

Two Essays on Morality and Consumption

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Two Essays on Morality and Consumption**

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Morality in consumption practices do not necessarily follow a clear script but rather evolve as they are practiced. Individuals attain specific values and beliefs through their primary socialization, which can change through their adult lives. In addition, moral values are not essentialized but contextually relevant. Morality is of interest to academics, marketers, and policymakers, given the existence of multiple, and at times contradictory, moral ideologies shaping consumption. In addition, moral forms in consumption are negotiated among the various marketplace actors. However, the literature has rather been uninvolved with such dynamics. To put forward this nature of morality, my dissertation investigates the role of morality in shaping consumption practices and the interwoven dynamics of the social and the marketplace.

The first essay provides a meta-synthesis on the literature in marketing, sociology, and psychology on morality. The paper aims at remedying the current drawbacks in the study of morality in consumption. I offer a new reconceptualization that advocates for a dynamic, adaptable, relational, and contextual judgment on the morality of consumption objects, practices, or fields. Guided by the re-conceptualization, I put forward a typology of moralized domains composed of five types: harmonized, divided, dispersed, breached, and debated. Finally, the essay provides diverse theoretical implications and substantive areas of empirical application.

The second essay investigates the influence of acquisition of new moral value on practice(s) and the role of the social circle and the market in the performance of the new practice. Through an empirical study of vegans, I theorize the journey of moralized practice transformation. My findings show a two-phase process of transformation. The first phase involves changes in the primary practice(s) and takes place over four stages: awakening, destabilization, reconfiguration, and re-habitation. Second, the changes in the primary practice(s) extend to other connected practices, eventually leading to their transformation. The paper adds to practice theory and provides managers with recommendations for appealing to consumers during the various stages of practice transformation.

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Zeynep Arsel helped with the conceptual development of both essays as well as providing feedback for data collection, analysis, and preparation of the dissertation. The writing was done by Aya Aboelenien with feedback from Zeynep Arsel.

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## DISSERTATION INTRODUCTION

The current COVID-19 outbreak magnifies the need for understanding morality in our everyday consumption and business practices. To contain the disaster, governments call on citizens to consume in a moralized manner: First, citizens are expected to make fewer shopping trips and buy only essentials grocery items so that others also have the opportunity to buy the essentials. Second, governments are relying on individuals to respect the ban on gatherings so that society can protect the most vulnerable. Thus, citizens forgo their rituals and gatherings even during religious holidays (e.g., Easter) for their moral responsibility towards others. Third, citizens are asked to stay home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms, so they limit community transmission. Fourth, citizens are encouraged to lend a helping hand in consumption practices (e.g., going grocery shopping for their elderly neighbors), to their communities. While some of these practices were considered moral before the pandemic, (i.e., helping the community), other practices became moralized consumption practices (i.e., shopping in a very particular manner, shopping for others, and limiting gatherings).

Governments also rely on businesses to support their societies, (1) to consider the best interest of their employees, (2) to help front line workers through shifting production to personal protective equipment, (3) to rearrange their work stations following public health guidelines (4) to change their business practices to be able to offer their services in a new way (e.g., offering take outs even if the restaurant did not have the option before). In addition, government officials themselves are conducting their practices differently. Officials hold daily briefings as a moral obligation to keep the public informed and educated on the most recent measures. In Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's advice incorporates changes to daily hygiene, consumption (e.g., shopping trips), and social interactions. Governments are also interfering to ensure that essential products are available on the shelves (e.g., food trucks still cross the US-Canadian border). The message is that responsible collective behavior is the only way to limit the spread of COVID-19. The ways individuals, corporations, groups, and governments to moralize their everyday practices (i.e., their ways of life), for a greater good, is the motivation behind my dissertation.

This dissertation is situated at the crossroads of sociology, anthropology, and marketing. I use theories from the former two disciplines, mainly practice and assemblage theories, to inform

the marketing literature. The focus is to highlight the pivotal role of morality in driving and limiting consumption. As individuals do not operate or live in this world in a vacuum, we exist within the realms of others. Our consumption practices and decisions influence not just our hedonic pleasure but the pleasure and even the existence of others. This interlinked relation is visible in calls for living a minimalist lifestyle (Rodriguez 2018), for donating (Warren and Walker 1991), for avoiding the exploitation of animals (Cherry 2006), and for avoiding fast fashion (Joy et al. 2012). This link raises important issues regarding the importance of studying morality in consumption (Arnould and Thompson 2015; Askegaard and Linnet 2011; Bauman 2001; Bertilsson 2015; Black 2011; Caruana 2007b, 2007a; Wilk 2001). As negative consumption consequences become apparent, consumers reflect on their consumption to try to adhere to their moral codes (see Cherrier 2009; Glickman 2009; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Simon 2011; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). While institutions dictate certain forms of moral consumption, individuals also have enough agency to decide (Schor 1998, 2007). Individuals can follow mainstream moral values or can decide to adopt a minority moral value.

While researchers have examined the interplay between morality and consumption, two gaps are still present. First, the existing work, on the interplay between morality and consumption, lacks a coherent conceptualization, needs a better dialogue between interrelated disciplines, and necessitates a generative framework for researchers. To remedy this, the first essay, “Moralized Consumption: Actors, Process and Typology,” provides a literature synthesis on the study of morality in consumption, particularly the dynamics between consumers, corporations, and institutions in the market (Arnould and Thompson 2005, 2015; Hilton 2004; Loureiro et al. 2016; Wilk 2001)) and provides an overarching framework of morality and consumption. Building on this framework, I put forward a typology of five moralized consumption domains: harmonized, debated, divided, breached, and dispersed. The essay later delineates the differences between these types applying it to the existing research and providing possible extensions.

Second, researchers are often silent on tracking the process of change after individuals adopt moralized products and lifestyles. Building on the contribution of essay one, the second essay provides an empirical analysis of one of the moralized domain types. The second essay, “Morally Triggered Practice(s) Transformation,” investigates practice transformations in a

dispersed consumption domain. My findings demonstrate a two-phase transformation journey. The second essay has multiple theoretical implications to practice theory and ends with recommendations for businesses and policymakers to provide support to individuals going through moralized practice transformations.

Through its two essays, this dissertation adds to the marketing literature on the study of morality in consumption. First, it provides an encompassing, coherent conceptualization to guide future studies. Second, it pinpoints expansion ideas for myriad research avenues that can benefit from the re-conceptualization. Third, it provides a micro-analysis of consumers who adopt a minority moral practice and their interaction with their affinity groups. The dissertation offers managers an understanding of the pivotal role of morality in driving consumption. Going back to the COVID-19 situation, the dissertation essay highlights the possibility of a newly established moral association to mundane consumption situations theorizes the process through which this happens. Grocery shopping and social gatherings are now being moralized consumption choices. Additionally, my dissertation can aid policymakers in understanding individuals' personal and interpersonal challenges when shifting to new moral practices. The two essays highlight various ways in which businesses can aid these individuals throughout moralized transformations.

# ESSAY 1: MORALIZED CONSUMPTION: ACTORS, PROCESSES, AND A TYPOLOGY

## ABSTRACT

This essay conceptualizes and operationalizes the interplay between morality and consumption domains, which I label as moralized consumption. It advocates considering the contextual and relational aspects when studying a moralized phenomenon. This reconceptualization remedies the static dichotomous view of morality to incorporate a fluid multidimensional perspective. In addition, moralized consumption reflects the interwoven roles of the various actors (i.e., the individuals, the affinity groups, and the overarching institutions) in the moral structuring of consumption domains. First, I provide a meta-synthesis of the existing literature on morality and identify the marketplace actors that moralize domains of consumption. Through assemblage and institutional theories, I develop a framework that shows how consumption domains are moralized. I, then, identify and explain five moralized domains that differ in terms of the alignment of marketplace actors' values, the translation phase of the moralized assemblage, and the support of the legitimacy pillars. These are harmonized, debated, divided, breached, and dispersed moralized domains. This essay contributes theoretically to the literature on morality and consumption by putting forward a conceptualization and a typology that remedies the oversights in the literature. The essay also offers a fruitful theoretical extension to study other potential moralizing actors, the domains' susceptibility to contestation, and finally, the possible integration between the identified types.

*Keywords:* morality, consumption, legitimacy, assemblages, objects, practices

## INTRODUCTION

An intriguing issue, still in its theoretical infancy, concerns the moral constitution of consumption and the nature of moral dilemmas and challenges that the commercialization of everyday life, including its most intimate moments, pose for consumers.

(Arnould and Thompson 2005, 876)

Morality underlines consumption in a wide range of domains such as religion, brand choice, subcultures, green consumption, corporate responsibility, corporate transgressions, donation, gift-giving, moral economy, and consumer activism. As consumption puts consumers in dilemmas of fairness, self-versus group interests, and immediate versus delayed gratification (Henry 2010), morality becomes an underlying driving factor for multiple consumption practices. These dilemmas raise concerns about the immorality of consumption (see Bauman 2007; Borgmann 2000). However, it is not consumption by itself that should be condemned as immoral (see Bauman 2001; Miller 2001), but rather specific forms of consumption are seen problematic (see Hilton 2004; Ulver-Sneistrup, Askegaard, and Kristensen 2011). The moralization of these specific forms of consumption signifies the importance of understanding the moral framing of specific domains. In this essay, I provide a framework that explains how some domains of consumption are moralized and provide research avenues for the use of this conceptualization.

Earlier research suggests that consumers have enough agency and sovereignty to limit their desire and choose ethical consumption practices that are of no harm (Schor, 1998). Individuals are concerned about the consequences of their consumption on other humans (e.g., sweatshop laborers), the animals (e.g., circus and slaughterhouses), and the planet (e.g., global warming). This is evident in the rise of ethical consumerism (Bilewicz, Imhoff, and Drogosz 2011; Joy et al. 2012; Rodriguez 2018). Institutions are capitalizing on this trend by advocating people to consume and choose morally (Giesler and Veresiu 2014; Veresiu and Giesler 2018).

Consumers, from their side, pressure companies to produce and act ethically as well. Such pressure is visible in the rise of anti-consumption movements (e.g., boycotts) (Cherrier 2009; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Thompson and Arsel 2004). Consumers call out corporations on their moral hypocrisy (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Thompson and Arsel 2004), and moral transgressions (Haberstroh et al. 2017). Such consumer practices push

companies and brands to adhere to the new values and concerns of their consumers (Davies and Crane 2003). Consumers' pressure and role in the moralization of consumption are evident in multiple industries. Their role gave rise to alternative forms of production, including fair-trade coffee, green products, electric housing, ethical fashion, and corporate social responsibility campaigns (Carlile 2017; Kateman 2019; Scott 2019). This dynamic of morality in the market necessitates an elaboration on the proliferation of morality in everyday consumer culture, and its influence on interpersonal relations and market systems (see Campbell 2005; Ulver-Sneistrup et al. 2011). Thus, it is crucial to understand the recent moral dynamics in the market between consumers and institutions (Arnould and Thompson 2005, 2015; Hilton 2004; Loureiro et al. 2016; Wilk 2001).

Despite the recent calls to study morality and research to address these calls, some limitations muddle the conceptual domain and create ambiguities and analytical inconsistencies. Through a synthesis of the literature in marketing, sociology, and psychology, I summarize these limitations as 1) a lack of conceptual clarity, 2) a disconnect between disciplines, 3) the overemphasis in studying specific contexts, and 4) the insufficiency of frameworks to operationalize morality. Overcoming these limitations help exhibit the intertwined relation between consumption and morality, pinpoint their dynamics, highlight the role of various actors in this relation, and expand the research avenues.

In this essay, I remedy the above oversights by providing an overarching framework of morality and consumption. In doing so, I introduce a conceptual apparatus to theorize the link between them, which I label: moralized consumption. This term enables a process theorization of morality rather than viewing it as an inherent quality of specific research domains, topics, or contexts. The concept of moralized consumption applies to various domains, including objects (e.g., gifts, green products), practices (e.g., donating, and butchering) and fields (e.g., sustainable consumption). After providing my new conceptualization, I apply my typology to the existing literature on morality and consumption. The typology incorporates the alignment in values between market-actors, the contestation of the assemblage, and the existing legitimacy pillars to account for the differences between distinct domains. The resulting typology consists of harmonized, debated, divided, breached, and dispersed moralized domains.



This conceptualization and typology are essential for marketing scholars for several reasons. First, my conceptualization identifies the main characteristics of each moralized consumption domain, the main dynamics of structuring its morality, and the role of the various actors in this moral structuring. This elaborate identification provides conceptual clarity and theoretical usefulness for the study of moralized consumption. It sheds light on how consumers experience the moralized domains, and how a recursive array of actors shapes these domains. Second, my typology is applied to existing research, highlighting the oversights of some of the papers, and offers possible extensions. Thus, it pushes the boundaries of the current research and offers fruitful research ideas.

I organize this essay in five sections. First, I briefly summarize the literature on morality and consumption in psychology, sociology, and marketing and their assumptions. I then elaborate on and synthesize this literature to uncover their theoretical oversights and highlight opportunities for a consolidated conceptualization. Next, I present my conceptualization, which is grounded in the intersection of assemblage and institutional theories. Following this, I identify the main actors responsible for moralizing a context and the process of such moralization. I, later, use the conceptualization and the identified actors to present a typology of moralized consumption. Fifth, I demonstrate the dynamism of the moralized domains by presenting an example and its movement across the domains. Finally, I present the theoretical implications for the study of moralized consumption and broad research areas that can capitalize on my conceptualization. To unpack my conceptualization, I start with a careful reading of existing work on morality in consumption.

## **STATE OF THE LITERATURE ON MORALITY AND CONSUMPTION**

Researchers in different fields have studied morality in a rather fragmented manner. Of interest to my essay are papers in psychology, sociology, and marketing. I excluded papers in philosophy and religious studies for myriad reasons. First, both disciplines did not focus on consumption related contexts but rather inquired on the morality of values. Second, philosophers, like Kant, Singer, Aristotle and others are interested in concretely establishing an inherent moral judgment around various values. In other words, they were concerned with labelling specific values (i.e., honesty, integrity, lying) as moral or immoral contingent on either the act itself (as in

the deontological approach), the consequences of the act (as in the utilitarian approach) or finally on the moral identity (as in the virtue ethics approach) (Gert and Gert 2017). Such conversations are not applicable to consumption domains as consumers' continuously change their moral judgment on various objects, practices and fields of consumption. Finally, in religious studies, researchers treated religion and morality as synonymous and focused on delineating the differences in values and opinions across various religious groups (see differences in Baker, Molle, and Bader 2020; Perry 2013).

Scholars in the disciplines involved in overt consumption choices (i.e., psychology, sociology and marketing) provided discrete and disjointed theorizations of the subject without much conversing with each other. This section presents a synthesis of prior research on morality and consumption to demarcate the theoretical motivations, conceptualization, and research questions of various academic fields. In most of the previous studies, "consumers' moralistic identity work is treated as an untheorized background factor, with the primary analytic focus placed on other theoretical issues, [however] if read for their latent moralistic implications, these studies provide empirical evidence that consumers can readily invert the jeremiad against consumerism to exalt specific consumption practices, brands, lifestyle interests, and alternative systems of exchange on the grounds that they possess redeeming virtues lacking in mainstream commercialism" (Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010, 1017). In addition, other studies downplayed the role of morality in the research paper; however, if examined carefully, the underlying role of morality can be uncovered. For example, take the work by Humphreys on the legitimation of the Casino market. Though she did not overtly discuss the role of morality in the process, it is traced in the content analysis words of purity, ethical, corrupt, bribe (Humphreys 2010b). Thus, I incorporate in my synthesis both articles that either clearly studied morality or incorporated it as an underlying factor. I will next explain my method of synthesizing the existing literature.

## **Method**

To examine the current state of the literature, this essay relies on meta-synthesis, which "represents the visionary and constructive outcome of an exhaustive analysis project" (Paterson et al. 2011, 110). Meta-synthesis is appropriate for reflecting the developments taking place in a

field of study of diversified methodological and theoretical approaches (Sandelowski and Barroso 2006). Meta-synthesis “can take the researcher into the domain of the assumptions underlying a body of research findings and the interpretations that have been made about it. In particular, it can extend the interpretation from what has been studied to what has not and can permit speculation about why this might be so” (Paterson et al. 2011, 113). Thus, I use qualitative meta-synthesis for analyzing the existing literature.

For conducting the meta-synthesis, as there is little “explicit procedural theory to draw meta-synthesis from, [it is best to aim] for a dynamic, iterative process of thinking, interpreting, creating, theorizing and reflecting (Paterson et al. 2011, 111)” to reach the final set of relevant research papers. To accomplish this objective, I identified key journals in each of the disciplines. These journals are selected for their strong impact on their respective fields and for their different target audiences that are relevant to the study of consumers and marketing. The impact was determined by the published impact factor of these journals. In addition, these journals publish diversified papers investigating issues related to moralized consumption at the micro, macro, and meso levels. The list of journals includes American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, Annual Review of Sociology, Consumption Markets and Culture, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Consumer Culture, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Management, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Judgement and Decision Making, and Marketing Theory. These journals allow for a comprehensive synthesis that brings interesting, impactful, and complementary points of view.

In these journals, I searched for keywords to select relevant articles. These keywords are moral(s)(ity), ethic(s), sustainability, value(s), and responsibility. I identified these keywords as they were interchangeably used in the journals to discuss research on morality and consumption (Besio and Pronzini 2014; Joy et al. 2012; McGavin 2013; Thompson 1996). Thus, I use the word morality to refer to these various keywords unless a different term is used in the respectively discussed paper. In the beginning, the selection included the ‘anywhere’ option to ensure a comprehensive search. Later, I narrowed the articles to ensure that the keywords did not only appear once yet were evident in the paper. This narrowing down first included the relevancy of the title, later the abstract, followed by the full article (ibid). I only included published papers

in the past two decades between (1992-2019) (see Jensen and Allen 1996). This step created 65 articles on the topic.

Next, I identified the conceptualization of morality in these papers through the authors' definition (or lack of definition) of morality, related constructs, level of analysis, context, and the researchers' assumptions about morality. Later, my research motivation informed the narrowing down of the relevant existing work (Castilhos, Dolbec, and Veresiu 2017; Sandelowski and Barroso 2006; Timulak 2009). This guidance led to the exclusion of papers that do not handle a consumption domain but talk about morals in more abstract terms. Papers included for mapping the typology comes from a range of methodological and theoretical approaches to provide a comprehensive account and a re-conceptualization of morality and consumption. Finally, informed by the current conceptualization of morality in the literature, my emergent themes, identified gaps, and typology, my final set is comprised of 48 articles that I present in the appendix (1). Some of the moralized contexts include donations, gift-giving, corporate social responsibility, brand resistance, brand choice, green consumption, and ethical consumerism. The following section will cover the broader domains of research to which the articles are a part of and their treatment of morality.

## **Overview of Morality in Relevant Disciplines**

### *Psychology*

Research in psychology is focused on drivers and consequences of individual moral reasoning, attitudes, and behavior. Earlier psychologists treated morality from a cognitive decision-making process (Adams and Raisborough 2010). The individual was perceived to be capable of processing all the information presented and behave morally or immorally based on their comprehension of the presented information (Bandura 1999; Kohlberg 1969; Piaget 1932). Later, this process was challenged by psychologists who believed that moral reasoning is more of a justification for decisions made through a built-in intuition rather than a careful assessment of a situation (Haidt, Bjorklund, and Sinnott-Armstrong 2008; Kunda 1990). Moral judgments on others are rather embodied, and reasonings are further needed to justify such initial moral judgments (Greene and Haidt 2002). Given that psychologists often focus on the individual process of moral emotions, reasoning, motivations and judgment (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek

2009; Greene and Haidt 2002; Haidt 2003); and the stability of the moral identity (Cherrier and Murray 2007), they overlook the socio-cultural processes at play and the fluid nature of morality. As a result, they did not capture the possibility of the social construction of moral identity and judgment, nor the fluidity of the moral identity sharpened through interactions with other actors (e.g., other consumers, news, scandals on social media, and corporations).

### *Consumer Research*

Treatments in this discipline are mainly phenomenological and focus on four different streams: the first stream focuses on green and sustainable consumption as a definitive moralized consumption behavior (Grayson 2014). It aims to understand consumers' moral perception, feelings, adoption, and purchase intention of green and sustainable products. This literature uses a normative-descriptive approach: the team of researchers had a predetermined idea of the morality of specific consumption acts. For example, Lee, Winterich, and Ross Jr (2014) and Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) frame donations as universally moral, referred to in the papers as ethical, without establishing to the reader their justification for the ethics of donation. They later collect their data to test this predetermined idea (Moisander and Pesonen 2002). Second, researchers investigated consumers' evaluations of corporate social responsibility campaigns and initiatives (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001) and their perception of such campaigns to greenwash unethical corporate practices (Kang, Germann, and Grewal 2016; Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz 2009). Third, research has looked into consumers' reactions about the moral transgressions by brands, companies, governments, and endorsers (Bhattacharjee, Berman, and Reed 2012) and the influence on acceptance, forgiveness (Tsarenko and Tojib 2015), and purchase intention (Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, and Schwarz 2006). Finally, research has investigated consumers' donation behavior to various campaigns and their associated moral feeling and warm glow (Lee et al. 2014; Tezer and Bodur 2019) without first asking consumers for their perspective on the relevancy of morality to such contexts. Thus, researchers in this domain do not start with questioning whether morality is applicable in the contexts they are studying nor with understanding the morality from the consumers' perspective. They start with the assumption that morality is inherent and agreed upon in their contexts. However, morality is not universal, and the term has caused disagreements among the wider network of researchers and consumers.

## *Sociology*

Research in sociology focuses on three main themes: defining and measuring morality, investigating the source of morality, and showing the effects of having a moral action (Hitlin and Vaisey 2013). Morality is defined in three ways (1) an objective judgment tool that defines right and wrong and 'the good' within a given society (Durkheim and Swain 2008; Stets and Carter 2012; Weber 2013), (2) a fluid-structure resulting from the fragmentation of the society and individuals have agency in determining what is right and what is wrong (Bauman 1993), (3) a dialectical social process by which the norms that (re-) define right and good are expressed and made meaningful (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Ellul 1969; Zigon 2009). The sources of morality were studied in conjunction with social class (Black 2011; Lamont 1992, 2001; Lukes 2008), race and ethnicity (Farrugia, Smyth, and Harrison 2016). Finally, sociologists investigated the social aspects of morality on public policy initiatives (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012). There is a call for greater work in the sociology of morality for expanding the literature on cultural fluidity, identifying its other potential social drivers, and highlighting its social importance (Hitlin and Vaisey 2013). Sociologists highlighted the importance of studying the interplay between consumption and morality as the former raises moral dilemmas of self-versus other benefits and immediate versus delayed gratification (Warde 2005; Wilk 2001); however, their call has fairly gone unnoticed.

## *Consumer Culture Theory*

Researchers in this stream of research, following the socio-cultural dimension of consumption, treat the interplay between morality and consumption in at least four distinct streams: The first stream studies the sociocultural drivers of morality in terms of institutions, religion, and government (Giesler and Veresiu 2014; McAlexander et al. 2014; Sandikci and Ger 2010). The second stream on subcultures of consumption looked at group morality and its role in establishing a hierarchy and maintaining order within the group (Schouten, Martin, and McAlexander 2007; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). The third stream focuses on brand resistance due to the dis-synergy between the values of the brand and the values of individuals (Izberk-Bilgin 2012; Simon 2011; Thompson and Arsel 2004) or associating the values of the brands to other desirable group values to increase its acceptance (Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010). Finally, researchers advocate the difference between moral markets in opposition

to other forms of markets, e.g., moral economy (Sherry Jr 1983; Thompson 1996; Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012) and moralization of markets by conscious consumers (Moisander and Pesonen 2002; Stehr and Adolf 2010).

## **THEORETICAL OVERSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

While the various streams of literature inform theory, managers, and public policy about the drivers of moral consumption, moral identity, and the emergence of moral markets, they come with their limitations. I identify five main problems with the study of morality in the literature: 1) a lack of a clear definition of the moral significance of the studied phenomenon, 2) a stable and dichotomous construction of morality as a construct (i.e., a phenomenon is either inherently moral or immoral), 3) the over-representation of certain contexts over others in the study of morality, 4) the separate treatment of morality from other aspects of social life, and 5) the study of dispersed moral in the market rather than the interplay between these actions. In this section, I delve deeper into these problems and provide my suggested remedies.

First, researchers start with a tacit assumption that the term morality is self-explanatory. In other words, researchers assume that other researchers, readers, the subjects of study, and managers understand the moral significance of the context. Thus, the papers often start without a clear conceptualization or definition of the term morality and the authors' justification for moral connotation to the phenomenon of study. Out of the 48 articles in my synthesis, only 15 articles had a clear conceptual definition of morality. A summary of these definitions in the literature is provided in appendix (2). Xie, Bagozzi, and Grønhaug (2015) studied the role of moral emotions in judging corporate green and non-green actions. They explained that they consider moral emotions are “combinations of inherited and learned reactions to events violating one’s ethical sensitivities” (334) and of interest to their paper were gratitude, contempt, anger, and disgust. They defined anger as “a belief that we, or our friends, have been unfairly slighted, which causes in us both painful feelings and a desire or impulse for revenge” (334). However, their discussion of the remaining emotions does not have a clear moral connotation even though they are classified as moral emotions. Thus, this lack of clarity leaves the reader puzzled regarding the moral aspect of the remaining three constructs and their relevancy to the higher construct of moral emotions. In general, a lack of conceptualization is problematic. It can misguide the

research questions and can bear the risk of confirmation bias where results confirm the researchers' predefined assumptions. To remedy this oversight, researchers using the word morality need to define it from the perspective and experience of the actors studied, rather than a-priori assumptions.

Second, existing research treats morality as an absolutist dichotomous variable, in which a phenomenon is either moral or immoral regardless of context. This oversight drives two main issues. First, it neglects the fact that the same phenomenon can be considered irrelevant to moral judgment in other contexts. Thus, the dualistic treatment of morality forces moral framing on phenomena, research questions, and topics that do not need such imposition. Second, it assumes a stable moral connotation to specific domains. For example, disgust was not perceived to be linked to morality in a Northern American context and was not studied from this angle before. However, in a study by Haidt, Koller, and Dias (1993), Brazilian consumers judged disgusting acts, even when harmless to others, to be moral violations. This paper demonstrates the contextual construction of the judgment of morality with various phenomena. The same values are considered to be moral violations in one culture and irrelevant to morality in another. Consequently, for future research papers, social and cultural construction need to be constantly taken into consideration to reflect the current moral connotation of the phenomenon. Additionally, researchers need to establish morality contextually and check their own biases. This reformation introduces new avenues for historical analysis of 1) the coupling and decoupling of morality with various aspects of social life and 2) the main actors and institutional resources that change this coupling and decoupling.

