; Ar 435.10.2; Ar 435.10.3; Ar 430.10.4; Ar 430.10.5; Ar 430.10.6; Ar 430.10.6; Ar 430.10.7; Ar 435.20.1; Ar 435.20.2	First sales of fair trade products in world shops	1982-1995
Claro 4952; Claro 4953; Claro 4954; Claro 4955; Claro 4956; Claro 4957; Claro 4958; Claro 4959; Claro 4960; Claro 4961; Claro 4962; Claro 7104	Creation of the Max Havelaar foundation and first sales of fair trade products in mainstream markets	1988-1996
Site 2: Swiss libraries		
Holenstein, A.-M., Renschler, R., & Strahm, R. (2008). Entwicklung heisst Befreiung: Erinnerungen an die Prionierzeit der Erklärung von Bern (1968-1985) / Development means liberation: memories of the pioneering days of the Declaration of Bern. Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 324 pages.	Autobiographical narratives about the fair trade campaigns executed by the Declaration of Bern (DB)	1968-1985
Brunner, U. (1999). Bananenfrauen / Bananawomen. Frauenfeld: Huber + Company AG, 206 pages.	Autobiographical narrative about the origination and success of fair trade bananas in Switzerland	1970-1997
Schaber, C., & Dok van, G. (2008). Die Zukunft des Fairen Handels / The future of fair trade. Luzern: Caritas-Verlag, 182 pages.	History of the Swiss solidarity movement	1977-2005
Kuhn, K. (2011): Entwicklungspolitische Solidarität / Developmental solidarity. Zürich: Chronos, 461 pages.	History of the Swiss solidarity movement, including the fair trade campaigns	1975-1992

* These official signatures refer to the archive folders we consulted. The folders included various documents about the themes listed, such as letters, notes, brochures, flyers, media releases, protocols, and reports as well as articles published in newspapers and magazines.

Both authors jointly worked through reams of documentation and mutually reflected on their relevance. To triangulate and complement our insights, we conducted 28 interviews with key participants of the Swiss fair trade movement, which were purposefully sampled using snowball sampling (Table 2). All interviews were transcribed. To overcome retrospective bias, we consulted published documentation written by historians and activists. We content-analysed our data, identified key events and actors involved, including their varying motivations, interests and orientations, and paid specific attention to the market devices deployed. We then developed an 80-page case description of how the movement emerged and developed over time (2017).

Our second phase of data collection was focused on the morality-oriented devising of the flower market over 15 years (1990–2005). The main data source comprised archival data as highly appropriate for the study of shifts in relations, interactions, and meaning systems (Ventresca and Mohr 2002). Two archives, the SSA and the public Documentation Centre of Alliance Sud in Bern (DocA) afforded us access to original documents concerning the conceptualisation and practicalities of selling fair trade flowers. The documents were produced by individuals and organisations involved in the moralisation project, for both internal usage (e.g., minutes of meetings, reports, letters) and external communication (e.g., campaign brochures), as well as by external

observers (e.g., newspaper articles) (Table 3). These archival data allowed us to detect the market devices deployed by the movement and to grapple with the meanings, interactions, and dynamics they spawned.

Table 2. List of interviews

Nr.	Type of organisation*	Domain	Interview partner	Date	Record
1	Non-profit organisation	Social domain	Label officer	18.10.2011	52 min
2	Relief organisation	Social domain	Director of development policy	21.10.2011	89 min
3	Consumer organisation	Social domain	Director of nutrition and agriculture	24.10.2011	54 min
4	Standardiser	Social domain	Director of standards and pricing	21.12.2012	74 min
5	Individual retailer	Economic domain	Director	02.02.2012	63 min
6	Governmental organisation	Government	Director of trade promotion	13.02.2012	37 min
7	Fair trade association	Social domain	Management board member	14.02.2012	57 min
8	Relief organisation	Social domain	Manager development policy	15.05.2012	68 min
9	Standardiser	Social domain	Key Account Manager	18.12.2012	103 min
10	Standardiser	Social domain	Director	06.02.2013	148 min
11	Social movement organisation	Social domain	Activist	25.02.2013	97 min
12	Standardiser	Social domain	Communication officer	07.03.2013	70 min
13	Alternative trade organisation	Social domain	Monitor Producer Support	09.04.2013	36 min
14	Relief organisation	Social domain	Fairshop Director	07.05.2013	53 min
15	Civil society organisation	Social domain	Activist	22.05.2013	153 min
16	Retailer/supermarket chain	Economic domain	Label officer	17.09.2013	46 min
17	Standardiser	Social domain	Communication officer	18.09.2013	46 min
18	Alternative trade organisation	Social domain	Purchaser	24.09.2013	64 min
19	Standardiser	Social domain	Program officer	26.09.2013	30 min
20	Standardiser	Social domain	Producer relation officer	07.10.2013	49 min
21	Social movement organisation	Social domain	Activist	14.10.2013	33 min
22	Social movement organisation	Social domain	Activist	15.10.2013	50 min
23	Retailer/supermarket chain	Economic domain	Director of communication	22.10.2013	38 min
24	Standardiser	Social domain	Program Officer	31.10.2013	61 min
25	Civil society organisation	Social domain	Activist	06.11.2013	84 min
26	Retailer/supermarket chain	Economic domain	Label Coordinator	26.11.2013	46 min
27	Retailer/supermarket chain	Economic domain	Director of sustainability	13.12.2013	46 min
28	Alternative trade organistion	Social domain	Chairman of supervisory board	22.01.2014	59 min

* We used snowball sampling to select interviewees. We asked each interviewee to nominate decisive people/organisations for the historical development of fair trade in Switzerland. Once the interviewees were only nominating people/organisations, that we had already included in the sampling, we stopped the interview process.

