

INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE PROMOTION OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST GASTRONOMY

Research in institutional theory has been concerned with processes of institutionalization and its relationship with the actions of institutional entrepreneurs (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; Lawrence & Phillips, 2004; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), which are actors who engage in institutional change (Lawrence & Phillips, 2004), purposefully aiming to disrupt a field. Particularly, previous research has already shown how these institutional entrepreneurs can change, *de facto*, old rooted practices in fields where one type of actor or organization provides the predominant field logic, that is, the predominant reasoning that sustains most organizational practices (Friedland & Alford, 1991). Examples of such are the participation of patients in the decisions of the pharmaceutical industry (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004) or how fashion bloggers changed predominant practices in the fashion field (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015).

To challenge dominant positions in a field, the institutional entrepreneur must gain legitimacy over the proposed change in the field. Legitimacy is the result of an ongoing and negotiated process of legitimization (Suddaby, Bitktine, & Haack, 2017), through which actors use language in order to institutionalize their positions (Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004). Language is the tool that is used to establish concurrent logic in a field (Green & Li, 2011). The concurrent logics will dispute for hegemony with other logics or they will both share legitimization in a certain field (Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Press, Arnould, Murray, & Strand, 2014).

However, the legitimization process in a field conducted by institutional entrepreneurs may go through several constrains. In this work, we particularly examine the construction of coherence in discourses of institutional entrepreneurs and examine the way in which this lack of coherence interferes with a changing field, by also interfering with the construction of a logic that sustains the legitimate practices of such actors.

Our research context is in the Brazilian gastronomic field. This field has recently undergone changes, somewhat in line with typical emerging trends in the international culinary field. These changes include the relation between the techniques and/or ingredients as the main elements constitutive of culinary capital (Naccarato & Lebesco, 2013; Ray, 2016). In Brazil, the “rediscovery of Brazilian ingredients” (Atala, 2013) resulted mainly from the influence of famous chefs - and prestigious NGOs - that promote the ingredients for the Amazon forest, mostly focusing on the tradition of Pará state (whose main city is Belem), which is the object of our research. In that context, heritage becomes a critical issue. Furthermore, the Amazon region has itself historically evoked a plethora of stories, meanings and narratives in the imagination of the Brazilian political and economic elite, which has had profound effects on the [sometimes paternalistic] public policies designed for the region, which still suffers from poverty and underdevelopment.

Therefore, other than contributing with institutional theory literature, our work touches upon questions related to the creations and preservation of traditions, sustainable development and social entrepreneurship, exploring characteristics that are typical of emerging and underdeveloped countries (Marquis & Raynard, 2015), answering a call (Marquis & Raynard, 2015) for more institutional theory studies in contexts in which infrastructure problems abound, where the role of the state is prominent and where economic development usually goes hand in hand with social development and population well-being discourses.

Method

We have used diverse sources of data, collected and analyzed through a basic ethnographic approach. First, we collected secondary data. We have analyzed three books written by chefs or Brazilian scholars on the country's gastronomic heritage. Then, we collected newspapers, magazine articles and social media data, amounting 101,034 words and 298 pictures.

Second, we conducted interviews sixteen interviews with chefs, experts, typical food producers and with the director of Instituto Paulo Martins that promotes food from Para across the country and abroad. Furthermore, we conducted observations in São Paulo, which is the major Brazilian market and in Belem, including several visits to the main Belem market - Ver-o-Peso - and many restaurants in the region. Field notes were written and served as material for the analysis. The interviews, which ranged between 25 and 108 minutes, were recorded and transcribed verbatim. (three

Data analysis was emergent, taking a grounded perspective (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The interpretative analysis of the interviews and also of the other texts produced through the field research involved an iterative part-to-whole reading. This process resulted in a holistic understanding of each informant perspective and also about the similarities within the data.