Third, the literature has assumed the saliency of the judgment of morality with certain consumption domains over the others. This tendency creates a narrow inclusion of research contexts deemed relevant to morality. In the literature, certain contexts were assumed to be more suitable for studying moral dynamics, while others were rarely associated with the study of morality. One example of the latter is the work on the habitus by Bourdieu. Bourdieu and the subsequent Bourdieusian literature relied heavily on the role of social, economic, and cultural capital in structuring social life and overlooked the possible role of morality (Ignatow 2009). Later on, Ignatow (2009) and Lamont (2001) advocated for the importance of looking at morality as a possible distinction tool. Such transformation on the work of the habitus led successive researchers to re-examine their biases when it comes to studying morality and to expand the



operationalization of habitus (McAlexander et al. 2014; Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013; Sherman 2018). Morality is used, in certain contexts, by individuals to draw boundaries between ones' group and avoidance or stigmatized groups (see Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013).

Another example is the literature on gift-giving and researchers' framing of gifting as a moral act towards others (Sherry Jr 1983; Weinberger and Wallendorf 2011). Gifts are perceived to be appreciated by both the sender, for having a feeling of accomplishment and warm glow (Berking 1999) and the receiver for feeling socially accepted. Recently, Marcoux (2009) challenged this assumption by demonstrating consumers' desire to hire and pay for movers than rely on their friends and family for a gift judged to be a burden. This paper demonstrates that gifts are not necessarily perceived to be a moral act and sometimes are negatively viewed. Thus, the examination of a possible moral aspect to a context that was usually silent in its judgment can lead to more rigor and reflective reality of consumers in research papers.

Fourth, researchers oversimplified the interaction between morality and other aspects of social life. Morality is studied as a sole driver behind a single consumption practice, overlooking the entanglement of morality with other aspects of social life. Morality is a driving factor in consumption; however, it does not operate in a vacuum. It is through its interaction with other aspects of social life (e.g., economic, cultural, or social resources) that consumption practices are shaped. For example, consuming morally interferes with taste preferences, such as the case for fashion. Fashion consumption puts individuals in a moral- taste dilemma to choose one aspect over the others. For example, Sherman (2018), in her work on affluent New Yorkers, was able to highlight the intersection of morality with class and taste practices. She demonstrated how her subjects manage the dilemmas and disagreements in their consumption. These affluent consumers strive for a good balance between their moral values of not spending so much money and their classed taste preferences. Thus, researchers need to study morality not in a vacuum but through its recursive relation with other social factors. This entanglement provides a better representation of our subjects of study.

Finally, morality is investigated either from a macro-level through the work of institutions or from a micro-level through understanding personal motivations for morality, but rarely at the intersection of both levels. This is driven by the fragmentation of existing research, taking the level of analysis as rather the individual in a vacuum or the market as a whole. This is

problematic as it neglects the possibility of the social construction of reality through the interaction of the individual and the market. Take, for example, the work by Giesler and Veresiu (2014), who studied the creation of the moral citizen through the work of the world economic forum. The embodiment of such moral identities by consumers was discussed neither in their paper nor in subsequent studies, and thus is still missing from the literature. To study such formation, researchers need to look into the interaction between the individual, the market, and other possible actors in constructing moral realities.

*Table 1: Oversights of the Literature on Morality and Recommended Remedies*

	<b>Oversight</b>	<b>Remedies</b>
1	No clear definition of morality	Dedicate a section to define morality, justify the need for a moral framing for the research question, and acknowledge the market actors' perspective in the definition of morality.
2	Morality is a dichotomous stable variable: moral or immoral	Allow for a contextualized association of the different morality judgments (moral, immoral, and irrelevant to morality) with the phenomenon of study.
3	Overrepresentation of specific contexts in the study of morality	Start with questioning the saliency of the context in studying morality and seek to expand the inclusion of other possible contexts.
4	Morality has been studied separately from other forms of social life	Examine morality and its relationship with other aspects of social life.
5	The moral actions of the market actors are studied separately	Investigate the social and cultural construction of moral judgment through the joint work of market actors.

Table 1 summarizes the shortcomings identified, and the remedies needed in designing future research studies. To re-think moralized consumption and improve its operationalization in the literature, it is crucial to understand 1) the process of linking morality with consumption domains, 2) the associated actors, and 3) the consequences of moral negotiations between these actors. To fulfill this task, I answer in this essay 1) What does moralized consumption mean? 2) Who plays a role in moralizing a consumption domain? 3) How does this process of moralizing

take place? 4) How do the various moralized consumption domains differ? 5) Finally, how can a multi-actor process theorization of morality open new research avenues and challenge the assumptions in existing research streams? I will start by providing my conceptualization.

## **TOWARDS A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MORALIZED CONSUMPTION**

To aid the literature in remedying the previously mentioned oversights, I put forward a multi-actor process theory. This theory provides a novel conceptualization and operationalization for the work on morality in consumption. The focus is on consumer research. Before delving into providing my conceptualization, I summarize the enabling theoretical frameworks.

### **Theoretical Building Blocks**

To aid my reconceptualization, I utilize two main theories. First, I rely on assemblage theory for four reasons. An assemblage approach allows for the dynamic construction of morality with the various objects, practices, and fields of consumption. In addition, it takes into consideration the agency and agendas of multiple market actors in constructing the morality of the objects, practices, and fields of consumption. It also accounts for the capacities of these various actors and other components in influencing the contestation of the assemblage. Finally, it provides process guidance to capture the change in the association of morality with the objects, practices, and fields of consumption. Second, I combine it with institutional theory to account for power relations and dynamics. In the next section, I explain the main pillars of each theory while elaborating on their relevancy to my research questions.

#### *Assemblage Theory and the Moralized Assemblage*

Assemblages are a combination of multiple components (e.g., people, objects, institutions), their motives, and their interactions (DeLanda 2006). The assemblage's components are dynamic, complex, and adaptive (DeLanda 2006; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Epp, Schau, and Price 2014; Latour 2005). Previous research highlights this dynamic nature through studying the introduction of new components (Epp, Schau, and Price 2014), betrayals in nature (Canniford and Shankar 2013), and the removal of old components (Parmentier and

Fischer 2015). Such characteristics demonstrate the agentic nature of these components to serve their motives (DeLanda 2006; Parmentier and Fischer 2015). Thus, the theory allows for a dynamic fluid interpretation of the studied phenomenon at large through a focus on the assemblage components.

In addition, assemblage theory allows for the “linking of the micro and macro levels of social reality” through “the combination of recurrence of the same assembly processes at any one special scale and the reoccurrence of the same kind of assembly processes at a success scale” (DeLanda 2006, 17). Thus, it theorizes the role of micro and macro actors, and their interaction is stabilizing and destabilizing an assemblage (Callon and Latour 1986; DeLanda 2006). My literature synthesis demonstrates the presence of market actors operating at three different levels: meso, micro, and macro. Therefore, by bringing an assemblage approach, one can theorize about how these three-level actors shape the judgment of morality and the domain of consumption. As I elaborate later, the interaction between these three levels of actors results in different types of moralized assemblages.

The identity of an assemblage cannot be reduced to the sum of the individual components (DeLanda 2006). It is rather through the capacities and interactions of the components that the properties of the entire assemblage come to existence (ibid). Thus, to conceptualize an assemblage, it is crucial to look at the components (e.g., the three levels), and their capacities. Capacities refer to the capabilities of the components upon interaction (DeLanda 2006; Parmentier and Fischer 2015). These capabilities are not static but can be improved to better re-integrate the components in the assemblage (Epp et al. 2014; Epp and Velagaleti 2014). These capabilities differ in two dimensions 1) their material versus expressive role, 2) their role in either stabilizing or destabilizing the assemblage identity (DeLanda 2006; Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The expressive capacity of the components involves the interaction between sentient beings. Examples include the assemblage’ members solidarity promises, vows, expressive acceptance of legitimate authority, and command obedience (DeLanda 2006; Parmentier and Fischer 2015). Material capacities, however, are visible through the interaction between sentient and non-sentient beings (DeLanda 2006; Parmentier and Fischer 2015). My conceptualization makes use of the expressive capacities of the assemblage components.

Thus, the components and their capacities influence the structure and the stability of the assemblage. Assemblages can stabilize and destabilize through the work of the components; these processes are referred to as territorialization and de-territorialization (DeLanda 2006; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Epp and Velagaleti 2014; Parmentier and Fischer 2015). Territorialization increases the internal homogeneity of the assemblage. While de-territorialization either increases the heterogeneity or expands the boundaries of the already defined spatial boundaries (DeLanda 2006). Territorialization is important for coding the expressive capacities of the components through rules, thus guiding the interactions within social assemblages (ibid). When rules are less strict, there is a chance for more decoding, and hence an assemblage can de-territorialize. This change can be attributed to the strength of the macro-level power and agency of the components within an assemblage. In addition, the process of territorialization and deterritorialization can enable assemblages together to form a larger alliance (DeLanda 2006).

As assemblages can stabilize and destabilize, the change happens through a process of translation. Translation refers to the actors' actions, negotiations, and tactics to convince others of their point of view through their expressive capacity (Callon and Latour 1986; DeLanda 2006). Translation takes place over four phases: problematization, intéressement, enrollment, and mobilization (Callon and Latour 1986; Giesler 2012). Problematization is the work of the main actor in redefining the current status of the assemblage. Later, the actor tries to impose his identity and viewpoints through intéressement to bring the assemblage to new stability. Following this stage, the actor is involved in enrollment to rally support from other actors in the assemblage. Finally, if all previous stages are successful, the problematizing actor mobilizes others to ensure that groups of interest follow the actor (Callon 1986; Giesler 2012). I use these stages to guide the fluid conceptualization of the different types of assemblages.

Assemblage theory is relevant for reconceptualizing moralized consumption for myriad reasons. First, assemblage theory acknowledges the presence of multiple actors, their capacities, motives, negotiations, and roles. These building blocks aid in providing guidelines for a clear conceptualization of morality, thus fixing the first oversight in the literature. Second, assemblage theory acknowledges the fluidity of social domains and thus fixes the persistent view of morality as a stable dichotomous variable. The expressive capacities of the various actors allow for a

flexible judgment of consumption to be moral, immoral, or irrelevant to morality. This expansion remedies the second flaw of the dichotomy of morality. Third, assemblages also allow for the change in the identity of the assemblage and thus enables for expanding the contexts previously examined through a moral lens. This element remedies the third oversight. Fourth, assemblage theory allows for the attachment of components of one assemblage to another, so that eventually the assemblage itself expands. This feature enables researchers to study the assemblage of the object involving morality and its interaction with other relevant aspects of social life, so eventually, the assemblage itself will expand and change. This final element provides a remedy to the fourth oversight. Finally, the assemblage encompasses the interwoven role of the micro, macro, and meso actors in the formation of moral judgment. This joint view provides a remedy, to the fifth problem, for the separate treatment of actors in the market. Looking through the linkage allows for an investigation of the social and cultural construction of moral judgment by the various actors.

The assemblages of interest, here, involve the social assemblages of an object, a practice, and a field that is framed by a moral judgment. I label it as a moralized assemblage. Assemblage components include consumers of the object, practice or field, the physical properties of the object, the materials of the practice, the objects in the field, larger groups of individuals that either oppose or consume the object, practice, or field. Their expressive capacities involve their sayings, methods of conveying these sayings, their negotiations, and adherence to the moral values of power structures. Their material capacities involve physical features. I look into the translation process that shapes the nature of the current assemblage.

However, assemblage theory is not able to cover power dynamics and relations (Whittle and Spicer 2008). Do we expect all translation problems to disrupt an assemblage eventually? What makes problematization work or fail? Are actors at the meso, micro, and macro levels all of the same power? To be able to answer these questions while providing a better conceptualization of moralized consumption in the literature, I integrate institutional theory with assemblage theory.

### *Institutional Theory and its Role in Moralization*

Institutional theory addresses the power dynamics in operationalizing the disruptions taking place in an assemblage. Institutional theory entails that institutions become established

and disappear through the acquisition and loss of legitimacy in the market (Scott 1995). For my essay, I conceptualize that a domain's moral status depends on the legitimacy of the moral judgments associated with it. In other words, the moral judgment on a domain is contingent upon it acquiring different types of legitimacy. The institution seeking moral legitimacy can be a consumption object, practice or field. Legitimacy is "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995, 574). It has three main pillars: regulative, normative, and cognitive. Regulative legitimacy is involved with governmental rules and regulations. Cognitive legitimacy is the association between a market and the existing cognitive schemas of individuals. Finally, normative legitimacy is associated with the social acceptance of a market (Scott 1995). Legitimacy can be gained (Humphreys 2010b, 2010a; Humphreys and Latour 2013; Press and Arnould 2011) by conforming, selecting, or manipulating the environment (Suchman 1995).

Scholars used institutional theory to understand the role of multiple actors in establishing and dismantling the legitimacy of various markets (Coskuner-Balli and Ertimur 2017; Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Handelman and Arnold 1999; Humphreys 2010b, 2010a; Scaraboto and Fischer 2012). For example, in the infancy of the industry, key actors, such as entrepreneurs, play an important role in convincing the public and governments through the use of symbolic language, educating stakeholders, and lobbying efforts (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Navis and Glynn 2010). Actors can also delegitimize an industry. For example, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) played an important role in the de-legitimation of alcohol consumption, which at the same time provided the opportunity for new legitimate organizations, soft drink companies, to emerge (Hiatt, Sine, and Tolbert 2009).

Institutional theory complements assemblage to provide a better conceptualization for morality in consumption. Institutional theory provides exploratory power to the varying degree of contestations of the domains reflective in the legitimacy pillars. These pillars provide a better reflection to capture the fluidity of moralized objects, practices, and fields. The pillars also provide a reflection of the power dynamics within the various domains of consumption. Finally, it neutralizes researchers' bias on the saliency of the association between certain contexts and morality. Utilizing both assemblage theory to identify the main actors and stages of translation

and institutional theory for power in legitimating moral concerns, I reconceptualize morality in consumption. The following section covers this new re-conceptualization, the main actors involved in moralization, its process, and its consequences.

### **Conceptualization of Moralized Consumption**

Informed by the theory and to connect the dots between the various streams of literature, I label the re-conceptualization moralized rather than moral consumption for different reasons. First, the term moralization allows for the morality of the objects, practices, and fields of consumption to be constructed and negotiated rather than being inherent qualities of these domains. Acknowledging the construction of morality forces researchers to provide a clear definition to justify to the reader the moral connotation of the studied phenomenon. Second, moralization captures the possible fluidity of moral judgment. Thus, it brings into perspective the interaction between different actors in judging an object, field, or practice to be moral, immoral, or irrelevant to morality. This fluidity improves the dichotomous presumptions regarding morality and allows for multi-level actors' conceptualization. This essay structures morality of consumption as an outcome of social processes, rather than an inherent quality of a specific domain.

#### *Definition*

I define moralized consumption as “a domain of consumption that has been ascribed a moral judgement through legitimation of a value system as a result of reflexive interactions and a dialectic process between various market actors.” This reconceptualization helps with my suggested remedies in consumer literature. First, the definition considers all possible variables in studying morality: the context, the relations, the value system, the actors, and their negotiations. Thus, it provides a clear and exhaustive definition that guides future papers investigating the relation between morality and consumption. Second, conceptualizing moralized consumption as contextually driven prevents researchers from assuming saliency of certain contexts to morality. Different contexts provide different judgments about the studied consumption phenomenon. Thus, accounting for contextual differences allows for a fluid association of domains as moral, immoral and irrelevant to morality. Third, a relational construction of morality allows researchers to acknowledge the interwoven link between morality and other aspects of social life.



Fourth, a value system is crucial as it structures judgment to legitimate or delegitimize the morality of various forms of consumption. The value system judges the consumption form to be either moral, immoral, or irrelevant to morality according to a certain value that is being negotiated. Thus, it aids in mitigating a dualistic view of morality. A value system puts forward the possibility of inducing a moral judgment on consumption forms that are considered irrelevant to morality. It also demonstrates a negotiation between actors in judging consumption forms and their relevancy to morality. Thus, it challenges the absolutist and normative framing of the use of morality in consumption in the literature. Finally, the definition shows that a judgment on the morality of consumption is contingent upon the interaction between the actors within an assemblage. It is through territorialization and deterritorialization that a value system that shapes the moralized consumption assemblage is established. In my essay, I use the above definition, to refer to the moralization of objects, practices, and field. I use the word domain to account for the objects (e.g., cigarette, gift), the practices (e.g., donating, stealing, whistleblowing) and the fields (e.g., sustainable consumption) of consumption. Next, I explain the process through which domains either acquire or lose a moral association

### *The Consumption Moralization Process*

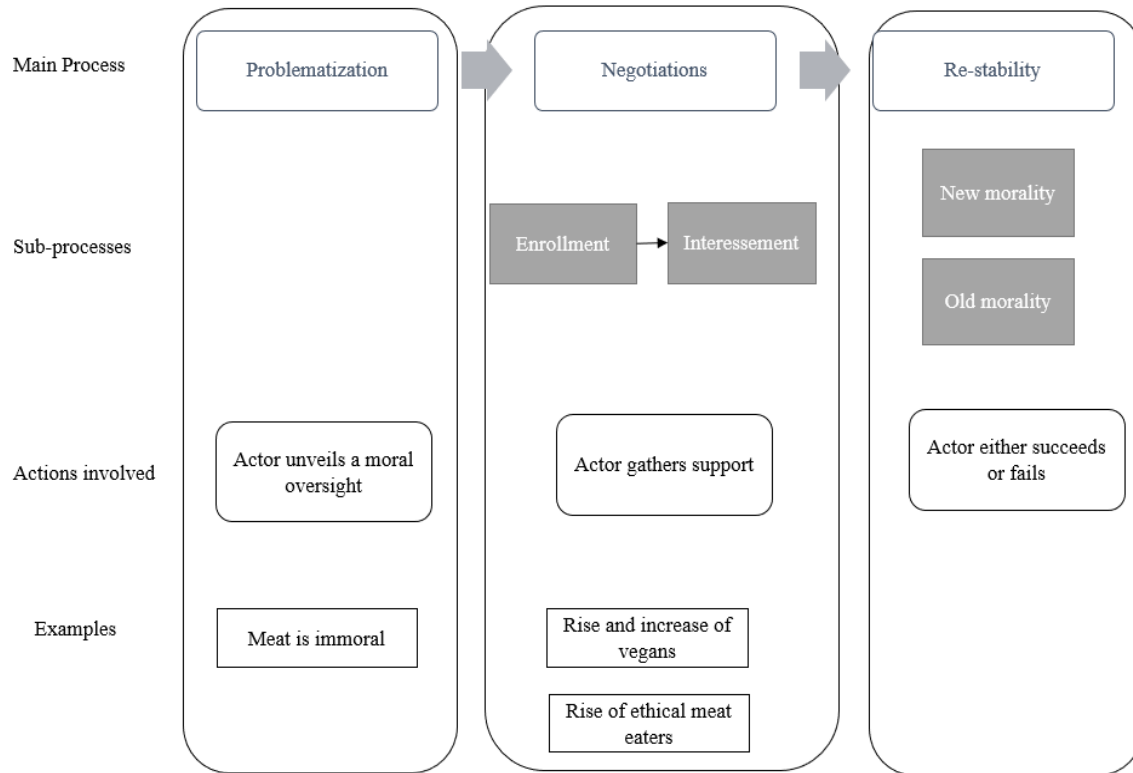
The consumption moralization process refers to the change in the associated moral judgment of a domain through the work of market actors. The moralization process represents the assemblage translation process. Based on the above conceptualization any an object, practice, or field can face a change in its moral judgment. For any object, practice or field to become moralized or de-moralized, it passes through a three-stage process. First, it is problematized by an interested actor (e.g., activists, non-profit organizations, companies, scientific groups, or regular consumers) that there is a moral problem. This moral problem can be a moral dilemma, or a novel moral aspect of the domain not previously considered. I explain the involved actors in detail in the coming section. Actors push forward this problematization to satisfy their motives and support their agendas. This problematization starts with contesting the legitimacy of the moral judgment on common objects or practices in a field. For example, meat was heavily perceived as a sign of good health. Later, it was problematized by individuals, the moralizing actor, to be an immoral object in 1944 for its harm on animals (“History,” The Vegan Society). I argue that the same process follows for moralizing a domain. The problematization brings

forward an actor with a counter-narrative to the current domain's moral judgment by presenting a value that ought to be focal to the domain.

Second, the moral problem is negotiated through discourses between this actor and other actors (e.g., overarching institutions, other individual consumers, or affinity groups). This negotiation creates supporting narratives (from the other actors) and counternarratives (from the problematizing actor). Through the negotiations, actors seek to legitimate their moral judgments in the domain (see Giesler 2012; Maguire and Hardy 2009). The negotiations, two subprocesses take place: enrollment and intéressement (Callon 1986; Giesler 2012). The problematizing actor engages in intéressement with their attempts to bring the domain to a new stability. Provided that the actor is successful in securing his position, he then enrolls other actors for support. However, if the problematizing actor failed in bringing stability to his point of view, the domain doesn't move to enrollment but rather re-stabilizes following its previous judgment. Going back to meat, there are narratives about the morality and immorality of consuming meat in the society. These narratives are supporting the conflicting motives of actors protecting their interests (Adams 2015; Tian, Hilton, and Becker 2016; Zaraska 2016). Examples include the China Study, Forks over Knives, Cowspiracy, Meathooked in which the moralizing actors (vegans) are establishing and rallying support to demoralize meat.

Finally, the problematized domain either re-stabilizes following its previous judgment (as either moral or immoral), continues being contested, or stabilizes following a new judgment. Meat, as a moral consumption object, is still contested among various groups: vegans, vegetarians, meat-eaters, and ethical meat-eaters. Meat has not yet re-stabilized. The result of the moralization process is a newly established judgment of morality with the domain of consumption. This process, presented in Figure 1, is important as it creates different types of moralized assemblages at its various transition points. I discuss this further in the section below on assemblages' phases. Moreover, Essay 2 of my dissertation covers in greater detail the problematization process. In the following section, I delve into unpacking the actors playing a role in the moralization process.

*Figure 1: The Consumption Moralization Process*



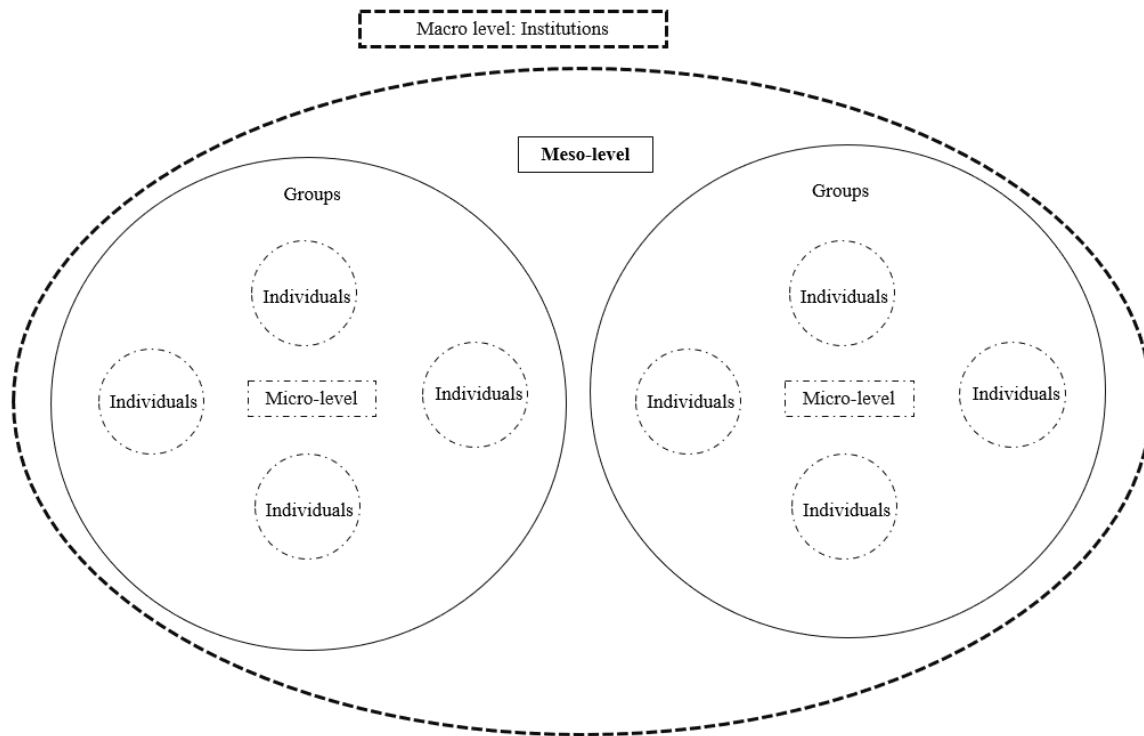
### *The Moralizing Actors*

The literature has fragmentarily discussed the responsibility of marketplace actors in consuming morally. The discussion considered the role of one actor at a time, either the individual (Lee et al. 2014) or the group (Beardsworth and Keil 1992) and rarely their interplay (Crockett 2017). It focused on one piece of the puzzle at a time, where the moral responsibility to consume or produce falls on one actor (Giesler and Veresiu 2014). This fragmentation gives rise to multiple questions: Should the government be the advocate of consuming morally? Should corporations be the only institution blamed for not producing morally? Should we hold citizens accountable for their consumption choices? Are cultural narratives strong enough to dictate individual morality? Is it the role of activists to facilitate moral consumption and production? I believe that the literature’s tendency to focus on one actor provides an incomplete representation of moralized consumption. It is not through the “universal singularities” (DeLanda 2006, 29) (i.e., the individual role of actors) that a moralized assemblage stabilize or destabilize but rather through the “micro-macro link” (DeLanda 2006, 32). Thus, for a better operationalization of a

moralized assemblage, researchers need to look deeply into the interplay between the actors rather than their dispersed efforts.

My conceptualization and its theoretical underpinning build on this micro-macro link to provide a more connected view of moralized consumption. Assemblages “have no overarching unity but instead establish a degree of consistency which allows for them to be analyzed as an assemblage and that the scope of the assemblage is determined by the theorist and the factors that are significant to the study” (Parmentier and Fischer 2015, 56–57). Accordingly, I use the actors fragmentedly identified in the literature as the working guide for my identified actors. Three main actors exist in the literature. They are institutions (see Giesler and Veresiu 2014), groups (Lamont 2001; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), and individuals (Bandura 1999; Luedicke et al. 2010). These three actors are presented in Figure 2. It is through the work of these actors that a domain becomes associated or disassociated with moral judgment.

*Figure 2: The Moralization Actors*



By individual actors, I refer to one single entity. This individual can be one consumer or one activist. This individual provides the micro-level of the linkages. Individual moral values are

those considered important for an individual, are held deeply, and guides their consumption. These moral values can be acquired through primary socialization (Crockett 2017; Ignatow 2009; Lamont 2001) or later due to a change in personal dispositions. For example, Crockett 2017 investigated the moral paths of African Americans to demand respectability. It is through normative and oppositional respectability that readers can understand the “the racial uplift moral obligat[ion] to counter stigma” p. 558. Individual values represent the micro-level in the moralized consumption domains.