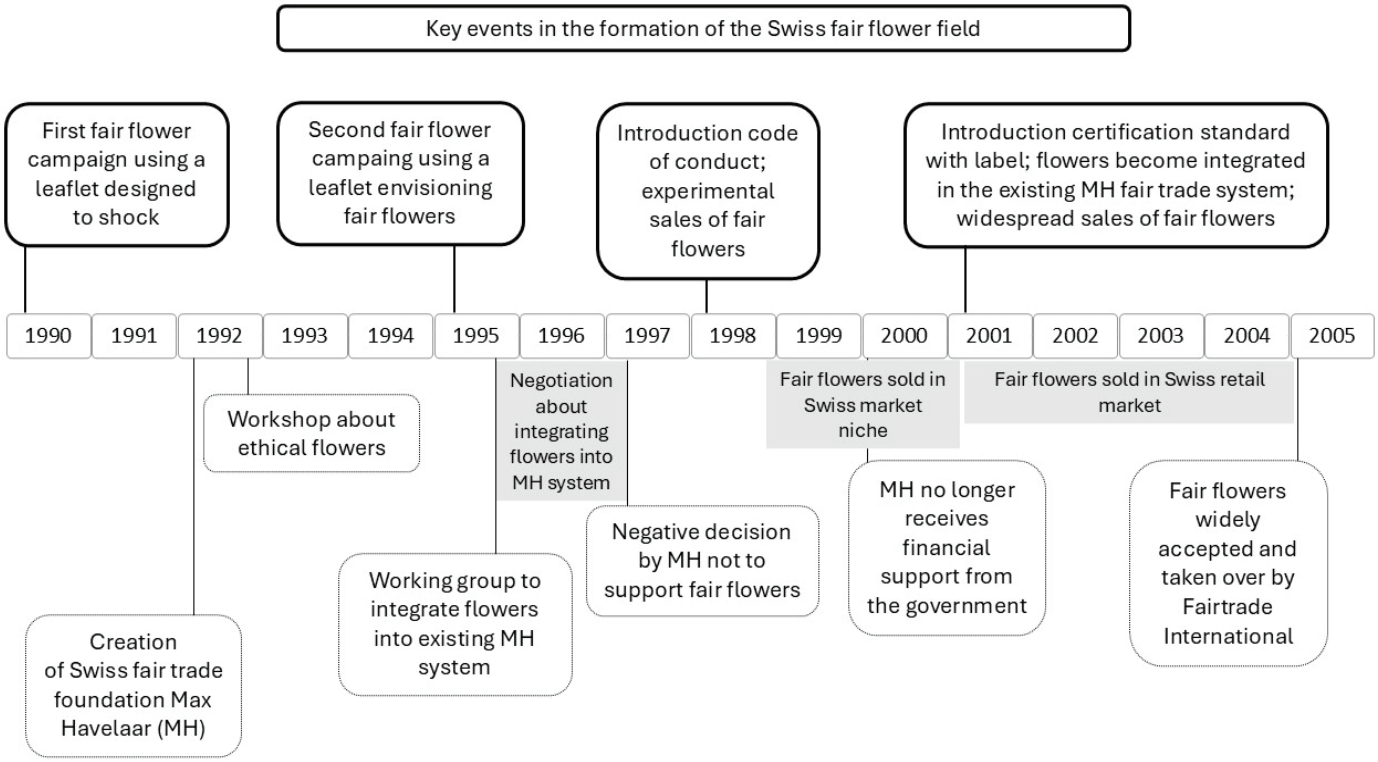
Table 3. Overview of collected archival data, phase 2

Signatures	Type of data	Timespan	Themes covered	Pages
Site: SSA Swiss Social Archives in Zürich, Switzerland (visited Mar 2014, Aug 2017)				
Ar 430.34.1	Letters, reports, notes, brochures, flyers, media releases, and protocols written by members of organisations (esp. Swissaid, Erklärung von Bern ask) involved in the awareness-raising campaigns about the flower industry and articles published in daily/weekly Swiss newspapers and magazines.	1984—1993	Social and environmental problems of flower production in developing countries (focus on Colombia) and injustice in international flower trade	approx. 800 printed pages
Ar 430.34.2	Letters, reports, notes, brochures, flyers, media releases, and protocols written by members of organisations esp. Swissaid, Erklärung von Bern ask) involved in the awareness-raising campaigns about the flower industry and articles published in daily/weekly Swiss newspapers and magazines.	1988—1992	Social and environmental problems of flower production in developing countries (focus on Colombia) and injustice in international flower trade – possible efforts against it	approx. 600 printed pages
Site: DocA Documentation Center of Alliance Sud in Bern, Switzerland (visited Mar 2014, Aug 2017)				
Topical folder: flower	Media releases and articles published in daily/weekly newspapers, magazines, weekly newspapers and magazines written by external observers (journalists) or personally involved members of field organisations.	1988—	Social and environmental problems of flower production in developing countries and injustice in international flower trade—and efforts to overcome these challenges (including the flower campaigns and the launch of fair trade flowers in Switzerland)	approx. 300 printed pages
Topical folder: fair trade	Articles published in daily/weekly newspapers, and magazines, weekly newspapers and magazines written by external observers (journalists).	1988—	Fair trade in Switzerland with a focus on the standardisation organisation Max Havelaar (including the launch and establishment of fair trade flowers in Switzerland)	approx. 500 printed pages
Magazine folder: reports WSC	Monthly, multi-page reports written by members of *ask*	1990—	Social problems in Columbia (e.g., political and human rights situation, drugs, war, resources, poverty) as well as statements on issues of development policy and activity reports (including flower campaigns and the launch of fair trade flowers)	approx. 1500 printed pages

