



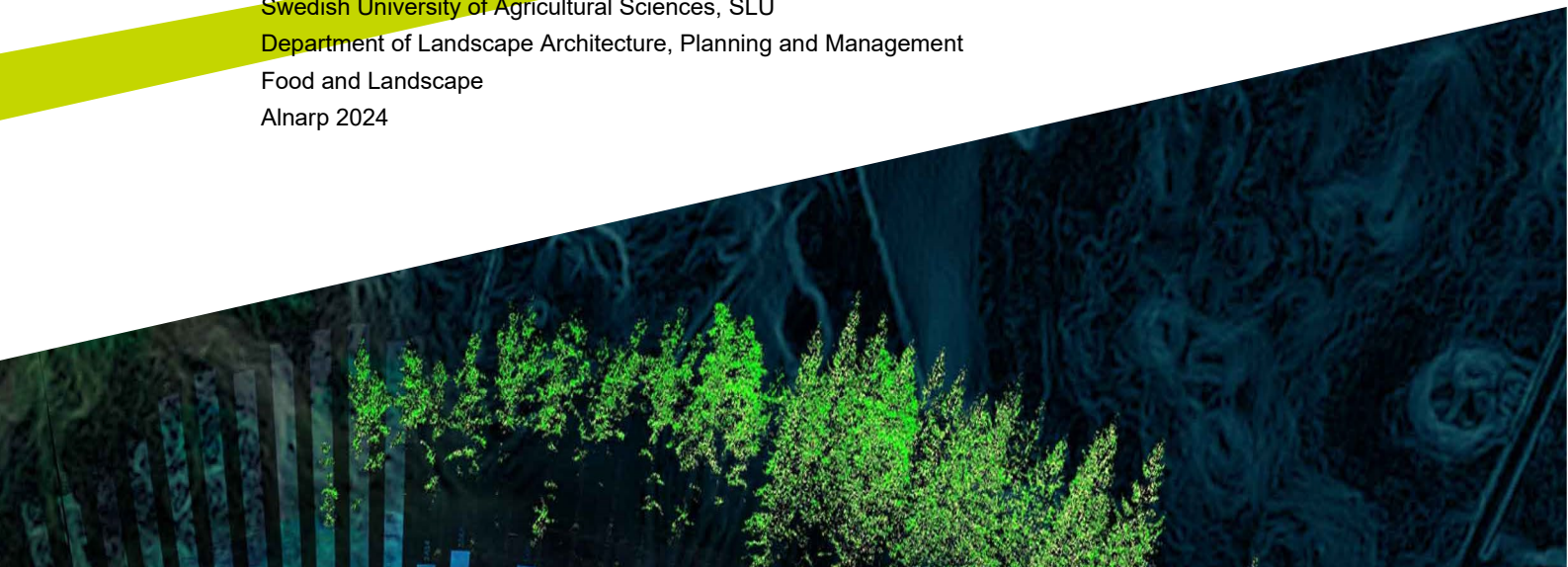
# **Building economic resilience for small food and beverage manufacturers:**

How cultural embeddedness and relational work  
benefit Malmö's craft coffee roasteries, a case  
study

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Degree project/Independent project • 30 credits  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU  
Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management  
Food and Landscape  
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# Building economic resilience for small food and beverage manufacturers: How cultural embeddedness and relational work impact Malmö's craft coffee roasteries, a case study

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## Abstract

The city of Malmö, Sweden supports numerous local, small food and beverage manufacturers. This study uses the Malmö local food community and Malmö's three active craft coffee roasteries as a case to examine the role of social capital in building economic resilience for small food and beverage brands in a market where global multinational corporations also compete. The theories of cultural embeddedness and relational work are employed to analyze and explain the research findings, which show that external cultural alignment can create a structure for community support and economic resilience, while relational work can meliorate market culture misalignment. Incorporating both external cultural alignment and relational work into business strategy is a active step that small food and beverage manufacturers can employ to succeed.

*Keywords:* food studies, local food network, market culture, relational work, cultural embeddedness

# Table of contents

<b>List of tables</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>List of figures</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>2. Literature Review</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>3. Theory</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>4. Methodology</b> .....	<b>21</b>
4.1 Interviewee Demographics .....	25
<b>5. Results</b> .....	<b>27</b>
5.1 Market values, behaviors, and relational work.....	27
5.1.1 Quality.....	32
5.1.2 Local .....	35
5.1.3 Openness .....	40
5.1.4 Trust.....	42
5.1.5 Company Size .....	44
5.1.6 Ownership Structure .....	45
5.2 Examining coffee roasteries' market cultural values alignment.....	49
5.2.1 Quality.....	49
5.2.2 Local .....	51
5.2.3 Openness .....	54
5.2.4 Trust.....	55
5.2.5 Company Size .....	56
5.2.6 Ownership Structure .....	57
<b>6. Discussion</b> .....	<b>59</b>
<b>7. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	<b>71</b>

<b>Appendix 2 .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Popular Science Summary.....</b>	<b>75</b>

## List of tables

Table 1. Malmö market culture core values with representative quotations.....	29
Table 2. Malmö market culture core value influenced behavior with representative quotations .....	30
Table 3. Malmö coffee roasteries adherence to market culture values and associated behaviors. ....	49

# List of figures

Figure 1. : Coffee bean quality is graded on a 100 pt scale	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 2. Diagram showing the methodology workflow .....	24
Figure 3. Infographic displaying interviewee number and gender as well as businesses represented and primary business type .....	25
Figure 4. Infographic displaying interviewed businesses ownership structure types .....	25
Figure 5. Infographic showing interviewee migration history .....	26
Figure 6. Bakery display .....	33
Figure 7. Grocery store coffee display .....	34
Figure 8. Roots of Malmö products .....	35
Figure 9. Lilla Harrie brand flour .....	36
Figure 10. Sign advertising Solde brand coffee .....	37
Figure 11. Chalkboard coffee menu .....	38
Figure 12. Coffee self-serve station .....	39
Figure 13. Oatly “Malmö” children’s chocolate oat milk product .....	47
Figure 14. Bag of imported raw coffee .....	50
Figure 15. Lilla Kafferosteriet’s “old yellow house .....	51
Figure 16. Local beer .....	52
Figure 17. Solde house blends .....	53
Figure 18. Barista milks .....	57



# Abbreviations

AFN	Alternative Food Network
B2B	Business-to-Business
F&B	Food and Beverage
MNC	Multinational Corporation
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

# 1. Introduction

Our relationship with food—the way it is made, marketed, and purchased—shapes the world around us. Unfortunately, that has led to a plethora of negative outcomes that are impacting the planet. The global food system contributes to deforestation, water pollution, human rights violations, economic disparity, obesity and malnutrition, and many other social and planetary challenges (Barret et al 2023:197-198; Gliesman 2015:4-13; La Trobe & Acott 2000; Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000). In recent decades, food movements and food system change advocates have espoused developing local food systems (LFS) as a remedy to the criticized global food system and as a counter to the encroachment of neoliberal expansion into every facet of life (Coelho et al 2017; Mount 2012; Kneafsey 2010; Sage 2003). For every problem attributed to the conventional global food system, LFSs are touted as the panacea (Perdana et al 2022; Mercado et al 2018; Mount 2012; Sims 2009). Critics challenge this cure-all belief, often citing examples of LFSs that exacerbate rather than alleviate food system challenges (Born & Purcell 2006).

Food movements such as the Slow Food Movement or La Via Campesina establish a duality of either a conventional food system (global) or an alternative food system (local) (Slow Food Foundation 2024; La Via Campesina 2024; Mercado 2018; Mount 2012). However, this assumption is challenged by the notion of hybrid markets where small, local producers participate in both alternative and conventional food systems (Mount 2012; Bååth *forthcoming*). Many of the benefits of an alternative food system such as supporting the local economy, reducing food miles, job creation, rejuvenating local culture, economic justice, etc. (Perdana et al 2022; Mercado et al 2018; Sims 2009), could also be achieved if small food producers are able to successfully participate in their local market communities through conventional or hybrid channels. Support for a local food systems does not require establishing an alternative food system, even though much of the literature focuses on alternative food networks (AFN) and their ability to support small producers.

However, participation in a conventional or hybrid market means small producers are competing against everything from regionally established brands to Fortune 500 multinational corporations (MNCs). MNCs such as Nestle, Mondelez, Coca-Cola, and Arla reap the benefits of economies of scale, vertical integration,

access to capital, robust marketing expenditure, technology, and regulatory systems that favor large producers over small (Polyviou et al 2019; Mercado et al 2018; Mount 2012). MNCs utilize these advantages during periods of economic growth and stability, but gain even greater advantages during market shocks and hemispheric supply chain disruptions, such as what happened to the global food system during the COVID- 19 pandemic (Ali et al, 2021; Polyviou et al 2019).

How can small food manufacturers survive against such powerful market players? Yet many do, which suggests access to another mechanism of market advantage that MNCs cannot utilize. MNCs' competitive advantages stem from structural strengths, but studies in market disaster recovery show that strong social capital with supply chain partners and the community is another source of resilience and strength (Jia et al 2020). Malmö, a historically blue-collar industrial port city on the Oresund Strait, is Sweden's third largest city with a population of 362,133 residents as of 31 December 2023 (Malmö stad 2024). In the first decade of the 21st century, Malmö's food community experienced a renaissance of small food producers and manufacturers concurrent with the establishment of the Nordic Kitchen Manifesto, not dissimilar to that experienced by other urban food communities around the world (Skylare 2024). Two decades later, while economic recessions, market shocks, and cultural change has closed the doors on many small food manufacturers, Malmö's small producers persist (Dunn&Bradstreet 2024; Weisstuch, 2020).

This case study profiles three small, craft coffee roasteries located in Malmö municipality and their B2B customer base. Basing the case study on Malmö's coffee roasteries challenges the connection between local food and local landscape, because coffee cannot be grown in Sweden and therefore the raw beans must be imported. The location of roasting does not alter the product quality or characteristics (unlike fermentation processes such as cheese making that rely on endemic microbes for production), therefore value-added manufacturing can take place anywhere and get more or less the same result. It also challenges the notion that small food producers can only succeed in market conditions that exclude large corporate competitors. Coffee is the one of the most traded global commodities (Morris 2019:121; Hoffmann 2018:42) and established global MNCs such as Starbucks and Nestlé also compete in the specialty coffee arena which occludes competitive advantage purely through product type or quality (Morris 2019:174). Malmö's coffee roasteries are producing a globally commoditized product on a local scale and succeeding.

This study examines the role of social capital within the Malmö local food community and whether it contributes to these three roasteries' success using the theories of cultural embeddedness and relational work. Market cultures have a set of values shared amongst members that inform and motivate economic behavior with participants choosing how much or how little to conform to these behavioral

expectations (cultural embeddedness). Within that setting, intentionally developing interpersonal business relationships for the purpose of economic cooperation also shapes and motivates behavior in addition to or despite existing cultural values (relational work). These two forces are at play in Malmö's local food community. The aim of this study is first to determine what are the values that are impacting economic decision-making in Malmö, specifically supplier and brand purchasing decisions, and what are the advantages and disadvantages for small food manufacturers of (non)conforming to those values. Second, this study analyzes whether relational work supports or supersedes the importance of cultural embeddedness in this community.



*Figure 1: Coffee bean quality is graded on a 100 point scale. Specialty coffee is coffee which has received a grade of 80-100. (Giuliano et al 2021:3).*

## 2. Literature Review

A major theme in local food system research is the development of alternative food networks (AFNs) which operate outside of the conventional food system. These offer participants, both producers and consumers, an opportunity to remove a portion of their food transactions from the dominant market structure. There is no agreed uniform definition for what is an AFN as compared to a conventional food network, with researchers basing their definitions on different factors such as market structure, participant behavior, economic outcomes, etc. as it relates to the focus of their studies.

Sage (2003) investigates how moral values and relations of regard motivate economic behavior within the AFNs of southwest Ireland and the development of “good food” which combines both intrinsic product quality characteristics with extrinsic values that the products represent. The product itself represents the persons who produced it, short supply chain, ecological stewardship, and local culture—which is factored into its premium pricing. In addition, the procurement of these products is a break from the increasingly commodified and centralized food retailers in Ireland’s food market sector. Sage’s working definition of AFNs combines multiple aspects that can be organized into three categories: structural, social, and territoriality.

Sage describes the structure of an AFN as an “alternative supply model with the potential to short-circuit the long, complex and rationally industrial food supply chains”. These are networks that operate separate from the dominant conventional channels and take forms such as “local exchange trading systems, community development banks and direct agricultural markets” among others. Sage borrows from Granovetter’s theory of social embeddedness to explain the social nature of AFNs which emphasizes the moral considerations inherent in economic behavior, the development of interpersonal relationships and mutual regard, and where customer loyalty is primarily a function of social interaction over price and product characteristics. Sage notes however that the social nature of AFNs also causes interpersonal entanglement which restricts “free market” behavior and functionally constrains consumer choice. Lastly, and paramount to the focus of his study, Sage connects AFNs to territoriality and local identity. The products themselves are representative of the regional landscape and cultural heritage in which they are purchased and often consumed. This

connects economic behavior to regional identity that is grounded in the landscape and land management based cultural practices.

A strong factor in developing community support and customer loyalty for local food producers in Sage's study is in-person interaction between producers and customers which draws on Marsden et al's (2000) work connecting the notion of value based economic behavior with short food supply chains. Short food supply chains allow face-to-face interaction between supplier and consumer. They create spatial proximity between production, retail, purchase, and consumption. Spatially extended product communication connects consumers with information about the region of production even if the consumers have no direct experience with that region. Marsden et al relate this work on short food supply chains to AFNs and agriculture-based rural development, though the work could be applied in other market formations.

Mount (2012) analyzes the potential for small food producers who rely on local food network support to grow into a hybrid of small and conventional distribution networks. Mount equates local food networks with AFNs and writes that actors therein "establish a shared set of goals and values that will govern their relationship and serve as the basis of their alternative identity." This alludes to intentional organization and conscious inclusion of value-based economic practices. It also connects an *alternative identity* to market function. He stresses the need for small producers to be able to scale in order to remain economically viable, but acknowledges the challenge to do so without violating or losing the direct connection with consumers that engenders local support. He champions the notion of hybrid markets, but his version of a hybrid market is where producers participate in two separate markets, the AFN and the conventionally organized markets. In my opinion this is not a singular hybrid market, but rather hybrid behavior within two geographically overlapping yet distinctly separate markets. This distinction is important because the AFNs to which Mount refers are structured to specifically exclude large players and thereby protect small suppliers.