Affinity groups are others within the individual’s frame of reference and include firms and organizations. Groups refer to the “informal and formal social arenas in which people who share common orientations, ties, interests, or foci interact; for instance, a formal or informal leisure or civic club, workplace, family, or school” (Weinberger 2015, 379). Examples of affinity groups are family members, friends, co-workers, corporate alliances, unions, and any other group to whom the individual feels a sense of belonging. These groups provide the meso level of the moralized assemblage. A group’s moral values are the identification of right and wrong behaviors that are considered important and unifying to a group of individuals. These group values consist of core values that provide a “positive evaluation of the in-group (i.e., in-group favoritism) and the negative evaluation of a less successful out-group (i.e., out-group derogation)” (Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto 2007, 235). An example includes values that are central to an entire culture or subculture of consumption (see Sandikci and Ger 2010; Schouten et al. 2007). For this essay, I use group values to refer to the intragroup core values that evaluate individuals, bind groups, and define the groups’ relation to the institutions.

Finally, the overarching institutions refer to macro-level values that transcend group boundaries. Institutions can be religious, markets, and governments that play a role in forming ideologies and cultural narratives. The values are considered crucial to multiple, if not all, affinity groups within this institutional frame of reference. Take, for example, the work by Luedicke et al. (2010) as they look into the moral stand of Hummer owners who draw on an institutionalized value of American exceptionalism. These values are also relevant outside the Hummer owners and apply to society at large. These institutional values unify at an inter and intragroup level and are protected by the power of the institutions. In addition, these values sometimes transcend time and are carried from one generation to the next. Hughes (2004) traces

the evolution and the core values of American exceptionalism. However, given the way business has been conducted for some time or due to consumers' increased socialization, the internalization of this institutional moral value is sometimes forgotten or not performed. Hence, the discrepancy in values across the three levels. Using a multilevel conceptualization is important in research for unraveling the previously assumed stability and static nature of the moralized consumption domain. Table 2 provides a summary of the important definitions mentioned in this section.

*Table 2: Terms and Definitions*

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Moralized consumption	Consumption that is contextually and relationally framed by a value system that is established through reflexive interactions and a dialectic process between market actors.
Moralized domain	A domain is an object, practice, or field of consumption that is subject to a judgment in terms of its morality.
Actor of moralization	The actors are individuals, groups, or institutions who play a role in structuring the morality of a domain.
Moralization process	The process refers to the change in the associated moral judgment of a domain through the work of market actors.

## **MORALIZED ASSEMBLAGES: CHARACTERISTICS AND A TYPOLOGY**

### **Assemblage Characteristics**

To identify the types of moralized domains, I rely on three characteristics, stemming from my theoretical building block to delineate the differences. Assemblage theory guides the presence of 1) alignment of actors' values, and 2) translation phase. Institutional theory provides the final difference: 3) the presence of legitimacy pillars. Table 3 summarizes the definitions of these characteristics. In the coming section, I explain these characteristics and later use them in the presentation of my typology, along with providing examples of each of the characteristics.

*Table 3: Assemblage Characteristics*

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>
Alignment of actors' values	The degree of harmony of the core values between the three levels of moralized actors.	Aligned Partially aligned Partially misaligned Misaligned
Translation stage	The progression of a domain's association with morality.	Contested Uncontested
Legitimacy pillars	Regulative, cognitive and normative support to a domain's associated value judgment	Supported Partial support Unsupported

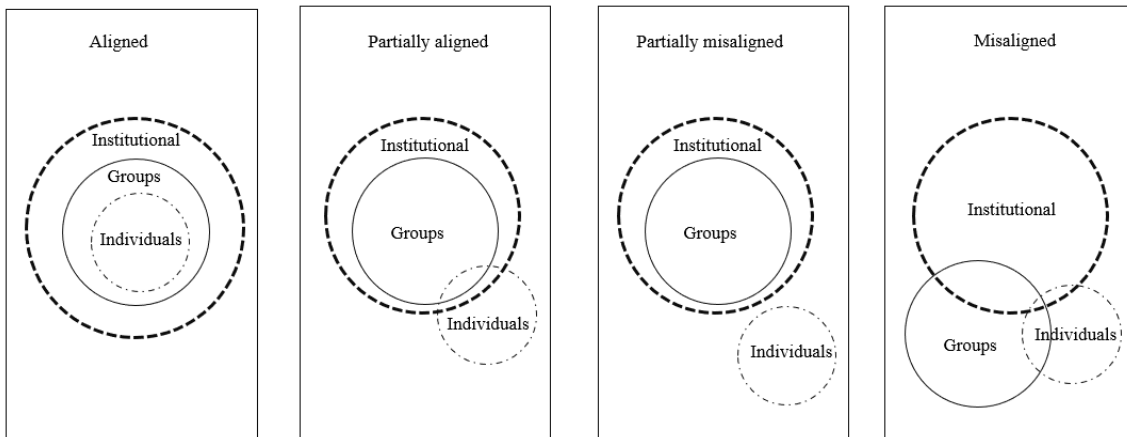
*Alignment of Actors' Moral Values*

Alignment refers to the degree of the harmony of moral values across the three-actor levels. The alignment is a crucial element as the three levels (i.e., micro, macro, and meso level actors) are present in the different moralized consumption domains. Thus, it is not their presence that creates differences among the domains, but rather the alignment of their values. The alignment occurs through the actor's expressive capacities of solidarity, promises, vows, obeying commands, and acceptance of authority (DeLanda 2006). Thus, the alignment depends on the actors' capacities to adhere to and perform either the same or different values from the other two levels. The alignment of the values, between the micro, macro and meso level actors, within each domain, ranges from completely aligned to completely misaligned. The range contains four degrees of alignment-misalignment.

First, aligned domains are present when the values of the three levels are harmonious. This type of alignment is present when institutions are powerful, groups, and individuals express solidarity and acceptance of the authority of the institutional values. Second, misaligned domains exist when there is no alignment of the values between micro, macro, and meso levels. This is present when individuals, groups, and institutions do not express the same judgment on the domain. Accordingly, the domain has different moral judgments across the three levels. The third level of alignment is partially aligned capacities when the values of two levels (e.g., the micro and the macro) match with a minor intersection with the third level values (e.g., the meso). This

is present when two levels express solidarity in the same values, while the third level is not in complete opposition. The fourth level of alignment is partially misaligned domains. This level is evident when the values of two levels match with no intersection with the third level values. For example, the meso and macro levels express solidarity in the same values, while the micro-level is in complete opposition. Figure 3 provides multiple possibilities for alignment degrees.

*Figure 3: Value Alignment*



*Translation Phases*

Translation phases refer to the progression of a domain from one moral judgment (e.g., moral) to another (e.g., immoral) driven by a moralizing actor. Translation creates two types of domains, contested and uncontested. Uncontested domains are those with stability, either an old or a new moral judgment, through the work of the actors. Contested domains are those with unstable moral judgment through the work of moralizing actors. Those actors are involved in problematizing and negotiating a new morality for the domain of interest. Problematization takes place through the work of actors who have an interest in contesting the moral judgment of the domain. Negotiations take place once groups are rallied around the problematizing actor. Both processes destabilize the moral judgment of the domain. Thus, the translation process creates three types of moral progressions, uncontested moralized domains, contested problematized moralized domains and contested negotiated moralized domains.



## *Legitimacy Pillars*

Legitimacy refers to the support on which a domain rests upon to ensure its stability and continuous association with morality. The three pillars of legitimacy (i.e., cognitive, normative, and regulative) can either be present or not present in the moralized domains. Regulative legitimacy is present when the macro-level actors have strong powers in dictating the morality of the domain. Normative legitimacy is present when the meso-level actors normalize the morality of the domain. Finally, cognitive legitimacy is present when micro-level actors internalize the morality of the domains. The presence and absence of these pillars create three different levels of support. Supported domains are those with the presence of the three legitimacy pillars. Unsupported domains are those lacking all three legitimacy pillars. Finally, partially supported domains are those with only two pillars present at a time. Two of the pillars are present. This characteristic creates my final differentiation element of the moralized domains and can be supported, unsupported, and partially supported. Based on these factors, I am providing a typology of moralized consumption in the coming section. Through the typology, I map the domains of moralized consumption, sensitize the readers to existing presumptions and dispositions, and open avenues for future research.

## **A Typology of Moralized Consumption**

I created a typology of moralized consumption domains using three characteristics: (1) degree of alignment between the three levels of values: individual, affinity group, and institutional, (2) the translation phases, and (3) the presence of legitimacy pillars. These distinctions create five types of moral domains. I present them in order of the degree of alignment: harmonized, divided, dispersed, breached, and debated. In the coming section, I represent the domains as ideal types. First, I explain the characteristics of the domain in general. Then, I go deeper into my literature synthesis for providing examples for each domain. This step demonstrates the prevalence of research focus on certain forms of moralized consumption domains versus others. Thus, later I delve into the possible extensions of each domain in specific and how my reconceptualization can push the boundaries of the literature in general. Finally, given my re-conceptualization of these domains are fragile moral assemblages, I use an example to demonstrate the movement of an object across the domains.

### *Harmonized Moralized Domain*

The Nature of the Domain. Harmonized moralized consumption domains are those protected by institutional power in maintaining the importance of the moral value for the well-functioning of the domain. With such institutional power, these domains are aligned across all levels. Institutions, groups, and individuals agree on the judgment of a domain as either moral, immoral, or irrelevant to morality. These domains are protected by the three pillars of legitimacy (i.e., normative, regulative, and cognitive). The pillars ensure the domain's survival and reproduction among generations. Examples of harmonized domains include gift-giving, drugs, and donations.

First, at the institutional level, moral values that unify people are established. Institutions are thus, the main drivers of the alignment of this domain. Institutions both structure and protect these values. These institutions include governments, public agents, and religious institutions. They use their authority to preserve and successfully reinforce their respective domains of interest (Durkheim 1973; Shilling and Mellor 1998). The values are enforceable by the institutional power (Foucault 1975) and thus protected by regulative legitimacy. One example of such institutional authority and power is the Roman Catholic church and its method to govern the actions of Christian groups and individuals.

Another example of institutional power is civil rights and responsibilities to ensure the morality of the citizens and that they do not violate the rights of others. The values set by the institutions are trickled down to groups to follow them, creating the first link of alignment (see Christians and Traber 1997). Thus, groups are formed to ensure the successful reproduction of the moralized domain across individuals. Groups exist to guide and check the individual consumption behavior. This synergy proves the existence of normative legitimacy (see Christians and Traber 1997). At the micro-level, individuals accept the morality of the domain elements: object, practice, and field due to the power of the institution (Foucault 1975) and support of their affinity groups. Individuals internalize the values established by the institution. Thus, cognitive legitimacy is present. These harmonized moral domains receive an alignment on all levels. Transgressing the values from an individual perspective lead to negative repercussions as it goes against the fairness and the rights of others (e.g., killing others when not justified, see Ewin 1972).

Research Status. Since most papers, on morality and moral consumption, do not define their conceptualization of morality, it is safe to assume that researchers take for granted the stability of their context. It also demonstrates the researcher's assumption about the consensus of the morality of their topic among readers and other researchers. Thus, most of the literature fits into a harmonized consumption field before embarking on data collection and analysis. However, for this essay, I will only include those papers that clearly map on the harmonized domain. One such example is the paper of Weinberger and Wallendorf (2012) on community gift-giving. "Since the moral and social fabric of New Orleans was ruptured in the aftermath of Katrina as people fought for their lives, a sense that connection and cohesion were being re-established was of focal importance to locals during Mardi Gras" (83). Cognitive legitimacy was evident as members supported holding the event despite the catastrophe that happened. Locals lobbied for the event in support of "community rebirth and renewed collective identity" (80). Normative legitimacy was present as high-status community members, known as a krewe, still participated in the event by providing gifts to the community despite the financial difficulties they faced. Although regulative legitimacy was missing from the context, the governments and businesses at that time demonstrated their support for the event, where the city asked for sponsorship for costs usually incurred by the city to help the community revive from the setback.

Pushing the research boundaries. For future research on the harmonized domain, I advocate researchers first to be cognizant of their assumptions about the universality of their domain. They need not assume the agreement of the readers and consumers about the morality of their subject study. Second, they can expand other institutional forces in shaping a harmonized domain or bringing about an unaligned domain to harmony. Such institutions include the United Nations, The World Trade Organization, and the NATO in fostering certain moral practices across groups of individuals. For example, The United Nations brought forward in 1985 Guidelines for Consumer Protection that were revised in 1999, and again in 2015, to better capture consumers' challenges. The guidelines are "accepted as the international benchmark for good practice in consumer protection. Although not legally binding, [and thus lack regulative legitimacy], their strength comes from their adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, and the consensus of countries and experts from around the world [in other words they are supported by normative and cognitive legitimacy]" (United Nations website). Researchers can study the relevance of these guidelines to morality, their perception, and relevancy among citizens and corporations.

Research can also investigate the adoption of these guidelines, and rejection across group boundaries, and the strategic work of the United Nations to stabilize these corporate moral practices across nations. For example, Giesler and Veresiu (2014) looked into the creation of the four different moral identities for the citizens by the World Economic Forum. However, the paper does not demonstrate the internalization of such moral identities, nor the interaction of these different moral citizens with each other at the individual, group, and institutional level. Additional research can also explain how moral practice becomes stabilized and reinforced globally. In other words, how do harmonized domains expand spatially and temporally?

### *Divided Moralized Domain*

The Nature of the Domain. The power of opposing group values drives divided moralized consumption domains. There is full alignment between the individual and the group values. These values intersect with some institutional values (Grauel 2016); however, not in full alignment. There is partial alignment on the values between the groups and the institutions. These domains witness the presence of competing moral groups, each with its agenda and values (see Luedicke et al. 2010). Groups draw on some, but not other, institutional values to draw the group boundaries. Individuals are divided among the groups and associate mainly with one group's value. The group constantly justify their values to others. The assemblage is at the enrollment stage of translation in which the main actor, here the group, persuades other levels to "engage in a concrete alliance" (Giesler 2012) to justify the moralization of the domain. The domain is contested by institutions and between groups. These domains are supported by cognitive and normative legitimacy but fall short on regulative legitimacy. Examples of such domains include brands as Hummer car, Starbucks, and Nike.

These domains follow much of the boundary-making negotiations (see Lamont and Molnár 2002) to ensure positive relationships within the members and clear distinction with the values of the outside world. Groups, in divided domains, were mainly studied as deviant groups who go against the morality of the society (Kozinets 2001). There is authority enacted by groups through normative legitimacy to preserve the enactment of these moral values within their boundaries. Groups, here, were established in each market for a while and thus have clear guidelines for its members to follow. The morality is dictated within the boundaries of the group, established and enhanced within its hierarchies; members adhere to this morality as it is the reason for their

affiliation with the group (see Schouten, Martin, and McAlexander 2007; Schouten and McAlexander 1995).

Research Status. Examples of literature in this domain are work on communities of consumption and subculture of consumption (Karataş and Sandıkcı 2013; Schouten et al. 2007; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Though it was not the focus of the papers, literature on subcultures covered the moral angle of the groups. Take, for example, the work by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and their highlight of the ethos of the subculture of Harley Davidson consumers. The morality of the group, referred to as the ‘ethos’, is protected by its members’ understanding and commitment to applying them while interacting with other group members. Members of the various circles valued personal freedom, and patriotism, cherished American heritage, and Machismo, all while enacting them. This performativity protects the structure and ensures the survival of the subculture through symbolic consumption. The values, though might appeal to a broader audience beyond the subculture, are transfused into a set of symbolic consumption of objects and practices that are only morally relevant within the subculture.

Another example that demonstrates the nature of this field is the work of Karatas and Sandikci (2013). They looked into the consumption practices of the Turkish-based Gülen community to identify the transmission of values from current to new members (students in their case), the moral identity formation of the group members, and learning the right way to consume according to the group values. This transformed Muslim identity keeps members of the group together and draws boundaries between them and others. This community was just one group; however, at the institutional level (here the Turkish government), there are multiple other groups, each with their morality. This group intersects with the Turkish government's morality, mainly on the free market and modern education. At the individual level, some of the values are internalized; in the case of the Turkish community, the value of education is reflective in their high education level. At the institutional level, divided domains witness a lack of alignment with the group and individual morality. Regulative legitimacy, incorporation within the macro-structure, is either sought after or prevented by the work of the actors. While some groups try to align their values with those of the institutional levels (e.g., Scaraboto and Fischer 2012), other groups want to maintain and protect their different status from co-optations (e.g., Arsel and Thompson 2011).

Divided moralized fields are protected by cognitive legitimacy that is reproduced and protected by well-regarded individuals in the group, those with significant cultural capital who can extend it to moral capital (Ignatow 2009). This is evident as “businessmen associated with the community form an informal network and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The wealth they generate is channeled to the funding of community initiatives, including dormitory houses, which function as spaces of teaching and disseminating a lifestyle based on Islamic principles” (Karataş and Sandıkcı 2013, 469). These individuals protect their investment in the field by advocating the morality and values of their own form of consumption, providing institutional resources to navigate the consumption field, and differentiate between authentic and unauthentic users within the group (see Arsel and Thompson 2011; Karataş and Sandıkcı 2013; Schouten, Martin, and McAlexander 2007).

Pushing the Research Boundaries. Further studies on subcultures and communities of consumption can look at the source of these moral values and their conflicting role sometimes in delineating members. In addition, how these subcultures manage between recruiting new members and keeping the group authentic and thus risking the fading away of the group. Research can also examine how values are sometimes negotiated, expanded, adjusted, and eliminated within the group boundaries. The influence of such value formation on the subculture’s survival and established legitimacy. Finally, the interactions between different moral subcultures of consumption in drawing on institutional values to negotiate the boundaries between them, e.g., Muslims versus Jews or vegans versus organic meat consumers, are almost absent from the marketing literature. The influence of the interaction of these competing moral groups on market dynamics, in terms of the formation of new markets, and the establishment of appropriate boundaries and forms of consumption. Further studies on divided domains can also investigate moral social media influencers who are advocating a moralized way of living, such as sustainable lifestyles, minimalism, or veganism. Researchers can study the difference in their practices to establish their network of supporters while drawing internal boundaries between them and others who advocate the same cause. In addition, researchers can examine the moral consumption patterns and judgment taking place between these moral influencers and the overarching institutions. Do they perceive their morality to be superior to the institutions? Furthermore, how they negotiate such differences and causes?

### *Dispersed Moralized Domain*

The Nature of the Domain. Dispersed domains are those with alignment between the group and institutional values that are not internalized by individuals within group boundaries. Moralizing the domain is put forward by stigmatized activists who judge institutions and the groups' values to be immoral. These activists face discrimination as they advocate for their conflicting moral values. One such example includes the work of oversized consumers and influencers in moralizing the acceptance of fashion for oversized models (Scaraboto and Fischer 2012). Groups and institutional values are not internalized at the individual level. However, these individuals are not agentic in soliciting opposing groups yet. Institutions are powerful in dictating the moral values and keeping the groups intact. Their values eventually are infiltrated and practiced by the various groups. Thus, the domain has regulative and normative legitimacy. Among some individuals, there is a misalignment between their perception of morality and the group and institutional values. Thus, cognitive legitimacy is missing as some individuals question the current moral judgment of the domain. The domain is contested and lies at the problematization phase stage in which the focal actor, the individual, attempts to force a new moral judgment (see Giesler 2012). The actor of demoralizing the domain and are individuals, who no longer believe in the current moral assemblage of the domain. Examples of such domains include meat, veiling within upper-class Muslim communities, fishing, and hunting.

Research Status. Research on dispersed moral domains has focused on the motives and justifications of individuals who break from the group and institutional morality (Minson and Monin 2012; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Twine 2014). The domain witnesses the presence of some individuals who are not adhering to the group and institutional moral values. These individuals do not agree on applying the morality of the domain for one of three reasons. First, they perceive the domain to be immoral. Second, they judge the domain to have the potential of achieving a higher morality than its current status. Third, they desire themselves to achieve a self-interest higher morality by demonstrating different values than the group. At the institutional level, individuals are negatively judged for going against the laws and normative moral code (e.g., vegans, see Twine 2014). Take, for example, the experiments run by Nelissen and Zeelenberg (2009) on moral emotions of anger and guilt. Participants were presented with a scenario in which unfairness was exerted on a third person through the unequal division of points, and

participants had the chance to punish the offender. As these individuals are going against the norms of the group and the institutional value of fairness, they are negatively judged and, in the case of the study, were punished for their violation.

Research on positive stigma (Beardsworth and Keil 1992; Sandikci and Ger 2010; Twine 2014), belong to this domain. In the paper by Sandikci and Ger (2010), middle-class Turkish women who decided to adopt the moral practice of veiling within their reference group were judged as the practice was frowned upon by others. Veiling practice is negatively perceived at the institutional level and among western societies (Bilge 2010). The practice does not lie within the frame of a moral practice. Within Turkish groups, veiling is associated with low economic capital individuals, and thus a morality judgment is not well supported (Sandikci and Ger 2010). Meat is studied in the literature as another example of a dispersed object. Meat eaters negatively view vegetarians as the former demonstrates their moral superiority vis-à-vis the consumption practice of meat-eaters who, in return, feel morally judged (Minson and Monin 2012). Eating meat is a normalized practice at the institutional level and supported by the majority of groups across space and time (Chiles and Fitzgerald 2018). Thus, the object is dispersed as some individuals, vegetarians and vegans, have a misalignment of value. They advocate the immorality of the object. However, meat still enjoys a harmonious alignment between groups and institutions, and thus not considered a debated domain.

Pushing the Research Boundaries. Dispersed domains, along with the divided domains, are the most studied moralized domains in the literature. However, rethinking these domains, in light of my framework, brings new research avenues. While research on positive stigma has focused on the role of actors in gaining acceptance for their practice, they are often silent on their macro-level impact in terms of moralizing and demoralizing the relevant domains. Researchers can study the methods undertaken by these individual actors towards activism and brand resistance to not only stand up for their values but try to diffuse it within a larger market scope. This extension broadens the work done on markets to reflect the relation between the moralization of some of its domains and macro-level institutions. In addition, research on positive stigma, though handles individual decision to leave mainstream moralized consumption (through groups and institutions) to minority moralized consumption (individuals), it is often silent in how this process of change unfolds. In addition, although the literature highlights the negative judgment from others within



the social sphere, the exact role of close-knit circles in such individual change is rather unexplored.

Another related avenue of research is market stability as it concerns identifying the factors that will either maintain the domain's moral stability or make it at risk of a fragile assemblage. These factors include the inherent characteristics within the domain, the combined efforts of the group, and institutional actors in building a unified moral identity, and the efforts behind communal moral identity management. In addition, researchers interested in co-creation and social media management can investigate the influence of individuals, going against the norm, in mobilizing activism, transforming new moralized domains from a fringe act to an organized rebellion. Finally, research on product innovations that have moral dilemmas (e.g., robots replacing human labor) or are solving moral debates (e.g., lab-grown meat to appeal to both vegans and non-vegans) can add value through looking at dispersed domains. Now, I move to explore the other domains that received less emphasis in the literature.

### *Breached Moralized Domain*

The Nature of the Domain. Breached domains are those who have an alignment between the individual and group levels that are misaligned at the institutional level. I label this type of alignment as partially misaligned. The main difference between the breached and divided domains stems from the overlap between the group and individual values on one side and the institutional values on the other side. This overlap is represented with the level of alignment. While divided domains have an overlap between both level values, breached domains do not have any overlap between the group and institutional values.

The field is facing contestation, in which one of multiple groups and individuals refuse integration within the bigger institutional values as they see moral flaws in how things are working. The group and its associated individuals are the only ones who have synergy in their moral values. The majority of the individuals fall outside the group boundaries within the institutional ones. Rather than trying to change the domain and the perception about their groups, they accept their moral differences (e.g., Muñiz and Schau 2005). This element presents an important point of differentiation between dispersed and breached for the alignment the group value has with the individual and the institutional values.

The produced assemblage is contested with the breached group uninterested in joining. Thus, the domain is at the mobilization stage. All targeted actors are safely following the values of the group. The main actor of moralization here is the group, maintaining the internal group alignment while vocally emphasizing the misalignment with institutional values. The domain is guarded with normative and cognitive legitimacy but lacks regulative legitimacy. The groups refuse integration as they want to maintain their autonomy over their values. Examples of breached domains include weed in the United States and religious head covers among societies that are not predominantly Muslim.

Research Status. Work on negative stigma falls within the boundaries of this domain. Apple Newton is an example of a breached object. It was discarded by Steve Jobs when he joined the company as it was not working. The object lacked institutional support and did not recruit new users. However, the previous owners of Apple Newton continued their support for the object. “Tales of persecution detail the experiences of members as they use their Newtons in the face of a lack of physical and moral support from Apple, pervasive anti-Apple sentiment, and strange looks and snide comments from those around them. In many of these narratives, the Newton user attempts to confront the stigma by getting back at the person heckling them or by redeeming the device by demonstrating what it can do” (Muñiz and Schau 2005, 739). Thus, within the boundaries of the Apple Newton community, cognitive and normative legitimacy exist.

Another example of breached domains is minority groups who live within their moral code that might not be consistent with the values of their institutions. This difference is evident in acculturation research by consumers’ who build their identity through separation: which is the rejection of the dominant culture and maintenance of the non-dominant one and marginalization, which is the rejection of both (Berry 1992, 1997). Üstüner and Holt (2007) studied this acculturation of poor immigrant Turkish women and how the mothers involved in the study rejected the Batchi lifestyle prevalent in the city. These immigrant women formed a group in opposition to institutional values. For example, “squatter families tend to share with other families the scarce modern technologies they acquire, rather than treat these items as individuated goods. [...] the first families able to afford refrigerators shared the machines with

their neighbors. Now that everyone has refrigerators, this communal practice has moved to other scarce goods” (Üstüner and Holt 2007, 48).

Pushing the Research Boundaries. Research needs to understand further the consumption of minority groups that refuse to integrate within the broader spectrum of society. Examples of such a group can be indigenous people who perceive their moral values to be superior, individuals experiencing homelessness who might not trust institutions and conservative religious groups (Orthodox Jews, Conservative Muslims) who still refuse to adopt the moral values of the larger society in terms of sexual orientation and relations. Besides, it is worth exploring their practices in maintaining the boundaries of the group consumption and their strategies in negotiating their differences within the larger institutions. This extension is important for brands that occasionally produce targeted promotional materials to ethnic minorities. Researchers can look into how these brands absorb the difference in the ethnic group's morality while not alienating the overall society at large. Furthermore, the researcher can study the interplay between the group and individual from one side with institutional efforts on the other in negotiating such a difference in moral values. This approach can help policymakers better shape institutional efforts to integrate these moral minorities and bring them closer to the realm of the general public.