We analysed our data using process analysis, investigating the devising and moralisation process by accounting for critical events and temporal embeddedness over time (Langley 1999). First, we arranged our data in chronological order to reconstruct the overall chronology of the case history and identify key events, actors, and market devices (Figure 1). Second, we analysed these data in depth, following an abductive process informed by our theoretical and empirical interests (Tavory and Timmermans 2014). This process consisted in the reading and rereading of data, mutual discussions of empirical and theoretical considerations, feedback from presentations, and constant probing of what market devices the movement was using, who they were intended for, what moral concerns the devices introduced, and what effects resulted from them. We found that the devising and associated moralisation proceeded through stages, each marked by the introduction of a new device that provoked actions and meanings, alongside a change in social movement relationships with market players.

We analysed each stage using temporal bracketing (Langley 1999), whereby we deconstructed the overall story into these stages and analysed the role of market devices in valuing flowers and relating various actors into the market project at each stage separately, before comparing our insights across the stages and illuminating the consequences on the movement. While identifying these stages is useful for explaining and understanding the devising process, they are not strictly linear; overlaps and deviations can be observed in the empirical realities. For example, the use of standards to ensure quality often appears stable, but in-depth empirical observations reveal manifold changes, deviations, and adjustments (Arnold and Dombrowski 2022). A clear specification of the stages is nevertheless beneficial for grasping the essence of the devising process. This is why we will present our findings along the four identified stages.

Figure 1. Chronological events in the moralization of the flower market in Switzerland, 1990-2005



Results

Our analysis revealed four successive stages, each orchestrated by a different market device that assisted

particular sub-groups of the overall fair trade movement in moralising the flower market. First, a shocking judgment device was used to *heat up moral concerns* (1990–1995), while in the second stage, the device helped in *tempering the heat and envisioning a moralised market* (1995–1998). In the third stage, the movement made use a code of conduct to *cool down and enact a market for fair flowers* (1998–2001). The last stage was focused on *scaling the market for fair flowers* (2001–2005) by employing a certification standard. Presenting each phase in detail, we start with a brief introduction to the contextual setting before analysing the device deployed by the specific social movement sub-group. We focus our narrative on the moral concerns and values evoked or established through each device, the relations that developed among movement and economic actors, and the resulting tensions within the movement. Furthermore, we clarify the transition dynamics across the four stages and highlight how the various devices built upon one another over time.

Heating up: Invoking moral concerns and approaching consumers (1990–1995)

From the mid-1970s, the Swiss fair trade movement, driven by various civil society organisations and activist groups, ran politically-motivated solidarity campaigns using coffee, bananas, pineapples, and jute bags as symbols to challenge the structural inequality between producing countries in the global South and consumer countries in the North. Like other social movements promoting market products that convey moral concerns, fair trade advocates were driven by a value-oriented agenda lamenting social and environmental shortcomings in conventional markets. Over the years, their campaigns resulted in alternative forms of trading and selling fair products.

Continuing this awareness-raising work, a coalition of several movement groups, including one of the most engaged civil society organisations in the movement, the Berne Declaration, turned its attention to flowers in 1990. A new campaign symbol was selected—a bunch of cut flowers—to challenge current practices in the trade and cultivation of conventional flowers in developing countries. The campaign preparation took off when the Berne Declaration engaged with a small, politically oriented activist group, the Working Group Switzerland Columbia (WSC) to organise a first flower campaign, with a focus on Columbian flowers. To ensure that the campaign launch gained wide attention, the activists chose the time around Mother's Day, when the Swiss give flowers to their mothers.

More than 100 activist groups publicly lamented the societal issues surrounding international flower production and trade; they campaigned at local markets, shopping malls, and in front of supermarkets in various cities and municipalities. As an activist from that time explained, these campaigns were not about boycotting, but rather about raising awareness about societal issues in the flower market, which also meant heating it up. The activist explained the motivation underlying the campaigns as follows:

> *It was always clear to us: no boycott, because we were in direct contact with many flower workers. And of course, it is preposterous to cultivate flowers on such fertile land, but that is simply a fact we cannot change. So, it became more about social justice in production and environmentally just production. (Interview Oct 15, 2013)*

Later in the interview, the same activist, laughing, recalled how their campaigns had offended the Swiss flower businesses: 'I still remember, it was always fixed on the calendar, [the campaigns on] Valentine's Day. The flower shops hated us' (Interview Oct 15, 2013). The centrepiece of these provocative campaigns was a specific market device: a leaflet in the form of a newspaper designed to shock consumers.