Bååth (*forthcoming*) addresses how Swedish Reko-rings, direct marketing AFNs for local, small-scale providers, use shared meaning to establish appropriate practices that support their common goal of "decent food provisioning." He uses ethnographic interviews of Reko-ring participants and draws upon Zelizer's (2012; see Bååth *forthcoming*) relational work to analyze how these groups determine what economic behaviors are and are not appropriate. Bååth chooses to focus on a specific type of AFN which is formalized with a codified structure of conduct and economic behavior, but acknowledges that there are many expressions of AFNs that are less formally organized and harder to define.

Formally established agreed values and codes of conduct seem integral in the long-term success of AFNs. Bloom and Hinrichs (2011) work with hybrid markets demonstrates that formally structured AFNs outperform informally organized ones, and that the latter tends to slide toward conventionalism. Without formal structures, commercial conventions overshadow social relationships and trust, downregulating the importance of social capital and trust in a hybrid system.

Bloom and Hinrichs note that AFNs often represent a hybridization of alternative and conventional structures. However, all markets express some degree of hybridization between economic and non-economic values (Bandelj 2020; Beckert 2009), and this blending of behavioral motivations on its own does not constitute *alternativeness* (Bååth *forthcoming*). Therefore, the presence of hybrid behavior is not sufficient to label whether a market is an AFN, hybrid, or conventional market. These arguments seem to suggest that there is a spectrum between conventionally organized food systems and alternative food networks, with most or all functioning food markets falling between these polarities. Whether a market is labelled conventional, alternative, or hybrid largely depends on the viewpoint of the researcher describing the system or on how the participants of those systems identify themselves.

Another area of local food systems research is the potential for addressing food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty in developing countries through central government encouragement of small, local food networks. Perdana et al (2022) investigate how developing infrastructure to support local food hubs in West Java Province, Indonesia could increase food sovereignty in communities dependent on imported staple commodity foods. These food hubs could counter food shocks such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic disruption of international trade, particularly in communities most vulnerable to supply chain disruption. This study exemplifies a recurring theme in the literature of the fragility of relying on a global food system and a call for developing local food production as a matter of national food continuity planning.

Mercado et al (2018) examine how applying global food hygienist logic to small, community-based food production networks causes conflict with local, indigenous community values and customs. These values are not the result of a deliberately organized AFN but are endemic characteristics of the community which also effect the food system. This study demonstrates that even with strong political support, the dominant structures developed to create trust in the global food system, which are arguably unnecessary in a localized context, can create insurmountable cultural and economic barriers of entry for small, local food producers.

Research into the connection between developing local food networks with community identity focus on utilizing food identity to support food tourism. Sims (2009) uses the Lake District and Exmoor, UK as a case study to show how developing a localized food identity in connection with the landscape creates a perceived authentic experience for tourists and acts as a focal point for attracting external capital into the local food economy. In this study, the food production and consumption are both local, but the consumers are not. Similar to Sims' study, Rytönen et al (2018) examine how the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of consumers and tourists for purchasing local, artisanal foods in Jämtland, Sweden. Both the Sims and the Rytönen et al studies emphasize the connection between local traditional foods and the landscape. The local food discussion moves beyond agricultural goods into craft manufactured or value-added foods, however, these manufactured products reflect the heritage and traditions of the region and are steeped in local agricultural practices.

Born & Purcell (2006) critique many of the assumptions in local scale food systems research in what they call the Local Trap. The primary assumption they criticize is that local food systems are inherently 'good' as opposed to national or global food system which are inherently 'bad'. Both intrinsic food characteristics such as quality and nutritional value and extrinsic characteristics such as environmental sustainability and social justice are frequently attributed to local food systems, but Born & Purcell give examples of how local systems can exacerbate problems as well as improve them. Other assumptions include that AFNs must be local, community only exists at the local scale, and conflating the terms global and corporate. They challenge Sage's (2003) and by extension Marsden et al's (2000) premise that direct face-to-face interaction between producers and consumers results in better communication and therefore trust development.

In this study, I focus on the Malmö local food system. Is this food system an AFN? Malmö's food market community functions on a local scale, with participants engaging in both local and global sourcing strategies through both conventional market channels and direct purchasing from suppliers. This market operates on a set of shared values that are endemic to this community and affect economic behavior, as I demonstrate in the results section of this thesis. However, these values are not strategically planned nor formally established as they are in AFNs. Similarly, there is not a codified set of economic behaviors other than those upheld by government statute. Yet, small-scale food producers and manufacturers in Malmö experience many of the benefits attributed to AFNs, such as premium pricing and preferential purchasing. I further demonstrate the strong community identity shared among the participants in this market which is akin to the shared identity often found in AFNs, however, this identity is an expression of location-based culture in



which the food network is embedded, and is not an artifact created by the food network itself.

Within the Malmö food market community are formal AFNs such as Reko-ring and farmers markets, but these do not pertain to this study other than to showcase that this local food system offers both conventional and alternative channels. However, as Bandelj (2020) notes, hybridity does not an alternative system make, and that all markets express some level of hybridization. Is Malmö's local food community an AFN or not? Convincing arguments can be made to justify calling this system alternative, conventional or hybrid—but for the purposes of this study it does not matter. What matters is that the small, local food producers in this community are able to succeed in a market environment in which global MNC competitors are an available alternative. Instead of focusing on the alternative (or not) nature of this market, I instead focus on its local scale, which as Born & Purcell emphasize are not synonyms.

This study also differs from the existing literature that connects food to local identity. Sage (2003), Sims (2009), and Rytönen et al (2018) connect local food to landscape-based cultural identity. Malmö's three roasteries are distinctly part of an urban foodscape identity, but separate from Malmö's and the surrounding Scania agricultural heritage. This shows that value-added manufacturing (as opposed to Sage's territoriality) can imbue a product with local identity.

This case study adds to the existing literature by exploring how small, localized food manufacturers competing in a globally commoditized product category build economic resilience by utilizing culturally embedded values and relational work.

### 3. Theory

This study relies on the economic sociological interpretation of markets as not only systems of exchanging goods and services, but as manifestations of cultural expression. The *Multiple Markets* model (Zelizer 2011:366-379) states that markets are cultural and social constructs that are impacted by noneconomic factors such as values, norms, and social structures that both constrain and give meaning to economic exchange. This explains irrational economic activity by players in a market that would otherwise seem counter to neoclassical economic principles of market forces.

To understand why noneconomic factors are affecting a market system, Granovetter (1985) set forth his theory of *social embeddedness* in which “[economic] behavior is closely embedded in networks of interpersonal relations”. Actors in an economic exchange are able to trust other actors and make decisions in absence of complete information because they can presume other actors to behave according to shared expectations.

Bandelj (2012) criticizes social embeddedness as “systems of social relations congealed into networks” because it focuses on the external restraining action that social relationships exert on economic behavior. Instead, she supports and expands upon Zelizer’s *relational work* in which actors intentionally develop and manage social interactions in pursuit of a goal, even if the goal is not clearly defined. Emphasis is given to the intentionality of developing these relationships, “economic actors invest effort in forging, negotiating, and possibly dissolving economic relations” (ibid). Relational work is a process, not a structure, that blurs the barrier between personal and professional relationships and connects meaning to economic exchange.

Rather than critique Granovetter, Zukkin & DiMaggio (1990; see Dequech 2003) expand the embeddedness concept beyond social networks to *cultural embeddedness*, “the role of shared collective understandings in shaping economic strategies and goals” which regulates rational economic behavior by conforming to values, beliefs, and norms. Often cultural embeddedness research is applied to institutions and large corporations but can also be applied to a market. Dequech (2003) sees cultural embeddedness as accomplishing more than constraining economic behavior, which he calls the restrictive function. He also describes the cognitive function which relates to what information is

available (or provided) to individuals and how these individuals will interpret this information, motivational function in which culture provides a shared set of values, and emotional function which is how culture influences the emotions that affect economic behavior.

If cultural embeddedness is conforming behavior to values and norms, what are values and norms? Values are beliefs that create guiding principles for behavior that transcend situational context and affect emotion (Schwartz 2012). Social norms are contextually dependent patterns or standards of acceptable behavior shared among the community and sustained by community (dis)approval and individual emotions (Elster 1989). Social norms can exist without associated values, however, when values underly social norms they give norms meaning. Sanctions for violating social norms include internal feelings of guilt or shame and external punishments ranging from raised eyebrows to ostracization. Elster (1989) argues that following norms to avoid sanctions represents rational behavior because the pain of sanctions is greater than the pain of suboptimal economic outcomes, and so it is in the actor's self-interest to conform. Elster still champions individual agency and that social norms motivate behavior, but do not violate individual choice. He suggests that economic behavior is "influenced both by rationality and by norms"(ibid) which sometimes results in a compromise.

Thomas & Thomas (1928:570-572) discuss that the interpretation of values is unique to the subjective experience of the individual. How a person interprets values and facts is real to him or herself, even if it is not substantiated by objective reality, which has a direct effect on that individual's behavior. This is often referred to as the Thomas Theorem and summed up in the quote, "If men define a situation as real, they are real in their consequences."(ibid:572). Thomas & Thomas discuss the nature of behavior studies, stating that it is possible to document *how* people behave, but the researcher must infer *why*. They emphasize the importance of interpreting behavior in the context of the subjects' environment, which includes the values and opinions of other people within that environment because these values will have an effect on the subjects' behavior.

Culture is not static, but rather "continuously constructed and reconstructed during interaction. It not only shapes its members but also is shaped by them" (Granovetter 1985). Thus, by embedding in a market culture, participants are both influenced by and creating the culture that surrounds them. This means that the motivations and constraints suggested by culturally embedded values and norms are not external controls as in Hobbes *Leviathan*, but a cocreation of the actors within a market.

In this study, I identify the embedded cultural values and their associated signatory behaviors (norms) inherent in Malmö's food and beverage market

culture that influence supplier selection in B2B economic relationships and analyze whether this engenders resilience for the three small, craft coffee roasteries in this market. I also analyze how relational work, as defined by Zelizer and Bandelj, supports or supersedes cultural embeddedness in this case study. I choose to use both cultural embeddedness and relational work to analyze this market because neither alone fully explains the behavior that I observed during my research. Together, however, they adequately encompass the prevailing and most importantly—*shared*—economic behaviors and consequences of those behaviors in this community. The work of Thomas & Thomas (1928) also applies to this study because the purpose is not to evaluate whether the values and beliefs shared in this community are factually true, but rather to connect those values to repeatable behaviors. At times I may point out inconsistencies with beliefs or occasions when beliefs are evidentially unfactual, however, this is reaffirm the point that *belief* is the critical factor, not objective fact.

## 4. Methodology

In this study I use the food and beverage business community of Malmö Municipality, Sweden centered around three active craft coffee roasteries, their B2B customers, and other F&B businesses that do not currently source from these three roasteries but do serve coffee. All businesses have their primary operations within Malmö Municipality with one exception which is the Malmö branch of a medium-size national franchise. All businesses and participants are considered part of the local food community and are micro, small, or medium sized enterprises according to the European Commission's definition of SMEs (2022).

I conducted fourteen semi-structured, open-ended ethnographic interviews with fifteen research participants in their place of business. Ethnographic field work strives to describe and understand a culture from the perspective of the members of that culture (Spradley 1979:3). By interviewing subjects within their cultural context, I am able to understand “the meaning of actions and events...[which people use to] organize their behavior, to understand themselves and others, and to make sense out of the world in which they live” (ibid:5). This permits me to make cultural inferences about the motivations and behaviors of interview participants.

There are many small, craft food and beverage brands in this market that could have been used in this study. I selected these three roasteries for the case study because they serve the same product in the same market, and differences in business outcomes can more directly be applied to business practices as opposed to product category. I included the names of these roasteries for two reasons: first there are only three active roasteries in Malmö at the time of this study so it is easy to deduce which roasteries are in this study from the findings; second, for two of the roasteries, their very names are data used as supporting evidence for one or more of my findings. The roastery participants are aware that they are not anonymous, and one expressed preference for including the brand's name in the study.

For the other business participants in this study I use maximum variation sampling, a selection method aimed at capturing the widest diversity of perspectives possible. I specifically try to achieve heterogeneity among participants with regard to gender, age, migration history, and business size (Palys 2008). Migration history is of particular note in this study because Malmö Municipality is an urban center that attracts both domestic migration and immigration with approximately one-third

of the fulltime residents born outside of Sweden, therefore the community is a heterogenous tapestry of ethnicities and heritage which influences the evolution of the local food community (Malmö stad 2024)). For this cohort of interviewees, heterogeneity is important to establish that the shared values are reflective of the overall Malmö community, and not specific to a particular demographic subset within that community. This cohort of study participants are anonymized to allow them to more freely share their opinions without potential backlash.

I identified interviewees using network sampling, social media, and field scouting. Recruitment utilized both warm introduction and cold outreach. Cold outreach included phone calls, emails, messenger applications, and unscheduled site visits. I conducted the interviews in a combination of focused and nondirective styles (Frankfort-Nachmias 2008:215). The first interview was with a Malmö food industry expert. I used this open, nondirective discussion about the Malmö local food and beverage community to develop interview guides for the three coffee roasteries (*appendix 1*) and the remaining interview participants (*appendix 2*). Interviews 2 through 14 were scheduled by convenience—it was easiest to contact and interview the roasteries first. Later I referenced the roasteries when doing cold outreach with other interviewees as a form of social proof to increase compliance.

The order of the topics was not addressed in any specific order, and interviewees were permitted to respond however they chose and for as long as they chose. Topics in the interview guides were starting points for discussion, and the answers given expand well beyond the starting topic. This interview style allowed room for unexpected topics to arise and be discussed. If I felt a certain topic was not discussed sufficiently, I would ask follow-up questions. I also conducted content analysis on the interviewees' physical café or roastery, product design, and customer communications such as websites and social media (*ibid*:295-296).

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim with the exception of one interviewee who declined to be recorded. I analyzed interview responses using pattern inducing analysis as defined by Reay and Jones (2016), a technique used to analyze qualitative data through inductive reasoning to capture beliefs, norms, and behaviors. Pattern inducing is a bottom-up approach that starts with the data looking for meaningful patterns and grouping (or coding) the data. Categories are developed through reflective engagement with the data “to reveal the existing underlying meanings and thus identify patterns of behaviors and beliefs” (*ibid*). This is opposed to starting with a model and organizing the data to fit a preexisting framework. The framework I present in this study comes from the data, not imposed on the data.