#### *Debated Moralized Domain*

The Nature of the Domain. Debated domains those with misaligned values between the individual, group, and institutional values. Hence, creating a debated domain in which actors in each level argue with the rest to form the boundaries of the acceptable values. These domains are at the first stage of the assemblage problematization, where one actor redefines a domain's association with morality (see Callon and Latour 1986) and thus try to establish alignment with the other two levels of actors' values. Driven by problematization, debated domains are contested with continuous negotiations across the levels. There is no one clear actor of moralization in these debates as each side is trying to provide their own moral discourses to convince the other levels and reach their own motives (see DeLanda 2006). These domains currently lack all forms of legitimacy, yet the various actor levels are eager to establish the pillar that would help them achieve their goals. Green products, recycling, and medicinal marijuana are all examples of debated domains. While governments, corporations and individuals advocate for

their importance, there is no consensus on the right form of consumption, the responsibilities of the actors, and there is a huge gap between demonstrated attitude and actual consumption behavior (see Carrington, Zwick, and Neville 2016; Shaw, McMaster, and Newholm 2016).

Research Status. Research on debated domains is scarce, as it suggests the relevancy of morality to fields not normally associated with this form of judgment. It requires researchers to expand their data collection and look for the association between novel constructs not normally framed as morally relevant. These debated domains are those who normally lie outside the relevant. An example of debated domains in the literature is the use of morality as a form of distinction (Ignatow 2009; Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013). Members of a poor residential trailer possess different individual moral habitus that shows their superiority versus other residents on the same group (Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013). Institutionally, however, being poor is a negative moral domain as it symbolizes weak will, and other negative values add them here. Before Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013), individual morality was not perceived as equivalent to taste, and thus its ability to provide a distinction tool in social life was not studied. It was not until their revolutionary paper that morality surfaced as a form of potential habitus and capital to be acquired. Their paper highlighted that in addition to moral debates between groups (Lamont 1992, 2001), morality could be contested between individuals, the other groups, and without a clear consensus of the overarching values. This division creates contested assemblage of a moralized domain, in Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013), the domain is practicing distinction.

Pushing the Research Boundaries. Debated domains provide fertile avenues of research, given the current lack of extensive work. First, researchers can investigate how competing moral values that surround a domain are being negotiated. What are the discourses put into action to align the values of the other levels? Inverted power dynamics are also worth studying, as individuals or groups can be strong enough to dictate their motives and form changes at the institutional values. Finally, researchers can conduct longitudinal studies for comparative case analysis between domains that succeed in rallying a moral aspect and those who failed to mobilize their goals. Brands that are trying to anchor themselves using an emerging moral value among groups and individuals, for example, sustainability, can benefit from an emerging stream of literature on debated moralized domains. Table 4 summarizes the differences between the

various types. Next, going back to the fluid identity of these moralized domains, I present how domains can temporally move between these types.

*Table 4: Moralized Consumption Domains*

<b>Moralized Domain</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b>Translation phase</b>	<b>Legitimacy Pillars</b>	<b>Examples of domains</b>
Harmonized	Aligned	Uncontested	Supported (all the pillars are present)	Gifts, drugs, and donations
Divided	Partially aligned	Contested Negotiated	Partially Supported (Cognitive and Normative)	Hummer, Starbucks, and Nike
Dispersed	Partially misaligned	Contested Problematized	Partially supported (Normative and Regulative)	Meat, milk, fishing, and hunting
Breached	Partially misaligned	Contested Negotiated	Partially supported (Cognitive and Normative)	Religious minorities
Debated	Misaligned	Contested Problematized	Unsupported (all pillars are missing)	Green products

### **The Movement across the Domains**

The presented types of moralized domains analyzed in my conceptualization are ideal. As morality is rather fluid, constructed by actors, negotiated for its legitimacy, a consumption domain can fall in and out of these moralized types. It is crucial to demonstrate this movement. A process theorization allows researchers to reflect better the shifting position of consumers, corporate and institutional on the morality of various domains of consumption. The literature, previously, handled morality as a static construct, and thus to validate my operationalization of its dynamic nature, I provide an example of a topic and map its movement across my presented typology.

A tattoo, as an object, or tattooing as a practice, witnessed a movement across my presented domains. In the early 1910s, tattoos were used by sailors and circus performers, referred to as freaks at that time (DeMello 2000). Within the larger society, it was a taboo object.

Sailors wore tattoos that demonstrated their travel achievements (DeMello 2000), a moral value acceptable within their groups at their time. Circus performers on the other side wore tattoo for entertainment purposes, an acceptable performance within their groups as well. Thus, at that point in time, tattoo was a divided moralized consumption domain.

During WWII, tattoos were utilized to demonstrate loyalty to the United States (DeMello 2000; Parry 2006). Patriotism is an aligned moral value between individuals, groups, and institutions. The object was supported by regulative, cognitive, and normative legitimacy. Thus, it became a harmonized moral domain. After the war ended, governments de-legitimated tattooing for the spread of diseases (DeMello 2000). Tattooing lost its regulative legitimacy. However, it was still practiced by some individuals and groups. At that time it was common among marginalized groups such as gangs, street-corner punks (Steward 1990) and rock bands (Mifflin 2013). Their practice was judged as illegal/immoral by the overarching institutions, in this case the government. This misalignment in values moved tattoos to a breached moral consumption object.

In the 1980s, tattoo artists, who started to view it as a legitimate form of art (Irwin 2001; Patterson 2018), started to problematize the immoral connotation with the domain and mobilizing their capacities to re-legitimate it. Heading into the 2000s, tattoos gained grounds on normative and cognitive legitimacies as witnessed in the a massive expansion in the number of parlors (Patterson 2018; Pew Research Center 2006). In addition, media outlets aided in creating normative legitimacy to the object. These actors created an alignment in the values within the suburban middle classes (Kjeldgaard and Bengtsson 2005; Patterson 2018), leading to the reclassification of the domain as a harmonized one. Such transformation of the association between the practice and the object with morality across time should be reflected in research studies. Table 5 demonstrates the temporal shift in the moral judgment of tattoos. Now that I have highlighted the possible tangling and untangling between morality and consumption, I move to the discussion.

*Table 5: The Trajectory of Tattoo's Moral Judgment*

	<b>The early 1910s</b>	<b>During WWII</b>	<b>After WWII</b>	<b>2000 onwards</b>
Moralized domain type	Divided	Harmonized	Breached	Harmonized

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

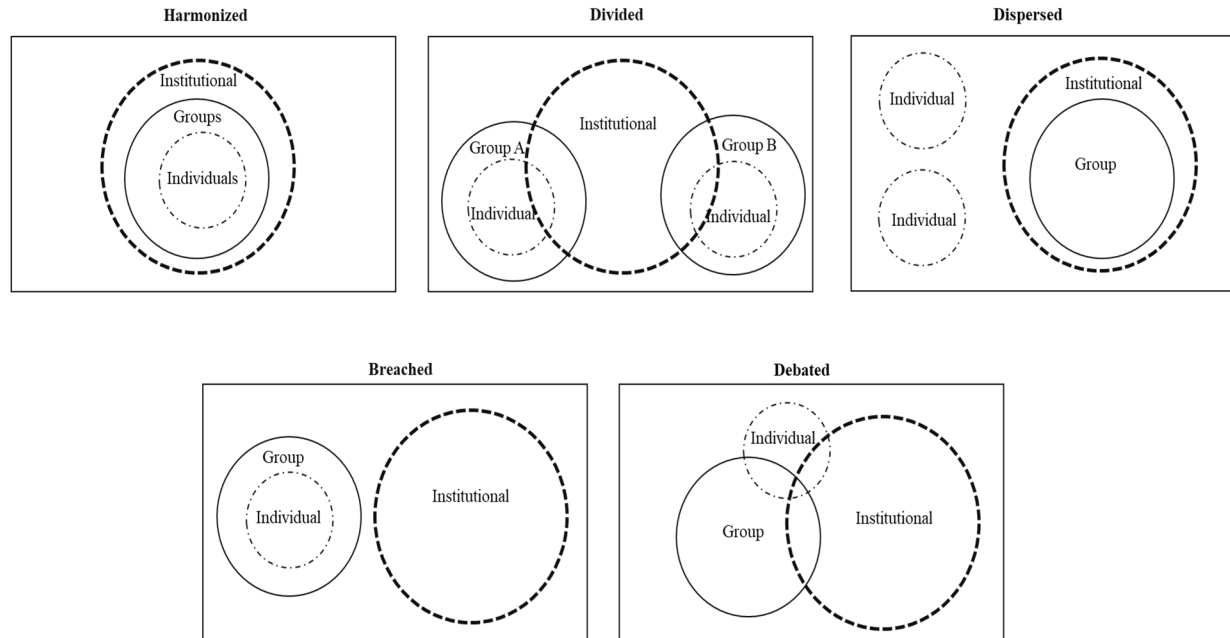
### **Summary**

This essay puts forward a conceptualization of the interplay between morality and consumption. Moralized consumption is contextually and relationally framed by a value system that is established through reflexive interactions and a dialectic process between market actors. It is fluid, changes over time, and contingent on the actors' motives. These actors play are individuals, affinity groups, and overarching institutions. They play a role in the moralization and de-moralization of consumption domains. Following the conceptualization, I present the typology of moralized consumption present in the literature. Four main characteristics delineate the difference between the moralized domains. These factors are the alignment of actors' values, the translation phases, and the presence of legitimacy pillars. The characteristics create five moralized domains of consumption, harmonized, divided, dispersed, breached, and debated.

First, harmonized domains are uncontested domains, with complete alignment of values across the levels, and the presence of all pillars of legitimacy. Second, divided domains are contested, with a partial alignment of values as only individuals and groups are in complete harmony with some intersection with institutional values. Divided domains have cognitive and normative legitimacy and thus are partially supported. Third, dispersed domains are contested, with partial misalignment of values as institutions and groups have a different morality than some individuals. Dispersed domains are partially supported by normative and regulative legitimacy. Fourth, are breached domains that are contested, with partial misaligned values as individual and group's values are not in harmony with those of institutions. They are supported by cognitive and normative legitimacy. Finally, are debated domains that are contested with minor alignments of values between the three levels and do not have any legitimacy pillar. Figure 4 demonstrates the moralized domains typology.

I later utilize this typology to demonstrate the fluidity of the moralized consumption domains. Through tracing the difference in moral judgment of tattoo, the harmonious perception of morality is dismantled. This movement across the typology emphasizes the importance of considering the context, relations, and fluid association of morality in consumption studies.

*Figure 4: Moralized Domains Typology*



## Contribution

Theorists and researchers treated morality as an objective structure that defines right and wrong and good and bad within a given society (Caruana 2007a; Durkheim 1973). They assume synergies and agreements on the moral connotation of consumptions between the researchers, and the consumers. However, with the increased individual agency (Schor 1998), the appearance of new moral groups (e.g., minimalists), loss of institutional power (Ebaugh 1991), and the rise of corrupt regimes (Bicchieri and Rovelli 1995), a static view of morality is rather problematic. As institutions lose their power in guiding moral actions across group boundaries (e.g., religion and the church), they become aligned with the morality of few groups or few individuals, assuming harmony in values is inaccurate. Besides, certain contexts drive conflicting motives, desires, and values among individuals, groups, and institutions (see Weingart et al. 2007). Thus, the literature needs a reconceptualization to remedy this static view.



Through my conceptualization and operationalization of moralized consumption in this essay, I remedy the literature oversights. First, my conceptualization provides an exhaustive list of factors that need to be considered in studying moralized consumption. These factors include the context, the relations, the actors, their negotiations, and the trajectories of moral judgments of consumption domains. My conceptualization urges researchers to clarify and structure the moral connotation of their studied topics from the market-actors point of view. Clearly defining the moral connotation provides a clear justification for the research questions' framing and findings. Second, the movement of the moralized domains across the various types challenges the dichotomous stable treatment of morality in the literature. Thus, future researchers can reflect the dynamic association between morality and consumption.

Third, conceptualizing moralized consumption as contextually driven prevents researchers from assuming saliency morality in specific domains but not others. It is the context that dictates the moral judgment of the consumption domain. Fourth, a relational construction of morality allows researchers to acknowledge the interwoven link between morality and other aspects of social life. While morality has a role in consumption (Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013; Sherman 2018), it is through the interaction with other aspects that consumption choices are made. Finally, my conceptualization shows that a judgment on the morality of consumption is contingent upon the interaction between the actors within an assemblage. Thus, my conceptual framework redirects how we study morality in consumption, and changes the outlook from a positivistic dualistic view, to a multidimensional process.

### **Future Research for Theoretical Extensions**

In addition to these theoretical contributions, I offer three possible theoretical extensions to the study of moralized consumption: other actors of moralization, domains prone to destabilization, and integration between the domains.

#### *Other Actors of Moralization*

My essay synthesizes the work of three main actors of moralization studied previously in the literature. At the individual level, studies have looked into the role of consumers and activists. At the group level, studies looked into the role of interest groups that stand as a reference point for these consumers. Finally, at the institutional level, studies investigated the

role of political institutions in dictating their morality. In addition, other actors might play a role in the moralizing and demoralizing of the domains. Researchers can, thus, examine the work of other influential actors. These actors can include media, firms, experts, entrepreneurs, financial, and scientific institutions. Media outlets can be considered a moralizing actor that can be grouped at the individual, group, and sometimes even the institutional level. Take, for example, the role of the media in advocating the morality of certain domains but not others. FoxNews is demoralizing the stay-at-home orders for its negative economic consequences. Researchers can also explore the role of social media in moral shaming and being used as a tool to moralize certain body types and consumption behaviors over others. Finally, researchers can look into how different moralized groups come together on social media platforms to rally support and push their agendas. An example,

Another actor is scientific institutions and their growing role in shaping morality. The role of the scientific community in educating, informing, and calming consumers was evident during the pandemic of COVID 19 in 2020. Their various messages and press releases, guiding individual and collective responsibility, bring new forms of moralized collective consumptions that are not present in the literature. Scientific evidence on the dangers of vaping on teenagers, on the suitability of moderating drinking while pregnancy with no harm to the fetus, and the importance of weed and marijuana in elevating pain and stress for terminally ill patients demonstrate their potential moralizing role. The actions of these scientific institutions can provide the missing legitimacy pillars to some consumption domains and, thus, moralize or demoralize these domains. Accordingly, researchers can expand their current utilization of moralization actors to represent the growing role of other unexplored actors.

### *Domains' Susceptibility to Contestation*

Assemblage theory has embraced the possibility of change to the assemblage components as they couple and decouple with one another (DeLanda 2006). Following this building block, I highlighted the role of multiple actors, covered and those that can be potentially covered in the literature, as components in this assemblage that can shake its stability. Yet, we are still unclear whether there are inherent qualities in some domains that make them withstand temporal and contextual changes. Are some domains always associated with morality versus others, therefore explaining the overrepresentation bias I discussed regarding the existing

literature? If this is the case, then what are their inherent qualities providing such a stable judgment? Can the actors' expressive capacities provide such stable qualities to the domains? Which type of actor can help this acquisition? Would actors in fragile domains care to acquire these qualities to ensure the moral survival of their interested domains? Can some of these qualities become intentionally ignored by actors when they no longer serve their purpose?

### *Interactions between the Domains*

Capitalizing on assemblage theory and the possibility of the components to couple and decouple with each other (DeLanda 2006), researchers can study the interaction between various domains. Rather than studying harmonized, divided, dispersed and other domains separately, researchers can investigate their interlink within larger assemblages. For example, gift-giving is a harmonized domain, and meat is a dispersed domain of consumption, how do individuals, and groups practice, react to a meat pie gift from new neighbors? This is crucial to highlight the complexities of moralized domains in social life. In addition, researchers can explore the consequences on market and system dynamics as different moralized domains interact together in much larger assemblages.

### **Substantive Areas for the Application of the Framework**

In addition to these theoretical implications, I propose applications to different substantive areas that are managerially relevant. These avenues include research on artificial intelligence, social media, and brand management.

#### *Artificial Intelligence*

Artificial intelligence research is on the rise as a reflection of the growing integration of artificial intelligence in multiple aspects of life. Such introspection and infusion of artificial intelligence in myriad consumption practices raises multiple moral dilemmas. The concerns are related to whom to blame in the case of moral failures: the machine, the developer, no one? Accordingly, who are the actors involved in the assemblage of artificial intelligence? For example, Tesla's autopilot car was involved in a crash killing the driver (Steward 2018). In such a case, who should be held accountable to bring fairness to the deceased? In addition, artificial intelligence brings new moral questions related to data privacy and data mining. While

consumers sign off their privacy and agree to share their information with app developers, how much of this data is used raises moral consideration. This raises a more abstract question regarding the morality of artificial intelligence as an assemblage: Should future research on the advancements of artificial intelligence always consider their moral implications?

### *Social Media*

The rise of social media and social media influencers also raises fertile grounds for studying their association with morality. How about the morality of using kids as influencers and sources of income? Which moralized domains do kids-influencers belong too? Do consumers and researchers consider it child labor? Which legitimacy pillars support and stand against this domain? Previously it was judged immoral to market to children, to use them in advertising, and to support businesses mistreating their workers. The rise of kid influencers and family influencers who use their kids as a mean of fame and money bring new ethical questions. How does this tie to the concept of immoral child labor or child abuse? How do consumers draw the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable use of minors in emergent and yet not perceived as problematic moral contexts?

Furthermore, research can focus on influencers, their moral transgressions, and how consumers evaluate, connect to, and address such issues. Researchers have already addressed service failure, recovery, and transgression in terms of corporations but have been silent regarding individuals. How would consumers react when influencers behave differently than their preaching. For example, vegan YouTube Yovanna Mendoza was photographed eating seafood on one of her trips. This consumption object represents a major moral violation for her followers as vegans, even during their vacations, should refrain from consuming any animal-related products (Cowles 2019). In addition, this violation increased the criticism of non-vegans towards vegan's life choices. The former is judging the illogical constraints that vegans are self-imposing. In addition, rather than a snapshot of the immediate response of consumers to such moral transgressions, researchers can look into long term relation with such influencers and how their moral transgressions can extend not just to influence their follower numbers, but also to the brands they vouch for, their causes and other associated influencers.

Finally, there are rising concerns of cyberbullying, unsolicited and non-consensual sexting, sex trafficking, and fake dating accounts. These concerns necessities the importance of

consuming morally at the individual, group, and institutional level to protect the vulnerable. These topics also reflect government efforts to curb immoral group and individual practices. How can institutions, groups, and individuals play a role in protecting these vulnerable groups? Do organizations have a moral obligation in protecting their consumers from possible problems rising from these concerns?

### *Brand Management*

Research on brand management has handled the role of morality in driving and opposing consumption towards certain brands but not others (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Luedicke et al. 2010; Simon 2011). However, such morality was only one of the brand's positioning. With the current rise of ethical consumerism and consumers' interest in ethical consumption, brands are responding. Some are shifting a few elements of their product, as an example H&M and its introduction of the conscious brand line. Others started to position their brands' assemblages around their morality. An example is Pact that builds its positioning on striving to make ethics meet aesthetics. How do consumers understand the difference in the moralization between such brands? Do we expect that consumers categorize both brands in the same moralized domain? On a broader scale, should brands strive to have a moral aspect of its production? And what are the consequences of moral violations?

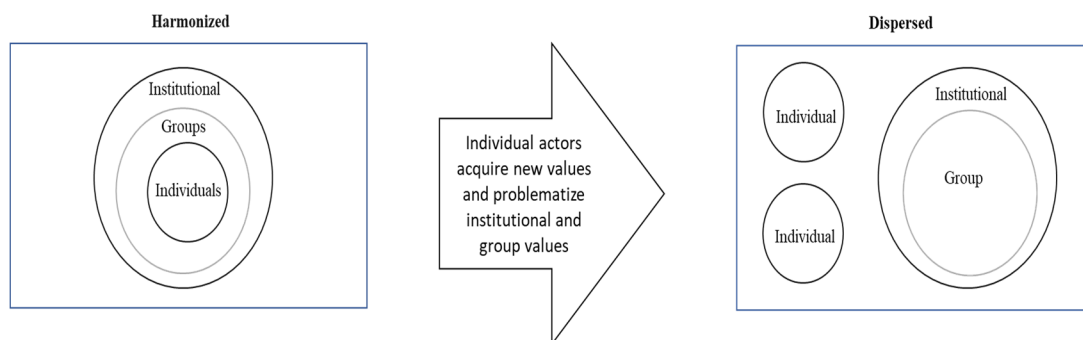
## THE TRANSITION BETWEEN BOTH ESSAYS

As presented in essay one of this dissertation, moralized consumption consists of five different domains. These domains differ according to the alignment of the actor's values, the translation phase, and the presence of legitimacy pillars. The characteristics produced harmonized, debated, divided, breached, and dispersed moralized consumption domains. A domain of consumption can move across the various types through a process of translation. First, an actor problematizes the current existing link between a domain and morality. Second, the actor tries to negotiate with other actors to try and stabilize the moral judgment of the domains (Callon 1986; Giesler 2012). Finally, the problematized domain either re-stabilizes falling back to its previous judgment (as either moral or immoral), continue being contested, or stabilize establishing a new judgment. The process of translation is contingent on the work conducted by the moralized actors to push forward their motives (DeLanda 2006). While the first essay provided a reconceptualization of morality in consumption, the second essay utilizes this reconceptualization to explore a process theorization gap. Essay two provides theoretical and managerial contributions through answering some of the gaps in the study of a dispersed moralized domain.

The empirical literature on moralized domains explored individual drivers to adopt a moralized value (see Beardsworth and Keil 1992; Sandikci and Ger 2010) and the negative judgments it entails (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006; Monin, Sawyer, and Marquez 2008). However, it is silent in exploring the process of change within the domains, the role of close-knit affinity groups, and institutions in such a change. My second essay explores individuals' journey to adopt a new morality that puts them in opposition to their affinity group's morality. Such a journey pushes the individual from mainstream moral judgment, which is aligned with the group and institutional values, to a minority moral judgment. The essay provides empirical insights into the dynamics within a dispersed, moralized domain. Accordingly, essay two provides a process theorization capturing the micro, meso and macro-level dynamics within moralized domains. I explore this gap through the study of newly converted moral vegans. Vegans, as minority individuals, defy the mainstream moral judgment of consuming animals for food, fashion, or entertainment.

Consuming animals, meat specifically, is recognized as a normalized consumption choice across cultures (Zaraska 2016). Some people consume meat for moral, religious reasons, while others consumed it as a normal part of the dinner menu (ibid). Later, vegetarians followed by vegans went against the ethical grounds of eating meat as they saw it as a violation of their moral code (Rozin, Markwith, and Stoess 1997). Using animals by entrapping, breeding, and killing them in animal agriculture, without any consideration for their lives, presented moral challenges to vegetarians (see Ruby 2012). Vegetarians broke from the moral code of their associated groups and institutions. In the past, meat was a harmonized domain as individuals, groups, and institutions had value alignment of its necessity (Zaraska 2016). Through the contestation by vegans and vegetarians, the domain became a dispersed moralized consumption. The movement of the moralized domain is presented in Figure 5.

*Figure 5: From a Harmonized to a Dispersed Domain*



The aim of the second essay is not on the movement, as this was covered in the first essay of my dissertation using a different case. Instead, I unpack the dynamics within the dispersed domain through an empirical study of individuals whose values do not align with their affinity groups and overarching institutions. Essay two captures the process journey of transformation, challenges, barriers, and navigation strategies to reach the desired change. The journey highlights the conflicting role of close-knit circles and the difficulty of navigating overarching institutions represented in the market within dispersed domains of consumption. Through this process, the essay answers one of the identified gaps in dispersed moralized consumption, which is providing a process theorization of change. In addition, the essay provides managerial implications for organizations operating within dispersed domains of consumption to ensure their survival despite the domain's instability.

## ESSAY (2): MORALLY TRIGGERED PRACTICE(S) TRANSFORMATION

### ABSTRACT

Practices are routinized behaviors consisting of three elements (objects, doings, and meanings), guided by a teleology (i.e., end goal) and performed through a stable alignment of these elements. While we know that involuntary disruptions cause misalignments in practices, little is known about the dynamics of voluntary disruptions. In addition, the sociality defines the tolerable range of performativity of a practice; however, little is known about the role of the social when individuals go beyond this tolerable range. This essay provides a process theory of voluntarily disrupted practices that are socially intolerable. Through interviews with, and archival and netnographic analysis on, ethical vegans, I put forward a two-phase transformation. In phase one, the practice transformation, individuals disrupt one practice and go through four stages of practice transformation: awakening, destabilization, reconfiguration, and re-habituating. The stages capture the disruptions in practices and the challenges faced at the individual, social, and marketplace. After the main practice is re-aligned, individuals move on to the second phase of the process, the nexus transformation. This phase is marked by a disruption in other related practices to the main one, connected through their meanings. Individuals differ in their transformed nexus, in terms of the number of practices influenced (the nexus span) and the flexibility of performing the practices (the nexus rigidity). This essay contributes to practice theory by advocating the possibility of voluntarily imposed practice misalignments that lead to change in the practice elements. Accordingly, this contribution remedies previous criticism on the theory for its inability to theorize for change. In addition, the essay highlights role of the social in negatively influencing practice changes. Finally, I extend the work on the nexus of practices, and rather than demonstrating a uniform outcome of practice transformation, I present a typology of transformed nexus. The process theorization provides managerial insights to offer tailored institutional resources along the transformation process, clarity and inclusive communication messages.

*Keywords:* practice theory, lifestyle nexus, veganism, morality, sociality, misalignment



## INTRODUCTION

Going vegan at first can feel completely overwhelming, especially if you have been used to consuming animal products your whole life. What can I eat? Where do I find products? Is it going to cost me more? Is it going to be any good? What will my friends and family think of me? [During and after transitioning, you also face challenges]. Your family is not on board is probably the main reason why people cannot stay vegan. Family and food are such a big part of everyone's lives. It can be very exhausting physically and mentally to be "the difficult one" who is always requesting separate meals or having to cook different meals for yourself and then the rest of the family. This is why many people choose to keep the peace and also not to spend hours in the kitchen every day, decide that it's just easier to cook the same for everyone. [In addition,] it is so easy to fall into the convenience trap. Sometimes laziness gets the better of us. And before you know it, one poor choice has led to eating chicken two nights in a row and having a cheese and ham sandwich for lunch. [...] When you educate yourself more deeply, it will be easier to make the right choices. You won't look at food the same way. You will see a live animal next time you look at that steak burger. You will see the mother cow being ripped away from a crying baby calf when you look at that milkshake. (The Minimalist Vegan Blog 2019)

Moralized consumption has infiltrated multiple consumption fields from ethical consumption to zero waste to fair trade coffee to name a few. Shifting from mainstream norms to one of these emerging consumption fields brings challenges. The above quote highlights the concerns, barriers, and sacrifices that vegans go through, leaving behind the culture of consuming meat. In Essay 1, I discussed how meat is a dispersed moralized consumption domain. It is marked with consistent moral values between affinity groups (e.g., friends and family) and the institutions (e.g., the market). These values are, however, not aligned with some individual values (e.g., here the newly transformed vegans) as it is negatively framed for being immoral.