Data analysis

The context: Pará, a state in the Amazon, historically and gastronomically

The history of Brazilian culinary formation relates to colonization and miscegenation processes. European, native Brazilian, slaves' and immigrants' techniques have merged with typical native ingredients to form a national culinary culture that is far from homogeneous, apart perhaps from the widespread custom of eating rice and beans (Dória, 2014). In Belem, the same process has taken place: the elites were certainly influenced by the typical Portuguese cuisine, but have used typically native techniques and ingredients (Santos, 2005).

Even so, the Brazilian elites tend to have habits more typical of their western counterparts and tend to see foods which are typically fruits of slave and native-Brazilian culture as "ethnic" as well (Fajans, 2012). Recently, the emergence of the phenomenon of foodies (Johnston & Baumann,

2010) has changed the field of gastronomy, bringing to it discourses of omnivorousness and exoticism that reconfigure its institutional form.

It is in this context that institutional entrepreneurs have been working to insert elements of the culinary from Para in restaurants in other states, deemed to be more cosmopolitan, such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, as well as promoting the state of Para as a gastronomical touristic spot.

In search of coherence: three discourses in search of legitimacy

We found three logics promoted by institutional entrepreneurs, as described in Figure 1: activism, faux-heritage, and bureaucratization, that vary on the level of negotiation with the heritage of traditional populations' culinary. The discursive tension takes place specially regarding the modern techniques that are in direct confrontation to traditional production and cooking skills, as well as regarding the position of the institutional entrepreneurs' discourses in relation to the market, creating the points of coherence and dissent showcased in Figure 1. Table 1 summarizes our results by describing the position of each discourse regarding its relationship with heritage, the logics promoted by these institutional entrepreneurs who sustain such position, the resources they are mobilizing and institutions that participate in the process of legitimization, and an example of each discourse.