During a campaign preparation meeting, the activists came up with the idea of developing a leaflet in form of a four-page newspaper. This leaflet was provocative in several ways. First, to attract attention, its design emulated the popular Swiss tabloid, *Blick* ('View'). The tabloid, which typically reported trivia, was repurposed to lament concerns of inhuman and environmentally harmful flower cultivation in developing countries. Its content highlighted social and environmental grievances in flower cultivation. The headlines raised alarming topics such as 'pesticides should destroy' and 'no responsibility for the environment'. Evocative metaphors such as

the 'cocktail of poisons' made readers aware about the harmful overuse of chemicals in flower cultivation. The body text elaborated on unhealthy and inhumane work conditions, low wages and poverty, pesticides, and soil degradation by providing real-life examples. For example, Elena, a Columbian flower worker, is portrayed with her story:

> *'One day, I became sick […] It felt like my whole body was burning […] I went to the doctor, who told me: It's not good for you if you continue working with flowers, if you don't want to leave your children behind' (leaflet Apr 1990).*

The activists distributed the leaflets together with a flower to people passing by, asking them: 'Have you ever thought about the origins of floral bouquets?' (leaflet Apr 1990). The leaflet thus presented a typical judgement device providing an initial relational anchor to establish a link to consumers and inviting them to re-valuate their consumption choices. To facilitate these first touchpoints, the front and back page of the leaflet featured more welcoming images and text, inviting readers to 'Enjoy flowers, but care about how they have been cultivated' (memo Jan 8, 1990). In other words, the leaflet supported the social movement in heating up the market by making moral concerns salient, invoking alternative values, and encouraging consumers to reflect on their own consumption behaviour.

The insights so far highlight the devising process that was set in motion with a sensational judgment device deployed by social movement actors to make consumers understand the problems in flower production and trade. While the device was primarily intended to target ordinary consumers, it also had relational effects as it addressed—albeit indirectly—economic actors that offered flowers to consumers (e.g., florists, retailers) by challenging their market offerings. During the following years, the activists established interaction with those economic market players. For instance, in April 1992, they organised a workshop inviting florists, supermarkets, and other flower vendors to discuss 'if and how the flower industry could help to achieve socially and environmentally friendly cut-flower cultivation and trade' (invitation letter Apr 11, 1992). During the workshop, the participants agreed with the concerns raised, stressing that '[they] do not want plants to be produced under such bad conditions' (protocol Apr 11, 1992). However, no collective agreement was reached either during or after the workshop. The leaflet thus supported the activists in heating up and disrupting the conventional flower market by introducing moral concerns, but the moralisation was far from accomplished.

Tempering the heat: Envisioning a moralised market and enrolling conventional market actors (1995–1998)

In 1992, with the joint effort of six Swiss relief agencies, the broader fair trade movement founded the fair trade standard-setter Max Havelaar (MH). MH developed a voluntary fair trade certification standard for corporations to source and sell fair trade products. The certification standard first brought coffee onto the shelves of Swiss retail chains, followed by honey, cocoa, and sugar. In 1995, MH announced: 'Switzerland is the European leader of fair trade. In no other country will you find such a variety of fair trade products […]. The per capita consumption is […] the highest Europe-wide' (MH annual report 1995, p. 1). This success inspired the flower activists to project MH's fair trade market devices (a certification standard with label) onto flowers, to create a market for fair flowers. Several groups formed an umbrella organisation called Flower Coordination Switzerland (FCS) and initiated a second flower campaign on Mother's Day in 1995.

The activists again created and distributed a four-page leaflet in a tabloid style, primarily to raise awareness among consumers. In doing so, the devising process took its course as this market device resembled the preceding leaflet in design, yet differed in two main ways. First, this device was used essentially to project how a fair flower trade system could be accomplished. In doing so, this leaflet toned down the shocking concerns and marked a first step towards a 'cooling down'. Instead of disturbing imagery, it proposed a label that would reorganise flower cultivation and trade along fairer lines. The concerns invoked earlier were translated into a set of specific valuation criteria projecting what a socially and environmentally sound flower exchange system could look like: no child labour, fair wages, special protection for pregnant women, medical care offered by employers, and no usage of prohibited pesticides. The composition of the device, its headlines, body text,

and imagery presented the advantages of the proposed flower label as 'bringing humane working conditions to all countries' and 'preserving nature, as responsible gardeners do' (leaflet Apr 1995). The leaflet featured imagery of friendly gardeners and colourful bouquets. While the main text still raised issues associated with conventional flowers, the tone was less emotional and more scientific. Experts were quoted on the disadvantages of the flower industry, and statistics on market volume, jobs, and energy consumption in the flower industry were presented. The leaflet appeared to be a projection device that was less heated and controversial, and instead envisioned a fair flower market.

The second difference that distinguished this leaflet from its forerunner was that it combined moral and economic concerns and addressed economic actors from the consumption arena more directly, by appealing to potential business opportunities. Showcasing the results of a market survey, the leaflet explained that '81 percent want a flower label' and that 79% of Swiss consumers were ready to pay more for morally sound flowers. With this statistic—about which one activist scornfully commented: 'of course, you can control that [the market survey]' (interview Oct 15, 2013—moral concerns and changing consumer preferences started to be heard in the conventional flower market. In other words, this leaflet, including the suggested label, encouraged economic actors to participate in trading and selling fair flowers. Not only would the label help to establish new valuation criteria and serve as 'an instrument to obtain socially and environmentally sound flowers' (monthly report Apr 1995), but economic actors also saw new business opportunities and economic benefits.