Deciding to become a vegan pushes the individual to adopt a minority moral lifestyle. By minority moral lifestyle, I refer to living one's life with unconventional values, outside the tolerable range of values in the mainstream society. For example, hippies and their moral refusal

of acquiring material wealth. The minority moral lifestyle stands in opposition to the dominant moral lifestyle. By dominant moral lifestyle, I refer to the socially tolerable range of values for living ones' life. Moving from a dominant moral lifestyle to a minority one raises two questions (1), how and why do individuals manage their transition?, and (2) what are the challenges faced during their transition? Focusing on exploring the individual and social transformation from a majority lifestyle to a minority lifestyle was not studied before in the literature.

Academic researchers made several calls to study the interplay between morality and consumption (Arnould and Thompson 2005, 2015; Warde 2005; Wilk 2001). While some researchers answered this call, there are still areas for future exploration. Researchers investigated the psychological factors and personal characteristics that drive individuals towards moral consumption (Lee et al. 2014), the macro-level institutional forcing influencing morality (Coskuner-Balli 2020; Giesler and Veresiu 2014; Henry 2010; Sandikci and Ger 2010) and the presence of multiple moral habitus among racialized and classed groups (Crockett 2017; Lamont 1992, 2001; Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013). However, the practice transformation journey of voluntarily adopting a minority moralized lifestyle has not been examined. This is particularly important as practices are embedded in the marketplace, and their transformation requires managing multiple challenges. From the quote mentioned above, these challenges are social, in terms of disagreements from others, and personal, in terms of the transformation of bodily skills, doings, and understandings. Through the analysis of a minority moralized practice, I contribute to the literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that consumers face, their navigation strategies of the social, and the marketplace interactions.

This essay draws from and contributes to Schatzki's (1996, 2002) conceptualization of social practices, which theorizes the structuring of social life and consumption (Phipps and Ozanne 2017). Practices are routinized behaviors that are learned through, and with, others (Maciel and Wallendorf 2017). Practices consist of objects (i.e., items needed to perform the practice), doings (i.e., bodily movements to perform the practice), and meanings (i.e., connotations associated with the practice (Arsel and Bean 2013; Magaudda 2011). These elements are guided by the practice teleology or end goal (Schatzki 1996, 2002, 2005). For the practice to be performed, these elements need to be aligned, yet in certain cases, the elements stop working together or become misaligned (see Canniford and Shankar 2013; Phipps and

Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017). This misalignment makes it harder for individuals to perform the practice as previously learned and routinized. Additionally, practices are connected to one another as they “link to form wider complexes and constellation, a nexus” (Hui, Schatzki, and Shove 2017, 1). Changes in the elements of one practice trigger changes in the connected practices of the nexus (Hui 2017).

Prior literature has studied the concept of practice misalignment as an involuntary disruption to dominant practice elements (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017). For example, Phipps and Ozanne (2017) examined the influence of the drought on the misalignment of multiple practices. Australians were forced to use less water, a dominant practice element, and find new ways of performing multiple practices: showering, doing the dishes, and flushing the toilet. This misalignment creates negative feelings of frustration (Seregina and Weijo 2017), which can lead individuals to abandon a practice (Thomas and Epp 2019). Nevertheless, what about individuals who decide to voluntarily disrupt their practices after a moral revelation, for example, those who decide to live a minimalist lifestyle or decide not to own a car to reduce their carbon footprint? The literature provides little insights into practice misalignment that is deliberately imposed through consumers’ agentic actions. Little is known about their motivations, their challenges, and their navigation strategies.

In addition, previous studies on practice misalignment portray realignment attempts as socially supported. Practices are social (Schatzki 2002), which ensures the reproduction of the practice elements across time through “carriers” (Shove et al. 2012). Carriers are faithful performers of the practice keeping its elements. At times of misalignment, the social circle aids the individual in realigning the practice elements back to their closest possible dominant configuration (e.g., Phipps and Ozanne 2017). The attempts to realign the practice through the social bring it back to its dominant elements. However, the role of the social, when individuals are seeking minority practice elements, is not explored in the literature. As practices are inherently social (Schatzki 1996; Shove et al. 2012), it is crucial to understand the role of this sociality during transformation and change. In other words, what is the role of the social when individuals voluntarily disrupt their practices to follow minority practice elements?

Prior work on practice misalignment and reconfiguration investigated previously habituated practices (Thomas and Epp 2019). Researchers investigated the readjustment of the

practice elements to regain a more stable consumption experience (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Epp et al. 2014; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017; Woermann and Rokka 2015). As these papers focused on practice disruptions that are involuntarily imposed, the desired practice alignment aims to restore the dominant elements of the practice. In other words, the objects, doings, meanings, and the teleology of the practice do not drastically change. After the disruption source is eliminated, the practice is restored to its previous dominant elements. Little is offered on the re-habitation of practices when the desired elements are different from the dominant ones.

Finally, research on the change of connected bundles or nexus of practices has focused mainly on co-located practices that share materiality (Hui 2017; Shove et al. 2012). Such colocation creates codependence and material linkages between various practices. For example, Blue and Spurling (2017) analyzed the practices within the hospital industry and how changes in the material in one practice create changes in others' material and, eventually, other practices. They highlighted how providing X-rays changed the practices of radiologists and, eventually doctors when diagnosing patients. However, exploring the change in spatially separated practices, that are connected through their shared meanings, has not been studied before. In addition, the change in the connected practices has taken a uniform route of analysis in which the changed nexus is the same. Thus, it fails to theorize about possible differences in the produced nexus. Table 6 highlights the gap in the literature.

*Table 6: Gaps in the Literature on Practices*

	<b>Practice theory blocks</b>	<b>Findings in previous literature</b>	<b>The gap</b>
One practice	Control on the misalignment	Practices become disrupted due to involuntary factors that impose a misalignment.	Possible disruptions driven by voluntarily imposed misalignments
	The role of the social	The social provides support for individuals to realign the dominant practice elements	The role of the social in adopting minority practice elements is unexplored

	Objects, doings, and meanings	The same objects, doings, and meanings are restored after disruptions and realignments	Change in the objects, doings and meanings of the transformed practice
Nexus of practices	Connection	Practices are connected through materiality and co-location	Connection between practices that are spatially dispersed
	Produced nexus	The change in one practice creates uniform changes in the nexus	Examining the possibility of deviations in the produced nexus

Addressing the above gaps, my essay explores the following questions 1-Why and how do individuals shift to minority moralized practices?; 2- How does their social circle, and marketplace interactions affect this practice transformation?; 3- How does the process of practice transformation unfold across a nexus of connected practices?; 4- What are the theoretical implications of such a change? I answer these questions through an empirical study of people who shift to a vegan lifestyle. Drawing from and contributing to practice theory, I show how a change in the elements of practice (i.e., the objects, meanings, and doings) following a moral shift in practice teleology (i.e., considering the consequences on animals) triggers practice misalignments. I focus on the adoption of new elements of practices and how the change in one practice can influence other connected practices.

My findings reveal a two-phase process starting with a change of one main practice, followed by an expansion into other connected practices. Phase one marks the modification in the main practice passing through four stages. First, in the awakening stage, my participants deliberately decide to transform the elements of at least one of their practices to fit a new moral teleology, in my case: avoiding harm to animals. Second, during the destabilization stage, I show how adopting this new moral teleology creates tensions with their social circle, which poses constraints to the realignment of practice elements. In addition, consumers are incapable of navigating the market with their current practical knowledge and thus perceive it as a source of tension. Third, in the reconfiguration stage, novice consumers invest in learning about performing their food-related practices as a vegan. Finally, at the re-habitation phase, consumers eventually realign both their practice elements and the sociality behind it. Phase two

marks the modification in other practices connected, to the main one, through their meanings and thus transforming the nexus. The transformed nexuses differ in terms of the number of changed practices (i.e., the span) as well as the flexibility in performing these practices (i.e., the rigidity).

Next, I outline the theoretical foundation that informs my research. I then discuss my context and methodology. My findings are organized in a way to show the two phases of transformation, as well as the sub-processes. Finally, I discuss my contributions and future research ideas.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: PRACTICE THEORIES**

### **Practices**

A practice is “a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (Reckwitz 2002, 249). It is through the continuous performance of a specific practice that it becomes embodied and routinized (Shove et al. 2012). Practice theory, though it has multiple theorists and theorizations (see Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 1996, 2002; Shove et al. 2012; Warde 2005), provides the same conceptualization to understanding practices. Practices are replicated across space and time through loyal carriers who guard them (Shove et al. 2012). Consumer culture researchers used these theories to explain a myriad of consumption activities (see Allen 2002; Arsel and Bean 2013; Epp et al. 2014; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017; Thomas and Epp 2019; Woermann and Rokka 2015). Thus, the theory is relevant to answer my research questions.

### **Practice Elements and Misalignments**

Practices are guided by a teleology, which is “a set of acceptable ends, orders, uses, and emotions—that governs the practice and embeds it into a context” (Arsel and Bean 2013, p.901). Such a teleology operating within the boundaries of understandings which is “a tacit sense of what to say and do” (Maciel and Wallendorf 2017, 727) and rules which are “explicit formulations, percepts and instructions that enjoin, direct or remonstrate people to perform

specific actions” (Schatzki 2002, 79). Thus, practices follow a teleology to achieve a certain end goal with clear understandings and rules to govern it.

Practices operate through the triad of objects, doings, and meanings (Magaudda, 2011; Arsel and Bean 2013; Maciel and Wallendorf 2017). Objects are the materials used in practice, doings are the activities employed on the material, and meanings are the symbolic connotations of these doings and objects (Arsel and Bean 2013; Magaudda 2011). This conceptualization is important as it captures the interconnectedness of the three elements and how the changes in one element impact the other two elements. Objects, doings, and meanings need to work together; in other terms, they need to align for an individual to seamlessly perform the practice without any negative emotions (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Seregina and Weijo 2017).

However, the elements (objects, doings, and meanings) do not always naturally align and sometimes are disrupted. I use the concept of practice misalignment to refer to practice elements (objects, doings, and meanings) that do not have links and thus disrupting the practice. The literature has looked into this misalignment due to involuntary disruptions (i.e., external factors that impose a misalignment). These external factors involuntarily disrupt the practice elements. Such external factors include natural forces (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Phipps and Ozanne 2017) and technological advancements (Epp et al. 2014). However, the literature has little to offer on explaining the voluntary decision to disrupt individual practices. This essay looks into this voluntary disruption through the acquisition of a new moral value. In other words, how do practices change and misalign as their carriers decide to shift the teleology after a moral revelation?

## **Practice Sociality**

Practices operate at two levels: the social level entails practices as an entity, and the individual level entails practices as performativity (Shove et al. 2012; Thomas and Epp 2019). Practices as an entity detail the cultural norms, and the performativity counts for individual understanding and performance of these cultural practices (Shove et al. 2012). The individual performance of the practice is guided by the social dimension to ensure its conformity to the social expectations (Shove and Pantzar 2005). The entity of the practice, at the social level, determines the acceptable “tolerable flexibility” (Hagerstrand 1996) of acceptable

performativities. It determines dominant practices that are favorable within societies (Thomas and Epp 2019). Individual performativities that do not reflect the practice as an entity are considered minority practices.

In addition to the social structuring of practices, practices are shared (Reckwitz 2002; Shove et al. 2012). People learn them from each other, leading to the emergence of practice norms (Scott, Bakker and Quist 2012). The sociality is aligned when individuals who learn and share the practice perform it using the same elements. In other words, individuals perform the practices for the same teleology using similar objects, doings, and meanings. On the other side, the sociality is misaligned when individuals learn or share the practice perform it using different elements. Throughout this essay, I use the term social misalignment to refer to the social friction that is driven by a difference in practice performances between individuals who either share the practice or are learning the practice from each other.

The social shaping of the practice ensures its successful repetition. For example, Maciel and Wallendorf (2017) highlighted the importance of sociality in practices through cooperative scaffolding in which less advanced members learn about the practice from high-status ones in the beer tasting community. As the social practice is enacted on the individual level, variations in the performance of the practice take place (Hui 2017; Shove et al. 2012; Thomas and Epp 2019). However, the variations are still tolerable (Hui 2017). Little is offered in explaining possible intolerable variations of performativity and the role of the social in handling these misalignments. In other terms, what is the reaction of the sociality when individuals perform outside the boundaries of the tolerable range of social practice? How do individuals seek to reconcile their social and piece back their social misalignments?

### **Nexus of Practices and Practice Change**

“As there are diverse social practices, and as every agent carries out a multitude of different social practices, the individual is the unique crossing point of the practices” (Reckwitz 2002, 256). Around this individual, practices can come together and join in a constellation, or what is referred to as a nexus (Hui et al. 2017). As practices come together to form a nexus, with the individuals as the main role of change, misalignments taking place in one practice create ripple effects in other associated practices. The literature has been silent in exploring this



entanglement of practices (Hui 2017). Except for Phipps and Ozanne's (2017) paper, which described the influence of the loss of materiality (i.e., water) on multiple dependent practices, the literature has focused on the analysis of individualized practice misalignments and re-habituations. Little has been said on the interlink between practices change that are not linked through their materiality.

Practices and their associated nexus inherently combine innovation and reproduction (Hui 2017; Hui et al. 2017; Warde 2005). Reproduction is usually done through tacit knowledge and the habitus, in “one notion which grasps the orderliness and predictability of people’s actions when faced with apparent free choices, both within a particular practice and across different practices” (Warde 2005, 140). However, practices are also mutable. They change as people in myriad situations adapt, improvise, and experiment (Schatzki 2002; Warde 2005). Practice theory takes into consideration that behaviors are routinized (Reckwitz 2002), reproduced through tacit knowledge (Warde 2005), and changed (Schatzki 2002). A change in one practice creates a ripple effect in other connected practices. I use the term nexus transformation to refer to a change in the bundle of connected practices.

To contribute to the literature on practice transformation by exploring the above-mentioned gaps, the context needs to involve individuals who 1) voluntarily disrupt their practices, 2) adopt minority practice elements outside the socially tolerable range of practices, 3) have practice misalignments with others in their social circle. Vegans, who were raised as omnivores, fit the description of these individuals.

## **METHOD**

### **Context: Veganism in North America**

“Veganism is the personal rejection of the commodity status of nonhuman animals, the notion that animals have only external value and the notion that animals have less moral value than do humans” (Kaplan 2012, 182). Vegans feel that killing an animal has the same emotional and moral repercussions as killing a person. Omnivores, on the other hand, are depicted to have a condescending view towards animals believing in the uniqueness and superiority of humans (Bilewicz et al. 2011). Previous literature explored the various motivations behind adopting

veganism, which I used as a selection criterion for our participants to establish boundary conditions. Animal welfare comes as the main objective (McDonald 2000; Ruby 2012; Singer 2009) and sometimes is coupled with sustaining the environment (McDonald 2000; Ruby 2012), ending world hunger (McDonald 2000), or caring for one's health (see Campbell 2005). These motivations guide my recruitment criteria in selecting vegans driven by a moral aspect.

Vegans, excluding those in it for health, tend to reject a myriad of consumption objects, including meat, animal by-products (e.g., eggs, milk, and honey), cosmetic products tested to animals and apparel manufactured using animal skin or feathers (Vegan society website; Singer 2009). The changes in one of their practices (i.e., eating) bring to the focus the cruelty on animals that pushes changes in other practices that determine their lifestyle. Such practices include grooming, entertainment, and dressing.

Veganism has been on the rise in North America and other places in the world (Loria 2017; Cappiello 2018; Hancox 2018). There is an estimate of 1.7 million vegans in the USA (Cherry 2006), and 3 percent of Canadians claim to follow a vegan diet (Cappiello 2018). Meat consumption decreased by 10% since 2001, with the sharpest decline in pork with 4.5% (Alt 2015). Milk consumption has been declining in the last ten years by around 25% (ibid). The Canadian Food guide (2019) invited Canadians to consume a plant-based diet with less emphasis on meat, and almost removed dairy and cheese. The movement has initially been portrayed negatively in the media (Cole and Morgan 2011). However, with the rise of celebrities' endorsement, this negative portrayal is changing (Lundahl 2018). It is still erroneous to assume that this shift in media trends, has a noticeable impact on vegans' daily interactions.

There are tensions between vegans and omnivores (Edwards 2013; Hirschler 2011; McDonald 2000; Twine 2014). Though studies handled the moral approach of veganism (see McDonald 2000; Ruby 2012; Edward, 2013), their contributions were mainly limited to vegans' desires not to eat meat. Morality was not linked to their problems in social life, their interaction with the marketplace, nor was it fully explored as part of their transformation to become vegan. Thus, this context is ideal for understanding voluntarily imposed misalignment of practices, the role of the social and the market in this misalignment, and the impact of this misalignment on other associated practices.

## Data Collection

I collected myriad sources of data on vegans over two years. My data set includes interviews, archival data, and field notes to triangulate the findings using different resources (Maciel and Wallendorf 2017; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017; Weinberger, Zavisca, and Silva 2017). For the interviews, I conducted 19 long interviews and 18 ethnographic interviews with current, aspirational, and lapsed vegans. Recruitment was purposive by asking for people to accept the interview request from online vegan groups. The interviewees were then asked to provide referrals for further snowball sampling.

The interviews followed the convention of depth interviews in which the interviewee set the flow of the discussion with the interviewer asking follow-up questions and directing the conversation when needed (Arsel 2017; McCracken 1988; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989). The interviews first started with the life-history of the participants to understand their trajectory. Then, the participants were prompted to talk about their journey into veganism. They were asked specific probes about their motivation and challenges they faced, their view about veganism and vegetarianism, the reaction of their immediate social circle, and their sources of support, including social and/or personal. Later, participants were asked about their interaction with the marketplace, their views about the various vegan related business initiatives, and their own shopping and dining practices. The long interviews ranged between 45 minutes to 2 hours. The interviews count 359 pages double space, Times New Roman Font 12. Same page. This format specification applies to all other utilized sources.

The archival data included the analysis of newspaper articles, blogs, social media posts, podcasts, YouTube video comments, books, and documentaries. Newspaper articles were downloaded using Factiva, and search words included veganism, vegans, vegan challenges, ex-vegans, vegan problems, vegan life histories, vegan relations, and vegan statistics. These search terms appeared the most in The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, New York Times, USA Today, and New York Daily News. These newspapers also have a wide readership based in North America and, therefore, shape and represent cultural narratives. Mainstream media sources are a total of 814 pages. Other articles from specialized media of newspapers and blogs were included. Specialized media sources discussed veganism in general, mainstream beliefs and ideas about it,

the struggle of vegans, and estimation of the number of vegans in North America, vegan businesses, and innovative products. The data from these external sources totaled 447 pages.

Archival data on the life stories of ex-vegans, from public sources, was utilized. This data included stories shared on personal blogs and YouTube channels using the search words of ex-vegan, lapsed vegans, why I am no longer vegan, stopped being vegan life stories. The data included the story itself, and if possible, the comments from the viewers that reacted to the story. Vegan blogs were also utilized to understand personal transformation narratives and the display of vegan practices and challenges.

In addition, I read books, watched documentaries, and listened to podcasts that our informants used as part of their education to gather a deeper understanding of the content of these materials. The first author also immersed herself in different social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) by joining closed and open groups. Open resources included People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Vegan.com, Anonymous for the Voiceless, #Vegan, #Veganproblems, and Curiously Veg. As for closed social media groups, I joined groups that support new vegans, or ex-vegans, omnivore groups criticizing the movement, and vegan haters. Upon acceptance to the group, the researcher overtly expressed their presence and the intention to use data as part of this publication. Archival data was coded and recoded to triangulate with the primary interviews, as they shed additional light on the transition stories of vegans into and out of the new consumption domain. Social media and YouTube posts and comments were also analyzed for coding on various practices, social stigma, judgment, and tensions that the commentators described.

Finally, I attended market events such as vegan festivals, protests against circuses, slaughterhouses, and sit-ins at sanctuaries to get closer to the context and collected ethnographic interviews and observational data. Field notes were written while the researcher was on the field, or if this was not possible, directly after the interviewee left the site. Fieldnotes amount to 483 pictures and 18 pages. Ethnographic interviews ranged from 5 to 20 minutes, and key points were written during the time of the interview, and the rest was noted down immediately after the interview ended. These interviews totaled 359 pages. All sources are summarized in Table 7, along with the specific purpose of each of the sets.

Table 7: Data Sources

Source		Source Examples	Data Set	Purpose
Interviews	Primary	Current, lapsed, and aspirational ethical vegans	19 interviews 359 pages of transcript	Understanding the process of, and emotions involved in, living a vegan lifestyle including the challenges from the social and the marketplace
	Ethnographic	Protests, Meet-ups, Festivals	18 interviews, 483 photos	Gaining an understanding of the context and the navigation strategies of vegans
Archival Data	News (mainstream)	The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, New York Times, USA Today, and New York Daily News	814 pages	Providing insights into the mainstream views about vegans and the presence, or lack of, market initiatives targeting vegans
	News (Specialized)	Challenges, stories, life history, judgment, ethics	447 pages	Exploring the arguments between vegans over the range of tolerable flexibility of the practice
	YouTube channels	Double standards that annoy vegan, why I stopped being vegan after ten years, dairy farmers struggle	12 videos 25,924 comments (More details in Appendix 3)	Digging deeper into this minority consumption motivations, and judgment on each other, on their social circle to determine the alignment of practice elements
	Blogs	Vegan Life, My Vegans Stories, Animal Justice	3 335 pages	Stories about personal transformation journeys and their resources during transformation
	Podcasts	That Vegan Couple, The Reluctant Vegan, Go Vegan Radio,	4 podcasts, 27 episodes	Exploring the types of advice given to vegans to shed light on the challenges' individuals

		The Vegan Revolution		face as they become vegan as well as the resources, they have access to in their journeys
	Documentaries	What the Health, Cowspiracy, Forks over Knives	3	Gaining an understanding of the context and providing an inventory for the transformation triggers mentioned by the interviewees
	Books	Animal Liberation, Meat-Hooked, Eating Animals, From Body Fuel, The Omnivores' Dilemma, How to Create a Vegan World	6	
Netnography	Facebook	PETA, Anonymous for the Voiceless, The Vegan Society, Ma Vois Pour Eux (FB), Vegan News (T), Vegansaurus (T)	16 groups	Exploring the emerging process and themes from the primary interviews
	Twitter			

### Informants

The interviewees self-identified as current vegans, aspirational vegans, non-meat eaters, or lapsed vegans. Their vegan journeys ranged from a few weeks to multiple years. This temporal difference in commitment to the consumption field helped me in detailing the various stages and challenges within each stage of transformation. All interviewees are classified as ethical vegans who are motivated by moral reasons for ending animal abuse, preserving the environment, and/or ending world hunger. I excluded health vegans, vegans by birth, and vegans for religious regions. During the pilot interviews, health vegans appeared to have different life narratives and challenges than ethical vegans. I also excluded the latter two categories as they have a relatively stable habitus and have not witnessed any moral conflicts with their family regarding their veganism. In addition, I have not encountered any newly transformed Hindus. I did not have any

exclusion criteria in terms of social class, age, the family situation as our preliminary observation demonstrated the heterogeneity of vegans. Our interviewees belonged to a range of social classes, age groups, and family situations, and these factors did not have any visible differences between the vegans' transitional life narratives. An overview of the interviewees' profile is provided in Table 8.

*Table 8: Informants' Profiles*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Years being vegan</b>	<b>Trajectory</b>
Benny & Jim	42 & 45	Entrepreneurs	6.5 years	Omnivore → Vegan
Jack	26	College Professor	2 years	Omnivore → Vegan
Melisa	41	Psychiatrist	4 years	Omnivore → Vegan
Rose	36	Administrator	1.5 year	Omnivore → Vegetarian → Vegan
Tom	24	Waiter	8 months	Omnivore → Vegetarian → Vegan
Charlie	31	Biologist	Less than a year	Omnivore → Pescatarian → Vegan
Matteo	35	Chemist	4 years	Omnivore → Vegan
Paulina	38	Engineer	11 years	Omnivore → Vegan
Acadia	57	Fashion designer	31 years	Omnivore → Vegan → Pescatarian → Vegan
Julian	45	Self-employed	(3 years)	Omnivore → Vegan → Vegetarian
Alex	48	Software engineer	3 months	Omnivore → Vegan
Luca	33	Technician	(3 months)	Omnivore → Vegan → Omnivore → Nonmeat eater
Francis	30	Hotel receptionist	1 year	Omnivore → Vegan
Reza	41	Driver	(3 months), 10 years	Omnivore → Vegan → Vegetarian
Alexandra	40	Accountant	5 years	Omnivore → Vegetarian
Celia	39	HR Consultant	10 years	Omnivore → Vegetarian → Vegan
Olivia	40	Chef	(2 years), 12 days	Omnivore → Vegetarian → Omnivore → Vegan
Clara	41	Artist	(13 years), 1.5 years	Omnivore → Pescatarian → Vegan → Omnivore → Vegan

## **Data Analysis**

Driven by my research questions and desire to unpack the transformation of individuals through acquiring new meaning to their life, I used the hermeneutic approach to data analysis (Thompson 1997). This approach is premised on the idea that a given consumer is not expressing a strictly subjective viewpoint. Instead, he or she is articulating a system of cultural meanings that have been selectively and creatively adapted to fit his or her specific life goals and circumstances (ibid). A methodological implication of this hermeneutic view is that it uncovers the underlying meaning system, eventually valorizing it as the focal of the analysis (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007)The data analysis was iterative between theory, the emerging themes, and previous literature. First, I conducted intra-textual coding and analysis to explore how individuals transformed into vegans, the involvement with the consumption field, and the challenges they encounter. Second, an intertextual analysis across transcripts helped the similarities and differences in the challenges and transformation story of the interviews. The process was iterative between the various data sources and theory. I stopped interviews once I reached data saturation. I discuss my research findings in the following section.

### **FROM DOMINANT TO MINORITY PRACTICES**

Individuals witness a moral revelation, sparking a change in their practices. The first practices to change following the moral revelation are those related to food. These practices include cooking, eating, grocery shopping, and sharing a meal. Change in these practices marks the first phase of change, the practice transformation process. Following this phase, individuals extend the changes to the connected practices through the transfusion of meanings. The associated nexus, which I refer to as a lifestyle nexus, includes the connected practices of food (e.g., meat), dressing (e.g., fur), grooming (e.g., cosmetics and body care), and entertainment (e.g., circuses). I include these practices in the nexus because, according to the interviews, they are connected through the new meanings. Individuals who change their practices upon a moral revelation, find themselves between two opposing performativities.