Figure 1: Logics and points of discursive coherence and dissent

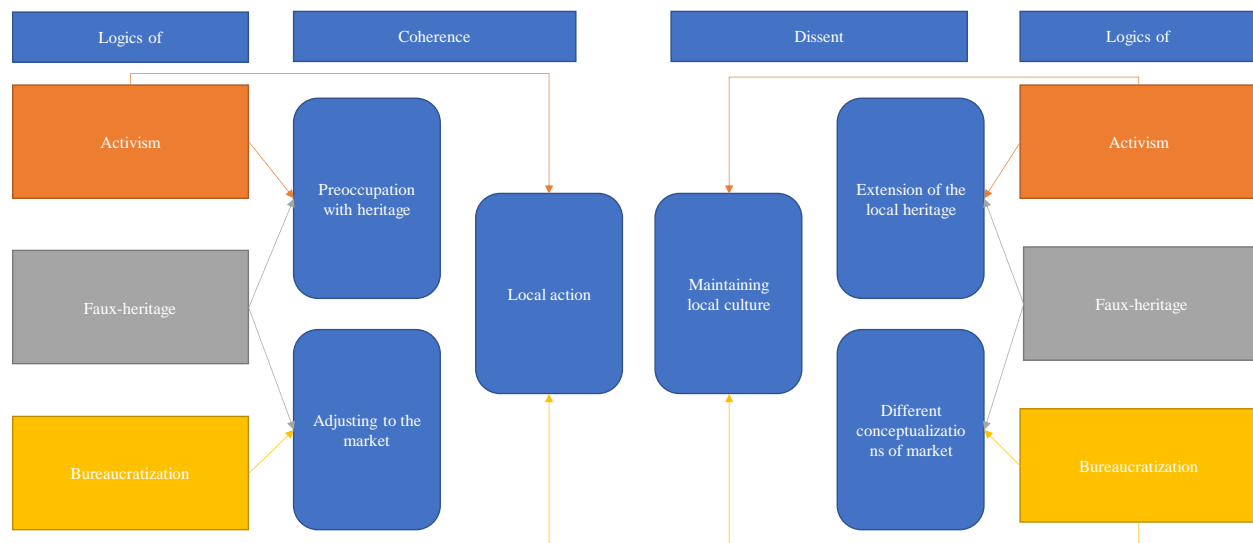


Table 1 – Summarization of the results

Position regarding heritage	Logics promoted by institutional entrepreneur	Mobilized resources/ institutions that participate	Examples
Preservation of traditions: entrepreneurs sustain that local populations' traditions must remain free from the interference of the market	Logics of activism: the logic promoted are similar to anti-market activists' and social movements in general (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004)	Network of activists, academics, United Nations programs	“It is not possible to believe that they (<i>referring to other institutional entrepreneurs</i>) are engaged in defending the Amazon cuisine. Without our traditions, practices, aesthetics, and culture, the tourism they want to promote” “Here, they want to turn a cheese production traditional facility in a surgery center, which suppresses the Marajo heritage to provide to a market that is not our own” (Tainá Marajoara, activist)
Traditions mildly constitute the market offers: actors engage in creating heritage by preserving some traditions, whilst working in a market-logics	Logic of faux heritage: the logic promoted resonates with sustainable development to insert some traditions and ingredients in the foodie culture context: it creates a (faux) heritage-based market	Associations of chefs, some support of the government, and NGOs that coordinate a network of local producers and cosmopolite markets	“If we understand that there are products of great quality, but lacking specific technology... because if you extract tucupi (<i>sauce extracted from wild manioc root</i>)... there is the artisanal way to do it, but you can also develop equipment for that... (...) I see a huge potential” (Joana Martins, head of the Paulo Martins Institute)
Ingredient beats tradition: heritage is built only through the ingredient. Industrial techniques are more important than local traditions	Logics of bureaucratization: promotes a typical business-bureaucratic logic, aiming to homogenize and standardize production according to modern norms	Business colleges, federal government, state government	“This college offered us a course to understand the production and distribution chain of the acai berry. We had classes every week day, from 2:30 to 7pm... and we were there, my husband and I. Sesupa, Sebrae and Senai (<i>government institutions that foster entrepreneurship and industrialization</i>) sent coaches to teach us the standards of production according to the decree 326 of sanitary law (promulgated in January 2012)” (Selma, acai vendor)

Legitimacy and coherence

Institutional entrepreneurs' positions and resources lack coherence, an important element of institutionalization (Phillips et al., 2004) of discursive strategies. We posit here that this lack of coherence interferes with the process of legitimization in the culinary field (Suddaby et al., 2017) of a model that can consistently articulate the need of sustainable development for the region and the value-proposition of the Amazon culinary milieu, sometimes sold as a set of ingredients and sometimes as cultural heritage, depending on the institutional entrepreneur who leads the institutional work. In Figure 1, we have shown the discursive points of coherence and dissent between the three logics that were found.

Discussion and conclusions

The results show that the legitimization process (Suddaby et al., 2017) that is attempted through discursive strategies (Phillips et al., 2004) suffers from lack of coherence in the attempt on institutionalization of a set of a heritage in the culinary field. Two different definitions of heritage collide, and for one to be legitimate, the other must be considered harmful. The discursive strategies of institutional entrepreneurs have points of coherence and dissent regarding crucial points, such as the extent of preservation of traditions, adequacy to consumer markets and connection to local population's sustainable development. In terms of theoretical contributions, we have illustrated a legitimization process and argued that legitimacy is not a property of discourses of institutional entrepreneurs who work for institutionalization of their divergent proposals (Phillips et al., 2004), but rather a constitutive element that is built through the emancipation of coherence among different logics (Friedland & Alford, 1991). This work has several limitations, which opens opportunities to new research. First, we have interviewed different of actors, but our consumers' data came mostly from social media. Therefore, we have not looked the experiences of consumers, whether foodies or not. Perhaps trying to understand how these discourses affect consumers directly could open new avenues for understating a legitimization process. Second, we have only looked at Belem do Pará and São Paulo, taking the former as the exotic and the second as cosmopolitan. Perhaps a more spread geographical approach could improve the vision of the institutionalization process.

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