The leaflet showcased the envisioned system. With a graph, it outlined the relationships and functional roles of key economic actors (flower producers, retailers and florists, consumers) in the fair flower system. The relationships invoked in the leaflet proved to become reality as dialog was initiated between the fair flower advocates and the various economic actors. Four months after the campaign, economic actors from the consumption arena (i.e., retailers, supermarket chains, florists, the Swiss Florists' Association), movement advocates, and some invited flower producers came together for a follow-up meeting. This meeting resulted in more persistent interaction, as the participants created a domain-spanning working group assessing the possibilities of integrating flowers into the MH system. The purpose of the working group was to clarify 'criteria for human- and environment-friendly flower production […], market volumes and delivery reliability of such flowers […], commercialisation and long-term market opportunities' (monthly report Feb 1997). The working group made great strides and MH publicly announced: 'In 1998/1999, human- and environment-friendly cultivated cut flowers with the label of MH will come to the market. Clarifications and preparations are currently in full swing' (undated press release). While this enthusiasm made it appear that all actors agreed to put the moral values into practice, reaching an actual compromise proved challenging. Surprisingly, MH ultimately blocked the development of a certification standard for flowers, justifying its decision as follows:

> *The development of effective mechanisms of monitoring and consultation for a consistent implementation of the criteria would require much effort […]. The certifiable volume of cut [flowers is] relatively low in the short- and medium-term. An acceptable cost-benefit ratio […] is not given, especially because the partner initiatives at the European level provide little support to the flower project. (Official letter reprinted in monthly report Feb 1997)*

A rift occurred throughout the fair flower movement as the pioneering activists doubted these political and economic rationales, inferring instead that '[t]he reason for this capitulation can probably be ascribed to conceptual problems. The original concept of coffee for smallholders cannot just be adapted to other products [such as flowers]' (monthly report Feb 1997). While a cornerstone of MH's fair trade standard and certification system had thus far been smallholders, flowers were produced only on large-scale plantations. Creating a certification standard for fair flowers cultivated on plantations would thus mean diluting the fair trade concept.

Given MH's decision and the intra-movement conflict that arose over a suitable device to support the

creation of a fair flower market, the provisional collaboration between the movement and economic actors came to a standstill. The device had nevertheless set a train in motion. Despite conflict within the movement over the appropriateness and usefulness of a fair trade standard for flowers cultivated on plantations, the moralisation project advanced because the trade had intensified and economic actors increasingly saw business opportunities in a fair flower market.

Cooling down and enactment: Standardising fair flowers and the plantations behind them (1998–2001)

By the mid-1990s, the fair trade idea was widely accepted among Swiss consumers, with retailers having identified its profit potential. They applauded the launch of new fair trade products and deplored the caution of MH. A retailer explained: 'We had to push them [MH] several times […] because for us [the retailers] everything was going too slowly' (interview Oct 22, 2013). Consequently, not only the FCS but also the leading retailer Migros took an interest in fair flowers. These overlapping interests resulted in an experimental ad hoc cooperation to provisionally create a first fair flower market. During spring 1999, a newspaper proclaimed: 'Flowers from "fair trade" fresh on the market' (*Basler Zeitung*, Mar 8, 1999).

To realise the project at this opportune moment, the devising process advanced further, this time by developing a code of conduct that formalised the required criteria for a socially just and environmentally sound production and exchange of flowers, as invoked by the previous devices. Specifically, the FCS, a flower-focused umbrella organisation comprising civil society organisations and activist groups, endeavoured to realise the claims of the preceding leaflet by developing the International Code of Conduct for the Production of Cut Flowers (ICC), which 'does not target a boycott of the products [from flower workers in Latin America and Africa], but strives for social and ecological improvements in their workplaces' (monthly report, Sep 1998). Unlike previous devices that focused on consumers and sales points, the ICC specified the obligations for producers, as is characteristic for accountability devices (Neyland et al. 2019). It encoded the idea of fair flowers in a standard by listing ten main valuation criteria: freedom of association and collective bargaining; equality of treatment; living wages; working hours; health and safety; pesticides and chemicals; security of employment; protection of the environment; child labour; and forced labour (ICC standard 1998). For each topic, FCS and its partner organisations specified standardised criteria that would account for higher moral standards of the production and trade of fair flowers.

Given that standards concern the producers behind the products (Arnold and Loconto 2021), the ICC started to specifically enrol the flower producers in the moralisation process. However, the producers were flower plantations (not smallholders as supported by the original fair trade idea), which meant that for the first time, a plantation-grown product became standardised as fair trade. As emphasised by an interviewee involved in the development of the ICC, they 'defined their own standard for flowers, [a standard] for fair trade flowers from large farms' (Interview Jan 22, 2013).

The addition of 'large farms' (i.e., plantations) was important, as this development was deepening the rift within the wider fair trade movement. Specifically, MH refused the idea of integrating plantations into the fair trade system, as a retailer recalled: 'Havelaar said, we don't do that [flowers], that is produced on plantations. We only work with *cooperativas*' (interview Oct 22, 2013). However, with the ICC in place, the participation of plantations in the fair flower exchange system became legitimate. The supplying plantations had to accept that the implementation of the criteria was subject to an independent audit. For instance, on this basis, experts inspected the first fair flower plantations in Zimbabwe, and recommended for admission those plantations that showed 'willingness to introduce social and ecological improvements' (monthly report Apr 1999).