On the first end is the dominant practice, the omnivore one. This practice is established through primary socialization and reinforced through mainstream culture. Accordingly, the



performativity of this practice lies within the socially acceptable range. Its teleology focuses on pleasure to maximize the interests of humankind. Thus, practices are performed without any regard for animals. The understandings include the presence of a hierarchy in the animal kingdom in which certain animals are smarter (i.e., dogs). In contrast, other animals are dumb (i.e., cattle). The rules guiding this practice include regulations of testing drugs on animals but not people and cosmetics on rabbits but not cats. Guided by this teleology, dominant consumption objects include meat, dairy products, leather, and fur. Consumption meanings include nutrition, fulfillment, togetherness, compassion towards fellow humans, and certain animals. Dominant consumption doings include gifting food, buying meat, going to zoos and, and various cooking tasks such as marinating chicken. Throughout the essay, I refer to dominant practices as the omnivore practice.

On the second end is the minority practice, the vegan one. This practice performativity is in tension with the omnivorous one. It is advocated by certain individuals as an ethical way of living ones' life. Being a minority practice surrenders it outside the range of tolerable flexibility. The vegan practice is guided by a teleology that focuses on pleasure yet taking into consideration the interests of animals. While pleasure-seeking is desired, it is not achieved without protecting animals in the process. The understandings include the need to protect all animals from abuse in various industries (e.g., meat, entertainment, apparel, and cosmetics). The rules include consuming products that are labeled as cruelty-free, vegan approved, and vegan-friendly, and boycotting all companies that exploit animals. Guided by this teleology, minority consumption objects include plant-based protein, vegan dairy, and cruelty-free cosmetics. Consumption meanings include nutrition, fulfillment, togetherness, and compassion towards all sentient beings. Minority consumption doings include gifting vegan food, buying plant-based protein, and marinating tofu. Throughout the essay, I refer to minority practices as vegan practices. Table 9 highlights the main differences between these two practices

*Table 9: Dominant Versus Minority Practices*

<b>Practice theory elements</b>	<b>Dominant practices</b>	<b>Minority practices</b>
Practices involved	Cooking, eating, grooming, entertainment, apparel, and grocery shopping	

Definition	Practice performativity that is normalized, habituated and tolerable within the broader society	Practice performativity that is new, unorthodox and intolerable within the broader society
Teleology	Human pleasure without regard to animals	Human pleasure with regard to animals
Understandings	The presence of a hierarchy in the animal kingdom in which certain animals are smarter (i.e., dogs). Thus, taking advantage of certain animals in industries is okay	The necessity of protecting the animals, the planet, and doing no harm.
Rules	Testing is acceptable on certain animals (e.g., monkeys) Using animals for their skin is okay	No animal testing No using animals in any industry
Objects	Animal-based protein Dairy products Leather Duck down jackets	Plant-based protein Vegan dairy products Fruits Vegetables Cruelty-free cosmetics
Doings	Marinating chicken Buying animal-based protein Gifting food (meat) Visiting zoos and aquariums	Marinating tofu Buying plant-based protein Gifting food (tofu)
Meanings	Fulfillment Nourishment Togetherness Compassion towards certain animals over others	Fulfillment Nourishment Togetherness Compassion towards all sentient beings Cruelty-free No Harm Animal friendly

### **PHASE (1) PRACTICE TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY**

In a vegan context, the movement from a dominant to a minority practice takes place after a moral revelation. The revelation, first, disrupts one main practice: food. This revelation

and disruptions mark the start of phase (1) the practice transformation journey. This phase consists of four stages taking place at the individual and social levels. These four stages are awakening, destabilization, reconfiguration, and re-habituation. The following section discusses each of these phases in detail while explaining the changes in food-related practices. Later, I explain how the change in this main practice is carried over to other practices connected through their meanings.

### **Stage (1): Awakening**

The majority of mainstream consumers have always believed in the superiority of humankind over other creatures (Singer 2009). Using animals as a resource, either for food or scientific or cosmetic testing is justifiable, and the harm to animals is taken for granted. This normalization of using animals for consumption is done through multiple mechanisms: communicative distortions by family members, media and meat and dairy industries (McDonald 2000); speciesism and segregation of hierarchy in the animal kingdom (Singer 2009); or labeling of food items distinct from the source animal (e.g., pork not a pig, eggs not baby chickens) (Adams 2015). These mechanisms safeguard industries that exploit animals from consumer consciousness. When some consumers are presented with a catalyst (McDonald 2000), they experience a revelation about the mismatch between their practice and either an aspired morality or a morality they thought is already achieved. This revelation transforms the individual from a carrier of the omnivore practice to a shocked practitioner. I label their moment of revelation: the moral trigger. The awakening stage takes place at the individual level, without much discussion with others who share the practices as described by Matteo.

I decided to act on [the moral trigger] after six months of thinking about that. I did that basically without discussing it with friends and family. I remember trying to raise the issue someday when I was having some drinks with my friends, and they did not believe it. They thought I was joking. They were pretty [much] laughing and not paying attention. I thought that it was totally not a good venue to discuss the idea. [...] Nobody quite understands this topic. They can not see my point of view. They regard it as being radical [...]. I did not know any vegan at that point. One of my friend's brother was vegetarian, but I really was

not close to him. So, I did not really have anyone to discuss or pull information from. Basically, it was reading on my own.

Matteo, same as other shocked vegan practitioners, embark on a solitary behaviour change to match the moral revelation. It is a lonely process at this stage as those around new vegans do not share the same concerns or mitigate their revelation through other techniques (Rothgerber 2014)

### *The Moral Trigger: A Shift in Practice Teleology to a Minority One*

People who decide to become vegans embark on a practice transformation journey following a shift in their practices' teleology. A teleology, i.e., an end goal (Schatzki 2001, 2005) guides practices to be performed in a certain manner. In our context, the individuals are moving their practice from following an omnivorous teleology to a vegan teleology. The former is guided with pleasure-seeking without considering consequences to animal welfare to a vegan teleology, which brings front and center a moral teleology of doing no harm. Though the vegan teleology might also incorporate pleasure, it is not the main goal or objective sought. Our respondents reported contacting pieces of information, news, documentaries that showed the horrific lives of animals in multiple industries. This information makes them realize that their current practice elements (i.e., objects, doings, and meanings) are not as harmless as they thought. Rose, who first became a vegetarian (she consumed milk, cheese, and ice-cream), and then a vegan, explains such a triggering moment.

It is always a video or a friend or something that you see that shocks you. For me, it was a documentary called man and animal. I cannot find it anymore [...] It was a special documentary [...] It just blew my mind. It was very graphic at the time I watched it; it was very graphic. It is when I watched it back in 2007; I remember that one scene [...] I remember I was crying. I could not stop crying, so that was it. That was the start for me.

For Rose, the documentary presented an important trigger point in which she realized the harm inflicted on animals. It was a horrific piece of information that she was blind-sided by. This information is the trigger behind hers and others' transformation journey. Earthlings, the documentary in question, is a "2005 documentary focus[ing] on the way animals are manipulated by humans for use as food, clothing, entertainment, scientific research, and as pets. It is one of

the most distressing depictions of animal suffering you are likely to see and a film that stays with the viewer.” (Harry Fletcher 2018). It one of the most influential documentaries in the lives of our interviewees, mentioned almost by all participants. It is so graphic and powerful that some of the interviewees could not even finish the documentary, others read about it, and few watched only the excerpts. Usually, when individuals are confronted with the negative consequences of their actions, they feel shameful and try to mitigate the negative feeling by externally assigning the blame (Šedová, Slovák, and Ježková 2016; Tian et al. 2016). However, our interviewees internalized the harm done to the animals presented in these documentaries and attributed the cause to themselves and thus enacted a change in their consumption practices.

If you are an ethical and moral person, watching [the documentary] *Earthlings* will make you go vegan! Only because you see the truth and you do not want to contribute to the pain and suffering animal agriculture represents, I watched *earthlings* six years ago. I became an ethical vegan immediately, one of the best personal decisions of my life. In today's modern society, there is no legitimate reason to consume animal products. Anyone telling you otherwise is lying to you! ( David Munoz, Archival data, Quora 2015).

For David, seeing the reality about animal abuse acts as a switch to his morality, ultimately sacrificing his embedded security (Phipps and Ozanne 2017) in his routinized practices. Consuming and using animals for food is guided by a teleology of human pleasure with disregard for cruelty and the impact of this practice on animals. Triggers highlight that for the practice to accomplish this teleology of pleasure there is a hidden cost, often unnoticed before this awakening phase: other sentient beings suffer in the process. The realization is coupled with their desire to act morally and not have a role in harm, as seen in the above quotes.

“As self-managing subjects, we moderate our consumption acts and refine our consumption desires to feel or become an ethical person” (Belk, Ger, and Askegaard 2003, 346). To manage this realization, individuals can deflect their feelings (Rothgerber 2014), or repress their feelings (Reczek et al. 2018; Tian et al. 2016). I demonstrate the third line of action, which is practice change. Novice vegans acknowledge the role of their current performativity in harming animals, and thus take the third route as they do not want to be the reason behind such harm. The time between this moment of realization and the decision to change one’s practice (abandonment) vary in duration. While some switched overnight, such as the case of Melissa, who went home and threw out all the meat products in her house, other interviewees took a few

months to make the change. Yet, at the end, the trigger points fueled individuals' desire to perform their practices differently.

### *Abandoning Old Practice's Elements*

Once people decide to perform some of their practices with a different teleology, the elements are modified. First, the meanings desired for the practice (e.g., cruelty-free, no-harm, compassion towards animals, animal friendly) no longer match the omnivore teleology (e.g., the omnivore's disregard for cruelty in search for a varied and pleasurable diet) of formerly established practices. These newly committed vegans have a general understanding of the new meanings. These desired new meanings guide the selection of new practice elements, especially the objects, and exclusion of those that harm the animals and the planet (e.g., chicken) during their production. To achieve this new meaning and to follow the teleology, old objects are called into question. Meat is almost the first object to be abandoned, given its substantial misalignment with the new meanings.

Reading *Fast Food Nation* was the first tipping point for me. I was horrified at mainstream food practices, and I went vegetarian immediately. But my decision was still mostly self-involved – how gross to be eating meat that was dirty, tainted, fattening?! And so, I still ate the occasional fish, and dairy and eggs did not even really cross my mind. It's not like [that my consumption of] frozen yogurt, cheese, and omelets were really hurting those animals, right? Ignorance was bliss. (Amanda Maguire, *My Vegan Story Series*)

Amanda, similar to other vegans, gradually eliminated objects starting by meat and thus labeled herself first as a vegetarian. Meat is an apparent misaligned object with the new meanings, hence its automatic elimination. She still consumed cheese, milk, and dairy. It was not until a second trigger that she realized the suffering of animals in the other industries, and eventually shifted to veganism. It took her some time to develop a practical understanding of how to select objects. These understandings also include an acknowledgment of the boundaries of consumption objects between a vegan, an omnivore and a vegetarian teleology.

The changes that take place at the individual level in this stage shape subsequent transformations. The decision to abandon their accustomed practice elements, objects such as meat and meanings such as pleasure-seeking without regard, forces the practice to lie outside the

boundaries of acceptable performativity of the carriers. Phase one of the transformation takes place at the personal level, as highlighted at the beginning. Table 10 highlights the main changes. In the next stage, I highlight the movement of individuals from a shocked practitioner to a novice practitioner once the sociality and market-embeddedness of the practice kick in.

*Table 10: Stage (1) Awakening*

<b>Practice Components</b>		<b>Awakening</b>
The practitioner		From a carrier to a shocked practitioner
The starting point		Moral trigger
The misaligned practice elements	Misalignment type	Teleology change to a minority moralized one  Meanings change to absorb the modifications in teleology
	Strategy	Abandonment

## **Stage (2): Destabilization of Practices**

The start of the destabilization stage is marked with novice vegans' reflexive thoughts about what to incorporate in place of the abandoned elements. As novice vegans shift the teleology and abandon the meanings and objects associated with their old practices, the practice elements are misaligned at the individual performance level. At the same time, when the practices are re-shared with others, the social aspect also becomes misaligned. This social misalignment is created by two aspects. First, there is an incompatibility of practice elements across individuals. Second, the new individual performativity is outside the tolerable range of social elements. Driven by the market embeddedness of the practice, novice vegans also face difficulties when interacting with the marketplace that underscores their practice elements and sociality misalignments. The following section covers each form of these misalignments and the strategies employed to manage them.

### *Practice Element Misalignment through Experimentation*

Deciding to become vegan disrupts a deeply routinized dominant practice that can not simply be eliminated. Switching practice teleology strips vegans from their practical knowledge of performing the practice seamlessly. They are unsure where to shop from, how to shop, and which products to buy. The general rule of their new practices is to avoid consuming any product that appears in the market through the exploitation of animals. The understanding of the range of the associated consumption objects (i.e., avocados, honey) and how to interact with these objects is still unclear. Thus, it forces vegans to think about routinized doings and objects reflexively. Grocery shopping changes from routine to a deliberated practice (see Phipps and Ozanne 2017)

When thinking about practice elements, novice vegans face two challenges. First, the substitution of old objects (e.g., meat) with a new object (e.g., plant-based proteins). I refer to this first challenge as an object-object substitution. Novice vegan now has to come up with new objects that are cruelty-free but perform similarly to their old routinized object. For example, they want butter that marinates and flavors their food the same way as the dairy but without any animal harm. Second, novice vegans have to calibrate their new objects (e.g., tofu) with their old doings (e.g., cooking steak) to reach alignment. I refer to this second challenge as object-doings calibration. Vegans need to pay attention, read the ingredients, think twice before putting an item in the shopping cart. These two challenges are as Elisabeth (Archival data, Grist 2013) says:

It is hard. Surprise, surprise: Departing from the eating and cooking habits you have developed over decades — particularly if you developed them in contemporary, fast-food-lovin[g], steak-and-potatoes-havin[g], pizza-partyin[g] America — is challenging. I normally eat meat sparingly and front-load my plate with veggies anyway, and still, I found the strict vegan thing to be hard. [...] Convenience foods got a whole lot less convenient. And eating well requires research: The real start-up cost to veganism is a massive increase in the amount of time it takes to evaluate, plan, and execute great food!

What Elisabeth describes is the frustration and reflexive thinking about managing the new objects and their new associated doings. The right objects are hard to find because of the unclear labeling of food products and the difference in nutritional values between meat and plant-based food. Our participants report different levels of skepticism and speculations when it comes to their encounters with the market. Objects, in terms of finished products, readily available on the



shelves in supermarkets are disguised in a way that figuring out the traces of animal products becomes very hard. Julian, a lapsed vegan, expresses his displeasure:

It was a little bit of a challenge because to find food that is vegan. When I went shopping, I would look into the labels, I would look under chips too. This [challenge] was around six and a half years ago [...], So it was finding food that was vegan and to [be] disciplined as well not to eat the cheese or the Doritos. [Do] you know poutine? They are very good in Montreal; I really enjoy them, which is, of course, [is not vegan as well]. Even the vegetable soup contained beef stock. I found out!! You know, I became really curious to find out what I was eating.

In addition to becoming more invested in reading labels of all items previously purchased without a second thought, vegans need to ensure equal nutritional substitution of the old objects. Omnivores and ex-vegans notice this struggle and use it as a point to prove the difficulty of living on a vegan diet and the frivolity of veganism.

The fact that it takes around-the-clock effort, planning, strategy, several months or years of research, numerous supplements, the guidance of health professionals, etc. for some people to fully nourish themselves on a vegan diet shows that the vegan diet may not be the best natural choice for the human body! [...] I always see vegans saying [it is] not the vegan diet that made you sick, it is because you did not eat this and this and this and that or because you did not take these supplements or research that, this and this. I do not see people on standard diets going malnourished from making a couple wrong decisions throughout week. It takes little to no effort to nourish myself and my kids on a standard diet. (MIKA, YouTube comment on what can we learn from 23 ex-vegans)

As navigating the market for truly vegan options, and eating a nutritional vegan diet are hard, novice vegans mobilize experimentation to figure out this misalignment. Experimenting takes place through various approaches, calculated substitution, proxy substitution, arbitrary substitution. Calculated substitution entails reading about the necessary nutrients and how to get them from plant-based food. These vegans are more dedicated to having a sustainable healthy lifestyle that will encourage them to continue their quest despite the difficulties. They start the journey by reading about which plant-based objects provide similar nutrients to their meat counterparts. Luca, a primary

interviewee, had to make sure that he can make healthy eating choices before he can fully commit. Other vegans have a more proxy approach to substitution. They look for mock-meats and mock-cheese with the assumption that they have similar nutrients as their meat counterparts. Last, other vegans perform more arbitrary substitution where they go to the supermarket and buy anything labeled vegan and various vegetables with the hope that the objects will fall in flawlessly within the practice. Olivia, a primary interviewee, thinks that nothing can go wrong with vegetables and thus buys whatever she finds.

Irrespective of the path chosen for the object-object substitutions, the new objects do not align with the old doings organically.

I never had the opportunity to try tofu, [and] I didn't even know what it was. [...] I just knew I didn't want it in my food [...]. When I went vegan, however, it seemed that tofu and I were going to have to make nice. It took me over a year to learn to like tofu and longer than that to learn to cook it properly (Parsons 2020, Archival data ).

This difficulty in calibration is caused by the inability of object-object substitutions, which is the novice's first challenge, to perform the pleasurable dimension of the practice teleology organically. Thus, figuring out the right object-doing calibration presents the second challenge for the vegans. It is not just removing the meat from the plate; it is figuring out how to make delicious cruelty free meals. Some examples include Kristy, (ethnographic interview) who struggled with making tofu and tempeh delicious, Celia (long interview) who had to learn how to make vegan cheese spread, Melissa (long interview) who was challenged with how to make a plate only out of vegetables and how to eat a well-balanced meal.

This object-doings calibration can lead to negative feelings of frustration and failure (Seregina and Weijo 2017; Woermann and Rokka 2015), in line with previous research, yet it can also be positively reframed as a way to discover a new passion. Olivia rediscovered her love for cooking as she embarked on trying new vegan recipes every single day.

I discovered new items for food replacement. I discovered chickpeas instead of chicken. It is an easy swap, and I can make a delicious chickpea curry in like 5 minutes [...] I find food easier to cook now, there is no worry about whether the meat is properly cooked, there is no worry about doing things properly as a cook. Like making sure you cut your

chicken on a separate cutting board—all of those things kind of gone away. Now cooking is really about throwing things in a pot and seeing which ones' taste best. I will write those in a notebook; I have a small notebook with successful vegan recipes. So, I am more excited to cook now, and it is easier than having to worry about all those hygiene issues.

The same passion for cooking can be seen in Benny and her husband Jim, who remodeled their kitchen to have more space to learn to cook vegan meals. Discovering or rediscovering their connection to cooking from learning to developing a passion highlight their strategies to calibrate the objects and doings. This importance of this calibration, is highlighted by the number of resources available to learn how to cook nutritious and delicious vegan meals, e.g., books: *Everyday Cooking*, *Plant-Powered Families*, *The Oh She Glows Cookbook*; recipes on vegan websites, e.g., PETA and Instagram accounts: @Veganmammy, @Plantbasedjane, and @Noraspiration. While we can see similar market resources for dominant diets, i.e., omnivores, it is a need rather than a want for novice practitioners. At the destabilization phase, in addition, to practice misalignment, the sociality behind the practice is also misaligned.

### *Social Misalignments through Interpersonal Negotiations*

Practices are inherently social, they are learned through interaction with others and are sometimes performed collectively (Schatzki 1996, 2002; Shove et al. 2012). Food is often shared during gatherings, such as pot-luck dinners, birthday parties, lunch breaks, dates, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. It is essential in gatherings and in bringing people together (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). Sharing the practice of eating brings the new objects of consumption into the spotlight as the practice moves from dominant performativity to a minority one. At the social level, novice vegan practice elements do not match the elements of those they are learning from (i.e., more advanced vegans). At the same time, the elements do not match the elements of those they used to share the practice (i.e., their existing social circles). The acceptable range of elements of the practice is different. While the objects and doings of marinating a chicken, heating butter are within the tolerable range of elements for non-vegans, they lie outside the vegans' tolerable flexibility. I refer to it as practice elements variations.

Practice variations are witnessed both within the subgroup (e.g., vegans) and between the subgroup (vegans) and the dominant group (e.g., omnivores). The variations involve the meanings (cruelty-free), the doings, and objects (frying chicken) of the practice. This variation in

practice elements drives social misalignment. Social misalignment refers to social friction that is driven by the difference in practice performances between individuals who either share the practice or are learning the practice from each other. Thus, novice vegans witness misalignments include both the difference in practice elements between individuals who share the practice or who are learning the practice from each other. The following section discusses two types of social misalignments both between vegans, which I refer to as intra-social misalignments and those between vegans and non-vegans which I refer to as inter-social misalignments.

Intra-social misalignments refer to the misalignments between vegans, who not necessarily share the practice but rather are learning it from each other. These misalignments are driven by the novelty of the vegan consumption field as the acceptable consumption objects are continuously contested between vegans. The range of consumption practices that need to witness a teleological shift are learned through carrier vegans. However, these carrier vegans disagree over the acceptable range of consumption objects. This contestation heightens intra-boundary conflicts. Thus, contrary to the literature on subcultures of consumption (see Schouten, Martin, and McAlexander 2007; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), where there is a clear way to guide the practices, the subculture in itself is disagreement and constant evolution without a clear roadmap. Objects are debated on vegan platforms (e.g., social media, meet-up groups, and newly formed vegan friendships) as to whether they align with the meaning of cruelty-free. Vegans debate the acceptance of feeding meat and dairy milk to their pets (Benny, Acadia, and Clara), consuming honey, oysters, avocados, and palm oil (“Debates” 2017); The negotiations revolve around the meanings of these objects: Are they cruel? Are they cruelty-free? Is it compassionate? The below debate concerns the morality of consuming figs under the minority practice performativity.

[Those who are for eating figs claim that] the pollination of figs is an entirely natural – and mutually beneficial – process that takes place in some, but not all, varieties of figs. Plus, in contrast to what some people think, the crunchy bits in figs are seeds and not the remains of wasps. [While those against eating figs argue that] the way some varieties of fig are pollinated means every edible fruit of some fig varieties contain at least one dead wasp – so by eating a fig, you are eating a dead insect. So far, so not vegan.

The debates are visible on vegan platforms, in which the institutional resources do not provide clear rules. Vegan carriers and other less experienced vegans question the elements of various practices to confirm whether or not they fall within the range of acceptable vegan elements. These meanings, while building common practices with other vegans, act as a barrier to sharing the practice with non-vegans. While the vegans are trying to re-align the social aspect of their practices with other vegans, the same strategies increase the misalignments with their non-vegan friends and family. New objects and meanings drive novice vegans' practices apart from their existing sociality, as discussed in the next paragraphs.

Novice vegans' new practice elements stand outside the acceptable range of flexible variations of the social enactment of practices of their non-vegans' networks. Non-vegans who are "carriers of the practice" (Shove et al. 2012, 156) maintain the existing elements of the practice and stand in opposition to changes advocated by novice vegans. The latter rejects the dominant practice elements and perform the same practice (i.e., eating) yet with new elements. Vegans request that other objects of consumption, ethical ones, should be included on the table in addition to, or as a replacement for, the old objects. The old objects are not part of the practice anymore, as they do not measure up with the new meanings desired for the practice. Once the practice is shared, carriers of the omnivorous teleology object to such a change of elements.

I think (my parents and siblings) were deeply concerned with the inconvenience they are going to have, especially my mum. As she knows, she will have to make something entirely different from me every year [at] Christmas and Thanksgiving. Or if we are going out, we have to go to a place where [I] can eat. We can not just go to McDonald's or whatever. When I was a kid, if we are going to go out, we will go out to eat hamburgers and stuff, it was never going to have pizza or something. Now they have to think! When you are doing something for so long, [...] if they spent two decades doing something one way and then asking them to do it another way, it is usually hard for some people! (Tom, a vegan)

Vegans judge omnivores to be unwilling to change the elements of their practice to accommodate vegans. Non-vegans consider vegans as "killjoy" (Twine 2014) for rejecting the most valued meal on the table. When food is shared, vegans face two main challenges regarding the new objects of consumption 1) constant reminders of their past-

selves as carriers of the dominant practice that they now judge as immoral, 2) non-vegans' rejection of the new elements of the practice. Acadia, a who turned vegan when she was 14, lapsed into being a pescatarian for health reasons and then became vegan again, talks about these challenges:

My family would have Christmas dinner, and obviously there is the turkey and all of the favorite staples of that time of the year, and I would have to bring my own meal, and that made me feel ostracized. People would comment. They would say things as “what is wrong with you? You always loved this! why are you not eating it anymore?” I think they feel judged, maybe they felt judged. I felt a little bit of pulling back from my friends.

Vegans also judge their omnivorous friends for living a “primitive” way of life (Benny, a vegan interviewee). They judge omnivores for following consumption practices that are immoral and unethical, for being greedy to care more about their taste buds than their mark on the environment. They feel isolated and under attack for the inability of the omnivores to comprehend the morality of their action. This judgment puts a strain on social relations. On one side, the person is considered part of a family or friends and thus is part of the sociality of eating practices; however, vegans and omnivores no longer share the understandings and rules of the practice. Driven by this difference, non-vegans, as loyal carriers of the practice, try to push the practice back to its old configuration. Benny faced such push back in rather an indirect way

We had issues with [our] family trying to pass us chicken broth or cheese or stuff [without us knowing]. So, there are some people we just do not trust anymore because we never know what they are going to do. [...] I bring my own food if I am going to my own parents [...], but it is less often now than in the beginning. [In] the beginning, everybody would say, “oh, it is a phase” or “they will grow out of it,” but now we do not have that much problem.

Benny and other vegans highlighted the severe social misalignment facing eating practices. As novice vegans question the role of food in gatherings. As food becomes a contested and divisive object rather than a uniting one. They defy the normative feelings of being grateful to the host, which is not always possible when vegans have a hard time to eat at the table. The turkey, while being an enjoyable object of consumption before

vegans' transformation, becomes a rejected object. These objects not only lose their cultural significance but also are suddenly imbued with negative meanings and emotions.

The destabilization phase is laden with emotions that spark from these boundary negotiations. The literature on emotions and social norms demonstrates that when individuals behave in a way that contradicts the norms of a society, they feel negative emotions of embarrassment and shame (Harkness and Hitlin 2014). Negative emotions manifest as individuals judge the society's norms and practices to be the right way of doing things. However, in our context, vegans stop their involvement with a practice configuration that they now perceive to be immoral and thus feel neither embarrassed nor shameful. On the contrary, vegans believe that others are the ones who should be embarrassed for their disregard for animal welfare and viewing animals as instruments to their own well-being and pleasure. This incongruity in practice performativity, between vegans and non-vegans, leads the former to feel isolated and lonely, as reported in our interviews. Take, for example, the below quote by Acadia.