I analyzed both verbal and nonverbal communication. The very act of speaking as opposed to the content of that speech is itself a form of nonverbal communication, so interviewees willingness to be interviewed, willingness to be recorded, ease of answering questions, and emotional tenor during speech were analyzed (Collins, 1981).

Within each interview, I used pattern inducing to deduce what are the individual interviewee's values that affect their sourcing decisions and behaviors, not just sourcing coffee but their overall approach to sourcing. Values are expressed as beliefs, opinions, judgments, or intuition. While interviewees have individualized interpretations of values, they share similar vocabulary and emotional tenure to discussing them. Next I looked for economic behaviors that are guided by those values, again not specifically restricted to coffee but to all suppliers. Specifically I looked for behaviors that are not explained by purely rational economic logic. These behaviors could include supplier selection, changing brands, price (in)sensitivity, etc. Then I looked at all the interviewees as a collective set for shared values. Values and associated behaviors that are shared by the majority of the café and restaurant interviewees I determined to be cultural values and not individual values. Outlier data, interviewees who either express the opposite of a collective value or who are aware of the value but do not agree with it are also pertinent evidence that the value exists.

To analyze relational work I pay attention to how interviewees discuss their personal interactions with suppliers including history, expressions of emotional attachment and 'liking', and economic behavior as a result of these interactions. I then investigate whether the relational work is reinforcing or superseding the influence that values have on economic behavior. It is possible for an interviewee to experience both reinforcing in one instance and superseding in another.

I developed the values and behaviors framework (*Table 3*) based on the data revealed during interviews excluding the three roasteries's interviews. Developing the framework took multiple iterations where I developed a working framework, applied it back on the data to see if it adequately reflected the data, then made adjustments and repeated the process. This framework is a way of analyzing the cultural embeddedness of a business and the business owner in this specific community. During this iterative process I also revised the theory selection to reflect the findings in the data—again, a data-first approach. I decided to apply both cultural embeddedness and relational work to this data, as the framework alone was not sufficient to explain all the findings.

I then applied this framework to the three coffee roasteries at the heart of this study to analyze how they conform or do not conform to the framework. I looked at both how the roasteries describe their own beliefs and behavior and how the café and restaurant customers describe their behavior. From this I further the study's aim to investigate if conforming with culturally embedded values and reinforcing sales channel relationships through relational work to develop social capital is a means of developing economic resilience for small-scale producers within a conventionally organized local food system.

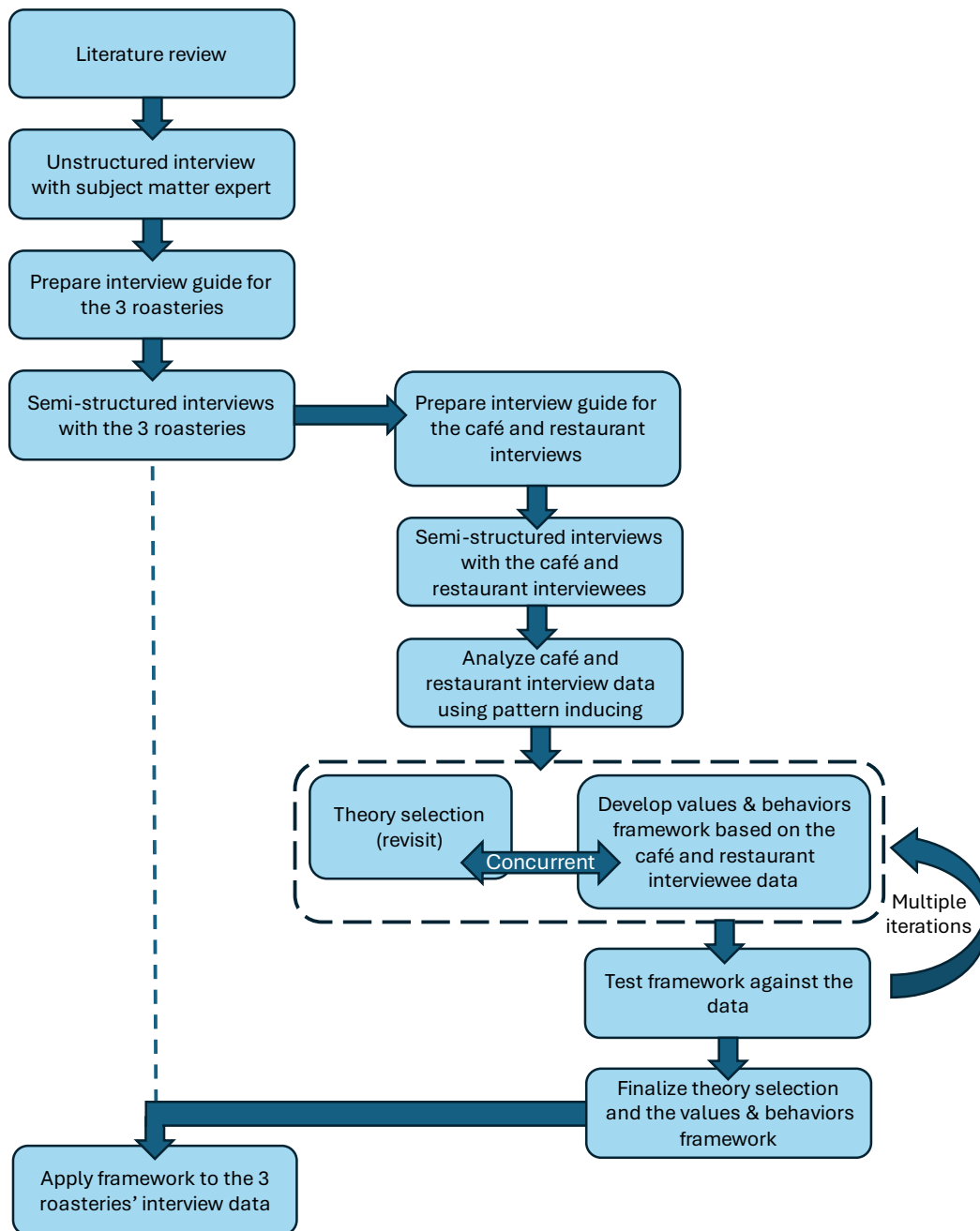


Figure 2 Diagram showing the methodology workflow. Theory selection and developing the values & behaviors framework happened concurrently. The framework was tested, then both theory selection and framework would be reviewed and revised until they accurately reflected the data.



## 4.1 Interviewee Demographics

In this study, I interviewed fifteen Malmö food and beverage industry professionals representing thirteen food and beverage businesses and one industry expert: three coffee roasteries, four coffee shops, three bakeries, two restaurants, and one ice cream manufacturer. One of the bakeries provided two interviewees. Many of the businesses represented have overlapping services, for instance the bakeries also served coffee, the ice cream manufacturer also runs several cafes, etc. The labeling used to describe their primary business combines the brand identity of the business with the primary purpose for sourcing products.

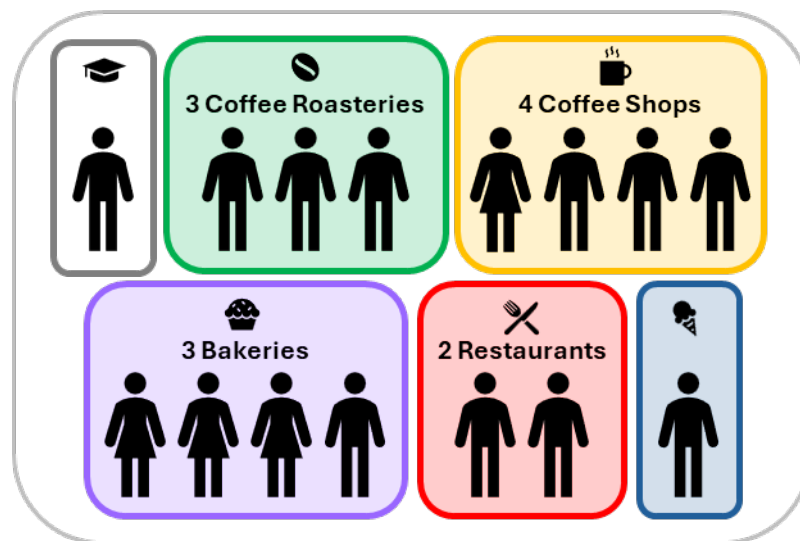


Figure 3 Infographic displaying interviewee number and gender as well as businesses represented and primary business type.

The three coffee roasteries will be referred to as ‘roasteries’ and the other businesses will be collectively referred to as ‘restaurant and café interviewees’. Of the thirteen businesses represented in this study, eleven are independently owned, one is part of a national franchise, and one is owned by a Malmö based tech startup incubator group. Eight of the independently owned businesses are still owned by the founder while three were purchased from the founder and are now owned by the second owner.

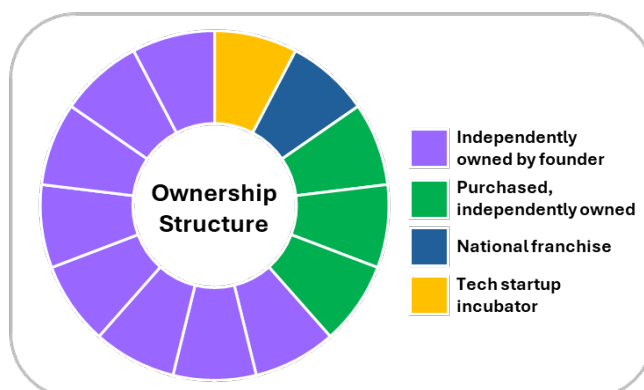


Figure 4 Infographic displaying interviewed businesses ownership structure types.

Ten interviews are with the business owners and four are with managers who are involved with the sourcing decisions. The industry expert currently works in academia, but previously worked in food and beverage management in Malmö and internationally.

Four of the interviewees were born and raised in Malmö, two migrated from within Skåne, five migrated from other regions in Sweden outside of Skåne, and four immigrated from outside of Sweden. Six of the interviewees have worked in food and beverage the majority of their professional careers, whereas nine transitioned into food and beverage from different industries. The interviewees represented an age range from 26 to 61 with four women and eleven men.

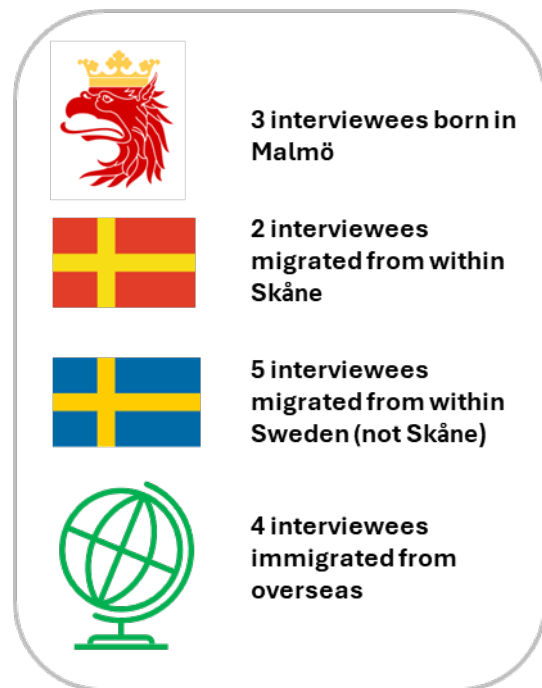


Figure 5 Infographic showing interviewee migration history.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Market values, behaviors, and relational work

I identified six core market values present across the interviews that affect economic behavior: quality, local, openness, trust, company size, and ownership structure. These values are based on overall supplier relationships and product categories, not specifically with coffee suppliers. These values were determined after multiple iterations of pattern inducing whereby I would develop a working framework of values based on interview data, then test the framework against the interview data, revise the framework, and repeat this process until creating a list of values that consistently reflects the results of the interviews and observations conducted during field work. These values and their signatory behaviors are reflective of the culture of this market at the point of time the study was conducted (Spring 2024). As Granovetter (1985) notes, culture is constantly changing, therefore the values and behaviors embedded in a culture are also changing and adapting over time.

Most of these values do not have a clear definition and interviewees describe these values using language around feelings and intuition. Values do not have clear boundaries and often interviewees would reference more than one value in the same statement as affecting their sourcing choices. Signatory behaviors associated with values are contextually dependent, which is in line with Elster's (1989) definition of cultural norms, and may cause a compromise between conflicting values or with rational economic motivations. *Table 1* presents the six values with representative quotations that support the presence of these values. *Table 2* connects these values to specific signatory behaviors and economic decisions, also with representative quotations. The list of values and behaviors comprises the framework which is then applied to the three roasteries in *Table 3*.

Often interviewees use long descriptions that do not specifically name the value, yet clearly speak to the value which provides supporting evidence that is not conveniently captured in a quote. These examples align with Collins' (1981) point that "...people are rarely able to verbalize many social rules guiding their behavior." I describe these examples as well as provide long quotations within context, contextual evidence such as product offering and signage, and

photographic evidence to further support this framework of values and the corresponding behaviors they influence.

Relational work explains interpersonal behaviors that fall outside of the values and behaviors framework, yet still furthers the goal of economic cooperation between study participants and their supply chain partners. These behaviors are highly contextual to the specific relationship, thus not fitting a generalized pattern. What does follow a pattern is the very presence of relational work, if not how the relational work is undertaken. Part of the context in which relational work occurs is in the setting of culturally embedded values. After describing each value with supporting evidence, I also examine examples of relational work that interact with that value to see how it is engaged and infer why the relational work is present.

Table 1: Malmö market culture core values with representative quotations.