The ICC became a key accountability device governing the nascent market for fair flowers. It determined who could participate and set the rules for doing so. It also played a key role in encouraging established players in the conventional market to join the fair flower project, and florists and retailers began selling fair mini roses. Thanks to the ICC, they could credibly participate in the project, as it would ensure that their

flower suppliers were accountable to the moral values codified in the standard. However, while the ICC was a central device in enacting the fair flower exchange system, it failed to enrol actors beyond those who pioneered the project. Fair flowers were sold in a market niche with limited scale, as a newspaper reported: 'At present, 7,500 bouquets of [fair trade] roses are sold weekly in municipal supermarket branches in Basel [major Swiss city]' (*Basler Zeitung*, Mar 5, 1999). Moralisation was achieved at this point because flowers with higher moral standards were being produced and consumed. However, the ICC lacked the acceptance that the established MH fair trade standards for food products enjoyed at the time, and such acceptance was needed to scale the moralised flower market.

Scaling the market: Certifying fair trade flowers and intra-movement conflicts (2001–2005)

Around the turn of the century, MH came under pressure to become self-funded. 'From 2001 MH will no longer receive financial support from the SECO [State Secretariat for Economic Affairs]' (MH annual report, 2000, p.14). MH's past experiences had shown that the launch of new products could generate more licensees and income. It therefore announced: 'The development of new products is of strategic importance for MH: the MH foundation has set the objective of launching one product per year' (MH annual report, 2001, p.5). This strategy and the contemporaneous initial sales of fair flowers pushed MH to revise its negative attitude towards plantation-grown flowers. It developed a certification standard including a label for morally sound flowers, and announced in April 2001: 'Now there are flowers with the MH certification seal […] Consumers now also have the possibility to support fair trade with flowers' (MH press release, Apr 3, 2001).

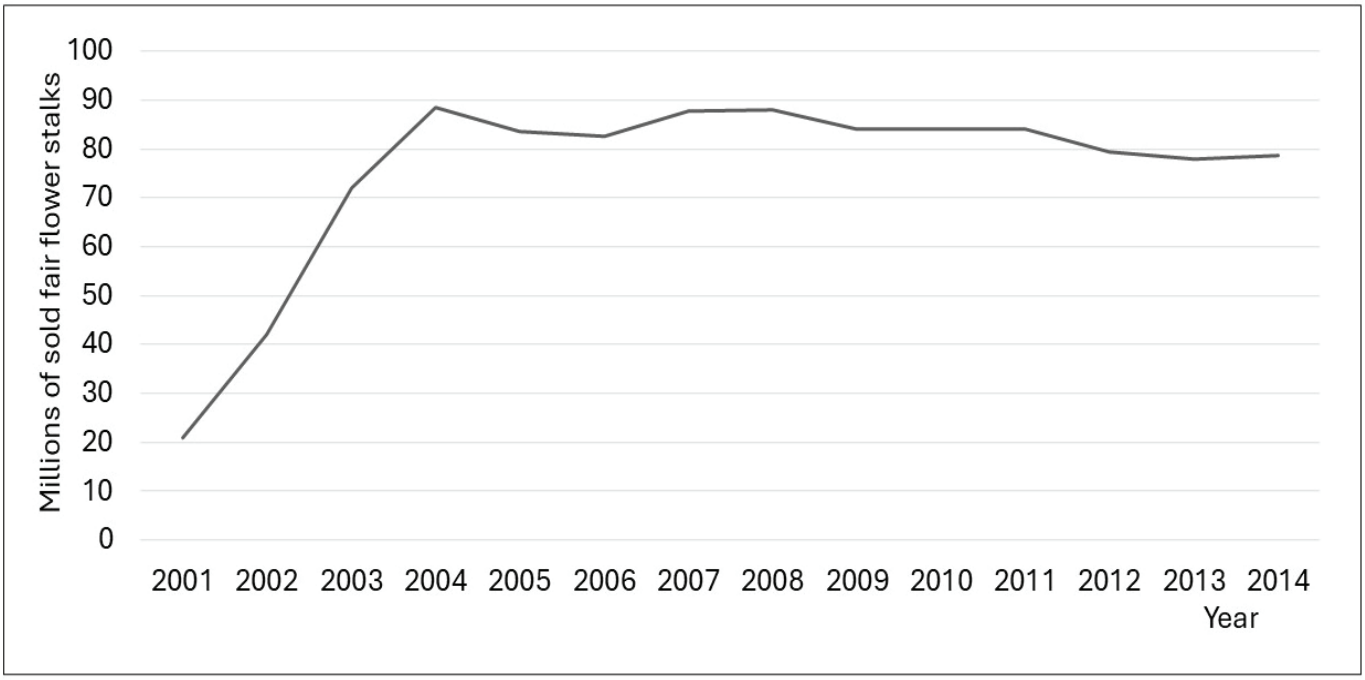
The MH certification standard remained closely tied to the idea of the ICC, adopting and building on its criteria. Hence, the devising process and the associated moralisation of the flower market moved gradually forward at this stage. Importantly, however, by specifying the obligations of flower traders and sellers, as well as flower plantations, the MH certification standard diverged from the stance that fair trade exclusively targets smallholders. Its certification standard specified over 13 pages the criteria that flower plantations had to meet. For each criterion, this market device defined specifications, according to which plantations were audited and certified. MH was determined to execute the audits, paid by the price premium charged for fair trade flowers. With the aim of strengthening accountability for the moral concerns propagated on the consumption side, the audits were later taken over by an independent certifier. Once plantation production was included in the fair trade system, the focus shifted from the question of whether plantation-grown flowers deserved to be supported by fair trade, to that of how to design and implement the standardisation and certification device in the best possible way to ensure optimum accountability.