I lost some friends. They said: “we can not invite her for dinner, so she does not eat like us.” It kind of created a gap, a rift, between me and a lot of my friends and some of my family [...] At that time those were the challenges feeling alone and ostracized for something you believe in.

Their social misalignment creates feelings of isolation and loneliness. The changes in stage (2) of destabilization are summarized in Table 11. As these vegans are still a novice in the practice and are innovating, the misalignment faced both at the practice elements, and the sociality behind the practice forces them to invest in learning. Through “acquiring and performing the skills and the knowledge required of acceptable participation” (Alkemeyer and Buschmann 2017, 14) as a novice vegan, they seek to realign their practice elements and the sociality behind the practice. It is when novice vegans are overwhelmed by misalignments and their desire to learn more about the rules of the practice that they transition into an intermediate practitioner.

*Table 11: Stage (2): Destabilization*

<b>Practice components</b>	<b>Destabilization</b>
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The practitioner		Novice practitioner
The starting point		A need to perform the practice through a new teleology
The misaligned practice elements	Misalignment type	Object-Object substitution Object-Doing calibration
	Strategy	Experimentation through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calculated substitution</li> <li>• proxy substitution</li> <li>• arbitrary substitution</li> </ul>
The social misalignment	Misalignment type	Intra and inter misalignment
	Strategy	Negotiations of the acceptable range of elements

**Stage (3): Re-configuration**

Following the misalignments witnessed at the destabilization of object-object substitution, object-doing calibration, and social misalignments, vegans need to figure out how to best perform their minority practice. The realignment is constrained by both the social as heightened importance of the cruelty-free meaning becomes under attack on the social level; and the marketplace, which still operates under the dominant teleology. To re-align, vegans have to reflexively and deeply think about their practical understanding of how abide by the minority practice performativity. Here, vegans try to figure out rules that can govern the performativity of their practice, allow their misalignments to heal and re-stabilize their practice.

*Developing Practical Understandings for Repairing Practice Element Misalignment*

To reconfigure their practices, Paulina and other new vegans increase their involvement with vegan communities and institutional resources. These resources include blogs, books, and watching documentaries. They capitalize on market resources (e.g., PETA, the Vegan society guides, and cruelty-cutter) with enough credibility in aligning their doings (e.g., knowing how to cook vegan), and objects (e.g., vegan restaurants and products). The resources provide them with field-dependent cultural capital (Arsel and Thompson 2011) that aids them in strengthening their



practical understandings. Paulina and Benny, primary interviewees, read every single resource suggested by their vegan friends, read additional resources that they found, and watched multiple documentaries about their new lifestyle. Others just read a few sources to assure themselves of their decision. Reza and Julian read few blog posts on the importance of veganism and the harm done to animals. Such increased practical understanding transforms the vegans from novice to intermediate practitioners.

Strategic learning about veganism provides relief and satisfaction that their practice elements are aligned with their practice teleology, pleasure while taking into account the animals. In addition, to educate themselves about vegan practices, intermediate vegans develop maneuvering strategies to better interact with the market. Philip (an ethnographic interviewee) looks for certified labels on the packaging and PETA online resources for ease of filtering appropriate objects. However, Alex (long interviewee) refuses such identifications and only trusts one vegan application for its strict inclusion of what is considered vegan. Applications aid in using the market as a resource for providing instant verification. These maneuvering strategies involve choosing between dealing with strictly vegan businesses, dealing with vegan-friendly businesses, and limiting the interaction with the market.

Dealing with strictly vegan businesses seems like the easiest and most convenient solution to practice element misalignments. Vegans can now find a list of vegan restaurants and brands for most cities online. The Happy Cow comes as the most recommended resource for vegans who travel a lot with travel guides, top vegan cities, airplane meal plans, and spotlights from cities all over the globe (“Vegan Travel with HappyCow” n.d.). Vegans who maneuver the market by interacting with only vegan businesses to ensure two things. First, food is free from any animal contamination and second, their money is not used to harm animals in any way. John (ethnographic interviewee) does not trust the claim of non-vegan restaurants that they use separate kitchen elements for his vegan meals and refuse to patronize them. He is always on the lookout for new exclusive vegan restaurants.

Most of the available vegan institutional resources favor strict vegan businesses, and thus can partially aid in maneuvering the dominant market. In addition, this narrow inclusion magnifies social misalignments as omnivore acquaintances reject the idea of not going to their favorite restaurants and changing their meal recipes to accommodate vegan practices. Thus,

vegans who want to remedy their social misalignments by retaining their non-vegan friends revert to either limiting their interaction with the marketing or dealing with vegan-friendly businesses. Home-cooked meals and restaurants offering vegan and non-vegan food provide an opportunity to align the social. Intermediate vegans invite family and friends more often to their places, to avoid the market dilemmas, to provide room for compromising with their social circle. Tom elaborates:

I definitely invite people over to make something for them, for just chilling and whatever it is easier for me. [I invite them for vegan food]. I will never cook non-vegan meals, even for other people. NO! I want to make sure that they understand that vegan food tastes great, even if you are non-vegan or whatever. I do not make a big deal about it. Like this is the food I eat, and they like try it and ‘oh, that is amazing. I like it.’ They realize it is normal food there [are not] just animal products in it.

Other intermediate vegans maneuver the market by interacting with non-vegan restaurants that offer vegan or vegetarian options on their menu. These non-vegan businesses catering to both practice elements (e.g., including and excluding animal-related products) are ultimate for managing social misalignments by retaining the social. Olivia, an omnivore who turned vegetarian then lapsed into omnivores to eventually become a vegan, describes that it is easy to go to these restaurants. Vegan-friendly restaurants provide her a compromise to enjoy a nutritional vegan meal, at the same time, her friends can enjoy an omnivorous meal. Intermediate vegans’ maneuvers to realign their practice influences their strategies to align their social.

### *Managing Social Relationships to Repair or Evade Social Misalignments*

With increased antagonism from their social circle on their practices, vegans start to strategize for future encounters. While there are institutional resources that advise vegans on ways to navigate their social tensions, they are far fewer in number than those on navigating the market. Previous research has highlighted people’s attempts to retain their social networks when they move into new fields of consumption (see Kates 2002; McAlexander et al. 2014). However, vegans’ social networks can neither be transferred to the minority practice as the omnivores resist the transfer nor can it be entirely lost as they cannot easily disconnect from family members. Thus, they handle their social misalignments through two main strategies:

safeguarding and selective retention. These strategies depend on the closeness of the social circle.

By safeguarding, I refer to the preparation conducted by vegans prior to their social interaction. This preparation includes anticipating potential arguments and unavailability of vegan objects during social encounters. Their newly built field-dependent cultural capital (Arsel and Thompson 2011) and practical knowledge allow them to respond to any anti-vegan arguments. “Figuring out how to eat a healthy plant-based diet is n[o]t the hardest thing about going vegan; it[i]s learning how to handle vegan arguments like a pro” (Krantz 2018). Jesse Tandler, a rhetoric teacher and the educational program director at Factory Farming Awareness Coalition advises vegans that

[E]ven if you do not know every detail about the ties between animal agriculture and greenhouse gas emissions or about the accidental amputations in chicken processing factories suffered by two workers on average each week, knowing enough to present a coherent and factual case is important. Have a couple of go-to stats up your sleeve and know the basic arguments for veganism. Make sure not to misquote stats or other arguments. It is vital to remain credible. You do not want someone going home and seeing you fudged a fact because it will reinforce their belief that vegans are just exaggerating.

Intermediate vegans blame their frustrations and difficulties of social misalignment on their lack of sufficient practical knowledge to deploy against criticism. Paulina described her social misalignment and how her lack of knowledge was the reason behind her inability to handle the resistance she was facing:

My friends were like, “you are crazy. What are you doing?” [...] The reasons I had were not strong enough, they were like “you used to eat animals, why you are stopping eating them? You do not have any viable reason.” For them, it was normal, [and] acceptable. It was like a tradition [to eat animals], so it was not normal to not eat animals. I did not have strong arguments [to convince them] because I did not read any books about that at that time. So for me, it was seeing like [the] animal that is alive and is begging you towards his/her regard [that you] do not kill them, and you just do not give a f\*\*\* and kill her/him. (Paulina)

Education and learning are done strategically, anticipating questions, and preparing a valid response to them. Resources published by vegan bloggers, influencers, and activist organizations provide support in this regard. These resources outline the possible attacks on veganism and the best method to reply to such attacks. One of the most common arguments of omnivores made against our interviewees is that eating meat is natural to humans. This argument is highlighted on various vegan institutional resources, and one advice on the response is:

It does not matter if it's natural, because this does not imply eating meat is ethical or good. This is known as an "appeal to nature fallacy." We do not do things solely because they're natural. We use planes, cars, buildings, clothing, cutlery, cups, glasses, and an array of things that are not natural. There are other natural things we avoid, such as killing members of our own species and forcibly impregnating females, because nature is a violent place. [...] Our civilization is largely focused on reducing suffering rather than in staying aligned with nature. In many cases, we strive to avoid the dangers of nature. We should do what's ethical, not what's natural. Killing animals when we do not need to, is unethical, period. (blog XYZ)

I show that such institutional resources not only allow vegans to understand the minority practice, as prior research shows (Maciel and Wallendorf 2017), but they also aid with the re-alignments. These resources validate their consumption choices and provide them with additional proof to manage social misalignments. The goal is not to alter the social circle's dominant practices but rather to expand the range of tolerable objects when the practice is shared.

Vegans also try to safeguard themselves in all food-related social gatherings. New doings are incorporated in practice to ensure not to go hungry and not to be too visibly different. These new doings include eating before going, getting a dish to share, having a snack in the bag. Tom says that he is

always prepared to go to places and not eat at all or eat a little bit. So, I eat before I go all the time!! I eat before I go to be sure, and if there is food I can eat, I will eat some still. That is what I am prepared for. I am prepared for these situations. If I am out somewhere on a trip or something, I have food in [my] bag all the time, granola bars and nuts and stuff. I will be able to eat if I run into a situation if I go out for lunch, and all there is to eat is [a] hotdog. So, I am always prepared.

This strategy enables them to maintain their dominant practice sociality, in other words, their social connections of omnivores, while not violating their own minority practice performativity. It also provides them with more freedom in their social encounters and reduces the possibility of social scrutiny as their practices are less conspicuous to their social circle. However, there are situations in which vegans handle their sociality differently. I discuss these in the selective retention strategy.

For selective retention, I am referring to vegans' techniques to handle the sociality of their practice by either maintaining the same practice but changing the sociality around it (i.e., sharing a meal with only vegans) or maintaining the sociality but in other practices (i.e., doing any activity with their omnivorous friends except for sharing a meal). Thus, this strategy highlights the disconnection between the performance of the practice and its sociality. With increased investment in the vegan community and the development of practical understanding, vegans rethink their existing shared sociality. They would selectively retain members that either exert an effort to understand them, accommodate them in their practices, or are too close to cut off (e.g., their spouses, kids, and parents). Vegans usually blame their omnivorous friends and family for not being able to accommodate them and thus forcing them to cut them off. The sociality is aligned in this case by replacing their omnivorous friends with new vegan friends.

When I went to the convention at [the] vegan festival, and I attended that as part of a meetup group, simply hanging around with people who share those beliefs really kind of reinforced my idea that yeah, this is a realistic thing to do. There's no reason not to do it at this point. If these people can do it, I certainly can. [...] It [is] easier [to go with these vegan friends] than going out with a non-vegan and figuring out where to meet.

Replacement of omnivorous friends with new vegan friends aids to re-align the sociality of the practice for a while. However, contrary to the established importance of practice sociality (Maciel and Wallendorf 2017; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Thomas and Epp 2019), vegans sometimes sacrifice such sociality for a while. They stop sharing the practices entirely or some of its elements with their current social circle. Melissa explains:

So I stopped kind of doing the things that I did with my friends, I stopped being able to do it, I feel like maybe for about a year and a half I pretty much isolated myself because it was

just too hard to like go out and see everybody doing this stuff that I was so morally opposed to. And so that was really hard. I did see my friends every so often, but it just was not the same. I am a pretty social person, and that was pretty hard for me to like suddenly, I would say lose my friends.

These two strategies, safeguarding and selective retention, aid intermediate practitioners in realigning the sociality of their practice. The alignment strategy is rather individualized as people differ in the performativity of the practice. Through increased engagement in vegan circles and education about the correct alignment of objects-doings-meanings with the vegan teleology, vegans use the market as a resource. Thus, they eventually learn how to navigate it with ease. Francis, as he is still learning how to cook vegan, manages his practice by outsourcing to the market. If he is invited to share a meal, he always brings good dishes from local businesses rather than ask the host for accommodation. After constant trials to reconfigure the practice elements and the sociality for the practices, vegan practices start to stabilize. This stabilization moves vegans to the fourth stage of their transformation in which they are no longer intermediate practitioners but experts. Table 12 summarizes the main changes in stage (3).

*Table 12: Stage (3) Reconfiguration*

<b>Practice components</b>		<b>Re-configuration</b>
The practitioner		Intermediate practitioner
The starting point		Frustrations
The misaligned practice elements	Misalignment type	Objects-Doings-Meanings
	Strategy	Education Maneuvering
The social misalignment	Misalignment type	Inter misalignment
	Strategy	Safe-guarding and selective retention

## **Stage (4): Practice Re-habitation and Performativity**

### *Routinization at the Personal and Market Level*

Following the education and maneuvering strategies that vegans get involved in the re-configuration phase, their aspired minority practice elements start to fall into place. Previous literature suggests that practices eventually become embodied after considerable routinization (Sandikci and Ger 2010). Vegan practices become habituated at the personal and market-level after adjustments to relevant objects (i.e., food items), doings (i.e., how to cook and shop), and places (i.e., shops and businesses). This habituation is reached as vegans possess a better practical understanding of the objects-doings-meanings that align with the new practice teleology. They start to develop favorites, (e.g., a favorite meal, favorite brand of cheese, and a favorite restaurant). Vegans “break of the old links that hold [the dominant practice elements] in place” (Shove et al. 2012, 156) and re-habituate the minority practice elements. In the final stage, individuals transform into expert practitioners of vegan practice. They are more confident in their practice performativity and become less involved in consciously thinking about everyday decisions. Francis makes this comparison between himself as a novice and an expert practitioner:

It might was a bit of a challenge in the past but not anymore. I made some mistakes in the past, but they were a mistake. Once, I used vegetable butter, which is not actually vegan, there is milk and wow, I didn't see that [...] but now I know the products. I have my favorite pasta, my favorite products. If I go to new cities and new shops, I still look at the stuff and try to understand how it is done because I have to. [...] But generally, I know, I know what I want to buy, it is very easy for me now.

With increased routinization of the practice elements, Francis and other vegans are at ease performing the practice and interacting with the market. Bryan (an ethnographic interviewee) no longer takes extra time trying to navigate the supermarket shelf or preparing his frequent recipes. Still, he also likes to go to vegan festivals to try out new brands and new recipes in case he gets bored.

This routinization does not always lead to a successful transformation of each intermediate practitioner into an expert vegan. This essay argues that practice re-habitation is not uniform and is different among the various vegans. While some individuals were able to shift

the practice elements and their performativity to become expert vegan practitioners, others fail to commit to the new practice elements. These individuals become lapsed practitioners. Temporal and contextual considerations influence this difference in performativity. Current research states that 84% of vegetarians and 70% of vegans go back to meat-eating diets (Lockwood 2019). Vegans fail to continue performing their vegan associated practices due to the difficulty of sustaining the new practice on a personal level (Reza and Luca, primary interviews) and also a social level (Clara, primary interview). The below quote by Hal Herzog, the author of *Animals and Us* and a lapsed vegan, exemplifies the difficulty of realigning the practices to fit the vegan lifestyle:

For the next 17 years, I ate grains, produce, legumes, and fake meat products like those Morningstar bacon strips that have a lower nutritional value than cat food. And for the next 17 years, it seemed like I was always hungry no matter how large my bowl of beans and rice. Even worse than constant hunger, I did not seem to enjoy food the way other people did. Eating was a chore, like folding laundry or paying bills, but even more annoying because if I did not do it, I would die. I was sick of being hungry, I was sick of beans and rice, and so at the age of 31, I have made a decision: I will try and become a meat-eater.

Hal was incapable of arranging his objects and doings following the vegan teleology even to achieve the goal of eating, satisfying hunger. Thus, he lapsed back to the dominant practice elements. His failure along with others' failure to habituate the new practice elements, is contingent on their capabilities (see Thomas and Epp 2019). Irrespective of the specific range of objects, doings, and meanings incorporated within the practice, stage 4 is marked with stability and routinization in practice performativity. This performativity can be the old dominant performativity, in the case of lapsed vegans, or the new minority one, in the case of experts. In addition, both types of practitioners manage to reach some form of stability in their social re-alignments.

#### *Incomplete Re-alignment of Practice Sociality*

During the first three phases, the sociality of the practice challenged the changes in individual performativity. While previous research advocates that the sociality aids the performance of the practice (see Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Thomas and Epp 2019), I show that



this is not always the case. When the practice elements and performativity of the practice are misaligned among individuals who previously share the practice, the sociality never reaches full stability. In other words, the social aspect of the practice (e.g., sharing a meal with others) does not become routinized and requires reflexive thoughts from expert vegans. Reflexivity is evoked in two contexts: first, in new social encounters; and second, in existing volatile social connections.

First, new social encounters aggravate social misalignments. Moving to a new job, making new friends, and looking for new partners evoke the conscious thought about their practices and how much the vegan would want to reveal to avoid conflict. Second, social misalignments can be present in existing social relations. The misalignment manifests in the form of subtle symbolic violence, exerted by non-vegans during gatherings. Clara's friends sometimes forget to bring vegan cheese and roll their eyes when she reminds them of her veganism, Tom is asked, repeatedly, during Christmas dinners if he is still a vegan. These forms of hostility require vegans to be "on their toes" during gatherings constantly. Celia describes the difficulty of realigning the sociality of the practice.

My brother objected a lot on my eating habits. Mum had to always cook him meat. So, it was hard when I visited. He always brought it up. It was so annoying. I think my mum was somehow convinced by me, but she did not want to annoy him. So, she cooked meat. I think she stopped cooking meat completely when he moved out. She still cooks meat, of course, for him when he visits, even if I am there. She is vegan when he is not around, and he got married last summer and moved to another city, so she is now more vegan, and I visit her more often now that when my brother was around.

It was not until her brother moved out of the country, that Celia regained the social alignment of her practice with her mom. This subtle form of symbolic violence, though hinders the sociality from re-stabilizing, is expected and thus manageable by expert vegans. For expert vegans, this form of social pressure is foreseeable, manageable, and ignored. It is different from previous phases, in which vegans look for ways to align the social. Here, the re-alignment is done through ignoring the source of the misalignment. Table 13 provides a summary of the practice transformation at the final stage. At the end of the practice transformation, mainly of food-related practices (i.e., eating, grocery shopping, and sharing a meal), expert vegans expand

the transformation to other practices that are connected through the cruelty-free, animal friendly and compassion towards all meanings.

*Table 13: Stage (4) Re-habituation*

Practice components		Re-habituation
The practitioner		Expert practitioner Lapsed practitioner
The starting point		Adequate practical understanding
The misaligned practice elements	Misalignment type	ODM re-stability
	Strategy	Routinization
The social misalignment	Misalignment type	Trials to re-stabilize
	Strategy	Trials to routinize

## **PHASE (2): NEXUS TRANSFORMATION**

In general, practices are connected to one another through their recursive relation to form a nexus (Hui 2017). As expert vegan practitioners habituate food-related practices, they extend the shift in meanings to the rest of the nexus. From my data set, the nexus includes multiple practices, for example, apparel, entertainment, grooming, and transporting. I refer to these connected practices as the lifestyle nexus of practices since it includes practices that are connected to form individuals' way of life. These practices are connected through their shared meanings of cruelty-free, compassion towards all sentient beings, and being animal friendly. Luca discusses how he extended the new meaning of cruelty-free to other practices,

I mean, I used to have a big leather jacket, and it was made with sheepskin. And I loved it. But then I started to get criticism from my girlfriend, and it made me think and look for information. And yes, even though I bought the jacket used, I did not buy it new, I did not support the industry, it felt weird for me to wear that. Because here I am trying to do something conscious[ly] for the animals and ethics and I am wearing a big leather jacket. I

thought about it, [ and her arguments] made sense. It was more personal. I mean, I felt uncomfortable wearing that.

Luca had a sense of discomfort for wearing a previously owned object that contradicts the new meanings. This feeling led him to abandon the object (i.e., jacket). While the changes in practice elements of food-related practices extend to others, there exists a difference in the associated nexus. This difference is driven by vegan's investment in education and learning during the third stage of their transformation. As the expert practitioners' "development of skills or understandings [...] can be incorporated into a different practice" (Hui 2017, 60). Vegans invest in deepening the understanding and rules of the minority food-related practices. This investment enables them to transpose the meanings of (cruelty-free, animal friendly, and compassion towards all) to other connected practices. The range of these meanings-connected-practices differs according to vegans' degree of investment. Such that vegans who invested considerably in education, perform more rigid practices with higher diversity, while those who did not invest much, perform more flexible practices with lower diversity.

The difference is highlighted in two aspects: the number of connected practices and flexibility in performativity. I describe the difference in the nexus of the number of transformed practices through its span, an element missing in the literature on nexus of practices (Hui 2017). A narrow-transformed nexus refers to changes in at most two practices, while a broad transformed nexus refers to changes in three or more practices. Two practices count as the minimum to form a nexus, as I need at least one connection between practices to form a nexus. Practitioners need to be involved in at least two practices with one connecting link. While some vegans transform only eating and dressing cruelty-free, others extend it to cruelty-free entertainment, vegan-dating, reducing waste, and shopping ethically. I also describe the difference in the flexibility in the performance of the practice through its rigidity. A rigid transformed nexus refers to practices that hardly change teleology and stay loyal to the vegan one, while a fluid transformed nexus includes practices that contextually shift their teleology. The two dimensions create four different types of transformed nexuses.

## **Type (1): Broad Rigid**

A broad-rigid nexus of transformed practices incorporates three or more practices that are always performed following a vegan teleology. Individuals who perform a broad rigid nexus possess high practical understandings that span a range of connected practices. The meanings regarding being cruelty-free, compassion towards all transfer to other practices as vegans become aware of animal exploitation in other industries. This awareness creates a link in meanings between these practices. Their education is continuous even after the re-habitation, enabling the meaning of the practice to become embodied as the individuals become carriers of the vegan teleology (Shove et al. 2012). Rose, an omnivore who turned vegetarian and later a vegan, decided to incorporate the moral meanings into other practices and joined a gardening program to be more sustainable. Acadia started to be an animal welfare activist:

I started a Facebook page because I came across something very troubling, and for me, it still troubles me. It has to do with China and [the] Asian dog meat trade. So, I discovered this, and I was in denial at first, and then I researched and found that this is actually happening. I do not know if you are aware of the Yulin dog meat festival. That touched me in a way that very few causes touch me. It really hit me in my heart and soul because I can not believe what these dogs go through. It is very, very disturbing, so I started my Facebook page. [After all], I wanted to start my first ever protest [...] I wanted to do something I could not just sit at home and do nothing because my heart compelled me to do something.

Both Rose and Acadia transformed more than three practices. For Rose, it was food, waste-free life, and apparel, and for Acadia, it was food, apparel, and activism. For Acadia, activism involves transforming the practices of others, those she shares the practice with (i.e., her family and friends) and others through protests. These practices are connected through their shared meaning of compassion towards animals. Rose and Acadia are also rigid in performing vegan practices by not slipping into elements that allow animal abuse or hurt the environment. The practice is always performed using the minority teleology. There is a robust recursive relation between their practice performativity and practical understanding acquisition as they become more involved with other vegans. Such that, their enhanced practical understanding, expands their practices with more rigidity.

## **Type (2): Broad Fluid**

This nexus incorporates three or more transformed practices that are sometimes guided by a vegan teleology and sometimes by an omnivorous one. Individuals who perform broad fluid nexus possess moderate to high practical understanding. For them, the link of meanings between the associated practices is strong and thus transforms multiple practices. However, they do not mind violating the objects of consumption every once in a while. This violation is contextually driven. Charlie eats vegetarian whenever she is at her in-law's place, and Luca who eats ice-cream from nearby shops because he will not "go across the city just for a scope of ice-cream when there is one just around the corner." The transgression for them is justifiable and performed on specific occasions. This violation is similar to the findings of Weinberger (2015) in which non-Christians violate their ideologies and participate in certain Christmas rituals.

## **Type (3): Narrow Rigid**

This nexus incorporates at most two transformed practices that are performed only following a vegan teleology. Individuals who perform this nexus of practice do not invest much in education about the rules and understandings of vegan practices. Thus, they possess a moderate-low level of practical understanding. This level of practical understanding allows creating a link of cruelty-free meanings between few practices. However, these few practices are always performed in a vegan manner. David, who does not consume animal products, also rejects going to the zoo:

I'm an animal person; I always have been. When I was a little kid, [...] I was more excited to see the family pets than any humans. And of course, I absolutely loved going to the zoo. But as it turns out, the zoo is pretty awful. And despite my pleasant memories, I will not be taking my kid there. If you take your kids to the zoo once in a while, I do not think you're a monster, but for me, it is a hard-moral line that I will not be crossing. [...] In essence, the same reason I will not be taking him to Sea World, or the circus, or the rodeo, or the running of the bulls. I believe that exploiting animals for the entertainment of humans is wrong, and I do not want him to normalize it. Zoos are often not a very happy place for the animals that live there. [...] Zoo animals often develop anxiety and depression. Zoos are not built or designed to keep animals healthy and happy; they essentially treat animals like

objects. What they are designed for, though, is for humans to walk through at a leisurely pace and see as many animals as possible. It's purely for entertainment. (David, a vegan blogger, no I will not take my kids to the zoo, 2016).

David has practical understandings of two practices associated with the meanings of veganism. He performs them rigidly and does not transgress within these fields. However, other vegans are less strict in their performativity in which the practice can follow the dominant teleology at times and the minority one at other times.