Value	Representative Quotations
Quality	<p>“I think quality is the number one.”</p> <p>“Quality. I think most people care most about how it actually tastes”</p> <p>“So quality still sort of trumps it all.”</p> <p>“I like the brand, and it’s a good quality”</p>
Local	<p>“And we want to have something local.”</p> <p>“Yes, I looked around, and I want someone who were in Malmö.”</p> <p>“Yeah, we do want local. It’s very high on the list of priorities.”</p> <p>“I want to state it clearly that supporting local food and beverage business is an important factor to do that and try to help. I think restaurants have become more conscious of that.”</p>
Openness	<p>“[W]e want all different backgrounds, like everyone should come here...And we have all types of people here. We are super proud of that and we love that.”</p> <p>“[E]verybody’s welcome. But that’s obvious.”</p> <p>“We want to be for everyone. We are not a niche, we want to be for everyone.”</p> <p>“I would say most of my customers are international, almost exclusively. I think I speak English 90% of the day.”</p>
Trust	<p>“I think a lot here is about suppliers, it’s about relationship, trust, these type of things.”</p> <p>“We trust Solde with that.”</p>
Company Size	<p>“I’m a small business owner and I just think that is good. I just like, I think we should have many small business owners.”</p> <p>“Nestlé and all them, and when you read about big companies, there is always something wrong. They don’t take care of their whole chain.”</p> <p>“And these big companies, they’re unequal, and it’s not right that some people should have that much money...I don’t like big structures, financial structures because I think it’s wrong.”</p> <p>“...the big company. Big, bad company.”</p>
Ownership Structure	<p>“Yeah, like good investors, their business plan, of course it would be okay.”</p> <p>“I just assume every other brand has big, bad capitalist owners.”</p> <p>“It’s not okay when I think about it [taking on outside investors]...No, I don’t think so. It depends.”</p> <p>“So I think that’s why a big company like that or a big investor like that maybe would be a problem for us. But a smaller investor...”</p>

Table 2: Malmö market culture core value influenced behavior with representative quotations.

Value	Behavior	Representative Quotations
Quality	Hygiene factor	<p>“I’ve [changed supplier] a couple of times because the quality was not good.”</p> <p>“There’s like a level of quality we are looking for, and if you meet that”</p> <p>“I know that the quality will be on par with what I expect from them.”</p>
Local	Preferential purchasing	<p>“[W]e do a lot of local in what we can do.”</p> <p>“We like to buy local. Beers and so...We have for example Malmö gin and Hyllie beer. So those are local brands here.”</p> <p>“The bread is from a local bakery. The kombucha is from Malmö.”</p>
	Price flexibility	<p>“Local is more expensive, but it is local. I think that if you can support them, you can support them.”</p>
	Advertising the supplier’s brand	<p>“[It’s] more communicative to say that this bread comes from that guy, that farm, that place.”</p> <p>“The bags are quite visible...I think we have a small sign. You see that sign there?”</p> <p>“I see a lot of signs where ‘Our coffee is from’ and then you have the bags visible as well, even though they don’t need to be.”</p>
Openness	Inclusion and integration	<p>“It’s easy to move here. It’s [a] welcoming city. Nice to get into the community. Easy to get into the community.”</p> <p>“It’s why I chose Malmö when I decided to move and do my other thing as well.”</p> <p>“I’m from Gothenburg, but I like living here. I like it...it’s so many international people living in Malmö.”</p>
Trust	Collaboration	<p>“How can we survive during this [COVID], and what do you do, and how can we help each other?”</p> <p>“It’s all about being able to help each other.”</p> <p>“[W]e try and capture events together. Corporate events, so that when he’s got some corporate customer, he’s serving his coffee, and maybe we can go and serve ice cream with our trolley.”</p>

Trust Company Size	Do not validate business practice claims	<p>“We want the whole process to be a good one. We trust Solde with that. So it’s like everything’s in their hands when it comes to that part.”</p> <p>“[T]hese are roasteries that I trust do it well, which means I don’t have to go into every single coffee and scrutinize it and see where does it come from, because I’m fairly certain all of the roasteries do their job in this.”</p>
	Preferential purchasing	<p>“In general I prefer smaller companies. There’s many reasons, but I just prefer it that way.”</p> <p>“We work a lot, I would say, with small suppliers.”</p> <p>“I like that...we don’t get like a seller on the phone, we get the guys owning and roasting.”</p> <p>“Coca-Cola is too big, and we don’t have them”</p>
Company Size Ownership Structure	Lack of “growth mindset”	<p>“But at the same time, we still want to keep it not too big, because if you grow too much then the quality’s going to drop.”</p> <p>“[W]hen mom started it 11 years ago, she told me like, okay I need to get 1000 krona each day just to make this go around. Like, not win anything out of it, no money, and she did it just for fun...we never wanted to lose that, that way of thinking.”</p> <p>“Exactly, so economics, and also letting businesses stay small...if everyone is getting paid enough, and no one is getting taken advantage of, it’s hard for businesses to grow too much.”</p>
	Independent Ownership	<p>“I’m a small business owner and I just think that is good. I just like, I think we should have many small business owners.”<sup>1</sup></p> <p><i>All except 2 of the interviewed companies are independently owned.</i><sup>2</sup></p>
Ownership Structure	Boycotting Brands	<p>“[Y]ou know the whole owner situation? Yeah. And because of that...I stopped selling Oatly.”</p> <p>“Because we found out they had these investors that we didn’t agree with. What they were doing in other investments they had, so we stopped using them.”</p> <p>“What I remember about Oatly mainly is who it was purchased by, and since then I stopped buying Oatly.”</p>

<sup>1</sup> Here is an example of one quote representing two values. The interviewee expresses the preference for *small* businesses and for *independently owned* businesses.

<sup>2</sup> I did not intentionally seek to interview independently owned cafes and restaurants.

### 5.1.1 Quality

Quality is the first value that restaurant and café interviewees mentioned when asked what they value in a supplier or in products. Every interviewee includes some language around quality, with 9 of the interviewees using the specific word “quality”. When asked why an interviewee would consider switching suppliers, the first response is related to product quality issues.

Quality has the least ambiguity of all the values identified. While each interviewee has a different personal opinion of what constitutes quality, each is internally consistent with a firm idea of what is good or acceptable quality and what is not. Quality is a strict hygiene factor in sourcing decision making. Some interviewees give precise descriptions of what constitutes good quality, such as describing flavor, texture, visual appeal, etc., while others use an intuitive approach to assessing quality, “if I taste it and I know I can’t sell this, this is not good enough.” One coffee shop owner who purchased his business from a previous owner describes his own experience changing product offerings based on both intuition around quality and specific product characteristics depending on the product category,

“When it comes to, at the beginning I carried everything [that the previous owner carried]... then I just started to personally try everything. Observing. Because I need to know it. Because I’m responsible for it. And the one that I liked, I decided to continue and buy more. The one that I didn’t, well they’re not here anymore, so you don’t even see them... [specifically addressing oat milk] I think before it was Oddly Good, but Oddly Good is not my favorite when it comes to the oat drinks mainly because of this, it leaves the residue in your cup that I’m not a fan of. I’ve chosen this one [Lidl Havredryck] for two reasons, it airs very well, it tastes good.”

This interviewee decided to change products and brands based on his personal experience with the products, trusting in his own authority to assess quality. These products include sodas, iced teas, baked goods, coffee suppliers, etc. In some cases, liking or not liking the product is enough to change suppliers. However, when it comes to oat milk the interviewee gives specific product performance characteristics to define why one brand is better quality than the other. It is important to note that this interviewee himself does not like or drink oat milk, so personal taste is not a sufficient guide for assessing this product category’s quality. Similar product characteristics informed his decision to drop one of the coffee suppliers that the previous owner carried—the roast was too dark—and switch to other brands.

Quality has the clearest boundaries between it and the other values in that it is not influenced by the other values, nor does it show influence on the others. When asked which is more important, quality or any of the other values, interviewees always choose quality. This, however, is challenged when interviewees were asked about the brand Oatly. Many interviewees acknowledged that Oatly provides the





*Figure 6: Bakery display. The supervisor of a prominent Malmö bakery explains prioritizing quality: “You know that the sugar and everything that’s inside, the baker that makes them are kind of expensive, but still it’s the best thing, the best product that we can put inside. And I know that [the owner] would never, ever try to make a cheaper bun, because that is not how he works. So he wouldn’t work the product, less good products because—use margarin instead of butter or we use this instead because it’s cheaper—that would never happen because it’s not his thing.”*

best oat milk on the market, but because of Oatly’s market norm violation (a description of this norm violation is provided in section 5.1.6 Ownership Structure), the interviewees switched to what they consider the second-best alternative. This illustrates that adhering or even excelling in the other market values is not enough to overcome poor quality, but failing the other market values is enough to invalidate good quality.

Quality was not always a market value. According to the Malmö food and beverage industry expert interviewee, quality became a market value about 20 years ago, “[f]rom 2008 and until now the increase in knowledge and demand [for high quality food and beverage products], both from customers and restaurateurs and chefs and people working in restaurants have grown immensely.” Previously price and product conformity were valued, as is reflected in the other interviewees’ comments when specifically referring to coffee. “And people did like expect a dark roasted Zoegas or something...in the beginning people were like, ‘What is this?’ and we were like ‘No, just try it, it will grow on you.’” Interviewees would compare the high quality, specialty coffees that they serve in their establishments to

supermarket brands such as Zoegas or Gevalia to make a point of distinction, where the supermarket brands represent low-quality, mass-market coffee with a conformed flavor, “[t]he supermarket coffee, you don’t know where it’s coming from, and it’s usually a mix of whatever. It just supposed to taste like this.” This shift towards valuing specialty coffee also reflects a generational change in Malmö’s food and beverage market culture, with interviewees describing the supermarket brands as what the older generation would drink, “[a] lot of old people in Malmö, they want to drink Zoegas.” This generational value shift applies across all food and beverage product categories, “Quality. I think most people care most about how it actually tastes.” Good quality, which had been a point of differentiation 20 years ago, has become the market expectation.

Quality is the only intrinsic product characteristic frequently mentioned. Some interviewees mention price or delivery reliability, and 4 specifically mention



*Figure 7: Grocery store coffee display. Zoegas is a leading mass market coffee brand in Sweden. Displayed in this photo is the "Skånerost." This traditional style roast is a dark roasted coffee blend noted for its bold flavor. Specialty coffee enthusiasts criticize dark roasts as a tactic to compensate for inferior coffee bean quality. Zoegas Kaffe AB was founded in Helsingborg, Sweden in 1886. In 1986 the brand was acquired by Nestlé Sweden AB (Zoegas, 2024).*

product packaging, but more frequently interviewees would express flexibility around these product characteristics as long as the supplier maintains a good quality product and expressed some of the other values listed in these findings.

### 5.1.2 Local

Sourcing from local suppliers is the second strongest value that interviewees describe. Often buying local is used as a heuristic for ensuring that suppliers are compliant with other intangible market culture values. Eight of the restaurant and café interviewees explicitly describe sourcing locally as part of their sourcing strategy. Only three restaurant and café interviewees do not include sourcing locally as a strategy, and all of them are immigrants from outside of Sweden. This could signal that they are less embedded into Malmö's market culture than other interviewees given how prominently this value features. That migrants from within Sweden express this value as strongly as those born in Malmö suggests this value may be shared nationally.

Interviewees have no clear definition of what constitutes local, frequently contradicting themselves, which conforms with Born and Purcell's (2006) criticism that local is a fluid concept whose definition is "constantly in the process of being



*Figure 8: Roots of Malmö products. Locally manufactured brands experience preferential purchasing status in Malmö's food and beverage market. Roots of Malmö is a Malmö based kombucha manufacturer. This specific brand was available at multiple cafés interviewed in this study.*

made and remade". One interviewee says that "[l]ocal, in my eyes, local is in the city...local is walking distance" then later in the same interview considers sourcing within the Skåne region as local, "Our house beer, that's a local one. Produced in Skåne." Another interviewee acknowledges that local is an amorphous distinction, "depending on what 'local' is." Some interviewees define local within geographical limitations such as the Malmö area or Skåne region. Two define it in the time it takes to transport, "within one hours drive, I'd say." Another describes local in terms of supply chain "[y]ou have to do straight from farmer to plate if you want to be super local and do very locally sourced." Others incorporate cultural boundaries along with geographical

boundaries, especially when considering whether Denmark can be considered local. Interviewees with a strictly geographical definition include Denmark, “[b]utter we get from Denmark. It’s actually kind of local, it’s closer than to north of Sweden.” While others who include cultural and historical nuance to their definition exclude Denmark, “Ah, oh that’s Denmark. That’s very different. Very different.” Even though Denmark is visible from Malmö’s coastline, the perception of them versus us excludes Denmark from inclusion in ‘local’ for some interviewees.

Interviewees’ preference to source locally does not differ depending on their size or ownership structure. Owner/managers of single locations show as much enthusiasm as the general manager of the Malmö branch of a 12-locaton nationwide restaurant franchise. The self-described largest bakery chain in Malmö with 7 retail locations intentionally localizes as much of its sourcing as possible by going with local food manufacturers when the ingredient itself cannot be grown locally, for example cardamon and other spices are imported whole and ground locally.

Interviewees who endorse this value are more price flexible when sourcing locally, “[l]ocal is more expensive, but it is local. I think that if you can support them, you can support them.” Often price flexibility with local products is combined with price flexibility for high quality. One interviewee comments, after explaining that her bakery’s sourcing priority is first quality and second local, “it’s



*Figure 9: Lilla Harrie brand flour. Lilla Harrie is the oldest, continuous flour mill in Skåne. The largest bakery in this study supplies all its flour from this mill, which is an expression of both the geographic definition of local and the cultural definition of local. This flour brand is a living relic of Skåne’s foodscape heritage.*

not that price is a big thing” then continues to explain that the owner would never sacrifice quality and local in exchange for lowering costs, “that would never happen because it’s not his thing.” Even price sensitive interviewees still opt for local alternatives if the price is acceptable.

Interviewees also express pride in communicating that they source local products. Many interviewees display the local brands that they carry, “the bags are quite visible... I think we have small sign. You see that sign there?” Another way interviewees communicate which local brands they carry is through talking directly with customers either in the store, “[it’s] more communicative to say that this bread comes from that guy, that farm, that place” or through social media, “I do campaigns on social media.” Displaying which products are local is also a marketing technique because customers also want to support local brands, “If you want to support them, you also want to show them. And if it’s a part of your brand to be sourcing local products and doing that, having that sort of narrative [for] your restaurant, there are also gains for you to show that you are doing it.” Not only do interviewees buy local, they want to be seen buying local.

One of the immigrant interviewees expresses both internal motivation for



*Figure 10: Sign advertising Solde brand coffee. Restaurants and cafes in Malmö proclaim that they carry local brands either by displaying the product itself or by including signage. This sign hangs above this bakery’s espresso machine.*

preferring to source local products and market culture pressure to source local and regional products,

“I like to support local, if I can support local economics, I will do it. If I can support, I don’t know, Skånska economic, I’ll do it. I live here for so long that it’s my main reason. Whenever I’m baking, I’m also trying to bake from products that come from Sweden as well... when I’m shopping, then I’m looking for either origins from Sweden or things like that...I think it depends what are we talking about. Obviously if I would have a farm in Malmö where I could get all my ingredients, that would be ideal. And I would count that as local. Skåne in general, I don’t consider it, what I consider getting coffee from Solde, that I consider local. When it comes to Skåne, well it’s a little bit too big. I still do that because I know that Skånish people, they have very firm, well Skånish people are Skånish people. That’s where they are. That’s who they are. That’s their identity, their firm identity. A lot of companies here are very proud that, yep, we support this particular region. Then I would just think, instead of local just regional. So yeah, if I can do that regional level instead of the smaller one... Is it local? I don’t know. It’s an extremely general question. I can’t really tell.”