Selling fair flowers required little effort, as Swiss florists and retailers simply had to source flowers from certified plantations, paying the defined minimum price and premium set by the device. By consolidating the meanings and practices associated with fair flowers into a single device, the certification standard triggered a substantial expansion of the moralised flower market. Fair flowers gained a strong foothold in the conventional market arena, with new conventional actors entering the moralised market, including two large supermarket chains and renowned florists. Their participation was driven by the acceptance of the MH certification standard, which the standard-setter proudly presented as the 'best-known sustainability label, with the highest confidence ratings' (MH report, undated).

Fair flowers met an unexpectedly large consumer demand. An employee of a retailer reported: 'At our house, Coop Switzerland, Havelaar flowers have reached 7 percent of total sales. This number is twice what we had expected' (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Feb 14, 2002). In the two subsequent years, the number of stalks sold grew exponentially (Figure 2), achieving a market share of 28% in 2004 (MH annual report, 2004). Since the market shares of products certified by MH had usually been below 10%, this was outstanding. The certification standard lastingly linked multiple actors with varying motivations and interests, and assisted in scaling the moralised market. In 2005, fair flowers became internationally approved when the umbrella organisation Fairtrade International took over the responsibilities of managing fair flowers.

At international level, and after the timeframe of our study, the fair trade certification standard for flowers provoked far-reaching shifts in the fair trade system, as this standard for plantation production was soon applied to other product categories (e.g., bananas, pineapples, tea, vegetables). In the case of coffee, on the other hand, fair trade certification was possible only if the coffee beans originated from small farmers, to remain true to the original idea (support of smallholders). This was a highly controversial decision and caused Fair Trade USA to split off from the international fair trade system. From then on, and in contrast to European fair trade initiatives, Fair Trade USA also certified coffee (and not only flowers and bananas) from plantations as fair (Raynolds and Rosty 2021)

Figure 2. Sales of fair trade flowers in Switzerland since 200



Source: own compilation of annual reports

Overall, the certification standard, as advocated by activist groups and civil society organisations at the outset of the devising process, enabled the scaling of the moralised flower market by bridging moral criteria with standardised economic procedures. Yet, such politics of scalability imply that the result of the scaling efforts is not simply more of the same (Pfotenhauer et al. 2022), which, in this case, would mean more social movement actors supporting more flower producers through fair trade. Rather, once established, the market device that enabled scalability pushed the pioneers to the margins. While the flower-focused umbrella organisation FCS dissolved because, as one could argue, their work became superfluous once the MH certification standard appeared, WSC, the politically oriented activist group with a focus on Columbia, which had been central in initiating the first flower campaigns, continued to exist. However, to pursue its advocacy work for the Colombian population, WSC needed to identify a new campaign theme (Swiss drug policy and the demand for a legalisation of drugs). This marginalisation of those who had initiated the moralisation (FCS and WSC) was assessed differently by the activists involved, further sparking intra-movement conflicts.

Among the pioneering social movement actors were activists who accepted the progressive devising and their own marginalisation. They emphasised that, from the outset, the movement had aimed at establishing a market for fair flowers, which was why the introduction of the certification standard by MH was considered desirable. This attitude was exemplified in the role of an activist who was hired by MH to manage flower certification.

It was also reflected in the quote from an activist who had a leading role in WSC. While regretting that WSC had lost the flower issue, he accepted that MH was now in charge and the market was concentrated on their device:

> *As a working group, it has been clear, the flower issue has been handed over, it is now with Max Havelaar. […] And we [WSC] have always said that this is a success, and we are proud of it. […] Now, they [the flowers] are labelled. Although they are not from Colombia, are partly from Ecuador, Kenya, and from African countries. That's okay. […] I can live with it if they [MH] do it well and market it well and really stay true to these social obligations (interview Oct 15, 2013).*

However, some activists shared the feeling that, following this 'flower conflict', 'there was still a bit of resentment towards MH' (interview Jan 22, 2013). Another leading activist and member of FCS criticised MH for taking over the process without acknowledging the central role that FCS had played in pioneering the fair flower market, thereby deepening intra-movement conflict. Hence, and regardless of the fact that FCS had originally sought to motivate MH to include flowers in their certification assortment, FCS accused MH of having stolen their 'invention', the fair flower, without compensating for it. 'At the debt collection office [FCS] deposited on March 30, 2001, a debt collection request of CHF300,000 against the MH' (*aufbruch*, Nov 2002). An activist told the media that 'FCS is accusing Havelaar [MH] of unfair methods: "This is unfair competition, what Havelaar [MH] is doing." […] The foundation [MH], which is supported by the relief organisations and the federal government with considerable contributions, was said to have acted "highly arrogantly"' (*Cash*, Mar 30, 2001). This frustration occurred because the MH certification standard replaced the ICC developed by the market pioneers.