#### **Type (4): Narrow Fluid**

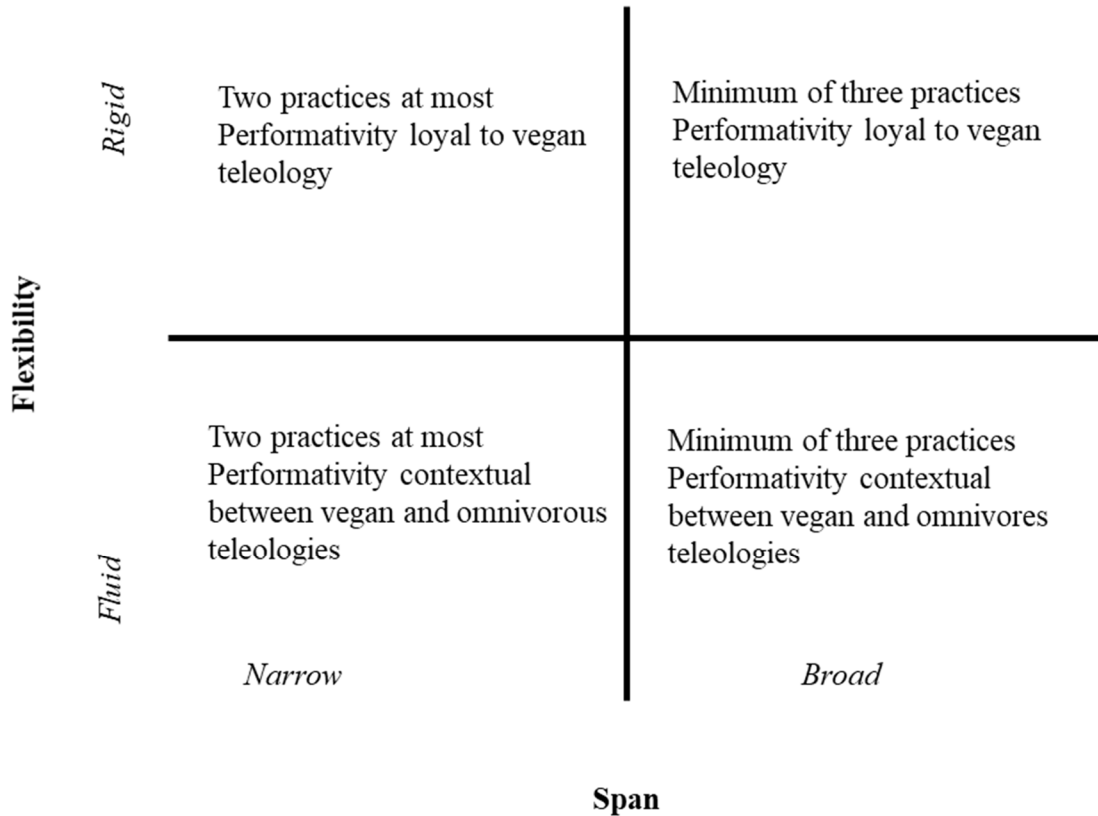
This nexus incorporates at most two transformed practices that are flexibly performed. Individuals here have not invested in practical education, have very little information about the understandings of the practice. They possess low practical understanding and switch in and out of the minority practice. They are aware of the benefits of following one teleology over the other but are unwilling to fully re-habituate a new practice. For these individuals, the main practice elements are the omnivore diet, which at times are adjusted to following a minority practice. Nancy, a blogger on *inspiralized* (a healthy cooking website), occasionally follows veganism in food-related practices and mentions that:

I know that veganism makes me feel the best, but only when I have the conviction to follow that 'diet' properly. Thus, I try to eat vegan as much as possible and, when I need a reset, I go 100% vegan for a few days or a week. I know that eating dairy or any animal protein before 6 pm does not sit well with me. Thus, I tend to eat vegan for breakfast, lunch, and all snacks in between. Dinner is sometimes vegan, but this is when I'll cook an animal protein like a salmon or make a lean turkey meat sauce. I'd say 2-3 weekly dinners are vegan, and the rest are not. However, I do not hold myself to any metrics (i.e., I must eat a certain number of vegan meals a week), I just do what works for my schedule/my cravings/my well-being.'

This fluid performance allows individuals a wide range of acceptable practice elements that they can efficiently utilize in various contexts. These individuals have a high practical understanding of the dominant practice and a low practical understanding of the minority one.

Accordingly, the context (i.e., family dinners, low energy) allows them to shift between teleologies. The above section highlights the second phase of transformation after a moral revelation which extends from the main practices to its associated nexus. Figure 6 below demonstrates the typology of the transformed nexus.

*Figure 6: Nexus Transformation Typology*



## CONCLUSION

In this essay, I outlined the process and outcome of the transformation journey of adopting a new minority practice performance. Individuals who stop performing their practices following the dominant teleology (i.e., pleasure without regards to animals) to a minority teleology (i.e., pleasure while considering animals) pass through two phases of change. The first phase starts with a transformation of the practices related to food. Here, practitioners pass through four stages, transforming both the practice and the performer. At the awakening phase,

the practitioners get in contact with information that alters the teleology of their practice. This change infiltrates to the meanings associated with the practice to incorporate compassion towards all sentient beings. Eventually, these new meanings force the individual to re-think the objects involved facing the first stage of practice misalignment. The individual moves from a carrier of the dominant practice to a shocked practitioner.

Second, at the destabilization phase, practitioners face misalignments both in the practice elements and the sociality behind the practice. The individual, as a novice practitioner, has limited practical understanding. This limitation poses challenges for navigating the market and social networks. Third, at the re-configuration, individuals invest in learning about the new teleology, its rules, and understandings to perform it correctly. This learning enables them to manage their misalignment better and transforms individuals into intermediate practitioners. Finally, after the routinization of the new practice elements, practitioners habituate the misaligned practice elements and become expert practitioners. These expert practitioners can be that practicing veganism or omnivores. Table 14 provides an overview of the practice transformation journey.

*Table 14: Practice Transformation Journey*

Practice components		Awakening	Destabilization	Re-configuration	Re-habitation
The practitioner		Shocked practitioner	Novice practitioner	Intermediate practitioner	Expert practitioner Lapsed practitioner
The starting point		Moral trigger	A need to perform the practice through a new teleology	Frustrations	Adequate practical understanding



Practice elements misalignment	Misalignment type	Teleology change to a minority moralized one Meanings shift to absorb the teleology change	Object-Object substitution Object-Doing calibration	Objects-Doings-Meanings	ODM re-stability
	Strategy	Abandonment	Experimentation through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calculated substitution</li> <li>• proxy substitution</li> <li>• arbitrary substitution</li> </ul>	Education Maneuvering	Routinization
Sociality misalignment	Misalignment type	N/A	Intra- and inter-misalignment	Inter-misalignment	Trials to re-stabilization
	Strategy	N/A	Negotiations of the acceptable range of elements	Safe-guarding and selective retention	Trials to routinization

The transformed food-related practices also create a ripple of change in other associated practices. This transformation marks phase two of change. The new meanings of compassion, cruelty-free, no harm done acquired from realigning the practice with a vegan teleology infiltrate to other connected practices. However, there is a difference in these connected practices according to the practitioners' level of practical understanding. The difference is in the number of associated practices (i.e., the span) and the flexibility of their performativity (i.e., their rigidity). These two differences create four different types of transformed nexus, broad rigid, broad fluid, narrow rigid, and narrow fluid.

This essay demonstrates a case of practice transformation journey through a moralized trigger. This moral lens, though, might not be key to explain the individual changes in practice transformation, is crucial to understand the social changes and (mis)alignments. It is through the moralized meanings and teleology that social relations are negotiated both within vegans and between vegans and non-vegans. This difference is further evident in my preliminary interviews with health vegans (not included in my sample structure for this paper). Health vegans reported similar stories about the individual and marketplace aspects of their transformation journeys but did not face any social tensions with non-vegans. Refraining from specific forms of consumption to protect one's health is within a tolerable range of performativity of a practice. It is an understandable and acceptable deviation and does not result in social misalignments as there is no social frictions. For example, medical dietary restrictions (e.g., peanut allergies) are mandated to be regulated and labeled via the government and do not cause social tensions the way moral vegans face. However, breaching the tolerable range of performativity by advocating moral superiority, such as the case of vegans, entails unwelcomed judgment. Hence the presence of social barriers that vegans face.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Theoretical Contributions**

I contribute to the literature on practice theory by (1) demonstrating voluntary re-alignment of practice elements after a moral trigger, (2) highlighting the negative role of sociality in practice change, (3) capturing the evolution of practice elements, (4) identifying the relation between practices connected through their meanings, and (5) illustrating the differences in the resulting nexus of practices. Previous work on practice misalignments has focused on habituated practices that are involuntarily misaligned (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Epp et al. 2014; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Seregina and Weijo 2017) or on new practices that need to be re-habituated (Thomas and Epp 2019). I add to this body of literature by demonstrating that the routinization of practices can be voluntarily misaligned. Thus, I bring in the vital role of the individual in theorizing about practice change, which is overlooked in the literature (Hui et al. 2017). Individuals, in my essay, are not reactive subjects to the misalignments, but are instead

active agents that produce these misalignments themselves and eventually transform their practices deliberately.

Second, the role of the sociality has been positively framed in the literature in reproducing and carrying over the practice (Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Schatzki 1996, 2002; Shove et al. 2012; Thomas and Epp 2019). The social circle has a positive influence on retaining the practice elements. Carriers protect the practice performativity across space and time (Shove et al. 2012). I extend the work on sociality by looking into the role of these carriers when practices change. As these carriers are loyal to current configurations, they are resistant to modifying the range of flexible variation for the practice. Their resistance does not involve their performativity but rather the performativity of other practitioners. However, given their loyalty and strong embodiment of the practice elements, vegans resist the change even if it helps to maintain social relations.

Third, misalignments are not always solved by going back to the dominant practice elements. Individuals bring change to the range of flexible variability of the practice elements. While the practice identification in itself is the same, it is through the work of these practitioners over time that the elements are modified, and performativity is transformed. Eventually, the individuals still perform the same practice, for example, eating, however, with new objects, doings, and meanings.

Fourth, I contribute to practice theory by showing how a change in one practice element influences its associated nexus. This line of work is extremely scarce in the literature with a focus on material, co-located practices. For example, Blue and Spurling (2017), looked into the temporal evaluation of the nexus of hospital practices. I extend this work by looking into practices connected through their meanings, creating a lifestyle nexus of compassionate practices. Finally, rather than the uniform treatment in the nexus of practices, I put forward a typology of transformed nexuses of practices. Accordingly, I remedy a shortcoming of the practice theory of not being able to count for change (Thomas and Epp 2019). Table 15 summarizes the main contributions.

*Table 15: Theoretical Contribution*

Practice theory blocks		The gap
One practice	Agency in the misalignment	Moral triggers can lead to voluntarily practice misalignments
	The role of the social	Sociality plays a negative consequence on voluntarily disrupted practice
	Objects, doings, and meanings	New objects, doings, and meanings can be re-habituated after building a practical understanding of the new practice teleology and elements
Nexus of practices	Connection	Meanings connect practices in the lifestyle nexus
	Produced nexus	Transformed nexus differ in the number of involved practices (i.e., the span) and the flexibility of their performativity (i.e., their rigidity)

**Managerial Implications**

Guided by the findings in this essay, managers of businesses that claim a moralized positioning (e.g., vegan restaurants, cruelty-free cosmetics, electric cars, green products) can understand the dilemmas of their target market. Their consumers are torn between a desire to acquire a new moral teleology for their practices, and misalignments faced both in the practice elements and its sociality. These pressures can be severe in some cases, forcing the consumer to abandon the transformation journey and lapse back to their old practices. To ensure the survival of their markets and to be socially considerate of their target market, morally positioned businesses’ communication needs to be (1) inclusive (2) dialed down on the moral claims. Morally positioned business owners need to open up their business for the inclusion of others, to provide an opportunity to compromise with the mainstream. This inclusion aids consumers, eager to morally consume to align their sociality. For example, vegan restaurants can have one item of meat-friendly dishes, or a vegetarian dish or allow meat-eaters to bring their food from other nearby restaurants. In addition, their communication needs to avoid advocating the moral superiority of their target market. While the goals and motivation of their consumers can not be undermined, the overemphasizes on its superiority can increase the tensions consumers are already facing in their social relations.

Morally positioned businesses can also provide institutional resources for consumers who are interested in consuming in a minority moralized way. These resources can be in the form of general information or can be related to disclosing details about the company (e.g., their product characteristics, ingredients, and production details). The dissemination of this information ensures consumers that they are not violating the intended moral meanings. Clarity enables consumers to use the marketplace as a resource. In addition, these resources can be tailored to the various stages in the processes of transformation mentioned above. Such that individuals at the destabilization phase require information about the various consumption objects and doings to align them with the practice meanings. While those at the reconfiguration stage require advanced knowledge about the practice, to better shape their performativity, and to help them build an armory of responses to align their social.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

This essay extends existing research on practice misalignment and the role of the sociality in managing such misalignment. The two paths of misalignment examined in existing literature are involuntary misalignments (with social support) and voluntary misalignment (without social support). Individuals perform both types. However, there are still other forms of misalignment that are missing from the literature. First, how about imposed misalignments that individuals refuse to perform. For example, individuals who are recently diagnosed with type I diabetes have to misalign their eating practices for better health but might refuse to do so. What makes these individuals unwilling to change their practices despite immediate threats? How do individuals mitigate the imposed new meanings and objects and continue with the old practice elements? What is the role of sociality in these cases once the practices are re-shared?

Second, what about misalignments that are neither entirely voluntarily nor entirely involuntarily imposed, but has elements of both? For example, after moving to the city from the countryside, individuals can either own a car or commute using public transportation. Some cities are more conducive to not owning a car. In this case, individuals can misalign their transportation practice of owning a car to follow the social entity of transporting or can still maintain their practice, own the car, and thus misalign the social. The drivers, challenges and processes of these two different routes need to be explored in the literature.

## DISSERTATION CONCLUDING REMARKS

The rise of ethical consumerism (Carlile 2017), green products (Moser 2015), ethical production (Reczek et al. 2018; White, MacDonnell, and Ellard 2012), fair-trade (Davies and Crane 2003; Nicholls and Opal 2005), and ethical citizens (Veresiu and Giesler 2018) demonstrates consumers' mindfulness towards the repercussions of their consumption. Despite the diverse coverage of the topic, two main gaps, identified in the introduction of this dissertation, still exist. First, how has the literature attempted to understand, conceptualize, and operationalize morality in consumption? Second, from an empirical perspective, how do consumers who decide to leave mainstream morality and make consumption choices based on minority moral values conduct such a change? This dissertation provided answers through its two essays.

The first essay provided a reconceptualization of the study of morality and consumption. Moralized consumption is contextually and relationally framed by a value system and established through reflexive interactions and a dialectic process between market actors. This reconceptualization remedies the lack of a clear definition in the literature and the dualistic static treatment of morality. Any consumption domain can be judged in terms of its morality through the dialogue between three-level actors: individuals at the micro-level, groups at the meso level, and overarching institutions at the macro level. Guided by this definition, I put forward a typology of the moralized consumption domains in the literature. These domains differ in the degree of alignment between the micro, macro, and meso level actor, the translation phase, and the presence of legitimacy pillars. These characteristics created five types of moralized domains which are harmonized, debated, divided, breached, and dispersed. The essay ended by providing multiple research avenues including studies on social media, artificial intelligence, and branding.

Building on the conceptualization and typology of essay one, my second essay investigated a dispersed moralized domain of consumption to uncover its dynamics. Through studying the moral transformation of omnivores to vegans, I provided a process theorization. The transformation journey model highlighted the changes in practices once individuals decide to incorporate the teleology of considering the well-being of animals in their consumption choices.

Utilizing practice theory, I demonstrated the two phases of transformation. The first phase starts with changing food-related practices and takes place over four stages: awakening, destabilizing, reconfiguration, and re-habitation. These phases delineate the changes to the practice elements and the practitioners while highlighting the role of the social and the marketplace in transformation. Once these practices are habituated, individuals carry the change in meanings to other connected practices in the nexus. This marks the second phase of transformation, the nexus transformation. The produced nexus differs in the number of transformed practices (i.e., the span) and the flexibility of its performance (i.e., the rigidity). From a managerial perspective, companies can provide institutional resources to aid consumers during the various phases of transformation. In addition, offering products of different physical appearances (e.g., those that look like meat and those that do not) target consumers of different investment levels in the consumption field. Finally, ethical businesses should build an inclusive business model. For example, their communications should refrain from overtly ethical messages to ease ethical consumers' social pressure.

Overall, both essays complement each other in advancing our understanding of morality in consumption both at a theoretical and a practical level. Theoretically, this dissertation provides better guidance for the study of morality in consumption. The first essay provides three theoretical contributions. First, by building on research in sociology, marketing and psychology, I presented a definition of moralized consumption that stresses the importance of studying the multiple roles of actors in moralizing and demoralizing domains of consumption through recursive narratives between each other. Thus, for researchers, it is crucial to study the relationship between the actors and their narratives in forming moralized domains rather than studying the role of one actor at a time. Second, by utilizing my typology of moralized consumption, researchers can rethink their own biases in studying the relation between such domains and morality. This reflection allows researchers to better reflect the marketplace actors' perspectives on the topic. Finally, by presenting the moralization process researchers can unravel the consequences of moralized consumption on products, brands, and markets through longitudinal studies rather than the cross-sectional snapshot that is evident in most researches.

The second essay provides theoretical contribution through the study of moralized consumption to a fertile theoretical framework that has witnessed exponential interest in the

literature, practice theory (Canniford and Shankar 2013; Epp et al. 2014; Hui et al. 2017; Phipps and Ozanne 2017; Schatzki 1996, 2001, 2005, 2019; Seregina and Weijo 2017; Shove and Pantzar 2005, 2005; Shove et al. 2012; Thomas and Epp 2019). I add to practice theories by demonstrating how voluntary changes take place over time, leading to a shift in practice elements for practitioners. In addition, I emphasize the presence of a negative role for the sociality of the practice, contrary to the prevalent positive framing in the literature. My essay demonstrates the possibility of the sociality surrounding a practice to act as a roadblock for practice change. Finally, I extend the recent work on the nexus of practices by showing how investments in building practical understanding influence, not just the immediate practice but other interlinked ones. The transformed nexus is not homogenous but differs in the number and performativity of the other connected practices.

The dissertation, especially essay two, also has policy implications. First, it clarifies the struggles and challenges that ethical consumers face in the market. Governments need to have a stronger grip on corporations for the transparency of their product messages and labels. These rules will help ethical consumers easily navigate the markets as the governments legitimate the claimed product's morality. For example, vegan food will require government certification that the factories do not have any animal cross-contamination, Second, it demonstrates the increased importance of communal support for a successful transition to ethical behaviors. Governments and policymakers can protect ethical consumers by providing them with a support group and resource centers to aid their transformation. Governments can also transmit educational messages to the public to advocate behavior change and acceptance towards their carriers. The recent outbreak of the coronavirus demonstrates the importance of such collaboration between individuals, groups, and institutions to reach the desired common ethical good for the society.



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## Appendix (1): The Literature Reviewed for Mapping the Typology

Literature	
<b>Harmonized</b>	<p><b>Moral economy</b> <i>Gift giving</i> (Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012; Weinberger 2017)</p> <p><b>Ethical consumption</b> (Carrington, Zwick, and Neville 2016; Haveman and Rao 1997; White, MacDonnell, and Ellard 2012)</p> <p><b>Donation</b> (Hysenbelli, Rubaltelli, and Rumiati 2013; Lee, Winterich, and Ross 2014; Winterich, Mittal, and Ross Jr 2000)</p>
<b>Divided</b>	<p><b>Resistance</b> <i>Fair trade</i> (Davies and Crane 2003); <i>Brands</i> (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010; Simon 2011; Olson et al. 2016) <i>Everyday objects</i> (Stamer 2016; Ulver-Sneistrup, Askegaard, and Kristensen 2011)</p> <p><b>Subcultures</b> (Karataş and Sandıkcı 2013; Kozinets 2001; Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto 2007; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Scarborough and McCoy 2016)</p>
<b>Dispersed</b>	<p><b>Religion</b> <i>Atheists</i> (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006) <i>Veiling</i> (Sandıkcı and Ger 2010); <i>Material acquisition</i> (Veer and Shankar 2011)</p> <p><b>Personality</b> <i>Moral rebels</i> (Bouville 2008; Monin, Sawyer, and Marquez 2008) and <i>Aggression</i> (Reede, Kumar, Hesson-McInnis, and Trafimow 2002)</p> <p><b>No Animal Harm</b> <i>Milk</i> (Kristensen, Boye, and Askegaard 2011); <i>Bullfighting</i> (Valor, Lloveras, and Papaoikonomou 2020)</p>
<b>Breached</b>	<p><b>Cancelled Brands</b> <i>Apple Newton</i> (Muñiz and Schau 2005)</p> <p><b>Money</b> (Polillo 2011)</p> <p><b>Identity</b> <i>Poor immigrants'</i> (Üstüner and Holt 2007); <i>Environmentalists</i> (Barnard 2016)</p>
<b>Debated</b>	<p><b>Identity</b> <i>Trailer Park</i> (Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013)</p> <p><b>Conspicuous consumption</b> (Goenka and Thomas 2020)</p> <p><b>Life insurance</b> (Quinn 2008)</p> <p><b>Finances</b> <i>Crisis remedies</i> (Pellandini-Simányi and Conte 2020); Credit predictive scores (Kiviat 2019)</p>



## Appendix (2): Definitions of Morality in the Research Papers Reviewed

Pellandini-Simányi and Conte 2020	Market moralities refer to assumptions on what moral aims, if any, markets should serve and to the moral rules guiding market relations such as the responsibilities of consumers, organizations and the state.
Goenka and Thomas 2020	The Moral Foundations Theory posits that moral values are composed of five different factors or foundations, including care/harm, fairness/cheating, authority/subversion, loyalty/betrayal, and purity/degradation (Graham et al., 2011; Haidt, 2007; Haidt & Graham, 2007).
Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013	Building on Ignatow (2009) who conceptualizes morality as being based on bodily, cognitive, and social inputs, and thus he contends that moral judgments are emotionally charged.
Monin, Sawyer, and Marquez 2008	Moral rebels are individuals who take a principled stand against the status quo, who refuse to comply, stay silent, or simply go along when this would require that they compromise their values.
Nelissen and Zeelenberg 2009	Moral emotions are defined as feelings related to the interest and welfare of others rather than ones' own (Haidt, 2003). We experience feelings like empathy, anger, and guilt if we consider how others have been hurt, wronged, or harmed (e.g., Batson, 2006; Haidt, 2003).
Xie, Bagozzi, and Grønhaug 2015	Moral emotions are identified a contempt, anger and disgust. Contempt involves looking down on someone and feeling morally superior. Anger is a belief that we, or our friends, have been unfairly slighted, which causes in us both painful feelings and a desire or impulse for revenge. Disgust refers to “something revolting, primarily in relation to the sense of taste, as actually perceived or vividly imagined; and secondly to anything which causes a similar feeling, through the sense of smell, touch, and even of eyesight.
Askegaard et al. 2014	Four types of moralities, underlying sets of moral assumptions, that orient the contemporary discourses of food and health: the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ nature of food items, the virtue of self-control and moderation, the management of body size and the actions of market agents.
Scarborough and McCoy 2016	Following Durkheim’s notion that morality corresponds to the social structure of a people, it can be said that one’s position within social space provides a moral vantage point.
Papaoikonomou, Cascon-Pereira, and Ryan 2016	Ethical consumers are broadly defined as individuals whose consumption decisions are guided by a variety of social, political and environmental concerns, including animal cruelty, human rights, environmental degradation or anti-capitalist sentiments (Low and Davenport, 2007; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

Samper, Yang, and Daniels 2018	A person's moral character signals whether that person will be harmful or helpful to others (Brambilla et al. 2011; Wojciszke, Bazinska, and Jaworski 1998) and is fundamental to identity and self-worth (Aquino and Reed 2002).
Ambrose et al. 2008	Ethical values represent a subset of the overall value system of individuals and organizations. At the individual level, ethical values influence the moral reasoning of individuals as they consider what constitutes right or wrong behavior.
Stets and Cartner 2012	morality represents cultural codes that specify what is right or wrong, good or bad, or acceptable or unacceptable in a society (Turner 2010; Turner and Stets 2006).
Weinberger and Wallendorf 2011	Cheal (1988, 15) defines the moral economy as "a system of transactions which are defined as socially desirable (i.e., moral), because through them social ties are recognized, and balanced social relationships are maintained.
Lee, Winterich, and Ross 2014	Moral identity represents an individual's broad associative cognitive network of related moral traits (e.g., being kind), feelings (e.g., concern for others), and behaviors (e.g., helping others; Aquino and Reed 2002).
Barnard 2016	morality as a set of individual or collective beliefs that specify the kinds of persons or actions that are "good" or "right" (Sayer 2005, p. 8; Winchester 2008, pp. 1753–54; Stets and Carter 2012, p. 122) evaluations that apply to actors across different situations and over time (Tavory 2011, p. 273).

**Appendix (3): Archival Data: YouTube Videos**

<b>Video name</b>	<b>Published</b>	<b>Accessed</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Views</b>	<b>Likes</b>	<b>Dislikes</b>	<b>URL</b>
Double standards that annoy vegans	25-Aug-18	19-Aug-19	305	29,090	2K	4	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD3md2TNhxU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD3md2TNhxU</a>
Why I stopped being vegan after 10 years	28-Mar-18	18-Jul-19	107,168	107,188	9.1K	135	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io7oKs9B8UU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io7oKs9B8UU</a>
Ex-Vegans Explain Why They Stopped Being Vegan	11-Jul-19	18-Jul-19	2,761	306,401	8k	398	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxkqju8l60M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxkqju8l60M</a>
What We Can Learn from 23 Ex Vegan Youtubers   A Deep Dive	26-Mar-19	18-Jul-19	4,090	503,448	15K	1.5K	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqDK_0iaVCE&amp;t=3196s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqDK_0iaVCE&amp;t=3196s</a>
Difficulties with Non-Vegan Friends & Family (Is My Family Vegan?)	11-Oct-17	20-Jul-19	1,777	130,789	9K	150	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHi9VF_0CFM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHi9VF_0CFM</a>
Why I stopped being vegan	29-Jan-19	24-Dec-19	3,027	58,886	2.2K	686	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5xDWMqXb_s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5xDWMqXb_s</a>
Things That Vegans Are Tired of Hearing	12-Jul-16	25-Dec-19	5,852	952,500	26K	1.6K	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldOdodfBPug">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldOdodfBPug</a>
When vegan diets don't worry	11-Feb-19	11-Jan-20	1,536	169,389	4.3K	317	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnw72D6MCzk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnw72D6MCzk</a>

Dealing with Non-Vegan Friends and Family   Gary Yourofsky Interview	27-Oct-14	19-Aug-19	847	20,093	6.1K	157	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76CbrC37hRk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76CbrC37hRk</a>
Vegan vs. Meat-eater [The best debate I've ever had]	12-Jul-17	01-Jan-20	5,399	475,520	12K	1.2K	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7LEEvSLnc4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7LEEvSLnc4</a>
Ex-Vegan (2 Years): Veganism Is a Trap - Countless Health Problems	01-Oct-18	01-Dec-19	120	21,849	519	55	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xwxm0K4VOk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xwxm0K4VOk</a>
Ex-Vegan (6+ Months): Vegans Attack Me for Finally Being Healthy	26-Jul-18	01-Jan-20	210	36,654	1.1K	70	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3ttUu6EuwY&amp;t=1487s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3ttUu6EuwY&amp;t=1487s</a>