This interview excerpt is particularly demonstrative for the malleable nature of what constitutes local. Local is a combination of geographical distinction, product type, culture, and economic impact. Produce should be grown in Malmö to be local. Dry baking goods should be from Sweden, even if it does not meet the interviewee’s strictest definition of local. As many products as possible should be from Skåne to satisfy his customers’ definition of local. Coffee roasted in Malmö counts as local because it is part of the local food economy even though the raw coffee beans are sourced from across the world.

One bakery interviewee who prioritizes sourcing certified organic products



Figure 11: Chalkboard coffee menu. In addition to prominently displaying the Lilla Kafferosteriet products, this café leaves customers no doubt about where it sources roasted coffee. The bottom of the sign reads "med bönor från Lilla Kafferosteriet" (with beans from Lilla Kafferosteriet).

before sourcing locally does so for environmental purposes, “[b]ecause the transport, that has been proven many lifecycle analysis reports that transports is very small. Production, that’s where the impact will be. So a little transport extra doesn’t change.” However, this interviewee does localize as many products as possible without violating his personal organic certification standard in order to support the local food economy.

The youngest interviewee who is the only representative of Generation Z in this study rejects sourcing locally as a strategy because of his experience with perceived hypocrisy,

“When you see them deliver to a place, that means if it’s a farm, Swedish farm, it has gone to their warehouse and then out to the restaurant. That means an extra trip somewhere, somehow. And if that farm doesn’t have a washing station, Martin & Servera [food distributor] doesn’t have a washing station, that means ... they are sending to a washing station first, then maybe back the farm, and then to Martin & Servera...You can say that it’s local, and people say that it is local, but it’s not local.”

This shows that his definition of local is tied to supply chain distance and not to economic flows. This interviewee expressed both feeling of belonging in the Malmö community along with having a global, urban identity, specifically listing New York, London, and Amsterdam as cultural influences, possibly strengthened



Figure 12: Coffee self-serve station. The brewed coffee station in this bakery displays the product brand on their coffee turbine. Mästers is one of Solde's four house blends.

through social media interaction. Further research is needed to see how other Malmö Generation Z do or do not continue to embody this value.

Relational work can both enhance or replace this value. One bakery interviewee compares how he prefers working with a local supplier to a Stockholm supplier using examples of relational work,

“We’ve been pretty loyal with Solde, I must say, and I feel it’s working good. I like that they are close and that we don’t get like a seller on the phone, we get the guys owning and roasting. We talk with Drop Coffee and we get these sales people. It’s not as nice, I think. And also, they [Solde] are in the same city. It’s just good. They come by themselves, we chat.”

In this excerpt, we see the interviewee conflating local with relational work. He attributes Solde’s personal relationship building tactics to their proximity, and it enhances his appreciation of the value local.

Often relational work and the value local go hand-in-hand. However, the value local relates to the brands and products, whereas relational work refers to the people involved with the brand. Cafes can have a relationship with a locally-based brand representative even if the brand itself is not local.

A coffee shop interviewee recounted an example of how relational work by a local distributor for an Italian brand overcame the value local. The interviewee currently sources two coffee brands, a local brand for filter coffee and an Italian brand for his espresso machine. I asked him that if a local roastery could provide an espresso roast that matches the quality of the Italian brand, would he switch? He replied, “I think I would keep that [Italian] brand because the supplier is a really good guy. I love him.” The relationship with the Italian brand’s regional distributor has overcome this interviewee’s commitment to local, even though in other products this interviewee expresses the value local.

Overall, interviewees who endorse the local value express emotional satisfaction with supporting local brands and feelings of community inclusion, “I like buying local because it’s like more family when you talk to them,...I like buying it.” They also express moral satisfaction, “[we] are in the same city. It’s just good.” While there were tangible benefits to sourcing locally, such as supplier responsiveness, short lead times, and marketing opportunities, the predominant rewards for conforming to this value are emotional satisfaction and feeling connected to the community.

### 5.1.3 Openness

At first glance, this value does not appear to be of particular note, as one interviewee himself acknowledges, “[E]verybody’s welcome. But that’s obvious. I don’t, that’s not a special value.” However, the frequency that interviewees mention



this value either directly or indirectly makes it apparent that this value should be included in the results. This value manifests in three ways, which I combine into one behavioral grouping called ‘inclusion and integration’: encouraging a diverse customer demographic base; opposing concepts of exclusivity; and allowing migrants and immigrants to become part of the local community.

Some interviewees emphasize they want to cultivate a diverse customer base, “young and old, we want all different backgrounds, like everyone should come here... And we have all types of people here. We are super proud of that and we love that.” While others positively describe an existing diverse customer base, “[a] lot of international people. It’s more, not the majority, but it’s kind of a mixed 50/50 nowadays. It’s fun!” Many interviewees specifically mention international patronage, “I would say most of my customers are international, almost exclusively. I think I speak English 90% of the day” and “[t]here’s a lot of people from other countries, I don’t know where, but there’s a lot of English in the bar.” Not only is the local community itself diverse, but tourists and other nonlocal visitors are also encouraged to partake in the local food community.

The second manifestation relates to taste and style. These cafes are serving specialty coffee, but wanted to clarify that they do not subscribe to the perceived pretentiousness of the Specialty Coffee Movement,

“...back then, it was slightly pretentious. You can compare it with wine places, when you don’t know that wine, ‘Well I’m not going to explain it to you.’ You know, people can be rude. And I don’t like this. That’s why I’m trying to create an environment where you can casually talk, or just get an advice if you want to listen. If you don’t, you do you. You brew it however you want. Like, it’s your things. But yeah, I think that not being pretentious about the coffee is something that everyone needs.”

This interview excerpt shows an openness to customer knowledge and experience, or lack thereof. It also shows a disdain for ingroup clique formation around expertise, preferring instead to be open and inclusive.

Another interviewee made a point to clarify that, “[w]e are not a hipster café,” associating the Hipster Movement with snobbery. Some interviewees paired this anti-pretentious, anti-snobbery sentiment with Malmö’s blue-collar heritage, “it’s a working city. Malmö has always been.” This brings in elements of class inclusivity and reinforces a notion that you do not need to have elite status to enjoy good quality food and beverage.

That the majority of the interviewees either migrated or immigrated to Malmö also provides supporting evidence that openness is a shared cultural value. Many of the interviewees note how welcomed they felt and how easeful it was to join the Malmö community, as one migrant described “It’s easy to move here. It’s [a] welcoming city. Nice to get into the community. Easy to get into the community.” One immigrant who previously lived in Stockholm and Kalmar explained that he chose to move to Malmö because he felt more cultural affinity, “It’s why I chose

Malmö when I decided to move.” However, not all immigrants share the same feeling. Another immigrant in this study arrived in Malmö 6 year ago and expressed after the recording had finished that he has difficulty making local friends, that all his friends are other internationals. Whether or not Malmö has successfully welcomed and integrated the most recent waves of immigration is beyond the scope of this study. The importance of this value is that this is how members of this community want to be, or want to be perceived, whether or not they have achieved it.

#### 5.1.4 Trust

The immediate expression of this value was how easily interviewees agree to be interviewed and how openly they answer interview questions. Interviewees who exhibit strong signs of cultural embeddedness treated me with more trust during the interview. I measure cultural embeddedness by how long they have lived in Malmö and how closely aligned they are with the other values. Indeed, alignment with this value is itself a measure of cultural embeddedness. Not every café or restaurant owner I approached agreed to be interviewed, however, cold outreach recruitment had a 57% success rate. Two additional café/restaurant managers agreed to be interviewed, but scheduling conflicts did not permit the interview to occur, bringing the acceptance rate up to 65%.

Trust and relational work go hand in hand in this community. It is difficult at times to distinguish if trust is an inherent state, or if it is intentionally developed through the course of a relationship. That so many interviewees agreed to be interviewed via cold outreach—including through email—before having a relationship with me shows that they have a high degree of inherent trust. Interviewees also did not need much “warm-up” time to begin comfortably answering questions, which is a reflection of both trust and openness. Due to my own experience in this community, I determine that trust is both a value and the result of relational work.

The two behaviors that emerge related to trust are collaboration and not validating the business practice claims of suppliers. Both of these behaviors represent rational decision-making choices. Collaborating with suppliers increases business opportunities for both and also offers opportunities to build mutual resilience during market disruption. One interviewee describes in detail collaborating with his coffee supplier to co-host events, borrowing his supplier’s storage space, and developing new products together. This shows a high degree of mutual trust and relational work. Another interviewee describes collaborating with her supplier to find mutually beneficial tactics for both businesses to survive disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, “How can we survive during this

[pandemic], and what do you do, and how can we help each other?” Even if trust is the result of relational work, having trust is valued.

The second behavior, not investigating the supplier, increases supplier management efficiency. Many interviewees express not having time to validate all their suppliers’ business practices. Instead, they trust their suppliers to behave in accordance with the interviewees’ concepts of good business practice, “these are roasteries that I trust do it well, which means I don’t have to go into every single coffee and scrutinize it and see where does it come from, because I’m fairly certain all of the roasteries do their job in this.” One interviewee describes supplier trust as outsourcing supply chain integrity to his suppliers so that he does not have to consciously pay attention to it, which is an expression of sourcing efficiency,

“I mean that is important, but again, I don’t even talk about it, because I understand what you are saying. I have it in back of my mind. I know these companies that I’m working with, they are responsible in that way. Solde, I know that they are good. If asked, they will give me the whole way of the bean to their firm... I don’t have to care because I’m choosing roasters that care.”

This shows that not only does the interviewee express this value, but he expects his local suppliers to also express this value. Sharing supply chain transparency is an act of vulnerability because it in essence is a how-to manual for how to copy the business model. Sharing this level of business operational information is an act of trust on behalf of the supplier. This interviewee trusts that his coffee supplier will provide detailed supply chain transparency if he asks for validation, therefore he no longer needs to validate their practices.

Often interviewees are unable to clearly articulate exactly what constitutes good business practices. Instead they relying on intuition to decide what is ‘good’, just as many were unable to clearly articulate what makes good quality. “We do trust them, but of course, it’s the same thing I think... We want the whole process to be a good one. We trust Solde with that, so it’s like everything’s in their hands when it comes to that part.” When interviewees lost trust in a supplier, it is because they heard from the news or by word-of-mouth that the supplier had participated in ‘bad’ business practices, not because they specifically investigated the supplier. This became particularly apparent when discussing the supplier Oatly. Interviewees became aware of Oatly’s market violation through the news or because a customer brought it to their attention. In short, they rely on community reputation to inform them if a supplier is untrustworthy.

I experienced this expression of trust while conducting these interviews. No one asked me to validate my status as a graduate student. I almost did not recognize the impact of trust on this community because it was immediately present with nearly every interaction during this study. It was only when I experienced distrust with the last two interviewees that I was able to recognize the general expression of trust throughout this community. One interviewee asked to see my questions in advance,

and another declined to be audio recorded. I found these experiences unexpected and slightly jarring because I had become accustomed to being trusted. To further compare this community to another community, during a market study I conducted in the United States in 2011, I was required to show my student ID as proof that I was actually conducting university research. Even after showing this evidence, the American interviewees were recalcitrant and hard to interview. Juxtaposing this previous experience in the United States with my current experience in Malmö further supports that trust is a market culture value in this community.

### 5.1.5 Company Size

The majority of the interviewees express the company size value in language related to ethics and morality. Large companies are viewed as immoral or practicing bad business practices to such an extent that calling a company big is itself a pejorative, “the big company. Big, bad company.” Small companies, in contrast, are viewed as ethical or virtuous. Interviewees who can easily express their reasons for following other market values are less fluid at expressing this value, often needing to pause and think before giving a reply. This suggests that this value is taken for granted without giving reflection or analysis. Interviewees expect me to already understand why big companies are bad and small companies are good without giving further explanation.

One interviewee explains this value with the following line of logic, “letting businesses stay small, meaning, not letting them stay small, but when it’s a, if everyone is getting paid enough, and no one is getting taken advantage of, it’s hard for businesses to grow too much.” This interviewee shows the belief that if a business behaves ethically, it cannot grow large, therefore large businesses are by definition unethical. Also, this normally articulate interviewee stumbles over his own words while trying to express the logic behind this value, further demonstrating that it is difficult to explain or even understand himself why he holds this value. Interviewees describe feelings of camaraderie with other small-sized businesses even in the absence of a relationship, “I’m a small business owner and I just think that is good. I just like, I think we should have many small business owners.” These two quotes frame the dichotomy: big is bad, small is good.

This value leads to preferential purchasing, both in avoiding products from large companies and favoring products from small companies. One interviewee is a strict adherent to this value, “Coca-Cola is too big, and we don’t have them.” She will not carry products from companies or brands she deems too large. Another interviewee who is less strict expresses resignation at carrying products from MNCs, “I assume I have, I don’t know, but probably I have products owned by Nestlé for example. Another company that causes lots of bad things in the third

world...” Even as this interviewee concedes that he carries a brand that violates this market value, he also expresses feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment at having to do so. According to Elster (1989), this emotional response is a form of internal sanction for violating this market value.

Business growth is permissible as long as the owner is not growth-minded,

“when mom started it 11 years ago, she told me like, okay I need to get 1000 krona (SEK) each day to just make this go around. Like, not win anything out of it, no money, and she did it just for fun. Then we grew quite quick, so we had to think in another way, but we never wanted to lose that, that way of thinking.”

The interviewee wants to make sure I understand that their business growth was unintentional.

One interviewee expresses the conundrum between conforming to various Malmö market values while also trying to grow a company,

“...if you just want to support local brands or Swedish brands, you also have to realize the Swedish market is not that big. You have to outgrow it, or you have to just say that, okay, I’m behind this. But then you’re just stagnating, and do you want to do that? It’s a very hard way to maneuver.”

The local market is not large enough itself to support a big company. For a company to grow, it must outgrow the Swedish market, which jeopardizes its local status. If a company wants to remain a part of the Malmö market community, it must stay small enough to fit in the market community.