Discussion and conclusion

Considering that social movements play an undeniably important role in the politicisation of food systems (Leach et al. 2020; Weber et al. 2020; Motta 2021), often by challenging and moralising markets (King and Pearce 2010; Bartley and Child 2011; Balsiger 2021), this article analysed such moralisation processes. Specifically, we approached the moralisation of markets as a devising process (Geiger and Gross 2018; McFall 2009), examining how and with what consequences market devices support a social movement in moralising a market.

Our analysis revealed the *sequencing of devices*, a process of shifting market devices that build upon one another over time, interacting in market moralisation efforts. Initially 'shocking' judgement devices were employed to contest and 'heat up' the flower market, before gradually shifting to devices such as a code of conduct and a certification standard to 'cool down' these concerns and thus to facilitate the establishment and scaling of the moralised market. The devices also addressed shifting audiences, from market participants in the consumption arena, to integration in the production arena. In doing so, the sequencing of devices increasingly enrolled and connected a broad range of market participants. While it initially linked activists, selected flower producers, and niche consumers, over time a wide range of flower shops, supermarkets, retail chains, and mainstream consumers joined in, along with a growing number of supplying flower plantations. With the implementation of a powerful certification standard, the moralised market expanded and a local standard-setter assumed the role of market building and coordination, a step that resulted in the sidelining of the pioneering market movement activists. Hence, examining devices not in isolation, but in their interplay and over time (Dodier and Barbot 2016), provides an analytical lens to capture the shifting and at times unintended relationalities between social movements and various market participants in the process of mainstreaming moralised markets such as fair trade (Goodman 2010).

Focusing also on 'the restraining (instead of only the enabling) dimension of market devices' (Velthuis 2020, p. 90), our results highlight how devices can spark unintended consequences for those who employ them (Erturk et al. 2013; Fligstein and Calder 2015; Scott 2003). Some unintended consequences that have scarcely

been studied are the repercussions on those actors who engage in devising. Our study contributes to better understanding these effects, and highlights how devising in the service of market moralisation does not only come at the expense of politicisation, as others have claimed (Edward and Tallontire 2009, Tallontire and Nelson 2013); it can also involve a shift in politics from valuing contestation and controversy to focusing on the expansion and proliferation of the moralised market. In other words, our findings substantiate the insight that 'it really is the *means* that matter just as much as the ends' (Goodman 2010, p. 115). Specifically, the sequencing of devices—understood here as the very means referenced in the quote—can unleash novel dynamics within the market moralisation project, which can have unintended consequences as they gradually build on and interconnect with one another (Geiger and Gross 2018; McFall 2009; Velthuis 2020; Geiger et al. 2014).

We found that the social movement actors who initiated the devising and moralising of the flower market became marginalised in the process of deploying a certification standard, pushing the pioneering social movement actors to the margins of the moralised flower market. While the marginalisation of those who initiated the moralisation is not unusual (Balsiger 2021), our analysis differs from prior research showing that the exit of social movement actors often results from the entry of powerful corporations (Balsiger 2021; Raynolds 2009). Instead of emphasising tensions between social movement actors and corporations (e.g., Bartley and Child 2011; King and Pearce 2010)—a conflict often highlighted in the context of the fair trade movement, particularly with respect to targeted retailers and large-scale food traders (e.g., Goodman 2004)—our analysis highlights how the sequencing of devices can generate conflictual dynamics within the movement itself. These insights extend research on movement-induced, moralised markets and devising by highlighting that markets backed by a single, powerful market device often have a history of multiple devices, and that conflicts do not only occur in moralised markets, where multiple devices coexist and compete (Suckert 2018; Reinecke et al. 2012; Fouilleux and Loconto 2017).

The second unintended conflict that resulted from the devising involved spillover effects from the local Swiss fair trade movement to the international fair trade movement: the conflict over whether plantations could be fair and thus part of the fair trade system (Besky 2008; Raynolds 2017). Our analysis detailed how the flower market devising had important cross-sectoral effects by creating a fair trade certification standard for plantations. Detached from what the flower activists intended, this certification standard for plantations was later extended to other products in the international fair trade system, provoking disputes over the meaning and potential dilution of the fair trade idea, which was originally limited to smallholders. While the extent to which the integration of plantations into the fair trade system benefits producers in the global South remains controversial (e.g., Raynolds and Rosty 2021; Raynolds 2022), it is less disputed that those actors—such as the U.S. Fair Trade Initiative—who advocate for the integration of plantation production are considered the pragmatic wing of the movement and value the scaling of moralised markets over contestation (Tallontire and Nelson 2013). Our study sheds new light on this debate by showing that the integration of plantations into the fair trade system is the result of a devising process initiated by Swiss flower activists who certainly did not intend to push the entire fair trade system towards a politics of scalability; rather, their intention was to establish a local market for fair flowers.

Given that the devising we studied might give the impression that devising and moralisation undergo a linear process from heating to cooling until reaching an endpoint, it is crucial to emphasise that devising is never truly complete (Geiger et al. 2014). Furthermore, multiple and even competing or conflicting devices can simultaneously be at play, with new concerns constantly emerging (e.gl, Arnold and Dombrowski 2022; Niederle et al. 2020). However, based on our findings, specifically for these potentially messier devising processes, we encourage future research to pay attention not only to intended outcomes, such as the creation of a moralised market, but also to the unintended ones.

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