### 5.1.6 Ownership Structure

In one interpretation, this is another hygiene factor. A supplier will be considered if their ownership structure conforms with the market’s concept of acceptable investors. However, the emotional reaction to companies who conform with this value is modestly positive if not neutral. The emotional reaction to companies and brands that violate this value is strong, and the resulting behavior is to boycott the brand. This goes beyond preferential purchasing, which is primarily expressed as an individual decision, and moves into collective community action. This value is not equally applied to all suppliers. It is strongly applied to companies who are already culturally embedded in the Malmö market culture and less strongly or not at all applied to outside companies.

As Collins (1981) describes, people generally are only conscious that a behavioral norm exists when it is broken. This is the case for this market value and its associated behavior. The interviewees became aware of this market value when Oatly, a locally founded oat beverage manufacturer, violated this value by accepting a USD \$200 million investment from the investment firm Blackstone (Blackstone 2020). Before the investment, Oatly was a welcomed member of the Malmö market culture, receiving the support and benefits conveyed by that

inclusion. However, accepting Blackstone's minority investment was received as such a large market value violation that Oatly was expelled from the community. All but one of the interviewees was aware of the 'Oatly scandal' and six intentionally stopped carrying Oatly. They cite this scandal as the reason for changing suppliers.

None of the interviewees give specific details about the investment other than it had happened. When asked for details, one interviewee replies, "it's hard to speak about something if you don't know about it." Interviewees became aware of the market violation through news media and word-of-mouth, "it's in all the news." Some interviewees recount dropping Oatly as a supplier immediately while others describe feeling pressure from employees and customers.

This was the only value that interviewees describe feeling external pressure from customers and employees in their sourcing decisions. Noting the difference between internal decisions and external pressure is important, because many of the values could be shared throughout the Skåne region or Sweden, but this value seems to be specific to Malmö. Interviewees from Malmö show the strongest emotional reaction to the scandal and do not need external pressure to boycott the brand. Interviewees who migrated from other regions of Sweden either express less emotion, or describe compliance with the Oatly boycott due to community pressure. One interviewee originally from Gothenburg admits that she "wasn't that into it" meaning the Oatly scandal uproar. Another interviewee from Staffenstorp, a neighboring commune north of Malmö, comments, "Yeah, I know about Oatly." He then implies through dismissive one word answers that the scandal was not important to him.

The following interview excerpt by the same interviewee from Gothenburg quoted above is an example of how one business owner complied with the Oatly boycott, not out of internal motivation, but by a combination of community pressure and relational work:

"...we changed to Oddly instead of Oatly. That was also because it was a big thing, and for us we also took stand that we didn't want to use the Oatly... I remember because we also have customers coming in. You also have customers, they ask about it, and then you also decided because then we have a lot of people working here. I wasn't that into it, looking for it. But I was also having people that work here, yeah, they wanted us to take a stand for it. They were more into it and reading about it. And then, my boss said, yeah, so we stopped."

In this excerpt, the speaker is a bakery supervisor commenting on the decision process of her boss, the owner. The owner is from Lund Municipality, which neighbors Malmö to the northeast. What we see in this excerpt is that neither the owner nor the supervisor, the two people who have the power to make supplier decisions, care about the Oatly market violation. However, the supervisor felt pressure from customers (community pressure) to switch brands, and the owner

decided to switch brands in an intentional effort to maintain and improve the relationship with his Malmö-based employees.

Another interviewee provides an example of how relational work can overcome this market value. This interviewee is an immigrant to Sweden who previously lived and worked in Kalmar. He joined the Malmö community after the initial uproar of the Oatly scandal had begun to wain, thus in the interview he expresses feeling both culturally and temporally distanced from the event. He decided to source Oatly for his coffee shop as a combination of quality, his relationship with the Oatly salesperson, and the brand's marketing strategy, "Oatly... The Swedish rep, or I think she is the Swedish rep, I became friends with her... I like Oatly as a brand. They have the same expressive, sort of fun, urbane vibe that I like. Even if it's like, I know the controversies they've had a bit about somethings." He is aware of the Oatly market violation and does not care. According to him, his young-skewing customer base also does not care, or does not care enough to change consumption behavior.

Interviewees attribute their disapproval of Blackstone as an investor because either it violates other market values or they attribute Blackstone as having unethical business practices in general. "[Oatly] had the whole thing with the, I can't remember what it's called, but the big company. Big, bad company". Here the interviewee connects Blackstone with violating the company size value. A different interviewee explains why he dropped Oatly as a supplier, "Because we found out they had these investors that we didn't agree with. What they were doing in other investments they had, so we stopped using them." There is a transitive property where what Blackstone does in other investments is now attributed to Oatly, even if the actual Oatly operations have no connection to the rest of Blackstone's portfolio. The above quotes also show that most interviewees could not remember the name of the "big, bad investor". Frequently interviewees mistakenly called the investor Blackrock which is a different company, not the actual investor Blackstone.



Figure 13: Oatly "Malmö" children's chocolate oat milk product. Oatly released this limited edition chocolate milk box as part of their 3-year sponsorship agreement with Malmö FF, both the men's and women's football teams (Oatly 2023). This sponsorship and Malmö branded product suggests steps the brand is taking to heal its wounded relationship with the Malmö community.

Of the café and restaurant interviewees who made a conscious decision to boycott Oatly, 5 opted to carry Oddly Good instead, “this from Arla came up, the Oddly Good, and we like that one, so it was easy to change without thinking”. Arla, the owner of Oddly Good, is a food and beverage MNC with sales in over 140 countries, contract manufactures for brands such as Starbucks and Kraft Foods, and acknowledges including “problem ingredients” such as palm oil and cacao from West Africa (Arla Foods 2023: 17 & 20; Arla Foods 2019a; Arla Foods 2019b). Palm oil is connected with deforestation of critically at-risk ecosystems and even ‘certified sustainable’ palm oil, such as what Arla reports sourcing, is at best connected to reduced deforestation and often the beneficial effects of certification remain unclear (Carlson et al 2017; Vijay et al 2016). The cacao industry in West Africa, specifically Ivory Coast and Ghana which together produce over 60% of global cacao, are under international investigation for child labor and forced labor (US Dept. of Labor 2022; US Dept. of Labor 2020). The interviewees give many reasons for why Blackstone is problematic, but every reason they provide also applies to Arla. The difference is Arla is 100% owned by European dairy farmers, with 25% owned by Swedish dairy farmers (Arla Foods 2023: 75). This shows that even though interviewees give different logical explanations for why they boycott Oatly, the underlying reason is the ownership structure.

An interviewee who switched from Oatly to Oddly Good shows awareness of the uneven application of this value in his own sourcing, “I assume I have, I don’t know, but probably I have products owned by Nestlé for example. Another company that causes lots of bad things in the third world and so. But, they don’t make a big thing out of being world saviors.” While he also has developed a logical reason for why he boycotts Oatly, the perceived hypocrisy between Oatly’s brand messaging and investor strategy, this interviewee gives further insight into the application of this value. “Everybody loved [Oatly] and thought it was cool, but then everybody started to hate it and thinking they are assholes.” Oatly was a member of the Malmö market community. Accepting Blackstone’s investment was not only a violation of this market value, but a betrayal to the community that had supported Oatly and contributed to the company’s early success. Company’s that receive the benefits of cultural embeddedness are held to a higher community standard than outside firms.



## 5.2 Examining coffee roasteries' market cultural values alignment

This section of the results takes the framework established Table 2 and applies it to the three coffee roasteries profiled in this case study. The goal is to determine how closely these roasteries align with cultural values (shared beliefs) and behaviors which are both actions and signals of compliance with those values. This analysis is presented in Table 3 and explained in greater detail below.

Table 3: Malmö coffee roasteries adherence to market culture values and associated behaviors

	Lilla		Solde		Limhamns	
	Kafferosteriet		Kafferosteri		Kafferosteri	
	Value	Behavior	Value	Behavior	Value	Behavior
<b>Quality</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Local</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Openness</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Trust</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Company Size</b>	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ownership Structure</b>	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

### 5.2.1 Quality

All three roastery interviewees in this study attribute quality as the inspiration for why they became coffee roasters. These roasters follow a stricter definition of quality than do the other interviewees, relying less on intuition and more on demonstrable product characteristics such as specialty grade, bean size and color, origin, supply chain transparency, and roasting technique. They connect this strong value for quality with the Specialty Coffee Movement, and suggest that the movement was one of the influences that disseminated this value through Malmö's market culture, as the owner of Lilla Kafferosteriet explains "When you push the quality all the time, you train people of what quality is." Lilla Kafferosteriet opened in 2005 and Solde in 2010. Both owners described being part of the Specialty Coffee Movement before they opened their roasteries and introducing high quality coffee to Malmö. This timeline agrees with the industry expert's timeline of when

quality became a Malmö market value. Whether these two roasters were causal, concurrent, or inspired by the market's move toward quality is unclear, perhaps a mixture of all three.

The third roastery in this study, Limhamns Kafferosteri, was acquired by the current owner in 2021. Prior to purchasing the roastery, the interviewee was a loyal customer of the roastery which was then called Kvarnkaffe. When the previous owners signaled that they were going to sell the business, the current owner purchased the business in order to ensure his own supply of high-quality coffee,

“And then they all of a sudden say that, um, we’re not going to roast anymore, we’re going to just sell the green beans. And I start [to] get used to good coffee, so, shit, no coffee. So at the same time we actually find the money to actually buy the whole roastery with all the inventory and home pages and everything. That’s how we started actually.”

The Limhamns Kafferosteri’s (the business entity) commitment to quality is what allowed it to survive ownership transfer and restructuring.



*Figure 14: Bag of imported raw coffee. Coffee roasteries in Sweden import beans from all over the coffee growing world. This bag in Solde's storage room has a designation of origin from Minas Gerais, Brazil.*

## 5.2.2 Local

Due to the global nature of the coffee industry and the fact that coffee beans cannot be grown in Sweden, all the raw beans are sourced from global suppliers. However, the way these roasters engage with the value of local is in their branding, manufacturing, sales, and distribution structures. All the roasteries operate a roasting factory and a café located in Malmö municipality. Beyond their physical locations, each brand engages with the concept local differently, further demonstrating the flexible definition of this value.

Lilla Kafferosteriet's owner understands the importance of being local to this community, "I see today that the most added value is that it is local produced." He expressed this value through tying its branding with Malmö's heritage. In 2006 the roastery opened a coffee shop in Malmö's historic old town, "it's like an old house from the 15th century, so it is quite unique. So that's the first like what people get to understand when they get to know the brand." The focus on Malmö's heritage and culture extends to online brand communications. The website, social media, and even the founder's coffee podcast are all in Swedish, "I want to present the products in Sweden, like so that's why I started communicating in Swedish.



*Figure 15: Lilla Kafferosteriet's "old yellow house". Lilla Kafferosteriet's original roastery location was in an historic 15th century house in Malmö's Gamlastan (Old Town). The building still houses the brand's coffee shop and architecturally connects the brand to Malmö's heritage.*

Because it was a bit of this local, how can I create a local relationship with people living here.” Communicating in Swedish is a conscious choice done intentionally to reinforce that Lilla Kafferosteriet is not an international brand. The roastery’s webshop has international purchases, but the owner believes this is due to the brand’s local connection, not despite it:

“I would say like it’s very interested that people are bringing a memory back home. You went to a place where you had a nice experience. And then you want that memory with you at home. So I think that’s what people are trying to experience. “

His international customers are tourists who want to bring an authentic Malmö experience home with them, similar to what Sims (2009) and Rytönen et al (2018) describe in their studies on localized food tourism. The difference is that Lilla Kafferosteriet’s tourist customers are connecting to Malmö’s urban foodscape, not its rural landscape.

Lilla Kafferosteriet also engages in purchasing locally produced products for sale in its flagship café. While the roastery and the café are independently registered legal entities, in the eyes of the consumer these two businesses are the same brand owned by the same person. Therefore, economic behaviors in the café reflect on the roastery. In its café, Lilla Kafferosteriet serves Malmö based Hyllie Bryggeri, a local microbrewery, and the baked goods produced by one of the bakeries interviewed in this study.

Solde uses relational work to reinforce its local status. The owners of Solde have structured interpersonal connections into their supply chain. Every week, one of the three owners personally delivers coffee to their B2B customers,

“For our wholesale customers, cafés and customers, we are driving out each and every week ourselves with our catty. That’s also our business. The brand, Solde, the business model is really, really, locally. It’s support your local style.”

Solde’s customers respond strongly to this strategy. One bakery interviewee recounts this interaction, “they come here and deliver the coffee and take a cup of coffee with us.” She describes conversation with the Solde owners during these deliveries as a mixture of business and general community topics, more like visiting a friend than a product delivery. The result is strong customer loyalty, “They are like family to us, and [we] should never leave them.” This strategy requires a high



*Figure 16: Local beer. Hyllie Bryggeri is a Malmö based microbrewery. This photo is of a product display in Lilla Kafferosteriet’s café.*



Figure 17: Solde house blends. Solde personifies its house blends through product characters that reinforce the company's relationship-based branding.

level of time and effort investment, and is only feasible on a local scale. Solde reinforces the personal relationship elements of the brand further through its packaging. Solde creates a character for each blend that personifies the product so that customers not only have a relationship with the brand and owners, but also with the product itself.

Limhamns Kafferosteri expresses the value local through participation in community activities, collaborating with other local food and beverage manufacturers, and participating in a hybrid of conventional and alternative food networks. The owner of Limhamns Kafferostri's definition of local is specifically focused on the Limhamn district within Malmö municipality, and that is where he focuses the brand's local engagement—even renaming the company after the district. Participation in local cultural and community events, such as Jul markets and the Limhamn summer community second-hand sale are tactics common for micro-sized craft producers, but Limhamns Kafferosteri uses these events to embed its brand identity with the local community's identity,

“We live here ourselves. We are also part of the community ourselves. And that's also one of the, we shall say, benefit. We are part of the local community, that's why also people know who we are.”

When speaking with the owner, it is clear that his own personal identity is also embedded in the local community.

Limhamns Kafferosteri's owner uses relational work to support the local value differently than Solde in that here the goal of relational work is to foster collaboration with other local F&B manufacturers rather than to reinforce sales channel relationships. Limhamns Kafferosteri is part of the Limhamn economic community where, "a lot of companies going together in small groups, working together, trying to figure out how we could cooperate." The owner of Limhamn's Kafferosteri describes various collaborative relationships with other local small manufacturers such as sharing resources and equipment that intertwines their production operations with other business members of the local food network, further embedding them in the community. Beyond buying local, Limhamns Kafferosteri has a business model of helping build other local food businesses in a rising tide floats all boats strategy—and it is a strategy. This owner unselfconsciously blends brand building and local food community building.

Unlike the other two roasteries in this study, Limhamns Rosteri participates in formalized alternative food networks. The company itself began as part of a Reko-ring (community driven direct sales, see Bååth *forthcoming*), and continues to maintain ties to AFNs even as it expands into hybrid sales channels such as B2B wholesales and webshop. AFNs, which are inherently local in their nature, further reinforces this roastery's expression of local.

### 5.2.3 Openness

All three Malmö roasteries were welcoming and accommodating to be interviewed by me, which is an expression of openness. In comparison, Love Coffee, a Lund based coffee roastery declined to be interviewed even with a warm introduction via mutual contacts. The emotional tenor of the interviews was welcoming. The owners of Solde and Limhamns Kafferosteri are migrants to Malmö and expressed feeling accepted and included by the local community.

The owner of Lilla Kafferosteriet connects the value of openness with tolerance and acceptance, not only in the Malmö community, but with his global suppliers, "We are very strong individuals and to take that in consideration of what different people like, or how people would like to live their lives, and be respectful to each other." Of the three roasteries, Lilla Kafferosteriet shows the most responsiveness to consumer feedback on brand design, which allows his customers to participate in the company's development and include them in the brand identity.

Solde expresses openness in how collegial the owners are with other coffee roasteries throughout the Nordic region. The owner interviewed in this study also works part-time in another café included in this study where he promotes and sells other coffee brands besides Solde, "he has such a big network in the coffee business... I feel like he is just an open book. He's, maybe he's too positive. 'Yes, this is such a great roastery, you should order from them, yes, yes, yes.'" Solde does

not let competition impede being open and inclusive to other participants in the coffee roasting industry.

Limhamns Rosteri in particular explains that openness is an intentional part of his business strategy,

“If you are open to people coming and doing a thesis like you are and so on, the same thing we have a lot of coming from normal school... We get a lot of school students... that is part of building the local community. If you help those ones, they say ‘ah, they helped us’... You never know where your revenue is going to come from. And as we are a young company, we need to see that we actually have contacts all the way. And that’s better to be open and let people in instead of closing the door.”

He not only expresses this value, but is aware of it and intentionally incorporates into his economic behavior. This is interesting to note since as Collins (1981) says, often people are unaware of the beliefs and values that influence their behavior. This owner shows how awareness of this community’s culturally embedded values and uses this knowledge to inform his business strategy. He also combines openness with other market values, specifically local.

#### 5.2.4 Trust

Assessing the roastery owner’s degree of trust is difficult. All three expressed a high degree of transparency with their operations and opinions during the interviews, from which I infer a complementing expression of trust. During the interviews we discussed opinions, beliefs, and aspects of their identities which implies comfort and trust. A distrustful interviewee would not give thorough replies, which the roastery owners did with ease. All three allowed me into their production facilities and allowed me to observe and even participate in the roasting process. In addition to the interviewees’ behavior toward me, Limhamns Kafferosteri’s strategy of collaboration with fellow F&B manufacturers shows a high degree of trust. The roastery shares its storage space and equipment with other manufacturers.

These roasteries also served as an example of receiving trust in this community. Throughout all the interviews were multiple examples of interviewees expressing trust for the three roasteries in this study. The primary expression of this trust is not investigating the roasteries’ supply chain, “these are roasteries that I trust do it well, which means I don’t have to go into every single coffee and scrutinize it and see where does it come from, because I’m fairly certain all of the roasteries do their job in this.” This high degree of trust increases the economic efficiency of these B2B relationships because the roasteries do not need to invest relational work into building trust—specifically about their supply chain practices—and the customers do not need to spend business hours investigating the roasteries’ business practices.

While this value may create vulnerability to deception, when it works it seems to work well.

### 5.2.5 Company Size

This value is where the roasteries begin to show non-conformity with value adherence. The name Lilla Kafferosteriet means ‘the little coffee roastery’. During the interview, the owner expressed belief in this value. When asked directly if he is growth motivated,

“No. In the beginning I was trying to look at my motivation. Would I like to try to get more money? No. I have so much fun working with this product. I meet so many people and so many cultures, so it’s more of a lifestyle. I don’t have the eager of getting more money.”

However, the roastery’s own commercial success is in jeopardy of becoming too big by Malmö market standards. While Lilla Kafferosteriet is technically still a small enterprise according to the European Commission’s definition of SMEs (2022), what community members see is a three-story coffee shop and product sales in supermarkets, “Lilla has a really big coffee shop that they need to keep alive.” Lilla Kafferosteriet products are available through their café, online store, grocery retail, institutional catering services, and vending machines. Here the owner’s value of openness might be conflicting with the company size value, “I think it is important as a small roastery to be open for every sales channel to provide.” However, the market perception connects supermarkets with mass-market brands. “Lilla Kafferosteriet is not a small company anymore. He is big. He is now having the wrong name, I would say. You can buy his coffee in all ICA in Sweden.” Lilla Kafferosteriet is pushing against the limits of this market value, and the community is paying attention. When mentioning Lilla Kafferosteriet to other Malmö residents, they commonly describe the roastery as ‘big’, which in this community is pejorative. At the moment community sanctions are limited to a raised eyebrow or a pun on the roastery’s name, which aligns with the lighter end of the community sanctions described by Elster (1989). The data is unclear whether existing customer support is impacted.

Solde is the inverse of Lilla Kafferosteriet. Ideologically, the owners have no problem with growing or becoming a large company, “I have absolutely been inspiring of the American style of expand.” During the interview, this Solde owner acknowledged that this opinion is counter the prevailing belief in the Malmö community. However, for their own business they want to keep it small enough that the three owners can run it on their own while maintaining close relationships with their customers. The brand does not engage in direct marketing, and instead, “are 100% organically growing model. So, one happy customer at a time.” The main reason for slow growth and keeping the business small is that the three owners prioritize lifestyle, “We have not been working fulltime, none of us, since the start.



So we are working quite few hours.” Growing a bigger business means more work, which leaves less time for other lifestyle pursuits. While Solde does not ideologically agree with this value, they do not have a growth mindset for other personal motivations.

Limhamns Kafferosteri needs to grow to survive, “Of course we want to grow, we need to grow. We need to more or less double our revenue. But once we manage to double our revenue, we’re going to have two really nice salaries.” Their growth goal is to have enough income to support full-time salaries for the husband-and-wife ownership team, but not more. “We still want to keep it not too big, because if you grow too much then the quality’s going to drop.” He connects growing too much with violating other Malmö market cultural values, once again displaying a high degree of cultural value awareness.

## 5.2.6 Ownership Structure

All three of the roasteries are wholly independently owned. Lilla Kafferosteriet’s owner is proud that he built his roastery himself, “I don’t have any investors. I’m building with my own money. The money that I provide I get back to the company.” Of the three roasteries, Lilla Kafferosteriet has the most potential for outside investors or acquisition, but independent ownership is part of the owner’s identity as an entrepreneur. Limhamns Kafferosteri does not explicitly say that they do not want investors, but when describing the company’s goals and strategies, it is clear that remaining embedded in the Limhamn local community is a top priority for the brand and for the owners personally. Accepting outside investors could mean jeopardizing not only this value, but all the market values.

Solde’s owner connects independent ownership with self-autonomy rather than a specific ownership structure value, “We don’t want any investors. We want to have total control ourselves. Three owners pretty much.” Taking on outside investors would mean accepting outside oversight, which none of the owners want. However, this is motivated by lifestyle goals, not a belief that outside investment itself is wrong. Notably, Solde sources Oatly products for its café and



Figure 18: Barista milks. These are the three milk and milk alternative products used at Solde's café in Malmö. The middle product is Oatly's barista oat milk. It is interesting to see that the Oatly brand logo is turned away from customers, which is probably for the barista's convenience, but also poetic given the community disapproval of this brand.

thinks well of the brand, “I’ve been following Oatly since the start as a company. I’m really business oriented as well. I like Oatly. I have no problem with [the Blackstone] history and stuff like that.” Again, Solde shows ideological misalignment with the Malmö market, yet the brand’s behavior is still compliant with market expectations.

## 6. Discussion

In this community, values are collectively held, but individually interpreted. Values exhibit variation due to reproducibility and repeatability.<sup>3</sup> In context of defining values, reproducibility means the interpretation or meaning of a value will be different person-to-person. Repeatability means that the same person will give different definitions for the same value. For example, the value quality seems subject to variation due to reproducibility; each participant has their own estimation of what is good quality (variation), however, each participant is consistent within that estimation. The value local not only is subject to variation due to reproducibility, but also repeatability; the same interview participant will give different and conflicting interpretations of what it means to be local.

This makes it difficult to define what each value means, because it does not have a clear definition. However, the behaviors influenced by these values do show consistency among the interview participants, whether the participant agrees with the value or not. This conforms with both Thomas & Thomas (1928) and Zukkin & DiMaggio (1990; see Dequech 2003) in that the values of the people around an individual, i.e. the community, will influence that individual's behavior. Many of these culturally embedded economic behaviors directly benefit small, local F&B producers.

Aligning with cultural values is connected with the expression of internal rewards, such as positive emotions and feeling of community solidarity. The owner of Lilla Kafferosteriet is proud that his company is 100% self-funded. By supporting other members of the local community, the owner of Limhamns Kafferosteri feels more strongly connected to his community. Misalignment with values can foster feelings of separation. The owner of Solde interviewed in this study expressed that his views of business growth and entrepreneurship made him culturally distinct from the overall Malmö community.

Conforming with community behaviors that correspond to these values is connected with expressions of external rewards, such as community support and customer loyalty. Even though Solde does not agree with the company size or

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<sup>3</sup> Variation due to reproducibility and repeatability are concepts borrowed from SixSigma quality control systems for operations management (Pan 2006).

ownership structure values, because Solde is a small, independently owned company, the community supports them. Not conforming with these behaviors meets community disapproval, even if the one not conforming agrees with the underlying value. Lilla Kafferostriet is beginning to receive disapproval for being too big. The owner makes several references to being a “small” company during the interview, but the community disagrees. This an example of the Thomas Theorem at play. According to the European Commission (2022), Lilla Kafferosteriet is a small-scale enterprise, but since the community perceives it as being big, it receives the consequences of being big even if those consequences are relatively minor.

However, it seems only community members who believe in the value will enact sanctions against a company that violates the associated behaviors. For example, Solde does not share the ownership structure value, and they continue to carry Oatly products. Another interviewee who shows resignation at carrying large brands such as Nestlé is glad to carry Lilla Kafferosteriet because it is local with no reference to company scale.

This interplay between agreeing with the value and conforming to the behavior shows that there is both internal cultural alignment (value) and external cultural alignment (behavior), but only external cultural alignment has economic benefits for small businesses in this community. Rewards for external cultural alignment means receiving the beneficial results of the value-based behaviors listed in Table 2.

All three roasteries receive the benefits of external cultural alignment. One interviewee recounts choosing his coffee supplier, “I feel there’s really two options. You can go with Lilla Kafferosteriet or Solde, and it happened to be Lilla Kafferosteriet. It might as well have been Solde.” This café owner does not even consider extra-community coffee suppliers as potential options. Limhamns Kafferosteri was not open when this café owner was choosing suppliers, and he may not be aware the brand exists.

Relational work can amplify the benefits of external cultural alignment, or can be used to mitigate the negative effects of misalignment. Currently I mainly find examples of the three roasteries using relational work to amplify alignment. Lilla Kafferosteriet’s owner recounted using relational work in the past to overcome misalignment when quality was not a cultural value. He had to train consumers to appreciate specialty coffee in order for them to prefer his product over commodity coffee through tastings and other coffee education activities. Now that quality is a market value, this type of relational work is less necessary. Perhaps this early investment in relational work is helping insulate Lilla Kafferosteriet from community sanctions over its size that could impact sales. At the moment, the sanctions are reserved to puns and raised eyebrows.

Limhamns Kafferosteri appears to engage in the most relational work and Lilla Kafferosteriet the least, with Solde in the middle. This could relate to the companies' economic position or to how well established they are in the community. Lilla Kafferosteriet is the largest of the three roasteries by product volume, and all three roasteries acknowledge that it is the most profitable. Perhaps the potential benefits of engaging in relational work are not worth the time and effort required to do it. While Solde engages in regular relational work with its existing B2B customers, it does not expend much effort in using relational work to acquire new B2B customers. Limhamns Kafferosteriet has the most precarious economic situation, and the owner described using relational work to drive customer loyalty while also developing new business opportunities. For Limhamns Kafferosteri, the benefit of acquiring one new B2B customer is much greater proportionally than for Lilla Kafferosteriet or Solde.

The three roasteries represent small companies in the early, middle, and late stages of business development with relation to stable revenue turnover, company size, and reputation. It appears that external cultural alignment in this community best advantages early and middle stage companies, and encourages companies to remain in the middle stage. The typical progression of late-stage development (i.e. becoming a middle-sized enterprise, territory expansion, and receiving outside investment) can cause a brand to be ejected from the community as happened to Oatly. The community both nurtures small F&B manufacturers, but also constrains them. If entrepreneurs have no ambition to outgrow these constraints, the Malmö community is a supportive and fertile environment to succeed. If entrepreneurs do have goals to grow, take on outside investors, and go global, they should be aware that they will lose Malmö community support. This furthers the assertion that developing social capital through external cultural alignment and relational work is a source of economic resilience available to small F&B manufacturers which is unavailable to larger firms. This allows small brands to compete with MNCs in a conventional or hybrid market.

This is interesting, because the study by Jia et al (2020) shows the connection between social capital and resilience, but not specifically how to cultivate that social capital. This study of the Malmö local food community shows the importance of external cultural alignment. Company cultural alignment must be perceived by other members of the community to have any beneficial effect. This suggests that awareness of market cultural values and intentional pursuit of these values in a visible way is a means for small F&B companies to engage social capital in their business model.

How can a business recover if it finds itself in violation of a market cultural value, such as is the case with Lilla Kafferosteriet and the value company size? This is where relational work comes to play. Engaging in relational work with

high value customers, either high value because of their purchase volume or because of their influence in the community, can help insulate a brand from accidental market cultural value violations. This is a social capital insurance policy that is paid for by investing time. Relational work can also be a tool for repairing relationships after a cultural value violation has occurred.

Beyond the interpersonal nature of relational work, more traditional public relations work can also help in finding ways to publicly express commitment to remaining embedded in this community. As mentioned above, cultural embeddedness through cultural value alignment must be perceived to be effective—so incorporating alignment with these values into customer communications is important. It seems that Lilla Kafferosteriet is already doing this. Originally their website was bilingual Swedish/English. The owner made a choice to change the company's customer communications to only Swedish specifically to reinforce the community cultural value of local. If the owner of Lilla Kafferosteriet wants to take this further, he could find ways of expressing local through product packaging or find other ways to express the values through product development.

Not all cultural value violations can be solved with public relations efforts. Oatly's sponsorship of the popular Malmö FF football franchise seems to have small benefit to the brand's local reputation (refer to Figure 13). Some market cultural value violations are so egregious that there is no way to repair it, at least for the current generation. It seems Oatly's best bet is to outlive the Generation X and Millennial dominant F&B business leaders until Generation Z has more influence on Malmö's market culture. Oatly is not financially hurting. The market opportunity of Shanghai, China alone where Oatly has a strong presence has twice the potential of all of Sweden, let alone Malmö. However, Oatly's continued efforts to repair its relationship with the Malmö community shows that this brand has an emotional need, as opposed to a rational economic need, to be part of this community.

This study specifically looked at B2B economic relationships and purchasing decisions. Further research is needed to determine if these values also influence Malmö consumer behavior. Interview data also suggests generational influences that change and shape market value systems, and more research is needed to analyze how Generation Z will impact the development of these values and thus the economic behaviors of this community.

## 7. Conclusion

The findings in this study only reflect the cultural values that impact the Malmö local food network during the Spring of 2024. It is inconclusive if these same values are at play in other industries. Perhaps there is an aspect to the intimate nature of food that applies these values particularly to those who make and sell food.

This study's focus on small F&B manufacturers may give a misleading conclusion that there are only small players in this market. Food and beverage MNCs are present in Malmö just like they are in any major city. McDonalds and Burger King have franchise locations. Coca-cola and Pepsi products are available in various establishments, both large and small. The point is not that large companies cannot compete in this community, but that local players have extra community support that allows them to succeed despite the presence of large, global brands. The MNCs have the goliath advantages of capital resources, technology, economies of scale, and a robust marketing department, but small, local players have a slingshot loaded with social capital.

Other communities will have different values. Some may overlap with Malmö's market community values but be expressed through different behaviors. Others may have equally strong yet opposite values. However, there are generalized take-aways from this work that small F&B manufacturers can use in their business strategies to build economic resilience through cultivating social capital. It is important to be aware of the values that influence behavior in your community because accidentally violating those values could have real, negative implications for your business. For F&B entrepreneurs, finding a community that aligns with your personal values and business goals is a strategic decision for the lifetime success of your company and should be done intentionally.

It is not enough to share a value, the company must be seen to express the value as well. This is perhaps the most useful finding from this study that was not discussed in the literature reviewed. External alignment is more impactful in a business strategy than internal alignment, yet internal alignment is also important for personal feelings of belonging and emotional satisfaction with cultural embeddedness. If a brand owner wants to have a community supported brand and product line, find ways to express the community's values through the company branding and product design to reinforce embeddedness.

Small F&B brands should incorporate relational work into their business strategies, not just to acquire new business and customer loyalty, but also as insurance against accidental cultural value violations. Depending on the degree of the value violation, a pre-existing framework of relational work with customers and community thought leaders creates a cushion to mitigate community sanctions.

Food councils should also become conscious of the market cultural values influencing their communities, especially for communities that have a high level of immigration. If Malmö Food Council wants to help immigrant owned F&B businesses to succeed in this market, one way is by explaining these prevailing values and what that means for businesses in the community. This is a way that food councils can provide universal support via information to all their members in a way that does not privilege some over others.

New members of the community might view some of the economic behaviors associated with these values and misinterpret their reason. I myself originally thought the Oatly boycott was fueled by resentment over Oatly's success. It was only through these interviews that I discovered how incorrect my initial impression was of this community and its behaviors. For migrants to new communities, especially those interested in starting or developing a business, hold judgement and interpretation of economic behaviors because the underlying values and beliefs may not be obvious.



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# Appendix 1

## Craft Roastery Interview Guide

### Pre-Interview

- Review public communications
  - Website
  - Social media
  - Visit branded café
  - Visit LinkedIn profile of the person(s) I will interview
  - Education level and field of study
  - Previous work experience
- Are there any questions specific to roastery that arise from reviewing publicly available info?

Interview Themes (*Interviews took place in the roastery's factory, not the roastery's branded café.*)

- General company history
  - When was the roastery founded?
  - Company milestones history
  - How did the founders “get into coffee”?
    - Inspiration
    - Transition from previous work to current work
    - Founding values
- Own brand products and product development
  - Tell me about your products and services.
- Customer mix
  - Who are your customers?
  - How do you reach them?
  - Sales channels
  - Geographical reach of customers
- Customer communications strategy
  - Is there an intentional strategy? Is it organic?
  - Does the communication strategy differ between customer type (B2B, B2C)

- Ask specific questions that come from reviewing online communications
- Pricing strategy
  - How do you price your product?
  - How much does the market influence your prices?
  - Are your customers price sensitive?
- Sourcing strategy
  - Are your personal and corporate values reflected in your sourcing decisions?
  - Has this evolved over time?
  - How does cost factor into your sourcing strategy?
  - Relationship building in the supply chain
  - Communication with suppliers
- Business strategy
  - Are you growing? Are you growth focused?
  - What is next for you and/or your business?
- Values
  - Clarify values and determine which are core values and which are nice-to-haves
  - How do these values impact your business operations/strategy?
  - Specifically feelings around these ideas<sup>4</sup>:
    - Quality
    - Price
    - Local Food/Local Economy
    - Relationships
    - Social Justice
    - Environmental Protection
    - Owning your own business
    - Other values that come through during the interview
  - In your opinion, are these values shared with
    - Suppliers
    - Customers

#### Post-Interview

- Visit the roasteries' own cafes.
  - What other brands do they serve besides their own coffee? (Local?)
  - What milk(s) do they offer? (Oatly? Skånemejerier? Arla products?)

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to see the evolution from what values I thought would be the most influential on this market before beginning the research, and what analyzing the data revealed. Prior to conducting these interviews, I assumed concerns around social justice and environmental protection would have a stronger influence on economic behavior in this community because these issues are strongly prevalent in the industry discussions around coffee production and sourcing worldwide.



# Appendix 2

## Café/Restaurant Interview Guide

Pre-Interview: Review the business's website and social media.

### Interview Themes

Throughout the entire interview, I will pay attention to how the interviewee responds to questions and pick out what some of their personal and corporate values are based on their responses, then specifically address values at the end of the interview.

- General history
  - When did you found your business?
  - What was your motivation to start this business?
  - Are you originally from Malmö? If not, how long have you been in Malmö? Where is your hometown?
- Products
  - What is your business's relationship with coffee? How integral is coffee to your business model?<sup>5</sup>
  - What brand(s) do you serve? (Both coffee and other products)
  - Why?
  - Do you advertise using these brand(s) to customers? How visible is this brand to your customers?
- Supplier Relationship(s)
  - Learn more about their relationship with their suppliers, with specific attention to coffee suppliers.
  - Have you ever dropped a supplier? Why?
  - Are there any brands you will not carry? Why?
- Business Strategy
  - Do you have an intentional business strategy?<sup>6</sup>
  - Are you growing? Are you trying to grow?

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<sup>5</sup> This question establishes how critical coffee is as a product category to this business. For some interviewees, coffee is the primary product sold, whereas others it is not. This will impact the care with which they determine suppliers according to supply chain management theory.

<sup>6</sup> I did not ask this question openly to avoid rudeness, but incorporated it throughout the interview.

- Values
  - What are their values?
  - How are these shared with their coffee supplier(s)?
  - How are these shared with their customers?
- Definitions
  - What do you mean by (quality, local, a good company, etc.)?
- Oatly (Ideally, do not bring up the name Oatly directly, but gently guide the interviewee to mention Oatly first.)
  - What is the interviewee's opinion on Oatly?
  - What vegan milk do you serve?
  - If it is Oatly, why? If not, why?

## Popular Science Summary

Our relationship with food—the way it is made, marketed, and purchased—shapes the world around us. Unfortunately, that has led to a plethora of negative outcomes that are impacting the planet. Many food system advocates suggest that small, local food networks could solve a lot of problems with the global food system, such as addressing food sovereignty, food security, food economic justice and so forth. However, the dominant global food system overwhelmingly favors large, multinational corporations.

But does it? Malmö, Sweden, a city of 362,133 residents, supports numerous small food and beverage manufacturers that are surviving and thriving. This study uses the Malmö local food community as a case study centered around the three craft coffee roasteries located here to understand how these businesses compete against global players in this market.

A 2020 study on market recovery after natural disaster found that strong social capital with supply chain partners was a source of strength and resilience for small businesses (Jia et al). This study analyzes the Malmö local food community through the lens of social capital, specifically using the theories of Cultural Embeddedness and Relational Work from the field of Economic Sociology. Cultural Embeddedness is how shared community understandings shape economic strategies, goals, and behaviors through collective values, beliefs, and norms. Relational Work is intentionally developing and managing social interactions in pursuit of a goal.

I conducted 14 ethnographic interviews with 15 participants in the Malmö food and beverage industry. These interviewees represent 13 currently operating food and beverage businesses and one industry expert. Three of these businesses are the roasteries and 10 are either current business customers of these roasteries, or could be customers. I used a qualitative data analysis technique called pattern inducing, which starts from the data and to identify patterns and develop frameworks and structures. I used pattern inducing on the 10 food and beverage businesses, and after multiple iterations created a framework of values that influence economic behavior in this food community, specifically sourcing decisions, as well as signatory behaviors that repeatedly show up connected to these values. This framework is how I analyze the level of cultural embeddedness of the three roasteries. I also used

relational work to look at relationship-motivated economic decisions that fall outside of this framework.

Through my research I identified 6 market cultural values with associated economic behaviors that influence purchasing decisions in the Malmö local F&B community. Many of these values have fuzzy definitions, because these are collectively shared beliefs, not codified rules. Interpretations would vary between interviewees, and sometimes interviewees would contradict themselves within the same interview—such as “What does Local mean?” However, the signatory behaviors are clear and repeatable. These observations agree with the Sociology literature.

Table 1: Market values and associated behaviors

VALUES	BEHAVIORS
Quality	• Hygiene factor
Local	• Preferential purchasing • Price flexibility • Advertising the supplier
Openness	• Inclusion and integration • Anti-pretentious
Trust	• Collaboration • Do not validate business claims
Company Size	• Preferential purchasing • Lack of "growth midset"
Ownership Structure	• Boycotting brands

Community members can ideologically agree with a value, yet violate the behaviors. They can also ideologically disagree with a value, yet conform to the behaviors. I saw examples of both in this study. The only value violations that resulted in interviewees dropping a supplier were violating Quality or Ownership Structure. For the rest, there appears to be flexibility. Relational Work can reinforce a value alignment, or it can overcome a value misalignment. Again, I saw examples of both uses in this community.

Table 2. Coffee roastery cultural alignment

	Lilla		Solde		Limhamns	
	Kafferosteriet		Kafferosteri		Kafferosteri	
	Value	Behavior	Value	Behavior	Value	Behavior
Quality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Openness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trust	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Company Size	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Ownership Structure	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

Overall, the three roasteries show alignment with most if not all the values and behaviors. All three express the value Local strongly, but they interpret it in different ways. Lilla Kafferosteriet connects to Localness through Malmö’s heritage. For example, their coffee shop is in a 15th century historic house in

Malmö's Old Town. Solde connects to Localness through deeply investing in one-on-one relationships with their business customers. Not only is this an example of relational work supporting a value, but the literature on local food networks highlights the connection between Local and person-to-person interactions. Limhamns Kafferosteri connects with Localness through community involvement by investing effort and resources to collaborate with fellow F&B businesses and taking part in cultural community events such as Jul Markets.

What happens when there is misalignment? Sharing the value is internal alignment. Conforming to the behavior is external alignment. The community only rewards or punishes external alignment. Lilla Kafferosteriet is the largest of the three roasteries in this study. According to the European Commission (2022), Lilla Kafferosteriet is classified as a small company. The owner identifies Lilla Kafferosteriet as a small company, and he is not trying to grow—this shows internal alignment. However, the community perceives Lilla Kafferosteriet as “big”. As the Thomas Theorem tells us, “if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas & Thomas 1928: 572). Lilla Kafferosteriet is beginning to receive criticism for being too big, but right now that criticism is limited to a raised eyebrow and a pun on the company's name. So far, the company does not seem to be missing sales because of this market violation.

Compare this to Solde, whose owners do not ideologically agree with two of the values, yet for other reasons are conforming to the behavior. Solde receives no community sanctions for this misalignment.

So what does all this mean? The data is clear that cultural embeddedness creates competitive advantage for small food & beverage businesses in this community over large, global food and beverage brands. It also shows that this advantage disappears when companies grow too big or severely violate external alignment. The three roasteries in this study are examples of businesses in the early stage of business development (Limhamns Kafferosteriet), middle stage (Solde), and late stage (Lilla Kafferosteriet). From the data we can infer that the Malmö local food community supports small businesses in the early and middle stages of business development, then encourages them to stay in the middle stage. Small businesses in the late stage of development are at risk for violating one or more community value.

Relational work is a tool for overcoming cultural value misalignments, but also as a way of differentiating and creating competitive advantage among other small, local businesses. Investing time in relational work, even with existing customers, helps to build insurance against an accidental cultural value violation. This is a direct tool for building economic resilience.

For future research, it would be interesting to conduct the same study in other communities, both in Sweden and other parts of the world, to see if a similar strategy of cultural embeddedness and relational work can create competitive

advantage and therefore resilience for small food and beverage manufacturers elsewhere. Food planners can use the results of this study and others like it to inform their local food strategies, especially if they have the goal of supporting local food manufacturing.

Here are some takeaways for small food and beverage owners:

- It is important to be aware of the values that influence behavior in your community because accidentally violating those values could have real, negative implications for your business.
- When establishing a company, locate in a community that aligns with your personal values and business goals. This is a strategic decision for the lifetime success of your company and should be done intentionally.
- It is not enough to share a value, the company must be seen to express the value as well. External alignment is key!
- Incorporate relational work into your business strategies, not just to acquire new business and customer loyalty, but also as insurance against accidental cultural value violations.

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